

Fact Sheet 2: Building a Dwelling House

Noosa Plan 2020 – As amended 26 September 2025

What is a dwelling house?

A *dwelling house* is a home where people live on a permanent basis. It can include associated structures such as sheds, garages, and carports. A *dwelling house* may also include one self-contained *secondary dwelling*¹ (like a granny flat).

Under Noosa Plan 2020, *dwelling houses* must:

- be built in appropriate locations;
- protect the privacy and amenity of neighbours;
- provide a comfortable living environment; and
- complement the character of the local area.

Dwelling houses are encouraged and preferred in the Low Density Residential, Rural Residential and Rural zones. In contrast, in the Medium Density Residential and High Density Residential zones, building only one house is generally not considered the best use of land. In these zones:

- new *dwelling houses* are only allowed on lots smaller than 500m².
- lots larger than 500m² are expected to accommodate more dwellings.

Do I need council planning approval?

In most cases, a *dwelling house* can be assessed by a private building certifier as part of the standard building approval process, without the need for referral to Council. However, planning approval or Council referral is required in certain situations.

The Table of Assessment in Part 5 of Noosa Plan 2020 outlines the acceptable outcomes for *dwelling houses* in each zone. If a proposed *dwelling house*:

- does not comply with any of these requirements (e.g. height, building setbacks, site cover), or
- is located on a site affected by a constraint (e.g. biodiversity, coastal protection),

then a development application must be submitted to Council for assessment.

Built form

Table 1 outlines the built form requirements for *dwelling houses* in each of the relevant zones.

Removal houses

A removal house is allowed (if certain requirements are met), provided it does not negatively impact on the amenity of surrounding premises and it maintains the safety of people and property.

Any part of a removal house that is affected by termite attack, borers, dry rot or severe weathering or is damaged as a consequence of relocation, must be repaired or replaced using new or sound second-hand materials.

Applicants will be required to pay a performance bond to Council before getting final building approval. The bond is held by Council until all building works are completed to a satisfactory level and a final inspection certificate is issued.

Connection to services

Dwelling houses located within the urban boundary (shown on the zone maps) must be connected to the following essential services:

- reticulated water supply and sewerage
- stormwater drainage, and
- telecommunications infrastructure (where available).

If reticulated water supply is not available, the property must be equipped with rainwater tanks providing a minimum:

- 45,000 litres for dwellings up to 3 bedrooms; or
- 60,000 litres for dwellings with more than 3 bedrooms or if there is a *secondary dwelling* on the same premises.

If reticulated sewerage is not available, the *dwelling house* must be connected to an on-site effluent treatment and disposal system that complies with relevant health and environmental standards

¹ Refer to **Fact Sheet 3: Secondary dwellings**

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Driveways

Driveways and crossovers² must be designed according to Council's standard drawings³. If a proposed driveway does not meet the 'acceptable outcomes' outlined in the Noosa Plan 2020, an application for a non-standard driveway must be submitted to Council for assessment.

Under *Noosa Plan 2020*, driveways and crossovers must be designed to:

- avoid significant changes to the existing road reserve (e.g. no major cut or fill)
- withstand vehicle loading
- have a minimum grade of 1% sloping away from any adjoining buildings and be shaped to drain into landscaped areas
- avoid interference with stormwater systems or other public infrastructure
- prevent disturbance to trees located on public land

Additionally:

- only one driveway and crossover is permitted per lot.
- if a property fronts more than one sealed road, and those roads differ in the Road Hierarchy, the driveway must be located on the lower-order road.
- for corner lots, driveway placement must be in accordance with Council's standard drawings.
- where a footpath exists, the driveway must meet the road reserve at the same level as the footpath.
- in Rural or Rural Residential zones, driveways must provide minimum safe sight distances in line with Austroads standards.
- driveways within a property must:
 - have a maximum gradient of 20% to prevent vehicle scraping; or
 - have a maximum gradient of 25%, provided:
 - the section steeper than 20% is no longer than 6 metres, and
 - there is a transition zone at each end of the 25% section that is at least 2 metres long and no steeper than 12.5%.

Earthworks and drainage

Filling (other than driveways):

- must not extend more than 1.5 metres (within the urban boundary) or 3 metres (rural areas) from the outer walls of the *dwelling house*;
- is limited to a maximum of 500m²; and
- must not impact on the local drainage of adjoining properties.

Bushfire hazard

If your property is located within a Bushfire Hazard Area (shown on the Bushfire Hazard Overlay mapping)⁴ and is not connected to a reticulated water supply, you must provide the following:

- A dedicated water source for firefighting purposes, such as a dam, swimming pool, or water tank, with a minimum capacity of 5,000lt.⁵
- A 50mm diameter outlet pipe fitted with a standard fire brigade fitting, connected to the water supply⁶.

Flood hazard

If a property is located within a Flood Hazard Area (shown on the Flood Hazard Overlay mapping)⁶, the finished floor level of habitable rooms must be:

- At least 300mm above the defined flood event (DFE); or
- If the DFE is not available, at least 500mm above the highest recorded flood level.

You can request a flood search from Council for a fee⁷.

Landslide hazard

Dwelling houses (including outbuildings and associated access) should generally not be built on land identified as a Landslide Hazard Area⁶ (shown on the Landslide Hazard Overlay mapping).

If there is no feasible alternative, and development must occur within a mapped Landslide Hazard Area, the following applies:

- a site-specific geotechnical assessment is required to demonstrate that the proposed development can be safely designed and constructed to address the landslide risk.
- the assessment must confirm that the development will not compromise the safety of people or property.

² The vehicle crossover is the part of a driveway that starts at the property boundary and extends to the road crossing over Council-controlled land.

³ Standard Drawings can be found on Council's website

⁴ Refer to Council's interactive mapping site to confirm hazard overlays

⁵ Must be separate from the household's regular water supply.

⁶ This requirement does not apply if the water source is a dam or swimming pool.

⁷ Refer to www.noosa.qld.gov.au/planning-development/searches/property-searches.

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- Any risk mitigation measures recommended in the geotechnical report must be implemented as part of the development.

Proximity to major electricity infrastructure & substations

Dwelling houses are not to be located within an easement for a distribution line and must be at least:

- 50 metres from a transmission substation;
- 10 metres from any other substation; and
- 30 metres from a transmission line easement.

Short-term accommodation use of a Dwelling house

The regular or frequent use of a *dwelling house* for *short-term accommodation* is an inconsistent use under Noosa Plan 2020. Such use is only permitted when:

- It occurs in the principal place of residence of a permanent resident, and
- It is limited to a maximum of 4 separate occasions and a total of 60 days per calendar year⁸.

Party houses

Party houses are prohibited throughout Noosa Shire, therefore a property lawfully let out to short-term guests (where the owner isn't in residence) cannot be used for parties, weddings, events etc.

This Fact Sheet/Guide is intended to assist with interpreting Noosa Plan 2020 and **should not be solely relied on to inform decisions**.

Prior to making decisions or undertaking any development, it is strongly recommended that applicants:

- Review all the requirements of Noosa Plan 2020, and/or
- Seek advice from a qualified planning professional.

Noosa Plan 2020 is available online at:

<https://noosaplan.noosa.qld.gov.au/eplan>

For further information or assistance, contact Council's Development Assessment team:

☎ (07) 5329 6500

✉ planning@noosa.qld.gov.au

⁸ Refer to the Noosa Plan 2020 – Short-term Accommodation Guide for more information.

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Table 1: Built form requirements for a Dwelling house

	Low Density Residential	Medium Density Residential	High Density Residential	Rural Residential	Rural
Maximum building height	8 metres and 2 storeys	8 metres and 2 storeys	12 metres and 3 storeys	8 metres and 2 storeys, <i>Note: pitched roof may be up to 9 metres, providing no other part of the building exceeds 8 metres</i>	8 metres and 2 storeys,
Minimum building setbacks	Refer to Part 6.3.1 <i>Note: The relevant Zone Codes in Part 6 of Noosa Plan 2020 include minimum setback requirements for all proposed buildings and structures from front, side and rear boundaries of a property. These provisions are different from the standard provisions of the Queensland Development Code (QDC) and vary depending on the zone of the land. Note: Special setbacks also apply to Noosa River, the Noosa Waters revetment wall and for rural properties adjoining Environmental Management and Conservation zoned properties</i>	Refer to Part 6.3.2	Refer to Part 6.3.3	Refer to Part 6.8.4	Refer to Part 6.8.3
Maximum site cover	50% for a single storey building - for a 2 storey building: 50% for one of the floor levels and 30% for the other floor level; or 40% for all storeys and floor levels;	40% for all storeys and floor levels	40% for all storeys and floor levels	30% for all storeys and floor levels	NA
Maximum gross floor area	500m ² Specific properties in Park Road, Noosa Heads are limited to 150m ² GFA	40% of the lot size eg. 400m ² lot allows maximum GFA of 160m ²	65% of the lot size eg. 400m ² lot allows maximum GFA of 260m ²	500m ²	500m ² , with 1000m ² total combined GFA
	<i>Note: Maximum gross floor area is the combined total of all buildings and structures, including the dwelling house Note: car parking, unenclosed balconies and stairwells do not contribute to calculations of GFA</i>				
Minimum landscaping	<i>Dwelling houses must be designed to allow space for outdoor activities, landscaping and screening to surrounding land uses. A minimum of 20% of the site must be soft landscaping (excluding driveways, carparks, swimming pools, tennis courts, decks, balconies or similar). Note: Artificial turf is not considered soft landscaping.</i>				
Minimum car parking	<i>A dwelling house must have two car parking spaces on the property. If there is a secondary dwelling, a third space is required (one of these spaces can be in tandem). Car parking spaces for a dwelling house or secondary dwelling do not need to be covered. Note: Retrospective applications to cover car parks will not be supported if site cover or building setback requirements are not met.</i>				