

FACT SHEET - CONVERTING A SHED INTO A DWELLING

Can I convert a shed into a dwelling?

To convert a shed into a dwelling, development approval is required, i.e. lodgement of a Development Application.

Under the Building Code of Australia, sheds are classed as 10a (non-habitable), generally not meeting the higher construction standards for a dwelling. Significant works or upgrades may be required to convert a shed into a dwelling.

If you are considering converting an existing shed to a dwelling or building a shed to be used as a dwelling at a later stage, it is important to seek advice prior to building. You may find that converting a shed into a dwelling is not the best or most cost effective option. Building a new dwelling that fully complies with the Building Code of Australia may be a better alternative.

On rural properties, the conversion of a shed into a dwelling may not be supported where the property does not have a dwelling entitlement.

I don't want to live in a shed, but what sanitary facilities can I install in a shed?

Development approval is required for the installation of sanitary facilities in a shed, even if the shed is an exempt structure. Approval can generally be given for a toilet, shower and hand basin in a shed.

Can I live in a shed or caravan temporarily while I build my house?

An application for approval to occupy a caravan or shed must be made to Council. Such approval will generally only be considered if an application for Development Consent & Construction Certificate or Complying Development Certificate has been lodged with Council for the erection of a new dwelling on the subject property.

Approval will generally be granted on the following basis:

- The following amenities are provided:
 - a) A kitchen sink and facilities for the preparation and cooking of food;
 - b) A bath or shower;
 - c) Clothes washing facilities; and
 - d) A closet pan and washbasin.
- An adequate water supply is provided which is reticulated town water supply or a 22,500 rain water tank. An alternate supply may be approved by Council;
- All sewage effluent is disposed of through connection to Council's sewerage system or an approved on-site sewerage system such as a septic tank or aerated waste system;
- Occupation will commence only after the footings or concrete slab has been completed;
- The maximum period for the occupation of a temporary dwelling is generally limited to six (6) months; however, extension can be granted upon written request.
- On completion of the dwelling the shed is to cease being used for residential accommodation, with kitchen facilities (and any other facilities nominated by Council) to be removed from the shed.

There is already a shed on the property that has been converted to a dwelling but I'm not sure if it is Council approved. What should I do?

You can check the building approvals that have been issued for a property. If it is revealed that there are no approvals for the building to be converted into a dwelling this matter should be discussed with Council staff.

What are the construction standards for converting a shed to a dwelling?

The construction standards for a dwelling are contained in the Building Code of Australia, the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 and Council's Development Control Plan and are summarised as:

- Minimum Facilities: A toilet; shower or bath; wash basin; kitchen sink and facilities to prepare and cook food; laundry tub and space for washing machine;
- Visible from a Public Place: Shed must be of higher architectural quality (e.g. increased roof pitch and architectural features) to be in keeping with the character of the area;
- Concrete Slab: Constructed to AS2870 for a class 1a dwelling or a structural engineer's certificate supplied, stating that the slab is suitable for use in a dwelling. Evidence of a plastic membrane or the slab will need to be suitably water proofed. The slab should be at least 100mm above surrounding ground level with adequate surface water drainage, but preferably 225mm above surrounding ground level;
- Frame (tie downs & bracing): Constructed for a class 1a dwelling standard under AS1684 if timber framed or certified by a structural engineer to be suitable for a dwelling;
- Minimum ceiling height: 2.4m for habitable rooms and 2.1m for the laundry, bathroom corridor and toilet as per the BCA;
- Minimum Natural light: Glazed area of windows to be 10% of the floor area and ventilation as per the BCA;
- Boundary set backs: Must comply with the BCA and Development Control Plan;
- Flood: If the property is flood liable, the floor level must be at least 1 metre above the 1% AEP flood level (i.e. 1 in 100 year);
- Bushfire: If the property is mapped as bushfire prone the NSW Rural Fire Service document 'Planning for Bushfire Protection 2006' and Australian Standard 3959 apply;
- BASIX: a BASIX certificate is to be submitted with any development application for conversion of a shed to a dwelling outlining the energy efficiency measures to be installed;
- Sewerage: Connection to sewer or an approved on site waste water management system;
- Thermal break: If the building has metal wall or roof framing and lightweight external cladding weatherboards, fibre-cement or metal sheeting fixed to the metal frame, a NSW amendment to the BCA requires a thermal break be installed between the cladding and frame. This can be achieved by:
 - a) Compressed bulk insulation;
 - b) 20mm thick timber battens;
 - c) 12mm thick polystyrene strips;
 - d) Air Cell;
 - e) Thermal break insulation ;
- Certificate of compliance for electrical, plumbing and glazing;
- Termite protection to AS3660.1 where required;
- Complying stairs, landings, balustrades, etc.; and
- Hardwired smoke alarm between living and sleeping areas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR ASSISTANCE, PLEASE CONTACT COUNCIL'S DEVELOPMENT SERVICES ON 67288200.