



## TEST BEFORE YOU INVEST'S FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING COUNCIL

When it comes to buying or renovating property, a common and completely valid question is: *Can I get approval for what I want to do?*

We completely understand the desire for certainty – particularly when a major purchase or design vision is on the line. However, the reality is that planning and working with Council is not a fixed or formulaic process. Each Council – and in many cases, each planner – brings their own interpretation of the rules. This means there will always be a degree of risk and subjectivity involved.

What you need to know about Council approvals:

- **Each application is assessed on its own merits.** Even if your neighbours have built something similar or you've found other examples in the area, this does not mean Council will automatically approve your proposal. What was permitted previously may have been assessed under different rules or in a different planning context.
- **Legislation and controls evolve.** Just because something was built recently doesn't guarantee it could be approved again today. Council policies, environmental constraints, and political or strategic priorities shift over time.
- **Interpretation varies.** Different councils – and even different planners within the same council – can interpret planning controls differently. This can affect how a proposal is viewed, especially when it comes to more subjective issues like heritage, view impacts, or 'streetscape character'.
- **Preliminary advice is limited.** Council is generally reluctant to offer definitive feedback without the benefit of a full set of drawings and documentation. Even pre-lodgement meetings or written advice usually come with caveats and are not binding.

### Need Personalised Advice? We're Here to Help!

*At Test Before You Invest, we're here to provide clarity – not certainty. While no one can offer a guarantee of approval, our job is to equip you with:*

- *Insight into how your idea aligns (or conflicts) with relevant controls;*
- *A review of precedent and recent approvals to indicate likelihood of support;*
- *Design strategies that minimise planning risk where possible;*
- *Guidance around fallback positions you might consider if approval isn't granted.*

Suite 202, Level 2  
61 Marlborough Street  
Surry Hills, NSW 2010

[www.testbeforeyouinvest.com.au](http://www.testbeforeyouinvest.com.au)  
[info@testbeforeyouinvest.com.au](mailto:info@testbeforeyouinvest.com.au)



*With years of experience across multiple councils and property types, our team applies professional judgement to help you weigh up what's realistic and what risks are involved – so you can make informed decisions about whether to proceed.*

*We know how much is riding on your plans. And while we can't offer a crystal ball, we can offer intelligent advice grounded in knowledge, experience, and care. If you need more certainty before buying or renovating, we recommend speaking with one of our Architects or Town Planners early, to understand the nuances of your site and the pathway to approval.*

*If you require further advice or tailored guidance for your specific situation, feel free to book a consultation with one of our experienced professionals. Our team can provide you with expert insights and practical solutions to ensure you're making the most informed decisions. **Contact us today at [www.testbeforeyouinvest.com.au](http://www.testbeforeyouinvest.com.au) to schedule a consultation.***

#### **Disclaimer**

*Please note, the information provided in this document is general in nature and intended for informational purposes only. It should not be relied upon as legal, financial, or professional advice. Every situation is unique, and regulations may vary depending on the specific circumstances, council jurisdiction, and changes in legislation. We strongly recommend seeking personalised advice from qualified professionals before making any decisions or taking action. Test Before You Invest Pty Ltd and its subsidiaries accept no liability for any loss, damages, or expenses that may arise from relying on the information provided in this document.*