CITY OF FOLSOM
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/ENGINEERING DIVISION
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CUSTOM HOME BUILDER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

For comprehensive information, please refer to the *"Guide to Permits for Residential Projects and Additions"* and other handouts in the *Custom Home Builder Packet*, available at the Community Development counter.

Design Criteria

Question 1: What are the current applicable design codes?

Answer 1: The 2007 editions of the California Building, Electrical, Fire, Mechanical & Plumbing Codes (*CBC, CEC, CFC, CMC & CPC*) and the 2005 California Energy Standards.

Question 2: What is the minimum roof live load?

Answer 2: 20 psf per *2007 CBC Table 1607.1* (reducible for roof slope).

Question 3: Is there an applicable snow design load?

Answer 3: No.

Question 4: What is the minimum design wind speed and wind exposure?

Answer 4: 85 mph wind speed (3 second gust), and exposure "C" unless observation by the registered design professional can justify exposure "B".

Question 5: What is the applicable seismic design category?

Answer 5: Seismic Design Category "D".

Architects, Engineers & Designers

Question 6: Is a licensed architect required to design a custom home?

Answer 6: No. An unregistered individual with the appropriate expertise may prepare plans, drawings and specifications of single-family dwellings of wood frame construction not more than two stories and basement in height.

If any portion of the single-family dwelling deviates from substantial compliance with the conventional framing requirements for wood frame construction (i.e. *2007 CBC §2308*), the preparation of plans, drawings, specifications and calculations for that portion shall be provided under the direct supervision of a California registered civil engineer or California licensed architect.

Question 7: Are structural calculations required on all custom homes?

Answer 7: No. Structural calculations are only required when the building or portions thereof **do not** substantially comply with the conventional framing requirements for wood frame construction. Most custom homes require some structural calculations for structural elements such as roof beams, floor joists & beams, posts, footings, shear walls and their elements, metal plate connected wood trusses, etc.

Question 8: Who may perform the structural calculations and stamp/sign the drawings?

Answer 8: A California registered civil engineer, structural engineer or a California licensed architect.

Question 9: Can the City of Folsom recommend an architect, engineer or a building designer?

Answer 9: No, but you may want to refer to the *"Consumer's Guide to Hiring an Architect"* at www.cab.ca.gov or *"Consumer Guide to Professional Engineering and Professional Land Surveying"* at www.dca.ca.gov/pels.

Architectural Review Submittal

Question 10: My plans have been approved through the neighborhood association. Is a separate submittal required to the City of Folsom?

Answer 10: Yes, a separate submittal is required to the City of Folsom Architectural Review Commission (ARC) or the Historic District Commission (HDC) for homes within the historic area of Folsom. Refer to the *Custom Home Builder Packet* for more information.

Question 11: What is required for submittal to the City of Folsom ARC (or HDC)?

Answer 11: Completed and signed application form, application fee of $54.00, site plan / grading plan (1 set), building elevations (1 set), material samples and color board, photograph of lot, and other materials and information as requested by the Commission. The size, location, and species, of existing trees must be indicated on the site plan and or grading plan. Refer to the *"Architectural Review Submittal Requirements"* handout in the *Custom Home Builder Packet* for more information.

Question 12: When does the City of Folsom ARC meet?

Answer 12: The Architectural Review Commission generally meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at 7:30 am in the City Council Chambers. In order for your project to be placed on the next ARC meeting agenda, applications must be received by 5:00 pm on the Wednesday one week prior to the meeting date. Hearing dates and submittal deadlines are subject to change. Dates may be verified by calling the Planning Counter at (916) 355-7214.

Question 13: When does the City of Folsom HDC meet?

Answer 13: The Historic District Commission generally meets on the third Wednesday of each month at 5:00 pm in the City Council Chambers. Applications must be received, assigned and reviewed by a Planner before it can be scheduled to appear before HDC. Hearing dates are subject to change. Dates may be verified by calling the Planning Counter at (916) 355-7214.

Fire Sprinklers

Question 14: When are fire sprinklers required for a custom home?

Answer 14: An approved automatic fire sprinkler system shall be installed within all new one- and two-family residential buildings when the total covered floor area exceeds 6,999 sq. ft. or the total interior floor area, excluding garages, exceeds 4,999 sq. ft.

Grading Plans

Question 15: What is the difference between a site plan and a grading plan?

Answer 15: The site plan and the grading plan are the same. The information required to be shown on the grading plan is required to be shown on the site plan. Refer to the answer to Question 17 below for grading plan requirements.

Question 16: What information is required to be on a grading plan?

Answer 16: Refer to the grading plan handouts within the *Custom Home Builder Packet*, which detail all the requirements. In general, grading plans shall include both existing and proposed topography at one-foot intervals, lot corner descriptions and elevations, the location of the proposed house and any other habitable structures, location and profile of the proposed driveway, setbacks, existing trees and tree

protection zones, existing easements, lot drainage features, standard notes, cut, fill and import/export quantities in cubic yards, water, sewer and utility services and connections, pad and finished floor elevations, site retaining wall construction details including wall heights, cross-sections and dimensions to structures, property lines, drainage features and fences. Grading plans shall be drawn at a minimum scale of 1-inch equals 20 feet.

Question 17: Can a building designer or licensed architect prepare the grading plan?

Answer 17: Most grading plans are required to be prepared by a California registered civil engineer. There are a few exceptions where building designers or licensed architects may prepare a grading plan. These exceptions are in cases where there is minimal grading on the lot and where the grading will consist of the installation of minor drainage swales. Please refer to Sections 6731 and 6735 of the Business and Professional Code for the State of California for grading plan preparation requirements for further information. The engineer or architect, if applicable, is required to stamp and sign the grading plan. Trunk locations and base elevations of existing trees shall be determined by a California registered civil engineer or licensed land surveyor.

Question 18: I am building a custom home on a "flat" or "pad-graded" lot; do I need to submit a grading plan?

Answer 18: If your lot is a "flat" or "pad-graded" lot, and the lot will utilize previously constructed drainage swales, then a grading plan and a grading permit are not required. However, drainage patterns shall still be shown on the grading plan. If your lot is generally flat but is not a "pad-graded" lot then a grading plan is required so that changes in drainage patterns resulting from minor grading of the lot can be analyzed.

Question 19: Can I submit architectural building plans without including a grading plan, and submit the grading plans later?

Answer 19: No. The grading of a lot can significantly affect the foundation of the home and may require additional structures such as retaining walls. Grading plans are required to be submitted **and** coordinated with the architectural and structural plans at time of building plan review submittal.

Question 20: Can I obtain a grading plan approval prior to obtaining a building permit for my custom home?

Answer 20: Yes. Grading plan approval is required prior to issuance of a building permit for a custom home.

Question 21: Can I begin grading on my custom home lot prior to issuance of a building permit for my custom home?

Answer 21: Yes, if you have a valid grading permit. The City requires the grading on the custom home lot be completed prior to issuance of your building permit. The City has an itemized list of requirements in the *"Requirements for Building Permit Issuance for Custom Homes"* form, which are required to be completed prior to issuance of a building permit. This form is included in the *Custom Home Builder Packet* available from the Community Development Department offices at 50 Natoma Street or on the City's website at http://www.folsom.ca.us/depts/community_development/downloads/custom_home_packet.asp.

Question 22: Can I construct site retaining walls which are shown on my grading plan prior to obtaining my building permit for my custom home?

Answer 22: Yes. Site retaining walls will be reviewed and approved by the Community Development Department concurrently with the review and approval of the grading plan. If site retaining walls shown on the grading plan require a building permit, a separate building permit(s) for the retaining wall(s) will be required to be approved concurrently with approval of the grading plan. Please refer to the City's handout "*Retaining Walls, A Guide for Owners and Builders*" for retaining wall requirements. This handout is available from the Community Development Department offices at 50 Natoma Street or on the City's website at http://www.folsom.ca.us/depts/community_development/downloads/custom_home_packet.asp.

Question 23: Do I need to obtain a grading permit with my grading plan approval?

Answer 23: Yes. All grading plan approvals, regardless of the amount of excavation, fill, and import/export in cubic yards, will require the issuance of a grading permit. Grading permit applications may be obtained from the Community Development Department offices at 50 Natoma Street or on the City's website at http://www.folsom.ca.us/depts/community_development/downloads/custom_home_packet.asp.

Question 24: Can I obtain a grading plan approval and a grading permit prior to submitting my building permit application for my custom home?

Answer 24: No. Grading plans will not be approved and grading permits will not be issued on a custom lot until the application for a building permit for a custom home has been submitted to the City.

Question 25: Are there other permits required to be obtained with the grading plan approval and grading permit issuance for my custom home?

Answer 25: Yes. There are other permits which may be required to be obtained together with the grading permit. These permits include retaining wall building permits (see Question 22), tree permits, pool permits, and encroachment permits. If required, these permits are required to be issued concurrently with the issuance of a grading permit for your custom home. Tree permit applications are available from the Community Development Department Planning Division office at 50 Natoma Street. Encroachment permit applications are available from the Community Development Department Engineering Division at 50 Natoma Street or on the City's website at http://www.folsom.ca.us/depts/community_development/downloads/custom_home_packet.asp.

Question 26: Can I import fill material to my custom home lot prior to obtaining a grading permit?

Answer 26: No. Fill material is not permitted to be placed on your lot until you have obtained grading plan approval and you have obtained a grading permit for your lot from the City.

Question 27: Can I place export material from my lot on another lot once I have been issued a grading permit for my lot from the City?

Answer 27: No. Export material from your lot is not permitted to be placed on another lot in the City of Folsom unless the owner of the other lot has a valid grading permit issued by the City of Folsom.

Question 28: My lot is a "no-grade", "sheet flow" drainage lot. Can I continue to drain my lot onto my neighbors' lot(s)?

Answer 28: Probably not. As a result of flooding problems in some neighborhoods, drainage is evaluated very carefully. Although it is desirable to avoid drainage from one lot to another, there may be situations where this is unavoidable. In such cases, drainage flows must be maintained in the same direction and manner that existed prior to development (i.e. sheet flow). City staff needs to review and approve site grading **and** drainage as part of the building permit or as a separate grading permit.

Question 29: If I have additional grading questions, whom should I call?

Answer 29: The Engineering staff of the Community Development Department is available to answer any grading or drainage related questions. They can be reached at (916) 355-7222.

Building Plan Review

Question 30: When can the construction / building plans be submitted for plan review?

Answer 30: Plans may be submitted concurrently or after submittal to the City of Folsom ARC. For custom homes within the Historic District, HDC approval must be obtained prior to submitting for building plan review.

Question 31: What fees are due at time of submittal for building plan review?

Answer 31: Only the building plan check fee, which is determined by the counter staff is due at time of submittal. The plan check fee is equal to 80% of the building permit fee, which is determined by the valuation of the construction. The plan check fee can be estimated using the *"Building Permit Fee Calculations"* handout in the *Custom Home Builder Packet* available at the Community Development Department's offices at 50 Natoma St. or on the City's website at http://www.folsom.ca.us/depts/community_development/downloads/custom_home_packet.asp, or by contacting our Building Counter staff at (916) 351-3555.

Question 32: When will the balance of fees be due?

Answer 32: When the plans are approved and ready for permit issuance.

Question 33: What and how many documents are required?

Answer 33: Typically, **three sets** of complete building plans, structural calculations, metal-plate connected wood truss calculations (if applicable), energy calculations (Title 24), electrical load calculations and manufacturers' specifications for roof tile, gas fireplaces, etc. Refer to the *"Document Submittal List"* handout in the *Custom Home Builder Packet* for more complete information.

Question 34: How long will the building plan review process take?

Answer 34: The first plan review usually takes from 20 to 25 working days to complete. All additional plan reviews are usually completed from 10 to 15 working days. Please be aware that these time lines do not include the time that may be required by the building designer and or engineer/architect to fully respond to the plan review comments. Most custom home plans are approved on or before the third submittal.

Question 35: My contractor is recommending that we submit for plan review even though the plans are not complete. He says that way we can receive a "punch list" of required items on the first plan review. Is that acceptable?

Answer 35: No. Only complete submittals (i.e. plans, structural calculations, energy calculations, etc.) may be submitted for plan review. Refer to the "*Plan Check Submittal Check List for New Residential"* handout in the *Custom Home Builder Packet* available from the Community Development Department's offices at 50 Natoma St. or on the City's website at http://www.folsom.ca.us/depts/community_development/downloads/custom_home_packet.asp. Any plans determined to be incomplete will be returned to the applicant and will result in further delays. The next submittal will count as the first plan review with a plan review turnaround time of 20 to 25 working days.

Question 36: How will I know when my plan review is complete or when the plans have been approved and are ready for permit?

Answer 36: The Plans & Permits Coordinator will contact the individual noted as the "applicant" on the permit application at the completion of each plan review and when plans are approved and ready for permit issuance. You may call (916) 355-7390 for a status on your plan review after 20 working days for the first review, and after 10 working days for all subsequent reviews.

Question 37: When using metal plate connected wood trusses, can these be treated as a deferred submittal, per *2007 CBC §106.3.4.2*, and be submitted after the permit is issued?

Answer 37: No, the City of Folsom requires that all metal plate connected wood trusses be submitted prior to the plan approval for building permit issuance. The truss supplier's layout must be coordinated with the appropriate framing plan and the truss calculations must be reviewed and approved by the engineer (or architect) of record before submittal.

Question 38: We have decided to switch to metal plate connected wood trusses in lieu of conventional roof framing (i.e. roof rafters, ceiling joists, purlins, struts, etc.). Is it necessary to revise the plans to reflect this change in framing?

Answer 38: Yes. Any change in the roof framing system can significantly affect the supporting framing. As a minimum, the roof framing plan must be revised and coordinated with the truss suppliers layout. Floor framing and/or foundation plans must be revised as determined by the registered design professional.

Question 39: I have not received approved plans or a building permit; can we begin trenching for foundations?

Answer 39: No. A valid building permit is required before any work begins, including the excavation of building foundations.

Question 40: Does the City of Folsom issue "Foundation Only" permits for custom homes?

Answer 40: No. "Foundation Only" permits are not available.

Building Permit

Question 41: My custom home plans have been approved. What fees will be due when I pick up the approved plans and permit?

Answer 41: The building permit fee, SMIP fee, business license fee, school mitigation fee, general plan update fee and impact fees obtained from the *"Schedule for Building Permit Fees"* worksheets on file by subdivision with the Community Development Department.

Question 42: What fees are not collected by the City of Folsom?

Answer 42: School fees are determined and collected by the School District. Just prior to permit issuance, a school form may be obtained from the building counter staff. Prior to permit issuance, the school form shall be taken to the School District office and fees paid, returning the pink copy of the school form to our building counter staff. All custom home lots in American River Canyon will obtain water service and pay related fees to San Juan Water District. Contact San Juan Water District to obtain a "will serve application". A copy of the approved application shall be submitted to the building counter staff prior to issuance of the building permit.

Encroachment Permit

Question 43: Is an encroachment permit required for a custom home?

Answer 43: Yes, an encroachment permit is required when the access to the custom lot is by way of a private street. Water and sanitary sewer connections to publicly owned and maintained water and sanitary sewer mains require an encroachment permit.

Question 44: How much is an encroachment permit?

Answer 44: $118 plus $1.71/Sq. Ft. plus a minimum $500 refundable deposit. The deposit is refunded after the final inspection is approved. Please refer to the *"Encroachment Permit Minimum Requirements"* handout for more information on encroachment permits.

Question 45: When is the encroachment permit issued?

Answer 45: The encroachment permit is issued at the same time as the grading permit.