



The City of Oslo: Urban Development - Processes and Procedures

Approval of Building Applications

The Agency for Planning and Building Services approves all applications regarding building constitutions that need approval or to be registered according to the Planning and Building Act. The duration of the approval process depends on the complexity of the building project. Less complex projects may be processed in the Customer Service Centre “over the counter” within an hour. Other projects call for a more comprehensive consideration. The Agency received 6061 building applications in 2004.

According to the Planning and Building Act, the following building construction projects have to be approved or registered:

- New constructions, additions, extensions and underpinning as well as positioning of buildings, constructions or plants
- Alteration of a building exterior, demolition, substantial repairs, change of use or substantial expansions
- Construction, alteration or repair of technical installations

- Dividing or joining together of occupancy units in dwellings as well as building reconstructions that result in division of dwellings
- Construction of fencing that faces a road, signs or advertising devices etc.
- Considerable, substantial alterations upon the terrain
- Establishment of roads or car parking grounds

Building application process

A complex building application normally goes through four phases:

1. Initial framework meeting

In most cases, there is an initial meeting where the Agency for Planning and Building Services as well as other involved partners and authorities clarify the general conditions and inform the liable applicant and developer of possible obstacles for completion of the process.

2. Application for “General Permit”

General Permit clarifies whether the project can be accomplished within the existing local plan and the initial framework agreed upon. A General Permit allows for some un-clarified technical conditions that later have to be fulfilled before a Project Start-Up Permission may be given. In 2004, the Agency for Planning and Building Services gave 4524 General Permissions.

3. Application for “Project Start-Up Permission”

Detailed planning for the project must be completed and controlled, and documentation sent to the Agency for Planning and Building Services before permission for project start-up permission may be given. In 2004, the Agency for Planning and Building Services processed 1479 such applications. For less complex projects, General Permission and Project Start-Up Permission may be issued simultaneously. Less complex projects may also be processed “over the counter”.



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4. Request for “Permit of Use” or an “Statement of Completion”

The Agency might give provisional permission for use or Statement of Completion on the basis of a request from the applicant when the project is completed, but before the building is put to its intended use. In order for a building project to obtain a temporary Permit of Use, there has to be no shortcomings that may be a danger to life, health or safety. When the project is documented to be completed, the Agency for Planning and Building Services issue a Statement of Completion.

Notifications

Some less complex building projects do not have to be applied for, only to be notified to the Agency for Planning and Building Services. There are no requirements for a temporary Permit of Use or a Statement of Completion for notifications.

The following building projects require a notification:

- Less complex building projects on developed property
- Provisional or transportable buildings, constructions or installations
- Erections, expansions, alterations or repairs of agricultural outbuildings
- Construction on company-owned land where specific regulations give exemption from application

Bjørnvik - building site for the years to come.



More than 4500 General Permits were given in 2004.

Time limits for application processing

- The initial framework meeting is to be held within two weeks of receiving the request from the developer
- Application for a General Permit that is in accordance with existing local plans are to be processed within 12 weeks
- Application for Project Start-up Permit or less complex initiatives are to be processed within three weeks
- Requests for Provisional Usage Permit are to be processed within a week
- Requests for a Statement of Completion are to be processed within two weeks
- Formal appeals are to be sent to the body of complaints within six weeks. This time limit is only applicable for complaints regarding applications that deviate from technical codes

Formal appeals

Everyone has a right to forward formal appeals according to the Public Administration Act. Parties such as neighbours, residents associations etc., have the right to make complaints regarding decisions made by the Agency for Planning and Building Services in a building application. The purpose of the system for formal appeals is primarily to secure the interests of private parties. The County Governor is the top-end authority to rule on appeal cases.

Fees

The processing of all building applications and notifications are priced according to rates set by Oslo City Council.