



Guidance Note 3 – Revision A

Use of Certificates of Design (Building Structures)

Introduction

When an application for a building permit is made, the applicant needs to declare whether the application is for a new building, an alteration of or extension to an existing building or for a material change of use of a building or a combination of these.

It is important that the Certifier understands these differences between the above and the implications of the declarations made on the Certificate of Design.

The certificate comprises a Part A which has to be signed and dated by the Approved Certifier and a Part B which has to be signed and dated by the Certification Coordinator for the Approved Body.

There are also a number of Schedules which need to be completed as described later.

Copies of signed certificates and any associated Schedules should be kept by the Approved Certifier for record and for future SER audit purposes.

Work types

There are three types of work which for which a building permit application is required:

- New Building
- Alteration and/or extension
- Material Change of Use

However, it is only necessary to complete one certificate to cover all three types of work.

Where the certificate is used in support of a Building Permit application which involves the material change of use of an existing building the Material Change of Use checkbox should be checked.

Schedules

- Schedule 1 A list of all drawings, details and calculations assessed for the purposes of issuing the design certificate;
- Schedule 2 A list of details which have yet to be designed and which will be certified in a later stage;

- Schedule 3 Scope of certification and how certified. See also Guidance Note 2 Options for Certification.

Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 (if applicable) should be attached to the original design certificate and submitted to the PED. This submission can be either at the time the application for a building permit is made or at a later date to discharge a condition attached to the building permit.

Schedule 3 should always be completed for a New Building and for Alterations and/or extensions to an existing building and be kept with the record copies of the certificate and Schedules. Schedule 3 is never issued to the PED.

In the case of staged certificates the certificate confirms that the design of all stages up to the particular stage of construction is certified. The information that the Certifier inputs on to Schedule 3 should therefore be that relevant to all elements up to and including that particular stage.

Conditional Approvals

In cases where the structural design is not fully completed at the time the application for a Building Permit is made, a conditional approval requiring a design certificate to be provided will be granted by the PED. This condition must be discharged before work relating to that condition can commence on site. Care must be taken to ensure that the certificate covers all of the proposed work described on the permit application. If it does not cover all of the work, details of those elements that still need to be certified must be included in Schedule 2.

Frequently standard components or details will be designed by specialist contractors who have either not been chosen or have not produced their designs when the building permit application is made. The design of these components or details will therefore need to be certified at a later date when specialist contractors are appointed and/or have produced their designs. If a design certificate is to be issued before the design for all structural components / details are finalised the elements which have not been certified must be clearly described in Schedule 2.

For further information regarding the procedure for Conditional Approvals refer to Technical Bulletin No. 1.

Appendix

a) Revised Building Applications

Where a building permit has been granted on the basis of a certificate any subsequent revised application will create the situation where, either a new design certificate (with new Schedules 1, 2 and 3), or a confirmation letter stating that the current design certificate is still valid, will need to be submitted with the revised building application. In all cases of amendments to permits (including conditional permits) the Certifier must be notified of the changes. The Certifier will then, after consideration of the amendment, decide whether a new certificate or a confirmation letter is appropriate. The following table provides guidance on this procedure:

Amendment to permit due to:			
Type of revision:	1. Change to building structure (certified work)	2. Changes affecting building structure	3. Changes not affecting building structure
Certifier action	Check of existing design	Check of existing design	Assessment required
	New certificate required	New certificate required	Confirmation letter required

b) Change of Certifier or Approved Body

It is the intention of the Scheme that an individual Certifier should certify all of the structural aspects of the entire design of the building. In the case of revised building applications and projects which are certified in stages, each design certificate should therefore normally be signed by the same individual. However, in some cases this may not be possible. Reference should be made to section 4.6 of the Scheme Guide for details of the action to be taken in such circumstances. In the case of an amendment for a staged certificate permit the SER Administrator should be notified so that the necessary changes to the SER database can be made to allow the new Approved Certifier or Approved Body to create subsequent certificates.

c) Amendments to Building Bye-laws

The design certificate has to relate to the Building Bye-laws in force at the date the building permit application is made. A certificate could be signed and dated some time before a permit application is made. During this period it is also possible that a change to the Building Bye-laws could come into force which was not considered by the Certifier initially. In this case it is the responsibility of the Certifier to establish that the design complies with the amended Bye-laws or to instigate any necessary design change before the Building Permit application is made. Therefore the Certifier should advise the client accordingly when a change in legislation is anticipated.

d) Amendments to Certificates

Minor corrections to certificates such as project address and description of work can be made free of charge by the SER Administrator either before or after a building permit application is made. An amended certificate is automatically generated by the SER IT system.

e) Cancellation of Certificates

Sometimes although a certificate has been created a building permit application is not made (perhaps there is no funding or the client changes his or her mind etc.). Occasionally an Approved Body may have difficulty obtaining fees from a client. In these circumstances SER has been requested to cancel certificates.

Approved Bodies should be aware that once a Certificate has been submitted to the PED it cannot be cancelled and others have a right to depend on the contents of that certificate. Similarly, where a certificate has been issued to the client (or their agent) it cannot be withdrawn as it may be submitted to the PED at any time.

A certificate that has been paid for but has not been signed may be marked as 'Not proceeded with' in the SER system. A refund of the certificate fee will not normally be made.

f) Changes to Email Address

Should the email address of an Approved Certifier or Approved Body change it is important that SER is advised as soon as is possible. Failure to do so could result in delays to the issue of certificates.

October 2016