

# Building Permit Application Guide

## Introduction

As a homeowner, you may feel that you have outgrown your present home, but don't necessarily want to move. Renovation is today's alternative to moving and can include anything from adding a room, finishing the basement, building a garage or simply remodeling the interior of the house.

If you are planning some home improvements, this guide will tell you what you need to know about preparing the necessary drawings and applying for a building permit. This guide is designed to help you understand some of the requirements of the local by-laws as well as the relevant provincial acts and regulations. Remember that before any construction work begins a permit must be obtained.

## Background on building permits

### Purpose of building permits

A building permit is a license, issued by the Building Inspector and approved by the Township granting you legal permission to start construction with the knowledge that the issued drawings comply with appropriate governmental regulations. In addition, the building permit provides the means to enforce the requirements of the building code, Zoning By-law as well as other laws and standards to ensure compliance during construction as well as the safety of the building.

### Building without a permit is against the law

As a property owner, it is your responsibility to ensure that a building permit is obtained prior to construction. Building without a permit is against the law and could result in you and/or your contractor being subject to fines or penalties as set out in the Building Code Act.

### Issuing of building permits

Building permits are issued by the Town of Leamington's Building Department, after the application has been approved by the Township of Pelee.

### Projects requiring a building permit

Under the Ontario Building Code Act, a building permit is required for the construction of any structure exceeding an area of  $10 \text{ m}^2$  ( $108 \text{ ft}^2$ ). For example, a structure with outside dimensions of 12'-0" x 9'-0" ( $108 \text{ ft}^2$ ) would not require a building permit but a building with dimensions of 12'-0" x 10'-0" ( $120 \text{ ft}^2$ ) would require a permit.

The following is a list of typical projects that **do require** a permit:

- Decks:
  - Detached decks that are larger than  $10 \text{ m}^2$  ( $108 \text{ ft}^2$ ) in area and are 24" or more from finished grade.

- All decks, regardless of area, that are attached to the dwelling (Decks less than 24" from finished grade with no roof cover we do not ask for permits).

- New fireplaces or wood stoves
- Completion of roughed-in fireplaces
- Porches
- Sunrooms
- Solariums
- Carports
- Attached or detached garages
- Dormers
- One or two storey additions
- Plumbing and/or drains
- New septic systems or alterations to existing systems (Septic Repairs)
- Re-insulating and vapour barrier
- New or structural alterations to windows or doors
- Adding or removing most walls
- Creating a washroom, kitchen or bedroom
- Casement or main floor walkouts
- Solar Panels mounted to a building (ex. roof top) and has a face area equal to or greater than 5sq.m.

### **Projects that do not require a building permit**

A building permit is not required for a detached accessory structure that measures less than 10 m<sup>2</sup> (108 ft<sup>2</sup>) in building area (with no plumbing installed). Although a building permit is not required for these structures, the provisions of the Zoning By-law, such as setbacks, height and coverage still apply. Any questions concerning zoning regulations should be directed to the Clerk or Deputy Clerk and will be referred to the Township Planner of necessary.

The following is a list of typical projects that **do not require** a permit:

- Air conditioning units or heat pumps added to existing systems
- Pool heaters
- Painting and decorating
- Landscaping
- Fences other than swimming pool enclosures
- Asphalt shingling
- Eaves troughs
- Minor repairs to masonry
- Kitchen or bathroom cupboards without plumbing
- Free-standing satellite dishes

### **Other approvals**

As part of the building permit process you may require other approvals. The Clerk or Deputy Clerk will let you know which approvals are necessary prior to the issuance of your building permit. Some examples of other types of approvals are as follows:

## **Committee of Adjustment and Consent/Zoning By-law Amendment**

- If your proposal does not comply with the Zoning By-law, you will need to submit an application and receive approval for an amendment to the Zoning By-law.
- If the variance is minor in nature, an application to the Township's Committee of Adjustment and Consent may suffice.

Approval of an amending by-law or a minor variance is required before a building permit can be issued. Although an application to the Committee of Adjustment and Consent may be approved, the approval is subject to a 20-day appeal period. A building permit cannot, as a rule, be issued until the decision of the Committee of Adjustment and Consent has passed the appeal process and is deemed final and binding.

## **Demolition Permits**

Demolition permits are required if you plan to demolish all or part of a building or structure. Demolition permits can be obtained from the Township of Pelee as part of the Building Permit Application package.

## **Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA)**

Application to the Conservation Authority will need to be made and approved for any building application within the Township of Pelee. For more information, contact the Essex Region Conservation Authority in Essex at (519) 776-5209.

## **Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry**

Depending on the Zoning and location of your property you may also require approval from MNR for building or site alterations; a permit can be obtained by contacting their office at (519) 360-6000.

## **Preparing a building permit application**

### **Required drawings**

If you have a good working knowledge of house design and construction, you may wish to make rough sketches of your ideas and then have a qualified professional transform them into proper working drawings suitable for submission to the Building Department for permit review.

**Note:** Certification by a Professional Engineer may be required for certain prefabricated structures or construction components such as roof trusses. Contact the Leamington Building Department for assistance.

It is important that you contact Township of Pelee or the Town of Leamington Building Department early in the planning stages of your project, before any drawings have been started if you have questions relating to your project.

You will be required to submit some or all of the following drawings at the time of application:

- Site plans, fully dimensioned and showing the intended location of your project

- Floor plans, fully dimensioned depicting the scope of the work being applied for
- Cross-sections and elevations
- Roof framing plans, showing the size and spans of all framing members
- Truss design drawings signed and sealed by a registered professional engineer

\*All drawings must be to scale\*

- Septic design if required  
(2 full sets of site plan, drawings and septic are required)

Determining the specific requirements for your application can speed up the approval process, saving you time and money.

### **Drawing formats**

- The Town currently accepts architectural and structural drawings in either imperial or metric measure.
- If original drawings are submitted rather than prints, they must be drawn in ink (penciled drawings are not acceptable).
- Photocopies of penciled drawings are acceptable.
  - Drawings must be to scale

Your drawings must conform to the Ontario Building Code, the Township of Pelee Zoning By-law and any other applicable law.

### **Zoning Requirements**

Zoning specifies the uses permitted within particular zones and regulates issues such as building setbacks, height, mass and coverage. You should contact the Clerk or Deputy Clerk who will need the following information to determine the specific requirements for your site:

- Municipal street address
- Lot number
- Concession and/or registered plan number

In addition, a Site Plan, showing the proposed construction, complete with site elevations, will be required to establish accurate zoning requirements.

For more information, call the Township Office at (519) 724-2931.

### **Additional required Information**

In addition to building drawings, you may be required to supply one or more of the following:

- Plumbing and drainage information
- Heat loss calculations and duct sizing information
- Engineered lumber shop & erection drawings

### **Explanation of required drawings**

#### **Site plan**

Note: A sample site plan drawing can be viewed online at [www.pelee.org](http://www.pelee.org).

A site plan identifies buildings and other on-site features in relation to property boundaries. The site plan should identify your existing dwelling, detached accessory structures and any proposed additions.

Most or all of the information required for a site plan can be found on your property survey, which you may have received when you bought your home. If an existing survey is not available you may have to hire an Ontario Land Surveyor to provide one.

The following information must be shown on a site plan:

1. Title and scale
2. Legal description
3. Street name
4. North arrow
5. Property lines with dimensions
6. Setbacks to all property lines from existing and proposed structure(s)
7. Proposed construction (shown shaded or hatched)
8. Overall building dimensions
9. Rights-of-way and easements
10. Access and parking
11. Total lot coverage including existing structures, additions and new structures
12. Well and septic system locations (if on private services)

Important notes:

- In some cases a complete property survey is not required. Instead, an existing site plan may suffice. Check with the Building Official for more information.
- All existing and proposed structures must be shown and fully dimensioned.

## **Floor plans**

Note: A sample floor plan drawing can be viewed online at [www.pelee.org](http://www.pelee.org).

Floor plans provide a "bird's eye view" of the different floors of your house. They show scaled dimensions of the rooms, halls and stairs on each floor, as well as the size, direction and spacing of structural members such as joists, rafters, beams and lintels that are placed on the floor or roof above.

The following information should be shown on a floor plan:

1. Title and scale
2. Use of rooms and spaces
3. Interior and exterior dimensions, including door and window sizes
4. The materials used and the extent and size of both the new and existing structure(s) including new work within existing building
5. Cross-section location and direction lines and arrows
6. Location of plumbing fixtures
7. Material specifications & notes

## Elevations

Note: A sample elevation drawing can be viewed online at [www.pelee.org](http://www.pelee.org).

Elevations show the exterior view of each side of your building. Elevation drawings may be required when the proposed work changes the existing exterior view of your building or structure or when a new building or structure is proposed.

The following information should be shown on an elevation:

1. Title and scale
2. Heights and dimensions of existing and new window and door openings
3. Exterior wall finishes, cladding and flashing
4. Finished floor and grade levels
5. Extent of proposed addition and existing building
6. Overall height of building
7. Slope/pitch of new roofs

**Note:** A north elevation drawing would not be required if the proposed work being applied for does not involve any material change to the exterior view of the north side of your building.

## Cross-sections

Note: A sample cross-section drawing can be viewed online at [www.pelee.org](http://www.pelee.org).

A cross-section represents a view of a building along an imaginary line cut through the building at a specified location and illustrates the structural elements and construction details at that imaginary cut. The location and extent of the section should correspond with the section line and arrow drawn on the floor plan. Cross-sections through the proposed and existing structure(s) may be required to show building materials and how they relate to one another.

The following information should be shown on a cross-section:

1. Title and scale
2. Details of footings, foundation walls, exterior wall construction, floor and roof framing details
3. Heights and dimensions of doors and windows
4. Size and type of materials and finishes
5. Finished floor level and grades
6. Extent of existing house and proposed addition
7. Attic and crawl space ventilation

## More detailed drawings

More detailed drawings may be necessary to fully explain a particular aspect of your project that varies from conventional construction practices.

## Submitting a building permit application

### Application Forms

Building permit application forms are available online and from the Deputy Clerk at the Township Office.

Your completed application form must be accompanied by:

Two complete sets of building drawings

Drawings submitted for the permit should be folded. However, if your drawings are too bulky for folding, rolled drawings will be accepted.

Two copies of your “registered” property survey or a properly dimensioned Site Plan taken from a registered current survey.

Your application will be reviewed and approved by the Township of Pelee and sent to the Building Official at the Town of Leamington to be reviewed before a permit will be issued. You can also submit your application directly to the Town of Leamington Building Official to be forwarded to the Township of Pelee for approval. All building fees will be determined by and paid to the Town of Leamington.

**PLEASE NOTE: *Any construction that starts without first obtaining the proper building permit will result in the owner being charged double the applicable fees.***

**Important note: Incomplete applications or plans will not be accepted.**

#### **Displaying your building permit**

Once you receive your permit, ensure that the permit is displayed in a conspicuous location on site and that the approved permit drawings are available for review by Town of Leamington Building Inspection staff.