



Retaining Walls

What is a retaining wall?

A retaining wall is a wall or structure designed and constructed to support soil at a slope steeper than can naturally supported.

When is a retaining wall required?

Retaining walls are only required where there is the possibility of land being adversely affected by subsidence. Retaining walls may be required when there are varying levels of land that land requires supporting at steeper angle than the land can naturally support itself.

Building and Planning consent are required for the following:

- Retaining wall exceeds 500 millimetres in height from the natural ground level and does not meet the required side and rear setbacks under Residential Design Codes (R-Codes).
- Retaining wall in excess of 500 millimetres in height from the natural ground level and within the front setback.
- Terraces created at the top of retaining walls in excess of 500 millimetres may be classed as active habitable spaces, and if these do not satisfy the deemed to comply of the R-Codes for privacy setbacks to the boundary, a planning application will be required.
- It is a requirement of the Building Code of Australia (BCA) that a retaining wall is to be built where the land cannot naturally support itself.

Location of retaining walls

Where retaining walls are required, it is preferred that retaining walls are built within the boundaries of the property where the works are proposed.

Retaining walls may only be built across boundaries where there is written agreement between affected neighbours.

Where the construction of a retaining wall encroaches across a boundary a BA20 form must be completed and submitted with the building permit application.

Both landowners will also need to sign any planning (development) application forms as necessary.

Positioning of dividing fences near retaining walls

Under the Shire of Moora fencing Local Law 2016, a dividing fence is to be positioned on the higher ground of a retaining wall which abuts a common boundary.

Privacy and overlooking

A fence of 1.8 metres can be erected on top of a retaining wall that is not located in the front setback area of a property, and is in excess of 500 millimetres in height to prevent overlooking of adjoining properties and maintain the privacy of the adjoining property. Fencing in the front setback area of a property is to be in accordance with requirements of the R-Codes for front fencing.

Maintenance of retaining walls

Owners of retaining walls are required to maintain their walls in a structurally sound manner.

If the Shire is of the opinion that a retaining wall is structurally inadequate, the owner will be required to consult a practising structural engineer to determine what action, if any, is required to restore the structural integrity of the wall. The cost for the structural engineer's services is the responsibility of the owner.

Building Permit

A building permit is required where a proposed retaining wall exceeds 500 millimetres in height. The Shire of Moora requires that such retaining walls are designed by a structural engineer; therefore applications are to be accompanied by signed structural engineer's drawings.

Building Permit application requirements

An application for a building permit requires the following:

- Completed building permit application from BA1 or BA2
- Site Plan – Two copies to a scale not less than 1:200 indicating;
- Site Boundaries and building setbacks
- Proposed location of the wall
- All existing structures, and
- The location of the proposed structure and distances to the boundaries
- Two copies of the floor plan, elevations, cross section drawn to a scale 1:100 indicating all dimensions
- Two copies of specifications with a completed addendum indicating the types of materials to be used.
- An estimated construction value, the name of the builder and the original signature of the builder must be on the application form.
- Two original signed copies of engineer's structural details.

Planning application requirements

A planning application is required for the development of a wall in excess of 500 millimetres above natural ground level.

Further Information

Please contact Building services on 9651 000