

# A RESIDENT'S GUIDE TO THE LANGHORNE MANOR BOROUGH PERMIT PROCESS

This guide details the steps involved in obtaining a building permit, from preliminary review through final approval. This information will help people who have had little or no experience with the building permit process. Experienced building professionals will also find information about the required amount of estimated processing time useful for their scheduling.

## **Building Permits: When are they required?**

Generally, you need to obtain a building permit from the Langhorne Manor Borough whenever you construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, remove, improve, convert, or demolish a building or other structure on your property (house, garage, shed, etc.). Additionally, current code violations generally require a person to obtain a permit to correct violations including minor property maintenance violations. A [Building Permit](#) may include building, grading, plumbing, mechanical and electrical permits. The Borough processes the various permit types required as one total packet. If you have a question about permit requirements for your project, call the Borough Manager at (215) 554.4534.

## **Preliminary Review: Before you apply.**

We encourage you to call the Borough Manager or the Building Inspector before you submit your building permit application. We will answer your questions and let you know if your proposed project is within the Borough's development guidelines. You may be referred to other Borough departments to determine if your project will require Planning or Zoning approvals.

If your project requires approval through a planning or zoning process, you must file a separate application and pay required fees to the specific department. Those fees are separate from the [building permit](#) fees. Planning and zoning approvals must be granted before you can apply for a building permit.

You may also be required to discuss your project with the Fire Department or the Health Department to determine if there will be any special requirements. The Borough Manager may suggest ideas to make the building permit process easier for you. Asking questions prior to making an application may save you processing time. We are glad to take the time to help you – it is part of why we are here.

## **Do You Need to Hire a Professional?**

The Borough is committed to explaining the process as clearly and concisely as possible. Depending on the size and type of your project, you may need the services of a licensed professional. In fact, State law may require that a portion or the entire project be prepared by a licensed architect or engineer. Our advice is to check with the Borough Manager to determine if the services of a licensed professional will be needed.

## **Applying for a Permit**

You may apply for a building permit when your proposed project plans are complete and Planning/Zoning approvals, if required, are granted. To apply you must submit an application packet to the Langhorne Manor Borough Office consisting of:

- ❖ [Permit Application\(s\)](#)
- ❖ The plan review deposit
- ❖ PA State Contractors license(s)
- ❖ Langhorne Manor Borough Contractors license(s)
- ❖ Insurance Certificate(s)
- ❖ Copies of required Signed and Sealed plans
- ❖ Supporting documentation (structural, energy, soils analysis, etc.)

The permit applications are available online at [www.langhornemanor.org](http://www.langhornemanor.org). Click on the "Resident Info" button to get to the Permit application page. The information included on the plans and the number of copies will vary, depending on the specifics of your project. Please choose the appropriate construction permits application(s) that match your scope of work.

Please note you will be required to pay, in most cases, a plan review deposit at the time of application. The entire plan review fee must be paid prior to the review of application documents.

## **The Review Process**

After your application is submitted, the Building Inspector will review your plans and associated documents. Depending on the nature of the project, the review could involve several departments. The Building Inspector will determine compliance with building, plumbing, mechanical, electrical (via a third-party examiner), energy conservation, disabled access compliance, Greenbuild codes, storm water control regulations, flood control, drainage, fire safety requirements, parking and driveway standards and public improvement requirements. The Planning Division will verify compliance with zoning regulations including authorized uses within zoning districts, required parking, and property development standards such as lot coverage, building height, setback, and density requirements. The Utility provider may review for water and waste capacities.

## **Obtaining a Permit: How long will it take?**

The Borough reviews applications on a first-come, first-served basis. However, we are committed to processing your plans as quickly and efficiently as possible. The Borough's goal is to complete the initial plan check within the following time frames upon receipt of a completed application packet:

| <b>Category</b>                                       | <b>Initial Plan Check Time</b> | <b>Project Examples</b>  |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Minor</b> Commercial Projects/Residential Projects | <b>4 weeks</b>                 | Non-structural tenant improvements, residential remodels and additions |
| <b>Moderate</b> Projects                              | <b>6 weeks</b>                 | Structural tenant improvements<br>Changes of occupancy                 |
| <b>Major</b> Projects                                 | <b>8 weeks</b>                 | New single-family homes  |

## **Corrections, Clarifications, and Changes**

The Borough will notify you when the initial plan review for your project is completed. If the plans cannot be approved as submitted, we will provide you with lists of necessary corrections from all departments that reviewed your plans.

Minor corrections can be made on the original plans submitted if approved by the Borough Building Inspector or Borough Manager. However, if major changes are necessary, or if there are numerous corrections, you will be required to correct the base drawings and resubmit copies of the revised plans. Submitting thorough and complete plans initially will help avoid numerous revisions.

When revised plans are submitted, they will be distributed to the departments that generated the initial corrections for subsequent review. Plans submitted for recheck will generally require less processing time than required for the initial check. The Borough's goal is to process revised documents within two weeks for minor projects, three weeks for moderate projects and four weeks for major projects.

## **Issuing the Permit**

After the Borough determines that the plans satisfy all code requirements, you will be notified of the approval and asked to pay all remaining fees and escrows. Upon payment, we will issue a [building permit](#), or building permit packet that may include additional required permits for your project. You can then begin construction.

## **Inspections**

We will inspect your project as work progresses. You will be given a “Building Permit /Inspection Record” card which must be displayed and visible from the street. You must have the inspection card and the approved plans available during all inspections. The card must be signed by an inspector after each phase of your project is completed before you begin the next phase. The Building Inspector will conduct an inspection on any weekday you request, **provided you call 215-322-2626 to request an inspection by at least 24hrs BEFORE you wish the inspection to take place.**

## **Completing Your Project**

From the day your building permit is approved, you are allowed 90 days (three months) to begin the work. Once construction begins, work must be continuous to avoid permit expiration. Any project that is not complete within 90 days (three months) may require renewal of the permits but there is no deadline on completion of the project. When the project is completed, you must obtain approval from all departments listed on the “Building Permit/Inspection Record” card before final inspection by the Building Inspector. With final approval, we will authorize “utility releases” allowing electricity and gas services to be connected and provide a certificate of occupancy, if one is required for your project.

## **Why is the permit process so complex?**

The process of issuing a building permit may seem complex. It involves many Borough departments and outside agencies, and it may include a separate Planning/Zoning process. The Borough is required by law to enforce numerous Federal, State and local construction and development regulations to ensure that your project is safe and is an asset to the community.