



Applicant's Guide to Submitting
Accessory Dwelling Unit Applications

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT – PLANNING DIVISION

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This Guide was created for informational purposes only. If there is any conflict between the information in this Guide and the regulations found in the Lake Forest Municipal Code, the Lake Forest Municipal Code shall prevail.



Introduction

WHAT IS AN ADU

An **Accessory Dwelling Unit**, or **ADU**, is a residential unit that is either attached to, detached from, or converted from existing space in a primary residential dwelling unit. An ADU provides complete independent living facilities from those in the primary residential dwelling, creating a full, separate standalone unit. These independent living facilities include provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation fully within the ADU.

A **Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit**, or **JADU**, is a type of ADU that has special regulations. A JADU is typically smaller than a standard ADU and must meet the following requirements:

- Only allowed on properties developed with a single-family residence.
- Must be converted from existing space within the single-family residence.
- Limited to a maximum of 500 sq. ft.
- Must include separate sanitation facilities or share sanitation facilities with the single-family residence with interior access.
- Provide an efficiency kitchen, at a minimum.

WHERE ARE ADU'S PERMITTED

In accordance with State Law, ADU's are allowed on all single-family and multifamily residential properties. JADU's are only allowed on single-family lots.

Types of ADU's (Graphics)



DETACHED

Free-standing structure.



ATTACHED

Shares at least one wall with the primary house.



GARAGE CONVERSION

Converted former garage space.



INTERIOR CONVERSION

Converted from existing space within the primary house, such as an attic.

Application Filing

HOW IS AN APPLICATION FILED

All ADU Permit applications must be submitted in person at City Hall, 100 Civic Center Drive, Lake Forest, CA 92630, at the Building and Planning Counter during regular business hours as follows:

- **Monday:** 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- **Tuesday:** 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- **Wednesday:** 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
- **Thursday:** 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- **Friday:** 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

What is required for an application?

SUBMITTAL DOCUMENTS

The following checklist can be used as a guide to ensure your application package has the necessary information for a successful submittal:

- ☐ ADU Address has been assigned and is used on all plan drawings and applications.
- ☐ Completed ADU Permit Application.
- ☐ Completed Building Permit Application.
- ☐ Three (3) printed full-size, fully dimensioned, to scale project plans.
- ☐ One (1) digital set of plans in PDF format provided on a flash drive.
- ☐ Two (2) sets of supporting documents (i.e. Structural calculations).
- ☐ Copy of Homeowners Association approval, as applicable.

INFORMATION REQUIRED ON PLANS

The plan drawings must contain the following information:

I. A title sheet containing:

- ☐ **Applicable Codes:** 2025 CA Building Code, 2025 CA Plumbing Code, 2025 CA Mechanical Code, 2025 CA Electrical Code, 2025, CA Residential Code, and 2025 CA Green Building Code.
- ☐ **Building Code Data:** Occupancy Group (e.g. R3 – Residence; U – Garage), Type of Construction (e.g. V-B, including fire sprinklers).
- ☐ Zoning designation.
- ☐ ADU/JADU Address and Primary Dwelling Address



- ☐ Floor area breakdown by area and floor, including new and existing square footage (e.g. existing first floor sq. ft.; existing second floor sq. ft.; existing garage sq. ft.; proposed ADU sq. ft.).
- ☐ Number of stories.
- ☐ Project contacts, including property owner, architect, contractor, engineer, and any other persons applicable.
- ☐ Project vicinity map.
- ☐ Project map showing walking distance to the nearest transit stop (Only for Class 2 ADU's).
- ☐ Detailed scope of work.
- ☐ Sheet index.
- ☐ Flood Zone designation, if applicable
- ☐ General notes.

II. A plot plan/site plan containing:

- ☐ Legal description and site address.
- ☐ Property lines of the building site and their dimensions.
- ☐ Location of all new and existing fences/fence walls, labeled accordingly.
- ☐ Location and size of all structures existing and proposed relative to the property lines and other structures.
- ☐ Setbacks from all property lines to the proposed structure.
- ☐ Location of street(s) relative to the project site, including street name.
- ☐ Location of required parking, including dimensions, as applicable.
- ☐ North arrow.
- ☐ Scale.
- ☐ Drainage 2% away from structure for 3 feet then minimum 1% to front of property line or drainage basin.
- ☐ All easements encumbering the property.

III. Foundation plan and details:

- ☐ Footing sizes and reinforcing.
- ☐ Slab thickness, reinforcing and moisture barrier, if required.
- ☐ Locations and sizes of holdowns anchor bolts.

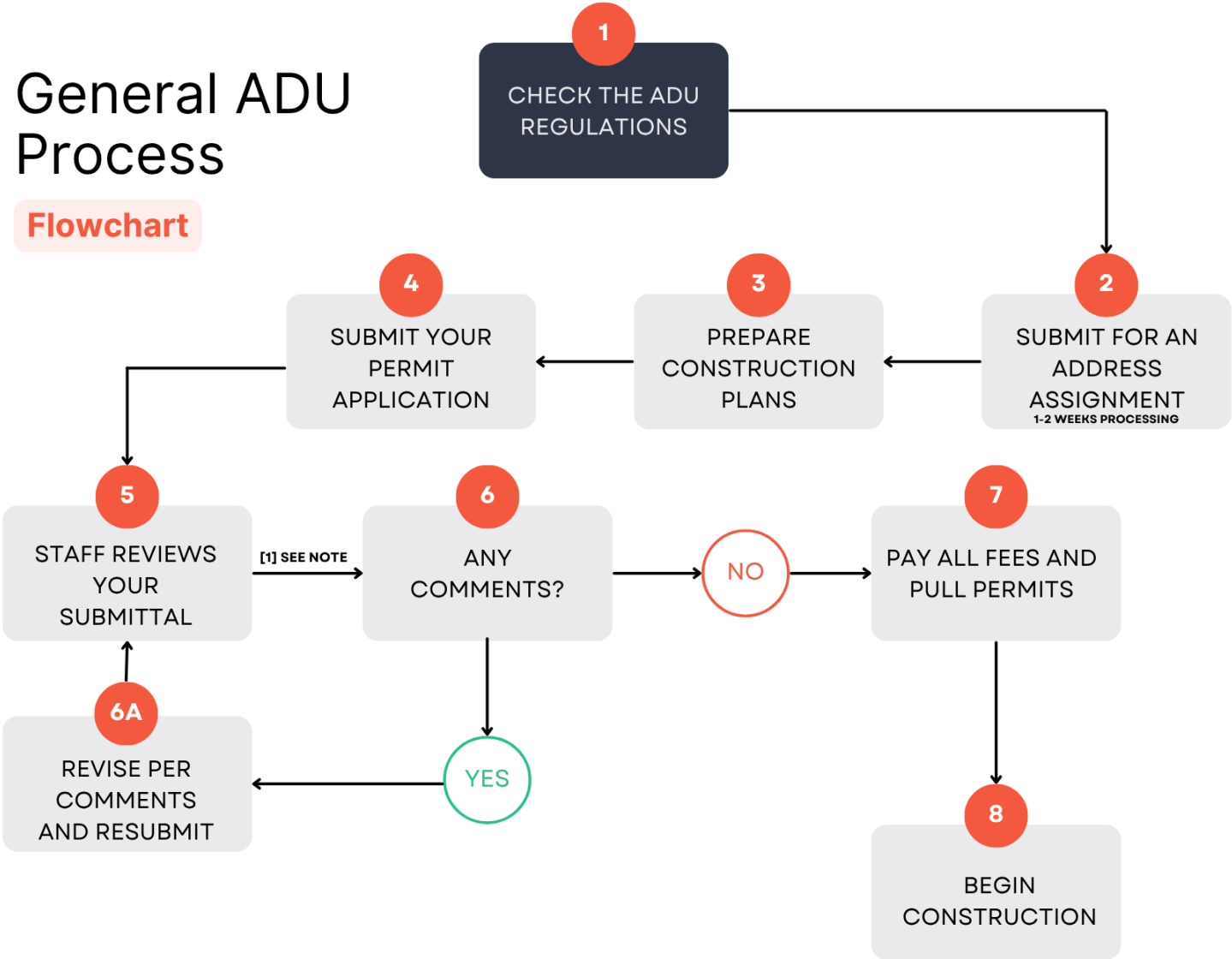
IV. Floor plan:

- ☐ Show layout of new and existing walls and partitions.
- ☐ The uses of new areas and adjacent existing areas.
- ☐ Interior dimensions (See Class 2 ADU Exhibit 1).
- ☐ Size, type, and location of doors and windows.
- ☐ Framing information (size, spacing, and directions of joists and rafters; headers; beams and columns, shear walls, floor diaphragms) may be shown here or on a separate framing plan.
- ☐ Plumbing, mechanical, and electrical fixtures and equipment.

- V. Roof plan:**
 - ☐ Roof material, slope, ridges, valleys, overhangs, roof diagram.
- VI. Exterior elevations:**
 - ☐ Show heights, finishes, doors/windows.
 - ☐ Overall building height.
- VII. Framing sections:**
 - ☐ Show roof, floor and wall construction, and the foundation.
 - ☐ Interior finishes and insulation.
- VIII. Details:**
 - ☐ Show structural details for connections of framing members to each other and to the foundation providing a continuous load path for both gravity and lateral (wind or seismic) loads.
- IX. Energy compliance:**
 - ☐ CF-1R forms completed and blueprinted on the plans.
 - ☐ Mandatory measures addressed on the plans.
 - ☐ Two sets of documentation of compliance.
- X. Green building code mandatory measures:**
- XI. Mechanical, plumbing, and electrical sheets showing:**
 - ☐ Show location of all utility meters (water meter, sewer connection, electric meter, and gas meter).
 - ☐ Mechanical, plumbing, electrical, gas layout, and new service laterals. Include electrical load calculations, gas sizing, and utility layout from meter(s).

General ADU Process

Flowchart



[1] REVIEW TIMES FOR BUILDING PERMIT SUBMITTAL ARE:
10 BUSINESS DAYS FOR FIRST SUBMITTALS
5 BUSINESS DAYS FOR ANY RESUBMITTALS

Deed Restrictions

WHAT IS THE DEED RESTRICTION

A deed restriction is a legal document that is recorded against the property to provide notice and disclosure to the current owner, and any subsequent owners, of the ADU and the associated limitations. The deed restriction must be completed and signed by all owners of the property. The signatures must be notarized and the document recorded with the Orange County Clerk-Recorder.

The original deed restriction must be returned to the City of Lake Forest.

WHERE DO I GET THE DEED RESTRICTION RECORDED?

The deed restriction must be recorded with the Orange County Clerk-Recorder's office before providing the final document to the City. The closest office of the Orange County Clerk-Recorder to the City of Lake Forest is in Laguna Hills at the Laguna Hills Civic Center, 24031 El Toro Road, Suite 150 & 160, Laguna Hills, CA 92653. Please check the Orange County Clerk-Recorder's website for hours, contact information, and additional locations: ocrecorder.com/about-us/hours-locations.

EXAMPLE OF A RECORDED DEED RESTRICTION

RECORDING REQUESTED BY AND
WHEN RECORDED RETURN TO:

City of Lake Forest
100 Civic Center Drive
Lake Forest, CA 92630
Attn: City Clerk

Recorded in Official Records, Orange County
Hugh Nguyen, Clerk-Recorder

* \$ R 0 0 1 5 0 8 4 2 9 7 \$ * NO FEE
2024000200978 9:39 am 08/06/24
440 CR-SC05 C39 4
0.00 0.00 0.00 0.00 9.00 0.00 0.000.000.00 0.00

DEED RESTRICTION AND COVENANT

EXEMPT—NO FEE REQUIRED
Cal. Gov. Code § 27383 & 27388.1(a)(2)(D)
Recorded for the Benefit of the City of Lake Forest

Regulations

ADU REGULATIONS GENERALLY

ADU regulations depend on the type of the ADU proposed. The City of Lake Forest categorizes ADU's into two primary categories:

- Class 1 ADU's
- Class 2 ADU's

A combination of ADU's may may be constructed on a single-family property. This can include one (1) JADU, one (1) converted ADU, and one (1) attached or detached ADU.

All ADU's must comply with the Building Code and the City of Lake Forest ADU Regulations as found in Section 9.146.050 of the Lake Forest Municipal Code.

In the case of **all ADU's**, including JADU's, the following apply:

- An independent exterior entrance is required, separate from that of the primary dwelling.
- Short term rentals (i.e. AirBnB and VRBO type stays), are not permitted.
- The ADU or JADU cannot be sold or otherwise conveyed separately from the lot and dwelling unit. Exceptions to this provision do apply to non-profit corporations and entities in accordance with State Law.
- Constructing an ADU does not constitute a change in building occupancy type under the Building Code. The space, or portion of the space, that was previously classified as uninhabitable space or non-residential use occupancy can be changed to a residential occupancy classification.
- Fire sprinklers are required if they are similarly required in the primary residence. Generally, if the primary residence already has fire sprinklers, the ADU will require fire sprinklers too. The construction of an ADU does not trigger the requirement for fire sprinklers to be installed in the primary dwelling.



Class 1 ADU's

TYPES OF CLASS 1 ADU'S

Class 1 ADU's are ADU's that comply with Government Code 66323. This classification includes:

- JADU's
- Detached ADU's 800 sq. ft or less in size.
- Converted ADU's
- Multifamily conversion ADU's*

*Note: Multifamily ADU's are not discussed in this Guide. Refer to the Lake Forest Municipal Code or contact the Planning Division for more information.

- Multifamily detached ADU's*

CLASS 1 REGULATIONS (JADU'S)

A JADU is only allowed on properties developed with a single-family residence. One JADU is allowed and it must comply with the following:

- Must be converted from existing space within the single-family residence.
- Limited to a maximum of 500 sq. ft.
- Must include separate sanitation facilities or share sanitation facilities with the single-family residence with interior access.
- Must have an efficiency kitchen, at a minimum.

An efficiency kitchen is generally smaller than a full size kitchen but is still considered a facility with cooking appliances. The efficiency kitchen must have a food preparation counter and storage cabinets, along with provisions for cooking, such as a sink, refrigerator, and hot plate or small cooktop.

JADU's are not required to provide parking for the unit. Furthermore, if existing off-street parking is removed to accommodate the JADU (e.g. conversion of the garage into a JADU), replacement parking is not required.

CLASS 1 REGULATIONS (DETACHED ADU'S)

A detached ADU on a single-family lot must be less than or equal to 800 sq. ft. to be classified as a Class 1 ADU. When planning to construct your detached ADU, it's generally best to think of it as building a whole new house, just on a smaller scale. The detached ADU will need to provide fully separate provisions for sanitation, cooking, sleeping, and living.

In addition, the ADU must comply with the following development standards:

- 4-foot setbacks from side and rear property lines.
- Maximum height (from finished grade):
 - **16 feet**; or
 - **18 feet** if within ½ mile walking distance of a major transit stop or a high-quality transit corridor; or
 - **20 feet** if within ½ mile walking distance of a major transit stop or a high-quality transit corridor and is necessary to accommodate a roof pitch on the ADU to align with the roof pitch of the primary dwelling unit.
- Separate gas and electric utility connections are required between the ADU and the utility.

Class 1 detached ADU's are not required to provide parking for the unit.

Class 2 ADU's

TYPES OF CLASS 2 ADU'S

Class 2 ADU's are ADU's that comply with Government Code 66314 through 66322. This classification includes:

- Detached ADU's greater than 800 sq. ft., up to 1,000 sq. ft.
- Attached ADU's

All Class 2 ADU's are required to provide one (1) off-street parking space for each ADU or bedroom, whichever is less. The parking space may be provided on the existing driveway serving the primary residence, which may be widened up to a maximum width of 30 feet or 60% of the width of the lot, whichever is greater, to accommodate the parking space. The parking shall meet the minimum dimensions of 9'x18', or 10'x20' if provided in an enclosed garage.

Exceptions to the parking requirements are further detailed as follows:

- The ADU is located within ½ mile walking distance of public transit.
- The ADU is located in an architecturally and historically significant historic district.
- The ADU is part of the proposed or existing primary residence or an accessory structure.
- When on-street parking permits are required but not offered to the occupant of the ADU.
- When there is an established car share vehicle stop within one block of the ADU.
- When the permit application to create an ADU is submitted with an application to create a new single-family or new multifamily dwelling on the same lot.

If an existing garage, carport, or covered or uncovered parking space is demolished in conjunction with the construction of an ADU, replacement for the demolished parking is not required

CLASS 2 REGULATIONS (DETACHED ADU'S)

A detached ADU on a single-family lot must be greater than 800 sq. ft. to be classified as a Class 2 ADU. When planning to construct your detached ADU, it's generally best to think of it as building a whole new house, just on a smaller scale. The detached ADU will need to provide fully separate provisions for sanitation, cooking, sleeping, and living.

In addition, the ADU must comply with the following development standards:

- Maximum of 850 sq. ft. for studio and one-bedroom units and 1,000 sq. ft. for two or more bedrooms.
- 4-foot setbacks from side and rear property lines.
- 25-foot setback from the front property line
- Maximum height (from finished grade):

- **16 feet**; or
- **18 feet** if within ½ mile walking distance of a major transit stop or a high-quality transit corridor; or
- **20 feet** if within ½ mile walking distance of a major transit stop or a high-quality transit corridor and is necessary to accommodate a roof pitch on the ADU to align with the roof pitch of the primary dwelling unit.
- Interior horizontal dimensions must be at least 10 feet wide in every direction (see Exhibit 1 for an example).
- Separate gas and electric utility connections are required between the ADU and the utility.

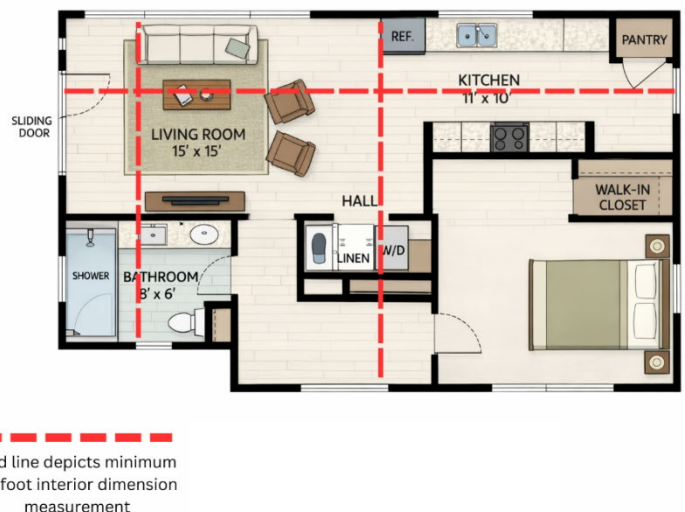
CLASS 2 REGULATIONS (ATTACHED ADU'S)

An attached ADU is considered to be a newly constructed unit (not converted from existing living space), that shares a common wall with the primary dwelling unit. The attached ADU does not have interior access to the primary dwelling unit and will need to provide fully separate provisions for sanitation, cooking, sleeping, and living.

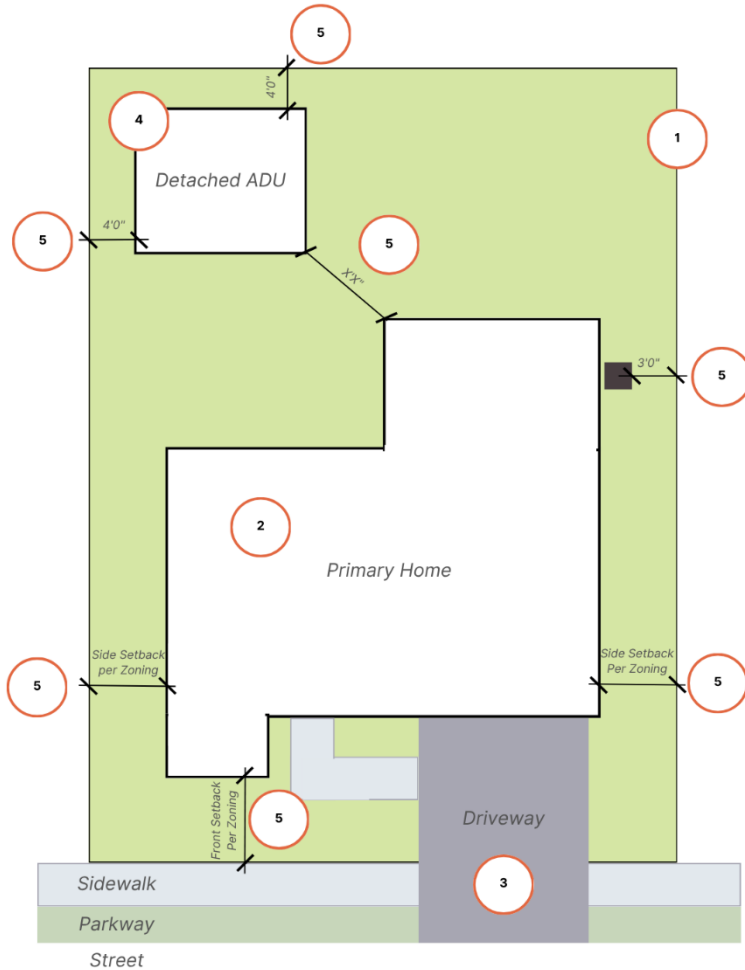
In addition, the ADU must comply with the following development standards:

- Maximum of 850 sq. ft. for studio and one-bedroom units and 1,000 sq. ft. for two or more bedrooms. Keep in mind the following limitations:
 - Maximum size is limited to 50% of the floor area of the primary dwelling unit.
 - Ex. Primary dwelling unit = 1,600 sq. ft. x 50% = 800 sq. ft. maximum attached ADU size.
 - However, the 50% size limitation cannot cause an ADU to be less than 800 sq. ft.
 - Ex. Primary dwelling unit = 1,300 sq. ft. x 50% = 650 sq. ft.
650 sq. ft. < 800 sq. ft. Maximum ADU size allowed is 800 sq. ft.
- 4-foot setbacks from side and rear property lines.
- 25-foot setback from the front property line
- Maximum height (from finished grade):
 - **25 feet**; or
 - The height of the underlying zoning district, whichever is lower.
 - Shall not exceed two stories.
- Separate gas and electric utility connections are required between the ADU and the utility.
- Interior horizontal dimensions must be at least 10 feet wide in every direction (see Exhibit 1 for an example).

Exhibit 1



Example Site Plan



SOME THINGS TO INCLUDE:

- 1 Draw the property lines.
- 2 Draw the footprint of the primary home and any existing accessory structures on the property, including patio covers, detached garages, sheds, pools, etc.
- 3 Draw the location of the driveway and other appurtenant features, such as sidewalks, existing and proposed utility connections, and existing and proposed fences/retaining walls
- 4 Draw the footprint of the proposed ADU.

- 5 Show the setbacks measured in feet. This includes:
 - setbacks from the property lines to the ADU;
 - setbacks from the ADU to the primary home;
 - setbacks from the property lines to the primary home and any existing structures.
 - setbacks from the property lines to air conditioning, utility, pool, and other equipment. (Min. Required: 3 ft)

- 6 All easements encumbering the property

Note: Full size set of plans drawn to scale are required