

Access to Building Plans and Records

October 10, 2014

1. Building owners can obtain copies of architectural plans, building permits, occupancy permits, or surveys directly from the Building Division if available. An Access to Information request must be submitted to the City Archives office for all other requests.
2. The Building Division keeps architectural plans for residential properties, and may not have mechanical or electrical plans available.
3. Plans for single family dwellings and smaller projects are kept for 30 years. Plans for major projects are now kept for 40 years. Older plans have been destroyed.
4. If you are not the property owner but have the owner's permission, you can obtain copies of the above directly from the Building Division if you present a letter of permission with the owner's name, address, and phone number that is signed by the building owner. The Building Division may contact the owner directly to confirm this permission. (This includes but is not limited to contractors, lawyers, and parties involved in real estate transactions.)
5. If you do not have the owner's permission, then you must make an Access to Information request for any records. There may be records you will not be given access to.
6. Access to Information requests are made at the City Archives, 235 Vickers St North, or by mail. The request process is covered by the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and is standardized across Ontario.
7. A standard \$5 fee is required for each application under MFIPPA. Other fees may apply, based on search time and copying costs. If no records are available the \$5 fee will not be refunded.
8. Building plans are subject to the Copyright Act. Copyright is held in most cases by the architect or designer who produced the plans. If you intend to construct based on previously submitted building plans you must have permission of the copyright holder. It is your responsibility to obtain permission. The copyright holder may sue for damages if their permission is not obtained.
9. If you need copies of plans or other documents, stamped copies can be provided by the Building Division. You will not be permitted to take photographs or otherwise make your own copies, as these plans and the buildings themselves are subject to the Copyright Act.
10. The copied plans obtained under this process cannot be resubmitted for a new Building Permit.

City Archives (625 2270) – thunderbay.ca/archives

Building Services Division (625 2574)