

How Much Does it Cost for a Planning Permission ?

I am frequently asked this question and my response now is "Do you want a Planning Permission or do you want a house ?"

The purpose of this short sheet is to give a brief explanation on what a Planning Permission is and what is then required to actually build something.

A confusion has occurred over the years concerning the drawings that are produced for the planning permission; below are a few of the myths that seem to perpetuate:

1. When your drawings have passed planning, they have been passed to commence building.
2. The planning permission drawings should contain all the information in order to build the house
3. Once you've received your planning permission you can start building straightaway.

Lets deal with each myth in turn:

1. The Planning Department (where your drawings hopefully are granted planning permission) and the Building Control Department (the area that determines whether your house passes the Building Regulations) are two separate departments.

If your drawings pass planning it does not necessarily mean that they will be acceptable to pass the Building Regulations.

When you receive your Planning Permission there is a single sheet at the rear called the Commencement Notice; this is a mandatory piece of paperwork that informs the Building Control Department that you are about to commence construction and where the department can obtain further details on who created the construction drawings and who holds the details for foundations and drainage.

2. The Planning Acts only require a drawing showing the OVERALL dimensions; they require no construction detailing or construction information/notes.
3. When you receive your Planning Permission, this occurs a month after the first notification (to allow for appeals) you then have to submit your Building Commencement Notice (described above) giving two weeks notice prior to commencement.

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Where has this confusion come from ?

My guess is that most Irish domestic architecture is not created by architects and is instead undertaken by a miscellaneous collection of engineers, wood work teachers...ie those not specifically trained to understand and implement the planning process. Who is the best professional to employ that understand this process; Registered ARCHITECTS of course !

It is easy to understand why a single drawing that contains everything and can be at a fixed price became popular. But the fact is an Irish 'Planning/Building Regulation' drawing would be laughed at by a UK Building Control office. The Building Regulations for a house are now very complicated and cannot be covered for a few hundred euro. Here are just two commonly missing items:

- Where is the design and detailing that forms part of the BER/DEAP calculations? Where is the BER certificate? Does your house reach level B1/B2 ?
- Where is the airtightness strategy and drawings that ensure your house is draughtproof ? (again air tightness testing is a mandatory requirement in Ireland).

CONCLUSION

I'm happy to provide any level of service from a conceptual sketch, through to planning permission, construction and tender drawings (drawings required for tender purposes need yet another level of detail to ensure your builder prices accurately and doesn't charge 'extras'). And equally I'm happy providing a Planning only service but it's important to understand that there's a lot more to building your dream house than the planning permission and the saying "You get what you pay for" goes a long way in architectural terms.

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