

LABSS Information Paper STAS/02/V6/2021 Domestic

Partnership Schemes “A Better Way to Build”

Domestic Type Approval

LABSS is at the forefront of delivering national decisions, offering **Partnership Schemes** that provide a consistent, effective assessment and approval service for designers, developers and contractors. LABSS provides various options for these national discussion and decisions.

Options are

- The **Consortia Technical Working Group (CTWG)** will, at the request of applicants, investigate new ideas, wherever they occur.
- **Scottish Type Approval Scheme (STAS)** provides assessments and approvals of designs of standard buildings that are to be constructed in Scotland. All Scottish Local Authority verifiers accept STAS approvals.
- **Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)** provide working in partnership with the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service (SRFS) and Homes for Scotland (H for S) - others will follow.

This Information Paper explains the Scottish Type Approval Scheme (STAS)

If you are a developer who is likely to be building throughout Scotland, then the **Scottish Type Approval Scheme (STAS)** is likely to be useful to you.

What is STAS Domestic Type Approval?

STAS is the Scottish Type Approval Scheme administered by **Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS)** in Scotland's Local Authorities. The scheme has been established to provide:-

- a national method of meeting Building Standards in Scotland,
- designers and contractors with an effective assessment and approval service,
- standard house designs approvals, excluding site specific features, which will be accepted by local authorities throughout Scotland, and
- partnership working between developers and nominated lead authorities to facilitate a one-door approach throughout Scotland.

By following the **STAS** rules and procedures the scheme will provide a national interpretation of the Building Standards for specific standard designs.

What is covered by a STAS Domestic Type Approval?

All dwellings not exceeding four storeys including:-

- bungalows and multi-storey houses,
- flats & maisonettes,
- holiday homes and sheltered homes

are appropriate for Domestic Type Approval, provided the designs are of a repetitive nature suitable for location anywhere in Scotland and are of a type to which the Domestic Technical Handbooks, issued in support of the Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004, apply.

The Domestic Type Approval deals with all elements of structure of the building superstructure under the relevant building standards. The scheme does not cover site-specific issues such as complex or customised foundations due to the wide variety of local ground conditions, external drainage, or other external features such as access arrangements and retaining walls etc. Conventional non-complex foundation arrangements and external drainage specifications can be included.

The scheme is ideally suited to standard types, which are to be repeated across the country, but there is no reason why “one-off designs of an innovative nature which may be replicated, even in part, elsewhere in the country” cannot be approved if appropriate.

The intention of the Domestic Type Approval option is to give comfort to developers and designers that their particular building; element of construction or component has been checked against the specific requirements of the Mandatory Standards issued under the Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004 and the related and supporting Technical Handbooks.

WARNING: This is not a substitute for assessment and test under a UKAS Accredited Test System such as BBA; TRADA; BRE or recognised and accredited Fire Testing Organisations.

On the contrary it would be a normal pre-requisite that such applications or enquiries for Domestic Type Approval would have already been subjected to independent accredited assessment and testing criteria.

Applicants and enquirers should bear these aspects in mind when considering a submission under STAS.

Who can seek approval?

Domestic Type Approval may be obtained by:-

- any organisation or
- any individual designer, developer or builder

who are involved in the preparation of the design and/or the construction of new houses.

How do I submit an application?

A completed application form and a register of the names and type of the houses to be subject to assessment will be submitted by you to the Administrator of the **STAS**. This information must be supported by the submission of the prescribed fee as indicated on the Application Form. If your application is suitable for acceptance under the **STAS**, the Administrator will advise you where to send further information in support of your application.

The Administrator of the **STAS**, following discussion and agreement with yourselves, will appoint a Lead Authority to lead your application and they will be your future point of contact throughout the process. The assessment process will involve a joint team of assessors from the Lead Authority and other checking bodies to jointly appraise your application, but importantly your contact is only with the nominated Lead Authority.

The Lead Authority will contact you;

- to establish a line of communication and
- agree time based performance target between you and the Lead Authority,

Once the plans are approved you will receive a **STAS** certificate for each house type together with a set of approved plans. Certificates are issued through Local Authority Building Standards Scotland (LABSS).

Even after you receive the Type Approval Certificate {**STAS** certificate} the Lead Authority will remain your point of contact for any issues which may arise in respect of matters covered by the certificate. Site-specific

issues are considered under the “normal building warrant process” and any issues arising from site conditions will be dealt with by the receiving authority.

STAS certificates allow those authorities receiving the site specific building warrants to eliminate duplicate assessments on standard building types.

What information needs to be submitted in support of your application?

As with any application for assessment under the Building Standards system supporting information is required. You should provide the following in an electronic format*:-

*If an electronic format is difficult for you, please discuss this with the **STAS** Administrator

To the Administrator:-

- a completed application form together with the prescribed fee, [see Application Form for Fee Levels],
- a register of the names and types of the buildings to be subject to assessment. [This may be completed on the Application Form or may be submitted in a separate sheet].

To the Lead Authority:-

- a register of the names and types of the buildings to be subject to assessment,
- a register of any supporting drawings and specification literature,
- any supporting structural certification [not calculations], and
- any other supporting certification deemed necessary to allow a full assessment to be made, i.e., thermal efficiency, heating installations etc.
- two complete sets of plans.

What is the STAS position in respect of Structural Assessments?

A Statement of Structural Adequacy prepared by a Structural or Civil Engineer (or an SER Ltd Engineer) confirming that the design has been subject to engineering input. You should note that this does not remove the need for a holistic certification of the completed building under the site-specific building warrant process.

What do I do if there is a lack of supporting information when I make the STAS application - reserved matters?

Ideally it is better if all details are submitted with your application but sometimes this is not possible, or it may not suit you at the time. Should this occur, you should discuss with the Lead Authority [or the Administrator if prior to the submission of an application] when confirmation will be provided on the best way forward to deal with such reserved matters. This will, of course, reduce the effectiveness of the certificate but is nevertheless available if needed.

Does the existence of a STAS approval reduce the building warrant fee?

The fee for your **STAS** application does not affect your normal building warrant application fee.

Charges are made for the **STAS** approval.

However, the **STAS** approval can save you money and time as local authorities will spend less time checking plans for a specific project, and thus there will be a reduced need to discuss and seek additional information from you.

The current **STAS** fees list is indicated on the application form and on the LABSS / **STAS** web site. Details of the Scottish local authority statutory national building warrant charges are obtainable from the local authorities and on the LABSS / **STAS** web site at www.labss.org.uk .

What do I need to do when making a building warrant application with a supporting STAS Approval?

When you are ready to make a building warrant application for a specific site, contact the local authority appropriate for the area to obtain the Building Warrant application form (see note (a) below) and return it to them with the following information:-

- a photocopy of your current **STAS** certificate,
- a copy of the variation schedule if relevant (see Guidance Note E – Major and Minor Variations),
- 2 sets of plans which must be true copies of the approved plans stated on the certificate,
- any details/information required to satisfy any reserved matters,
- the correct building warrant fee,
- site specific works not covered by the **STAS** certificate.

NOTES:

- (a) a supply of national building warrant application forms which are accepted by all Scottish local authorities can be obtained free of charge on request from the Authorities
- (b) if you have amended the drawings since the certificate was issued, you should clearly describe the changes with your building warrant application in a covering letter.
- (c) to avoid delays you are advised to ensure that the certificate is attached to the Building Warrant application form.

What checks do the local authorities carry out under the site-specific building warrant procedures?

The local authority will check any reserved matters and any site related issues not included on the certificate, for example, matters such as siting, drains and foundations.

Also, any amendments identified by you will be checked. A **STAS** certificate enables your building warrant application to be processed more quickly and you will not be required to alter any details shown on the type-approved plans.

What is the status of STAS certificate and are there any limitations in its use?

Your **STAS** Certificate is a valuable document so please keep it safe. Using it to make a building warrant application will save you time and money. However, it is **STAS** copyright and can only be used, and is only valid, for building warrant applications to Scottish Local Authorities. It cannot be used for any other purpose.

How long is it valid?

Your Type Approval Certificate remains valid until:-

- any changes of legislation occur,
- any changes in Building Standards occur, or
- any changes in circumstances occur which, in the opinion of the **STAS**, renders the current certificate invalid.

The **STAS** Administrator will advise you when you must make any changes.

NOTE: The Association reserves the right to make a charge for any replacement certificate.

What do I do if I want to amend the certificate?

It is recognised that in time, for various reasons, you may wish to amend a **STAS** approved design, and this is not a problem. If the changes are minimal:-

- you may use the normal application for an amendment of a building warrant procedures through the Scottish local authority in whose area you are actually building the project, or
- you may seek a Variation Schedule through the **STAS**. All you need do is return the certificate with your amended plans and a completed Variations Application Form and Fee to the **STAS** Administrator. **STAS** will finalise the Variation Schedule and return your certificate.

Alternatively, if you prefer, or if the changes are more significant, a separate certificate can be issued. Plans will be required, and, in this case, you will need to give a different reference to the amended house to differentiate it from the original.

NOTE:

The Association reserves the right to make a charge for amending the certificate or issuing a variation schedule. The Administrator can advise you on all prescribed fees.

If I have a complaint – what do I do?

Every effort is made to keep problems to a minimum, but it is recognised that sometimes things can go wrong. You, as the customer, should not be involved in any differences that may arise between the inspecting local authority and the Type approving authority. This will be handled by **STAS**.

In the unlikely event that you do not agree with the assessment made when your application is first appraised, you have the right to appeal to Local Authority Building Standards Scotland who will ensure that your case is heard, and a decision is reached within ten days. You can initially telephone the **STAS** Administrator, but you must also put your complaint in writing.

What can STAS do for you?

STAS offers significant benefits for major clients commissioning complex developments that include standard elements.

Retail developments, shell fit outs, restaurants, hotels, leisure facilities, warehousing, office buildings and industrial units all frequently incorporate standard design elements within the overall scheme. A **STAS** certificate for standard details will speed up the approval process and ensure that your project progresses more rapidly.

Depending on the nature of your project you may wish to use either the House Builders (Domestic Type Approval), or Industrial/Commercial Developers (Non-Domestic Type Approval).

We are committed to offering every assistance to make the application and approval system as quick and easy as possible – including providing a single point of contact for you.

What are the benefits?

The Scottish Type Approval Scheme is your guarantee of:-

- consistent interpretation of building standards,
- a fast track through building standards approval,
- an agreed time based performance target between you and the Lead Authority,
- a single point of contact with building standards authorities,
- confidence in a design checked by **STAS**,
- checks by the local authority will be confined to site related matters

If I have further questions, where do I go?

If you would like to know more about the **STAS** described in this brochure, you can contact the LABSS Technical Director at labss@labss2018.onmicrosoft.com or the **STAS** Administrator direct on bob.renton@labss2018.onmicrosoft.com or visit our web site www.labss.org