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### What is a retaining wall?

A retaining wall is a structure designed and constructed to support soil at a slope steeper than can naturally be supported; ie. exceeds natural angle of repose.

Whilst retaining walls are primarily designed to support soil, they may also be placed under stress from other factors such as buildings, swimming pools, landscape structures, footings, vehicle loads and/or wind loads on dividing fences. Some pre-manufactured retaining walls are designed to support soil only and not other contributing stress factors.

### Do I need approval?

A Building Permit is required where a proposed retaining wall exceeds 500mm in height, is an addition to an existing retaining wall and/or in the case of tiered walls, the walls exceed 500mm in total height.

The following retaining walls generally do not require a Building Permit:

- Planter boxes
- Retaining walls used to create public open space areas
- Retaining walls used to create drainage sumps

For site specific building permit requirements, please liaise with the City.

Generally all retaining walls greater than 500mm require Development Approval. Please contact the City's Approvals Services department for further information.

### When is a retaining wall required?

Retaining walls may be required during the construction of dwellings, swimming pools, subdivision of land, the erection of dividing fences or landscaping purposes. Whilst the City may require that retaining walls be constructed as part of building works, other retaining walls may be necessary depending on contributing factors as mentioned above.

### What do I need to submit?

#### Certified Applications

- Completed [BA1 application form](#)
- Relevant fees (refer to page 2)
- Completed Certificate of Design Compliance and one copy of all referenced documents
- Street and Verge Bond Permit Application (refer to page 2)
- Development Approval (if required).

#### Uncertified Applications

- Completed [BA2 application form](#)
- Relevant fees (refer to page 2)
- 1 x copy of a site plan. The site plan must be drawn at a minimum scale of 1:200 indicating site boundaries, existing and proposed levels and proposed wall location (relative to a nominated datum point or Australian Height Datum).
- 1 x copy of Structural Engineers details (always required for retaining walls)
- Street and Verge Bond Permit Application (refer to page 2)
- Development Application (if required).

### What is the difference between certified and uncertified applications?

A Certified Application has had its assessment completed by a private Building Surveyor and has been issued with a Certificate of Design Compliance. Certified Applications must be submitted complete with all prior approvals issued (including Development Approvals). The City will issue a Building Permit for the proposed structure.

An Uncertified Application is submitted to the City for a full assessment. Uncertified Applications can be lodged while the Development Application is still pending however; it will be placed on hold until the Development Approval has been issued. The City will issue a Certificate of Design Compliance and a Building Permit for the proposed structure.

### Street and Verge Bond Permits

If you apply for a building permit, you will also be required submit an application for the City's Street and Verge Bond Permit. This application includes a non-refundable administration fee. If the construction value is over \$5000, an additional bond fee applies. For more information on these applications (including fees and a link to apply online), please refer to the [Street and Verge Bond page](#) on the City's website.

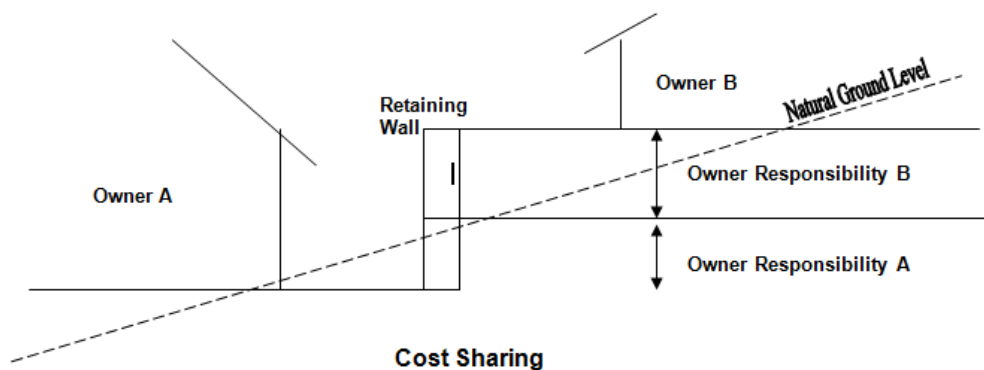
### Fees

To determine your application fees, please refer to please refer to our [Building Fee Schedule](#) or [Building Application Fee Calculator](#) on the City's website.

### Who pays for the retaining wall between neighbours?

Each landowner has an obligation to retain soil where necessary resulting from earthworks on their property. Adjoining owners who have both undertaken earthworks are advised to negotiate a proportional based agreement when retaining walls are required along a common boundary for a dividing fencing or landscaping works. When an agreement cannot be reached through arbitration and mediation, owners should seek legal advice.

Please note that this information is general only and not the City's policy. Retaining wall costs are entirely a civil matter and the City does not intervene on disputes.



### Maintenance of retaining walls

When the City is of the opinion that a retaining wall is structurally inadequate then the owner must consult a practicing Structural Engineer to determine what action, if any, is required to restore the structural integrity of the wall. The cost for the Structure Engineers services is the responsibility of the owner.

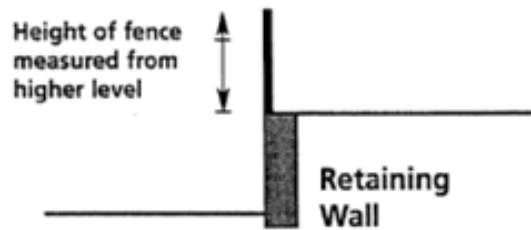
### Encroaching or adversely affecting other land

The construction of retaining walls in close proximity to a boundary may cause an encroachment or adverse impact to occur on the adjoining property. For example, if the retaining wall requires backing blocks to be placed beyond your boundary line, you will be encroaching. Retaining walls can also reduce the bearing capacity (the ability of the soil to support a structure) of the higher side due to structural limitations.

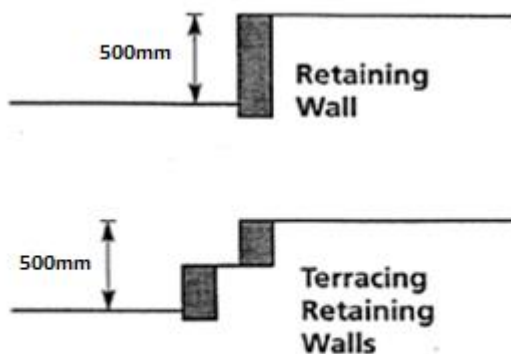
The *Building Act 2011* requires the adjoining landowner's consent where works affect their land. If you require this consent, it must be provided as part of your Building Permit application. Please refer to Building & Energy's website for further information on work affecting other land.

**Positioning of dividing fences near retaining walls**

Under the City's Fencing Local Law 2016, a dividing fence is to be positioned on the higher ground of a retaining wall, which abuts a common boundary. A dividing fence which is fixed to a retaining wall will require a structural engineer to design the installation.



## Example of standard and terraced retaining walls



**For further information, please contact the City's Building Services on 9405 5000.**

### Disclaimers:

1. In line with the City's recordkeeping requirements, please ensure that the information included on any application form is accurate and complete. Please also retain a copy of the completed form before submitting with the City as the form and any supporting documents will not be returned. The City accepts no responsibility for any loss, damage, liability or inconvenience suffered by any person as a result of using an application form or lodging an application form with the City.
2. This information sheet is produced by The City of Wanneroo in good faith and the City accepts no responsibility for any ramifications or repercussions for providing this information. This information sheet is correct as of July 2020 and prone to alteration without notification.



### Did you know?

Save time and apply online! This application is available for lodgement via the City's website  
[www.wanneroo.wa.gov.au](http://www.wanneroo.wa.gov.au)

