



Guidance Note 4 – Revision B

Use of Certificates of Design (Building Structures)

Introduction

When an application for a building warrant 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 the conversion of a building, as defined in Schedule 2 to Regulation 4 in the Building Regulations, or a combination of these.

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

The certificate comprises;

- Part A which has to be signed and dated by the Approved Certifier, and
- Part B which has to be signed and dated by the Certification Coordinator for the Approved Body

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

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

Work Types and Conversions

The certificate recognises the following project types for which a building warrant application is required:

- New Building
- Alteration and/or extension
- Conversion

However, it is only necessary to complete one certificate to cover all project types.

Where the certificate is used in support of a Building Warrant application for the change of use or occupation of an existing building defined as a 'conversion' in the Building Regulations at Schedule 2 to Regulation 4 the conversion checkbox should be checked.

It should be noted that Regulation 12 only requires compliance with the requirement of the relevant standard 'as far as is reasonably practicable and in no case be worse than before the conversion'.

Conversions can be complex and Certifiers are advised to discuss the work with an SER Administrator or the Verifier if in doubt as to the requirements for a particular project.

It is also important to check that the description and location of the project are compatible with the wording on the warrant application. If required, certificates can be amended to correct typographical errors by an SER Administrator.

Schedules and Lists

Schedule 1 A record of items certified under the Third Party Designed Details option

Schedule 2 A record of the manner in which the project has been certified

List of information used for the purposes of certification

List of items to be certified in a later stage

Schedule 1

This lists the items that have been certified using the Third Party Designed Details Option and should be submitted with the certificate to the Verifier. This procedure should not normally be used where the warrant application is staged. Certifiers should always notify the applicant that this option is being used.

In the case of certificates for amendments to warrant, Schedule 1 will record all items. It will list any new items together with all the Schedule 1 items from previous certificates. As a result, the final Form Q will include all the Schedule 1 items.

It should be noted that any items that no longer require to be covered by the warrant as a result of an amendment will remain on Schedule 1. However, they should be noted as 'no longer applicable' when an interim or final Notice of Finalisation of Design Details, Form Q is generated.

Further information about the use of this option can be found in Certification Guidance B1.4.

Schedule 2

This records the manner in which the project has been certified. The Certifier must select the structural elements covered by the certificate and the corresponding certification option. For guidance on options for certification see Guidance Note 3.

The Certifier should keep the original with a record copy of the certificate. There is no requirement to submit this to the Verifier. For staged warrant applications the certificate confirms that the design of all stages up to the particular stage of construction is certified, in which case the Certifier should input onto Schedule 2 of the certificate all structural elements in that stage and all preceding stages.

When the certificate relates only to a conversion there is no requirement to complete Schedule 2.

List of information used for the purposes of certification

This would normally be the information that was used for the purposes of certification and forms part of the warrant application. It is likely to include all of the structural drawings and specifications and any other information, such as architect's floor and roof plans, elevations and sections, which will be construed as defining the design proposal for the project described in the application. This list should be submitted with the certificate of design. It is important that the information listed is consistent with that submitted with the application to avoid any delay in granting the building warrant. A copy of the information listed should be kept, either in hard copy or in digital format, so it can be made available at a future audit.

List of items to be certified in a later stage

This is a list of structural elements that have not been certified up to the particular stage and that will be certified as part of a later stage. The stages should be agreed by the Verifier and applicant and recorded on the list along with the relevant structural elements. For a non-staged certificate the list will be blank. The list should be submitted with the certificate of design.

Staged Warrants

Staged warrant applications can be made in situations where the design is not fully completed when the application for a building warrant is made.

Details of the various stages should be discussed and agreed with the Verifier, the applicant and with other designers prior to making application so that there is an organised approach to design and certification.

When a certificate is issued for a staged application the design that is certified is that up to and including the particular stage of construction.

Certification using the third party designed details option should not normally be used with staged warrants, except where piling, vibro-stone or concrete columns form part of the Stage 1 submission or where steelwork connections form part of the stage that includes the associated steelwork. See Certification Guidance B1.4 for further information.

Summary of Certificate, Schedule and Supporting Information

Certificate		Mandatory	Submit to Verifier
Part A	Approved Certifier declaration	Yes	Yes
Part B	Approved Body declaration	Yes	Yes
Supporting information			
Schedule 1	Third Party Designed Details (if used)	Yes	Yes
Schedule 2	Manner the project has been certified	Yes	No
List	Information for purposes of certification	Yes	Yes
List	List of stages (if staged warrant)	Yes	Yes

Appendix

a) Amendments to Warrant

Where a warrant has been issued on the basis of a certificate any subsequent amendment to the design will create the situation where, either a new design certificate (with new schedules), or a confirmation letter stating that the current design certificate is still valid, will need to be submitted with the amendment to warrant application. In all cases of amendments to warrant (including staged warrants) the Certifier must be notified of the changes by the applicant or their appointee. The Certifier will then, after consideration of the amendment, decide whether a new certificate or a confirmation letter is appropriate. Procedural guidance on certification is available on BSD's website and gives more information on this procedure.

Providing the value of the project has not altered significantly the fee for a new certificate to accompany an amendment to warrant will be limited to that noted on www.ser-ltd.com.

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 amendment to warrants (including staged warrants) 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 warrant 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) Legislative Changes to Building Regulations

The design certificate has to relate to the Building Regulations in force at the date the building warrant application is made. A certificate could be signed and dated some time before a warrant application is made. During this period it is also possible that a change to the Building Regulations 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 appropriate Regulations or to instigate any necessary design change before the building warrant 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 location and project description can be made free of charge by an SER Administrator either before or after a building warrant application is made. An amended certificate is automatically generated by the SER IT system.

Sometimes the decision to use a staged warrant application is made after the original certificate is generated. In these circumstances the Certifier is able to convert the original certificate into a Parent Certificate. Further staged certificates can then be generated by the Certifier.

e) Cancellation of Certificates

Sometimes a certificate has been created but a Building Warrant 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 issued to the Verifier it cannot be withdrawn and others have a right to rely 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 Verifier 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 it is updated as soon as possible. Failure to do so could result in delays to the issue of certificates.

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