



Step by step Guide to House Demolition for Renovators and Investors

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With the increasing trend to demolish old houses and replace them with your luxury dream home or sub-dividing a block for investment purposes, the search for a reliable house demolition company starts.

In this article we are going to look at the steps involved in getting a house demolished and what is required to get council approval.

Applying for a Demolition licence

Generally your demolition contractor will submit the application for a demolition licence. So your first step is to get some quotes for the demolition work including a site visit. The house to be demolished needs to be vacant before an application for demolition can be submitted to your local council.

When choosing a demolition contractor, look for depth of experience in the industry, positive referrals and competitive pricing. Ideally you will want a contractor who is going to look after the whole demolition process including all requirements for council approvals, disconnection of site services and removal of all site rubble in an environmentally friendly way.

On application to the council, a form and fee is payable plus a bond to cover services within the road reserve in case any services are damaged during the demolition activity the council does not bear the cost of repairs.

Before a demolition licence is issued, a number of conditions have to be met. All services to the site need to be sealed or disconnected, any asbestos is handled and disposed of in accordance with health and safety regulations, rat baiting occurs on the property and the permitted hours of work and dust control are planned and agreed to. The house to be demolished must be vacant and a site specific safety and work plan is developed.

Rat baiting is usually carried out 14 days prior to a demolition licence being approved and is confirmed with a certificate issued by the city's health services department. It can take between 2 to 4 weeks after the inspection for the demolition licence to be issued. The council will consider any heritage considerations as part of the application. A demolition licence cannot be refused by a council under its by-laws unless there is a heritage consideration. Once a demolition licence is issued, it is valid for 12 months.

Planning and Development Approvals

If you are intending to build or redevelop the property generally planning and development applications are submitted at the same time as the demolition application. It can take up to 8 – 10 weeks for planning approval to be granted from the council. If you are working with a builder they will do this on your behalf.

Demolition Process

Once the demolition licence is approved the house is stripped of asbestos and hazardous materials by the demolition company. Any salvageable items are manually removed including roof tiles, doors, windows, timber and floorboards. If dealing with an experienced demolition contractor who follows a green recycling program such as the Perth Demolition Company, usually 90% of demolition materials are salvaged or recycled.

The next step in the demolition process is booking the machinery to be on site to start the demolition of whatever is left on the block to demolish. A hydraulic excavator is bought in to do the heavy demolition work along with semi-tipper trucks and bobcats to remove site rubble. It can take up to five days for this process to be completed and the site cleared.

If the demolition contractor recycles, then a recycling team will handpick and strip out any salvageable bricks and pass them on to local salvage yards. If timber is not in good condition it is usually recycled for mulch and any broken bricks or concrete are crushed and recycled as road base. Ideally look for a recycling friendly demolition company so the amount of landfill generated by a demolition job is minimised, this is good for you and good for the environment.

In summary when choosing a demolition contractor, ideally look for a company who works closely with their customer and council to meet the statutory requirements for demolition applications and approvals. Ask them what their approach is to ensuring the safety and protection of the surrounding structures and the property in general, this will hold you in good stead with your neighbours. And confirm that they will handle the disconnection of site services and removal of all demolition rubble in an environmentally friendly way.

Author Biography/Resources:

This article was co-authored with Andrew McDonald who has 32 years' experience in residential and commercial demolition in Perth, Western Australia and is the Director of the Perth Demolition Company. Andrew has experience in all aspects of demolition including house demolitions, office strip-outs, commercial strip-outs and structural demolition, backyard cleanouts for sub-division purposes, excavation, asbestos removal, salvage and setting up green recycling programs. To find out more, visit www.perthdemolitionco.com.au