ADVISORY NOTICE BUILDING 03/10

Advisory Notices are issued to assist in the interpretation of the Development Act 1993 | August 2010

TECHNICAL:

Moving Houses

Moving existing timber and steel framed houses (and other buildings) has been a common occurrence for many years. A new company has now been established in South Australia that has the ability to move masonry buildings.

This Notice provides guidance, on how to assess buildings that are being moved from one site to another.

DISCUSSION

Most of these buildings have been in existence **and performed satisfactorily** for many years. At the time that they were built they would have complied with the relevant building law (including codes and standards) that was in place. Moving the building does not necessarily change anything in the building itself unless alterations and additions are proposed. It is therefore reasonable to accept that the building generally meets the performance requirements of the BCA.

However, compliance with some current requirements should be considered to the extent necessary, such as:

Footings

The nature of the footings needs to be compatible for the new site. This is unlikely to be a significant issue for fully framed (timber and steel) buildings which have a large amount of ductility. For these buildings, ensuring that there are adequate tie downs is normally all that is necessary. Masonry buildings have adequate tie down capacity but their brittleness means that the potential for soil movement and the ability of the footings to withstand that movement needs to be considered. If the building is being moved to a site having the same soil characteristics as the original site and the building is not showing any signs of distress, then it could reasonably be expected that the footings will perform equally well at the new site. However, if the building were being moved to a site that is much more reactive or the building is already showing some signs of distress, then the footings may need to be supplemented with new work in order to provide a satisfactory level of performance at the new site.

Structural Integrity

The structural integrity of these buildings should be checked before moving. Obvious conditions such as salt attack, termite damage and corrosion can compromise the structural integrity of the building and need to be addressed before attempting to move the building. The process of actually moving the building will impose new loads on the building and provide a good test of the building's structural integrity. Once the move is completed, the building should be inspected for any signs of distress that may indicate hidden structural flaws.

The opportunity should also be taken to consider the earthquake resistance of features such as chimneys, parapets and gables. Other loadings to check for are changed wind loads.

Any significant structural rebuilding will need to comply with current requirements.

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Energy Efficiency

As explained in Advisory Notice 08/10, the energy efficiency may need to be improved to an extent that is reasonable. The first consideration should be orientation as moving the building provides an excellent opportunity to orient it such that the maximum amount of glazing is facing true north.

The level of insulation that can be practically installed should then be investigated. For most buildings it should be possible to gain access to the roof space to install insulation. Framed buildings that are being reclad also provide an opportunity for wall insulation to be added. Re-cladding is often required for framed buildings for occupational health and safety, as any asbestos sheeting must be removed prior to moving.

Enclosing underfloor spaces will improve the energy efficiency effectiveness of the floor and may also be necessary in bushfire risk areas. Opportunities for the sealing of openings should also be investigated.

Wet Areas

Whereas wet areas may be performing satisfactorily in their current location, they are vulnerable to breaking down through the process of moving the building. All wet areas need to be carefully examined and tested once the move has been completed to ensure they do not leak. For shower areas it is often better to install new waterproofing rather than chance a leak.

Fire Safety

For houses, the installation of smoke alarms is reasonable if they are not already there. Depending on circumstances, a hard wired smoke alarm.

If the building is relocated to a designated bushfire prone area it will need to comply with the relevant planning and building requirements.

Access

Access for people with a disability needs to be considered for any public building in relation to the new site.

New Work

Any new work will need to comply with current requirements including ground clearance, external paving, rainwater tank, verandahs, stairs, decks and landings.

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Further information

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