

28th November 2025

**+ BOWMER
KIRKLAND**

**Experience of the
Gateway 2 Process**

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Objectives

- Understand Gateway 2's context & role
- Understand Gateway 2's timeline
- Overview Castle Leazes Project
- Understand Gateway 2 timeline
- Level of information required
- BSR process and team makeup
- Obstacles for design teams
- B+K's experience of navigating the above on our Castle Leazes project

Regulatory Context & Definitions

Building Safety Act 2022 (BSA) established the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) to regulate Higher-Risk Buildings (HRB's) in England and monitor the performance of Building Control bodies generally.

HRB's are defined as:

- Buildings that are at least 18m high or 7 storeys AND contain at least two residential units
- Typically, this can apply to apartments, student accommodation, care homes or hospitals meeting the above. New build prisons and hotels exempt.

System of Gateway approval established:

- Gateway 1 Planning – requiring submission of a Fire Statement with the planning application
- **Gateway 2 Building Control Approval – requiring submission of sufficient design information**
- Gateway 3 Completion – requires validation of construction during handover and prior to occupation

Where Does Gateway 2 Fit?

The process of gaining Building Safety Regulator approval **BEFORE** construction starts:

- Focus on fire & structural safety compliance
- Ensures design meets the functional requirements of the Building Regulations throughout
- Requires designers and contractors to declare and provide evidence of competence
- Requires project teams to provide strategies for managing:
 - The construction phase
 - Change control
 - Mandatory occurrence (MOR) reporting of safety incidents
 - Development of the 'Golden Thread' of safety information

Castle Leazes



Project Team

- Client – Joint venture between Newcastle University and Unite Students
- Principal Contractor – B+K
- Architect and BR Principal Designer – NORR
- Structural and Civil Engineer – Billingham George & Partners
- MEP Consultant – JH Partners
- Building Safety Design Advisor – Safer Sphere
- Fire Engineer - Hydrock
- Acoustic Engineer – Apex Acoustics
- Landscape Architect – Southern Green
- Specialist designers – Walker Modular, Kone, Keyclad, JD Pierce, Dane Architecture, Aarsleff, Greenleaf, Cairnhill, Northern Steel Decking, Stephenson Group, Beals

Existing Castle Leazes Site

- Existing Castle Leazes site housed 1250 student bedrooms over 17no. Accommodation blocks
- Majority of the existing buildings were opened in the 1960's and were no longer fit for purpose
- Newcastle University had a requirement to increase student beds
- Requirement for more modern and diverse room types
- Demolition of existing student accommodation buildings during 2024 and 2025



Proposed Castle Leazes Site

- New build provision of 2011 student beds spread over two new buildings
- New areas of public realm and landscaping
- New blocks are 9 storeys with the highest floor being 25.5m
- Intention to have the site open for 2028/2029 academic year – site start necessary during November 2025 to achieve this
- Value £240 million



BSR Gateway 2 Process

- Submission of design information for each section of the Building Regulations
- Validation and confirmation of BSR Regulatory Lead
- Technical assessment by Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT)
- Consultations between project team, Regulatory Lead and MDT
- Determination (approve/refuse/more info)
- Post-approval controls – design requirements and site inspection

BSR Team Makeup

Once validated BSR appoint a Regulatory Lead to oversee Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) reviewing the submission.

MDT includes:

- Registered Building Inspector (Local Building Control Officer)
- Fire engineer
- Structural engineer
- Facade/MEP specialists if required
- Central Innovation Unit introduced for batching assessments

Statutory Gateway 2 Timeline

- New Build HRB Application Approval - 12 weeks
- Existing/Remediation Application Approval - 8 weeks
- Current industry reporting is 36 weeks average
- 15% of applications approved within statutory period

Obstacles for Design Teams

- Insufficient design maturity
- High invalidation rates
- Evolving guidance
- Information inconsistency
- Capacity issues within BSR
- Competence evidence confusion

Castle Leazes Phase 1 Timeline

- Stage 4 design commenced June 2024
- Initial strategy was to run the design of both buildings together, but this became cumbersome for designers – decision made to split into two phases with separate applications
- Phase 1 submitted 21st February 2025 and confirmed valid on 26th February
- No further correspondence with BSR until 14th May when Regulatory Lead confirmed.
- Two further changes in Regulatory Lead during July and August.
- First feedback on submission received at end of July.
- From August onwards we started to receive regular updates and meetings were held with the MDT through September and October.
- Phase 1 approved 23rd October 2025
- Approval period 35 weeks

Castle Leazes Phase 2 Timeline

- Phase 2 submitted 11th July 2025.
- Same MDT and Regulatory Lead progressing application.
- Hope to have approval at end of year (approx. 23 weeks if achieved).

Design Maturity Required

It is expected that a minimum of RIBA Stage 4 design is submitted demonstrating:

- Coordinated arch/struct/fire/MEP design
- Clear evidence of Building Regulations compliance – clearly stated on drawings, designer statements and reports, calculations where required
- Early Golden Thread structure – how the design team intend to manage information and where it will be stored and provided to the end user
- Submission of the projects Change Control Strategy – the process of logging change (minor, notifiable and major)
- Feedback from within B+K Group and Safer Sphere as well as examples of feedback from other BSR Gateway 2 submissions received – very in depth!
- We took decision to submit Stage 5 level design to ensure that we had the greatest chance of approval

Key Documentation

Castle Leazes Submission:

- Client Authorisation
- Designer and Contractor Competency Records
- Construction Control Plan
- Fire and Emergency File
- Mandatory Occurrence Reporting Plan
- Change Control Plan
- Design Information – Architect, Structural, Civil, Landscape, MEP and specialist design packages

Implications for Programme

Longer pre-construction phase:

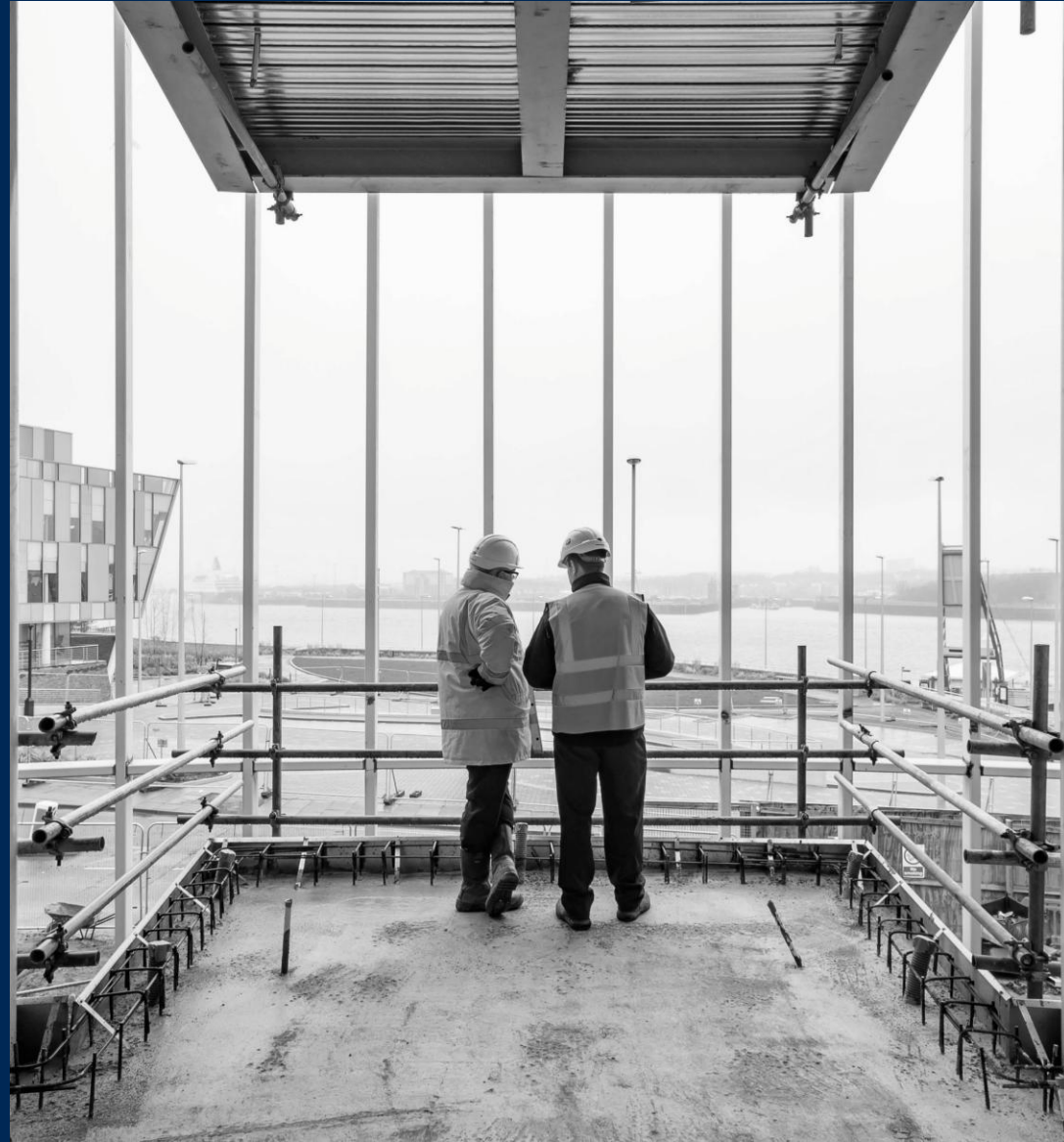
- Early contractor engagement critical to coordinate key packages and formulate Construction Control Plan
- Two-stage procurement for CDP packages i.e. design stage then contract works
- Client education critical – requirement to spend more up front on design @ Castle Leazes this amounted to over £2 million in up front design fees including specialist sub-contractors

Key Takeaways

Gateway 2 = critical safety gate:

- Requires mature, coordinated design
- Needs early planning and design freeze discipline
- BSR multidisciplinary assessment process is more robust than traditional Building Regulations plan checking process
- High rejection & delay rates – although this is improving
- Strong information management essential to support Golden Thread

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Thank You
