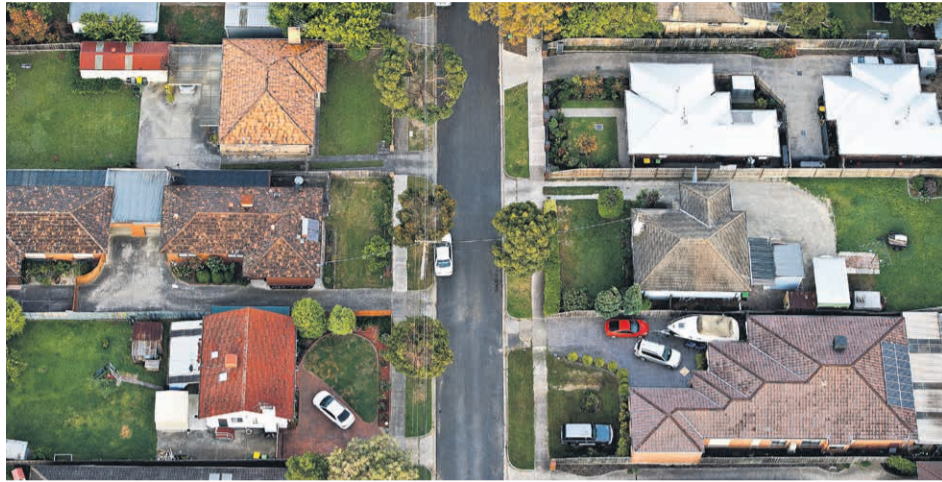


MASTER BUILDERS

ROMINA DE SANTIS, technical adviser at Master Builders WA, answers your questions about home building



THE QUESTION

My neighbours are constructing a new home. A few months ago they gave us the plans to review for some compliance issues that we needed to provide comments to the council for. We had no problem with the design and wrote our comments. Now the builder has sent us a form to sign – a Notice and Request for Consent. Again, they have provided plans indicating they need to remove part of the fence and have scaffold partly in my yard for access from our side. I am not comfortable with this but don't want to upset my new neighbours. I have 28 days to respond.

THE ANSWER

The first consent or comments you provided were to confirm your support to variations sought under the residential design codes; the second request for comments or consent are under required building legislation.

The delivery of materials, subcontractor vehicles, waste management and recycling, and the construction itself is now commonly up to at least one boundary, and two-storey homes are layered with the additional complication of our shrinking blocks and growing homes.

Every builder dreams to be the first home in the street or building between vacant land.

The form (BA20A) was introduced in 2012 to formalise handshake agreements between the builder and the neighbours for the construction of a new home.

Most times, these agreements worked fine – neighbours were understanding of the disruption of a construction site next door and builders were respectful of established homes.

However, there are always exceptions, and problematic situations would arise where no formal agreement was in place; from a builder frustrated when access that was previously agreed to was denied to neighbours upset when liberties were taken or blatant disregard was shown for privacy or property.

The form is designed to facilitate negotiations

between neighbouring property owners or occupiers and builders with the requirement for this process to be followed.

It is not necessary for the builder to use this form specifically; as long as all the information is included in a letter and you consent, this also acts as a formal agreement without the form, which can sometimes seem intimidating.

The BA20A form gives you notice of activities that would be disruptive, like temporary removal of the dividing fence, or requests consent for activities such as access to your land, as is in your case.

The form should include a description of the work, the timeframe and the reinstatement of your property.

If there is anything on the form that you would like to add or change, feel free to contact the builder to discuss or include it in the form as part of your consent.

Keep a copy of the document for your records. If the builder does not follow the agreed conditions, you can contact the council to assist.

There are significant penalties in place should a builder not follow the conditions of the consent provided.

For more information about building, visit the Master Builders A-Z Building Information Directory at www.mbawa.com. If you have any questions about home building or purchase issues, email romina@mbawa.com

WOMEN IN BUILDING

International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8 every year. Master Builders director Michael McLean comments on the important role women play in the housing industry.

THE official theme for International Women's Day 2018 is 'Press for Progress'.

At an international level, there is a focus on examining the vital role that women play in humanitarian and disaster planning and response.

From the building industry's perspective, it is a message to encourage more females to choose a career in our field.

Although the building industry is predominantly comprised of males, it is heartening to see more and more females entering it.

In Western Australia we currently have over 75 female apprentices across the painting, plastering, tiling, bricklaying, plumbing and carpentry trades.

Bricklaying apprentice Jessie Wilson from BGC Residential is sure to inspire more women to try their hands at a trade after winning the Best Female Apprentice title at Master Builders Apprentice of the Year Awards late last year.

An additional 80 females have embarked on traineeships in fields such as estimating, scheduling, drafting, scaffolding, site management and civil construction.

There are also over 50 females currently being trained in electrical-related occupations and a high proportion of females are enrolled in Curtin University's Construction Management course, including overseas students.

Master Builders recently launched an Advancing Women in Building and Construction pilot program to support women in their training pathways and careers.

Recruiting men and women who are high achievers in the industry and encouraging them to mentor women is an important step to creating and retaining a better gender balance.

The mentoring program, which is funded by the Federal Government, aims to boost the number of women in building and construction.

Research shows that while women are

attracted to careers in this industry, they often drop out during training or fail to go on and work in the sector even when their training is completed.

Advancing Women in Building and Construction – and the mentoring program in particular – will work to counter this trend by spurring industry leaders to support women who are starting out and ensure they are able to realise their full potential.

Experienced builders, specialist tradespeople, people who own their own businesses and professional supervisors are some of the mentors being recruited for this initiative.

Their mentees will be women with up to five years' experience working in the industry either part or full-time and/or completing an apprenticeship or in a pre-employment program.

With skills like creative thinking in increasing demand in the housing industry, women have a great opportunity to establish their credentials and forge successful careers.

These opportunities are likely to increase as the industry embraces technology and robotics more in the near future.

There may be less than 20 female registered builders in WA, but each of them can hold their own against their male counterparts.

Isla McRobbie, a lawyer with Jackson McDonald, recently became the first female on Master Builders board.

International Women's Day on Thursday March 8 provides each of us the opportunity to acknowledge the role that women play in our lives.

I take this opportunity to thank my wife Anna and my female staff for the support they provide to me on a daily basis.

Builders are very aware that it is generally the female that makes the important decisions when it comes to building or renovating a home.

For any females thinking about a career in the building industry, visit www.nolimits.com.au or the Construction Futures Centre in Belmont.

