

## Background

Where a new development is proposed to be connected to our sewer and/or water network, the property owner (or representative) must apply for *Conditions of Connection* before connection to our assets.

When an application to connect is lodged via our PropertyConnect® portal, the application is assessed, and *Conditions of Connection* are issued to the applicant in the form of a Notice of Agreement. The Agreement will include any fees relevant to the application.

Once the applicable fees are paid, a *Consent to Connect* can be issued to the applicant, usually within 24 hours (*Consent to Connect* is also known as a PIC number). If works are required to enable a future connection, such as construction of new sewer or water assets, *Consent to Connect* cannot be issued until such works are completed. The delay caused by pending works may create difficulties for the plumbers – who cannot offer drains for inspection to the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) in accordance with *Section 221ZP Building Act 1993 without a Consent to Connect (PIC) number*.

To help facilitate the commencement of site sewer drainage works and allow plumbers to offer drains for inspection to the VBA, the plumber may apply to South East Water for a Test Prior.



## Test Priors

The term “Test Prior” originates from “Test prior to consent being issued”, when the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works was the responsible authority.

If *Consent to Connect* can't be provided by South East Water due to the unavailability of services at the early stage of new development, or due to extended application wait times, the plumber may be able to proceed with sewer drainage work at the site, provided the development is deemed suitable for a Test Prior.

The plumber can apply for a Test Prior by contacting the South East Water Customer Contact Centre on 9552 3770. Where a Test Prior is approved, a Test Prior fee will apply.

We will assess Test Prior suitability, considering these key points:

- Has a full and comprehensive application been lodged and assessed by South East Water?
- Does the development pose a Buildover or damage risk to South East Water assets?
- Would the granting of a Test Prior, and the subsequent commencement of construction, hinder or prevent South East Water's ability to access or construct assets to service the development?

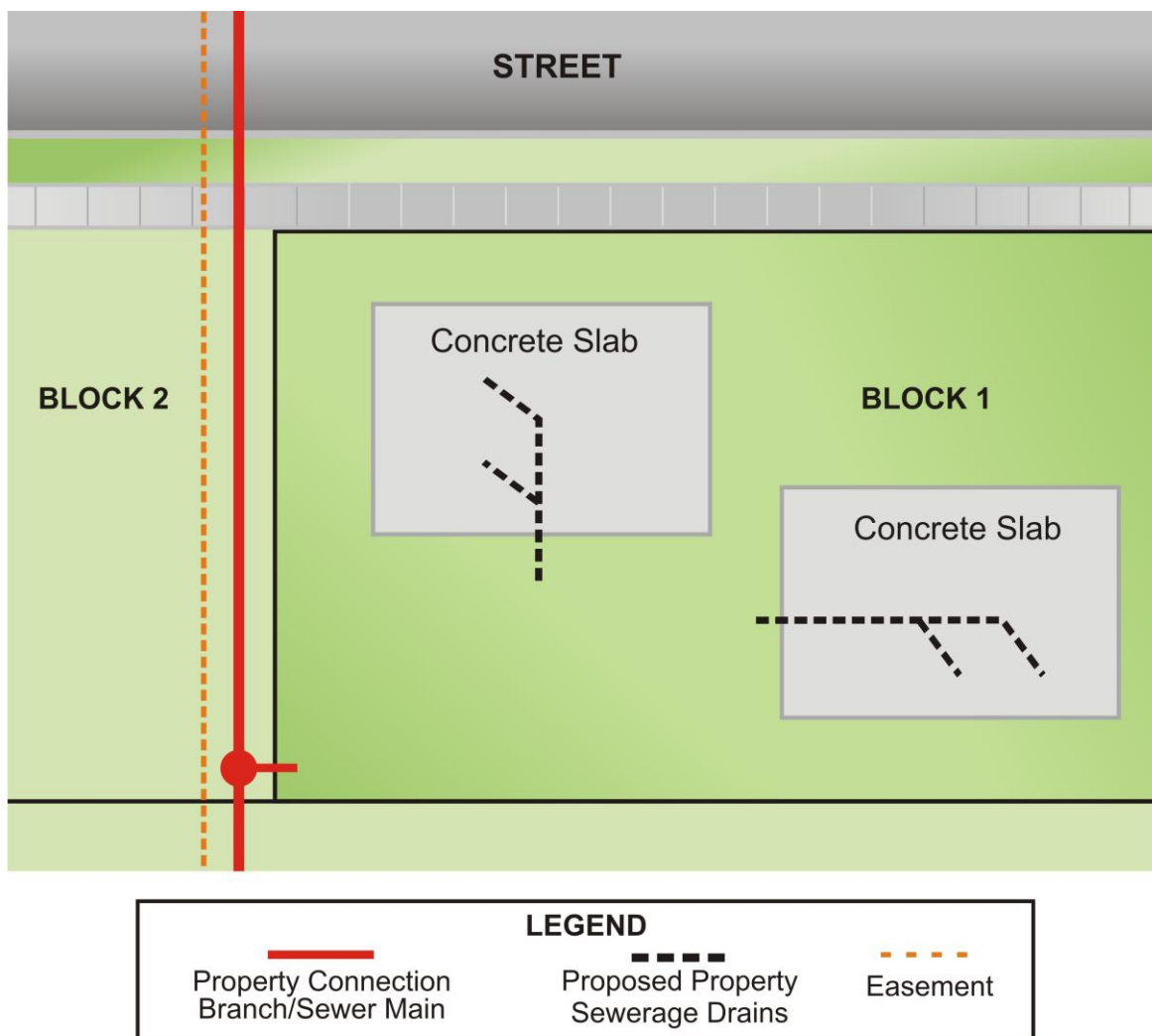
- Is the servicing strategy for water and sewer in line with South East Water requirements?

Where the assessment shows that a Test Prior can be issued, the applicant will be provided with and asked to complete a Test Prior application form. Once this form is completed and returned to South East Water with the applicable fee, South East Water will email the VBA advising of the Test Prior approval, and the number of drainage inspections requested by the plumber.

## What works can I carry out under a Test Prior?

Test Prior approval is only provided to allow under slab works to proceed, unless otherwise requested by the applicant and approved by South East Water.

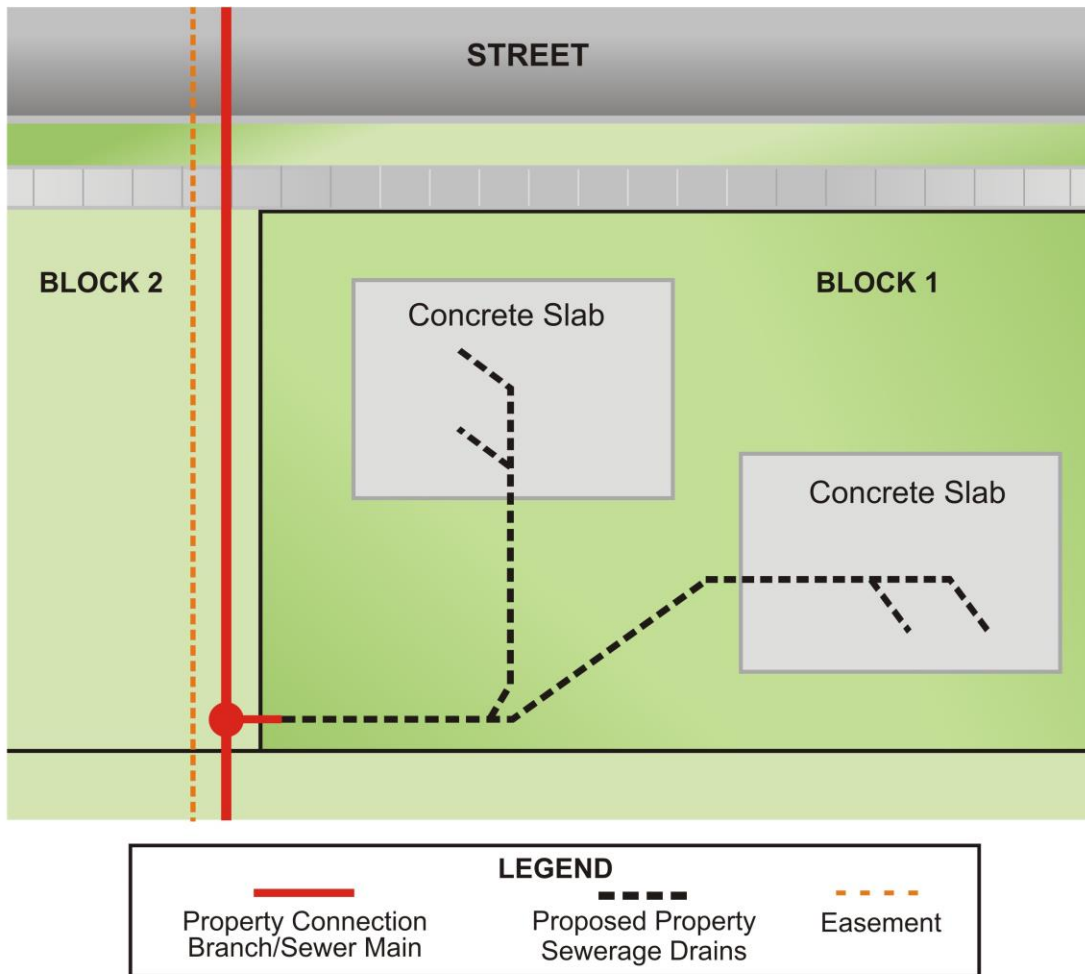
## Works typically carried out under a Test Prior



Connection to the South East Water Property Connection Branch (PCB) at this stage is prohibited. Where such a connection occurs, South East Water will arrange disconnection of the illegal connection, with any costs charged to the property owner or their representative.

Once Consent to Connect has been issued, final connection works to the PCB can be completed by the plumber.

## Connection to PCB after Consent to Connect issued



## FAQs

- Test Priors are not available for all developments. South East Water allows Test Priors where it is assessed as suitable, however a Test Prior is not a substitute for lodging an application in a timely manner
- Utilising a Test Prior does incur risk for the property owner/plumber. As the sewer main or PCB has not yet been constructed, the plumber does not yet know what the final invert level will be for the new drainage connection. When applying for a Test Prior, the plumber and property owner must accept the risk that any drains laid before the sewer main or PCB is constructed may not be at a level that allows a gravity connection
- As no PIC number has been issued, the plumber will need to book the Test Prior inspection by contacting the VBA Audit Department via email ([testprior@vba.vic.gov.au](mailto:testprior@vba.vic.gov.au)) or 1300 108112.

## Need to get in touch?

You can request further information through our Customer Contact Centre: 9552 3770