

Seattle Permits

— part of a multi-departmental City of Seattle series on getting a permit

Changing the Professional of Record for a Building Permit Application or Active Permit

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In Seattle, the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) requires that most permit applications be submitted with the seal of a design professional of record, either a licensed architect or structural engineer of record.

Because consultations with the professional of record are frequently necessary at various stages of plan review and construction, SDCI expects that the professional of record who originally stamped the plans will be associated with the project until its completion. This is reflected in the requirements of Section 106.5.2 and 106.5.3 of the Seattle Building Code and successor provisions.

Occasionally there is a need to change the professional of record, either during the plan review process or after permit issuance. Reasons for the change include design business closure, death or illness, disagreements between the owner and designer, and sale of the project to a new owner with a new design team. These can occur at differing points in the project development: during the early phases of the application process with plans needing significant corrections; just before the permit issuance, with no anticipated changes to the plans; or during the construction process, where the need will be to perform shop drawing review. Sometimes a new owner will want to make changes to the original design.

Notification of Change to SDCI

If the original professional of record ceases to be associated with the project, the project owner or owner representative must notify SDCI of that fact in writing. If the professional of record was the contact person for the project, a new contact person must be identified.

If no further involvement by the design professional is required, it will not be necessary for the owner to appoint

a new professional of record. Practically, however, there is almost always a need for plan corrections, design interpretation, design changes, structural observation, or shop drawings associated with a project in process. In these cases, the department will require the identification of the new professional of record to be included in the written SDCI notification.

Review of Plans by New Designer

In order to verify continuity of responsibilities when a new professional of record is named, SDCI will require the owner to include a “document review” in the duties of the new professional of record. This review will result in a letter from the design professional to SDCI stating that he/she has reviewed the original plans and, to the best of his/her abilities and knowledge, the plans, including both the original and effects of the new changes (if any) on the original design, are in general agreement with the intent of the code.

This written notification from the new design professional will not be needed in the case where the original plans will not be used.

Changes in Design

Any changes to the original design must be made under the seal of the new design professional of record. SDCI will not require the new design professional to stamp plans prepared by others. All responses to correction notices and plan review corrections must be from, or approved by, the current design professional of record. When changes to the plans are substantial, a complete new set of plans under the seal of the new professional of record will be required.

SDCI will not become involved in disputes between owners and design professionals. When SDCI is notified that a design professional is no longer associated with a project, project review and/or construction may proceed only to the extent that involvement by a design professional is unnecessary. If questions, issues, or observations require professional participation, a design professional of record will have to be appointed before work can continue.

