

OWNER-BUILDER?



**A HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO
BUILDING PERMITS AND
INSPECTIONS FOR PROJECTS
IN LOMPOC, CALIFORNIA**

**PREPARED BY:
CITY OF LOMPOC
BUILDING AND LIFE SAFETY DIVISION**



Illustrations by Tom Acosta

Revised July 2021

Introduction

This pamphlet is intended to provide basic information for owner-builders wishing to design and build a home or a home addition. It is not a complete list of City regulations and codes, but is intended to answer the questions most frequently asked.

Many residential buildings are constructed using what is called “conventional construction” in the Building Code. This method utilizes materials and techniques that have proven through long usage to be adequate for residential buildings in this area. Information provided in this booklet is based upon the “conventional construction” parameters of the 2019 California Building Code (which is based on the 2018 International Building Code). Specialized structural systems or techniques that were used in your existing home or unusual features of your proposed home may require design by a State of California licensed Professional Engineer or Architect.

Frequently Used Telephone Numbers

Building & Life Safety	(805)875-8220
Planning Department	(805)875-8213
Engineering	(805)875-8261
Fire Department	(805)875-8063

IS A PERMIT REQUIRED?

Most construction work requires a permit and inspections to help assure that unsafe conditions are not created. There are certain exceptions to this rule. The following is a list of items that do not require permits:

- A. One-story, detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided the floor area does not exceed 120 square feet.
- B. Fences not over 6 feet high.
- C. Retaining walls that are not over 4 feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing to the top of the wall, unless supporting a surcharge.
- D. Driveways and flatwork not more than 30 inches above adjacent grade, and not over any basement or story below and are not part of an accessible route.
- E. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting, cabinets, counter tops and similar finish work.
- F. Prefabricated swimming pools accessory to a group R-3 occupancy that are less than 24 inches deep, do not exceed 5,00 gallons and are installed entirely above ground.
- G. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall that do not require additional support.
- H. Minor electrical repair work, such as changing switches, replacing fuses, and changing lamp sockets or receptacles.
- I. Clearing of stoppages or the repairing of leaks in pipes, valves or fixtures, unless piping is replaced or rearranged.
- J. Changing of belts, replacement of component parts of mechanical systems and installation of portable appliances.



Although a permit may not be required, there may be other City regulations that apply. For instance, the Planning department limits fence heights to 3 feet in the front yard setback areas. If you are uncertain about your project, a telephone call or visit City Hall before commencing work may save time or headaches.

PLAN PREPARATION

The key to obtaining a permit with the least delay and frustration lies in the proper preparation of plans. Plan preparation should show specifically what is to be done, where on your property it is to be done, and how the project will be constructed. An accurate drawing is the only practical way of creating mutual understanding and expectations between you and the Building and Life Safety office.



If you have doubts that your project may be approved, preliminary information can be obtained at the Building and Life Safety Division counter during plan preparation. Quite often a few minutes of conversation and a sketch can save redrawing of plans by resolving concerns before final working drawings are completed.

Another consideration in preparation of plans is the adequacy of the public improvements within the street right-of-way adjoining your property. On extensive additions or new dwelling construction, any lack of street paving, curbs, gutters and/or sidewalks and the undergrounding of utilities may also be required, depending on what improvements currently exist. If improvements are required, plans must be prepared by a California Registered Civil Engineer and submitted to the Engineering Division for their approval before a permit may be issued.

Here again, a preliminary conference with members of the Building and Life Safety Division staff in the early planning stages will help you to arrive at estimates of costs before proceeding with working drawings.

Any time a building permit is required, a site plan of your property showing the location of the work must accompany the building permit application. Simple re-roof permits are an exception and therefore, do not require a site plan. (*A site or plot plan is a view of your entire property looking down from above. It must include all property lines, all structures located on the property, the street, the driveway and the location of any proposed work to be done.*) A sample site plan is shown in the rear of this booklet.

In addition to the required site plan, the size and complexity of your project will determine how extensive additional plans must be. Changing of windows or something of like simplicity may only require existing room uses and dimensions, window sizes, and the sizes of basic structural members. A patio or similar structure will require a drawing or sketch showing how the structure will be built, including the size and spacing of construction members and the methods intended to be used in making the connections and attachments.

If you are planning a complete new home, or just a room addition, more complete plans are needed. The following is a list of the different plan requirements to be submitted along with your site plan; make sure all your plans are clear and drawn to scale:

- Floor plan - show all door and window sizes and locations, label the use of and show dimensions of all rooms.
- Other architectural and/or structural plans such as to fully describe proposed project, including, but not limited to:
 - Foundation plan
 - Floor framing plan (for raised floor or multiple story buildings)
 - Roof framing plan
- Electrical plans – meter location, switch, outlet, and light locations.
- Two sets of wet stamped and signed structural calculations and truss calculations (if required).
- Two sets of energy calculations – (California State Title 24).

For the design of a complete home, it is advisable to arrange with a professional Architect or building designer for preparation of the plans. Certain State of California requirements are extremely complex, and typically beyond the capabilities of the average homeowner. These State requirements alone make obtaining professional help advisable.

SUBMITTAL FOR PLAN REVIEW

Three complete sets of plans must be submitted for plan checking prior to the issuance of the permit. Upon approval, one of these sets will be retained by the Building and Life Safety Division, and one set forwarded to the Santa Barbara County Assessors office. Any remaining sets will be returned to you at the time of permit issuance as your approved copy.



In addition, at submittal you will need other data:

- A. You will be asked to fill out a building permit and/or a plan check application worksheet. For this you will need to specify what is to be done, the floor area of the addition or new dwelling, and the name, phone number, and email address of the person who will be making any required plan corrections.
- B. If the proposed work requires it to be left for plan check, a fee must be paid at the time of application. Approximate plan check turn-around time is 30 business days.

Plans submitted for review expire by limitation 180 days after application unless an extension is requested and granted. Therefore applying for plan check should allow ample time for processing but should not be so premature that the plan check expires. A single extension may be granted in many circumstances, but it is not automatic.

PERMIT ISSUANCE

After all required departments have approved the plans, a permit to construct may be issued. At the time of permit issuance certain fees are required. These permit fees are based on various things, and depend entirely on the scope of work, value of the job, and number of inspections required.

As the holder of an “Owner- Builder” permit, if you intend to hire workmen on an hourly basis, you are required by law to provide workers compensation insurance. The carrier name and policy number will be required to be included on the permit application.

When your building permit is issued, a copy of the approved plans will be returned to you with your receipt and an inspection record card. The plans and card are to be kept at the job location and must be available for the inspector’s use whenever they visit your property for inspections. With your permit in hand you are now ready to proceed with construction.



BUILDING INSPECTIONS

During construction of your project, the majority of contacts with the Building and Life Safety Division will be through the field inspection staff when they visit your property.

City building regulations require that certain inspections be made prior to covering that portion of construction with other portions (for example, a framing inspection before drywall is applied). On typical residential construction, this means that you must request inspections at certain stages of the project before proceeding. These stages typically are:

- **Foundation inspection:** To be made when trenches have been excavated, forms are set, and all steel reinforcing, hold down hardware and/or anchor bolts are in place.
- **Concrete slab or under-floor inspection:** To be made after all in-slab or under-floor equipment, piping, conduit, etc. are in place, but before the concrete is placed or floor sheathing installed.
- **Roof sheathing nailing inspection:** To be made when the roof sheathing is installed and entirely nailed off.
- **Framing inspection:** To be made after all framing, fire blocking, and bracing are in place; and all pipes, chimneys and vents are complete, roof covering is in place and rough electrical wiring, plumbing piping, and heating ducts have been installed and inspected.
- **Insulation inspection:** To be made when all insulation is installed, and all openings and gaps in the shell of the building have been caulked or sealed.



- Lath and/or gypsum board inspection: To be made after all lathing and gypsum board, interior and exterior, is in place but before all plaster has been applied or before gypsum board joints and fasteners have been taped and finished.
- Final inspection: To be made after finish grading and when the building is complete and ready for occupancy, and all plumbing and electrical fixtures and appliances are installed.

Other inspections may be required in addition to those outlined above. For instance, pressure tests are necessary for water and gas piping, and water tests of drainage and sewer piping are likewise required. The inspectors may also advise you of the need for additional inspections if they believe special attention is required for some areas of your project or if approvals from other City Divisions such as Planning, Fire, or Engineering will be required prior to final inspection.



REQUESTING INSPECTIONS

Inspections may be scheduled by calling (805) 875-8231.

For all inspection requests, please leave the permit number, your name, phone number, address of the project, and the type of inspection requested.

Inspections received before 7:00 a.m. Monday through Friday will be inspected the same business day.

Do not request any inspection prior to the work being completed and ready for inspection.

The field inspectors arrange their own schedules to make best use of their time, so unless the premises will not be accessible during normal working hours, or unless some specific reason requires a meeting, we ask that requests for specific appointments be avoided.

THE INSPECTION PROCESS

When the building inspector visits your project, the approved plans must be available for comparison with the work, and the inspection card must be available for the inspector's signature. If there are corrections to be made before approval, the inspector will leave a "correction notice" briefly outlining the things required to be completed prior to approval of that portion of the project. Time delays and reinspection can be avoided if you make sure that work is complete before the inspection is requested. Any necessary tests should have been done ahead of time to assure acceptance and compliance.

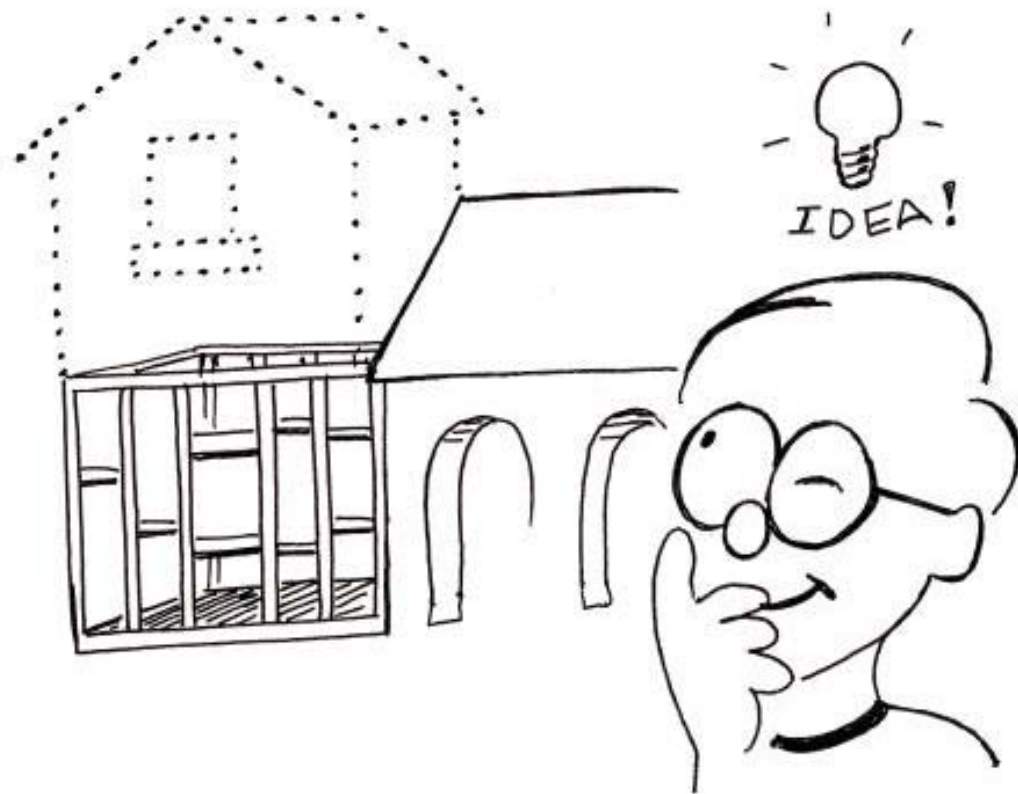
Your inspector can provide you with a lot of useful information about the codes and inspections but cannot act as a construction supervisor. If you are not reasonably familiar with construction procedures it may be to your advantage to hire a licensed contractor or tradesperson to do the work or assist you.

PLAN CHANGES

If you decide during the construction process that a change is desirable, it will be necessary to have that plan change cleared by the Building Official. This can sometimes be done over the counter, but if building area or structural features are to be modified it may be necessary to perform additional plan checking and/or that an additional permit be obtained with additional fees being assessed

REMEMBER to never make changes to the original approved set of plans. Always make desired changes to copies of the original plans and bring in at least 2 sets of the changed plans along with the original approved sets for comparison.

If you have questions regarding a need for plan change approval, call and ask.



AVOIDING PERMIT EXPIRATION

Building code provisions require that work be continued if a permit is to remain valid. During any 180-day period, if some reasonable amount of work is not accomplished, your permit will automatically expire. Once expired, additional fees will be necessary to renew the permit, so it is in your best interest to continue work until completion.

FINAL APPROVAL

Prior to requesting final inspection from Building and Life Safety, approval may need to be obtained from the Planning, Fire, and/or Engineering divisions.

To gain these other approvals, (such as landscaping or street improvements, which may have been established as a condition of approval), simply call Planning division at (805) 875-8213, the Fire department at (805) 875-8063, and/or the Engineering department at (805) 875-8261 and request those inspections.

After the building inspectors make their inspections and all requirements have been satisfied, your project will be approved. If a new electric or gas service has been installed as a part of your project and approved by the inspector, they will see that the utility company is notified (you must also call them and arrange for installation of meters).



SUMMARY

We have attempted in this pamphlet to provide useful, but very general information. To ensure that your project proceeds without delays, consider the following:

- Ask for a preliminary review of what you propose before you develop working drawings.
- Plan carefully. Make sure plans are complete and clearly indicate what you are going to do, where you are going to do it and how you propose to do it.
- If you do not have basic design or construction skills, consider getting help from design professionals such as Architects or Engineers.
- Call for inspections ahead of time and recheck your work well before the inspector arrives, thereby avoiding call-backs.
- Coordinate final inspection with Planning, Fire, and Engineering departments and with the serving utilities.

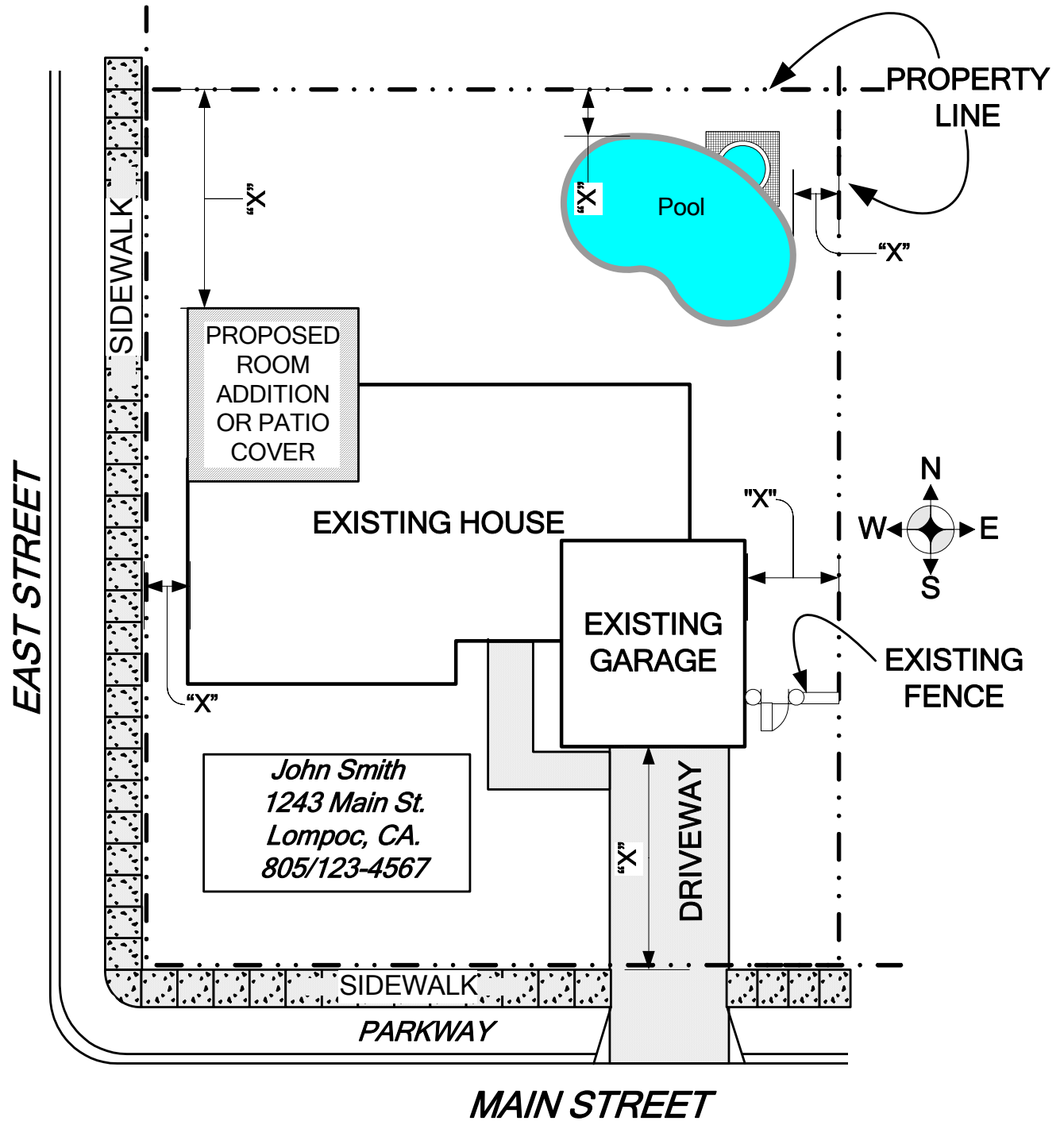
We want to be of help to you during your construction project. We urge you to utilize the services of the Building and Life Safety Division if you need guidance or have questions as you proceed through the building experience. Together we can make your efforts more productive and less frustrating.

Remember, when in doubt, give us a call or email the Building Official, and ask for help. It's easier and more satisfying when we can prevent a problem before it develops.



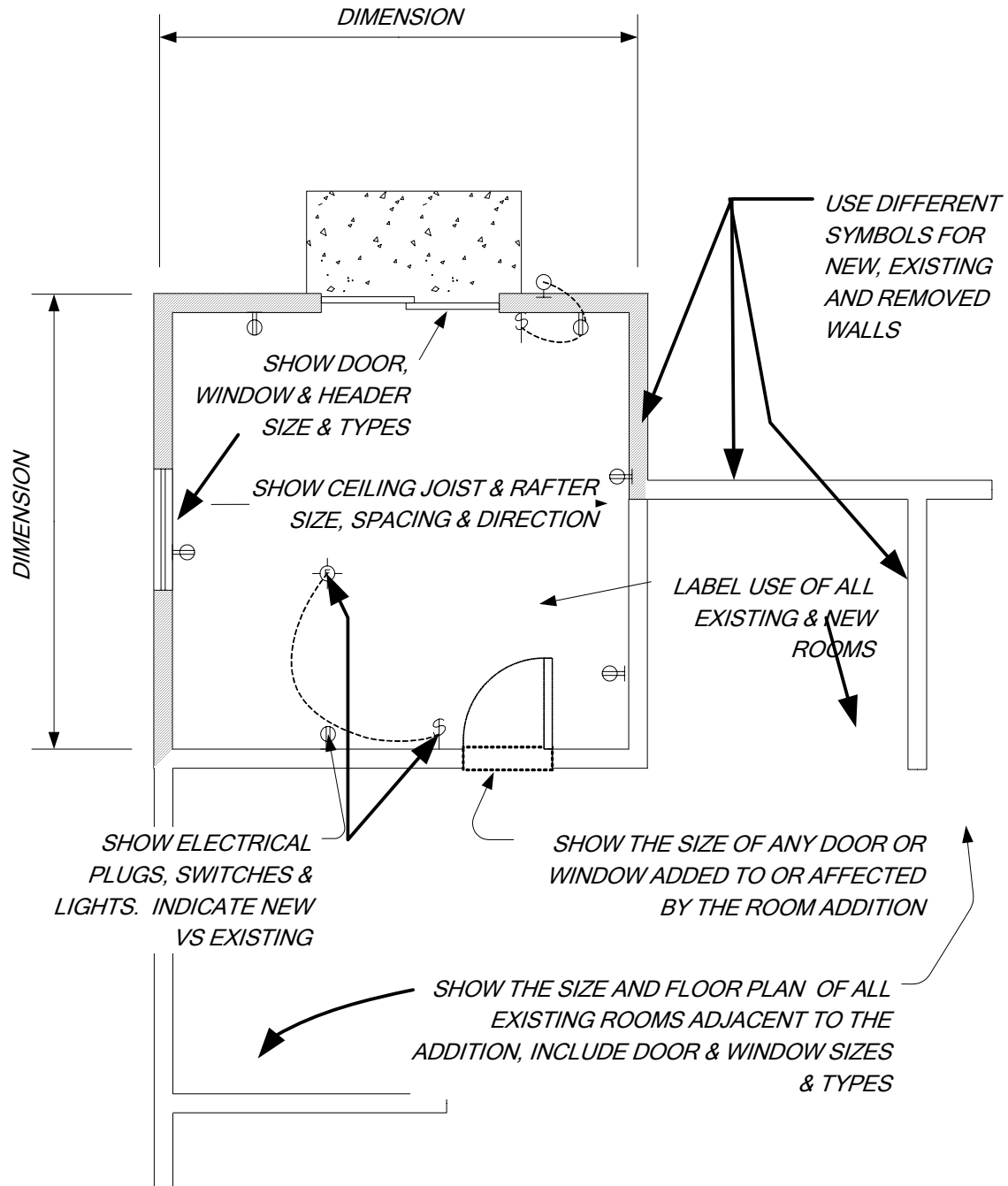
Building and Life Safety Division

(805) 875-8220
building@ci.lompoc.ca.us



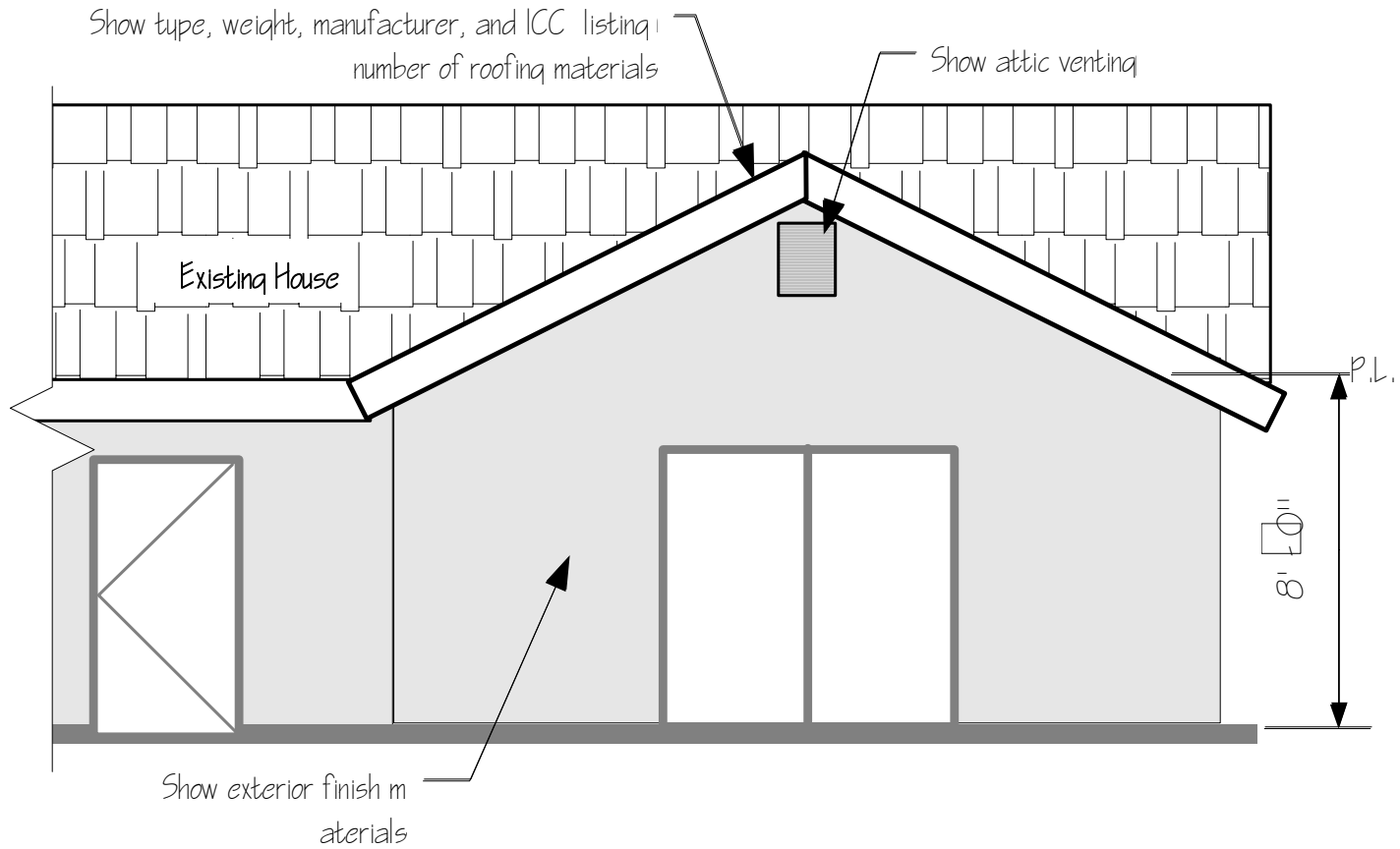
"X" = DIMENSION

SAMPLE SITE PLAN

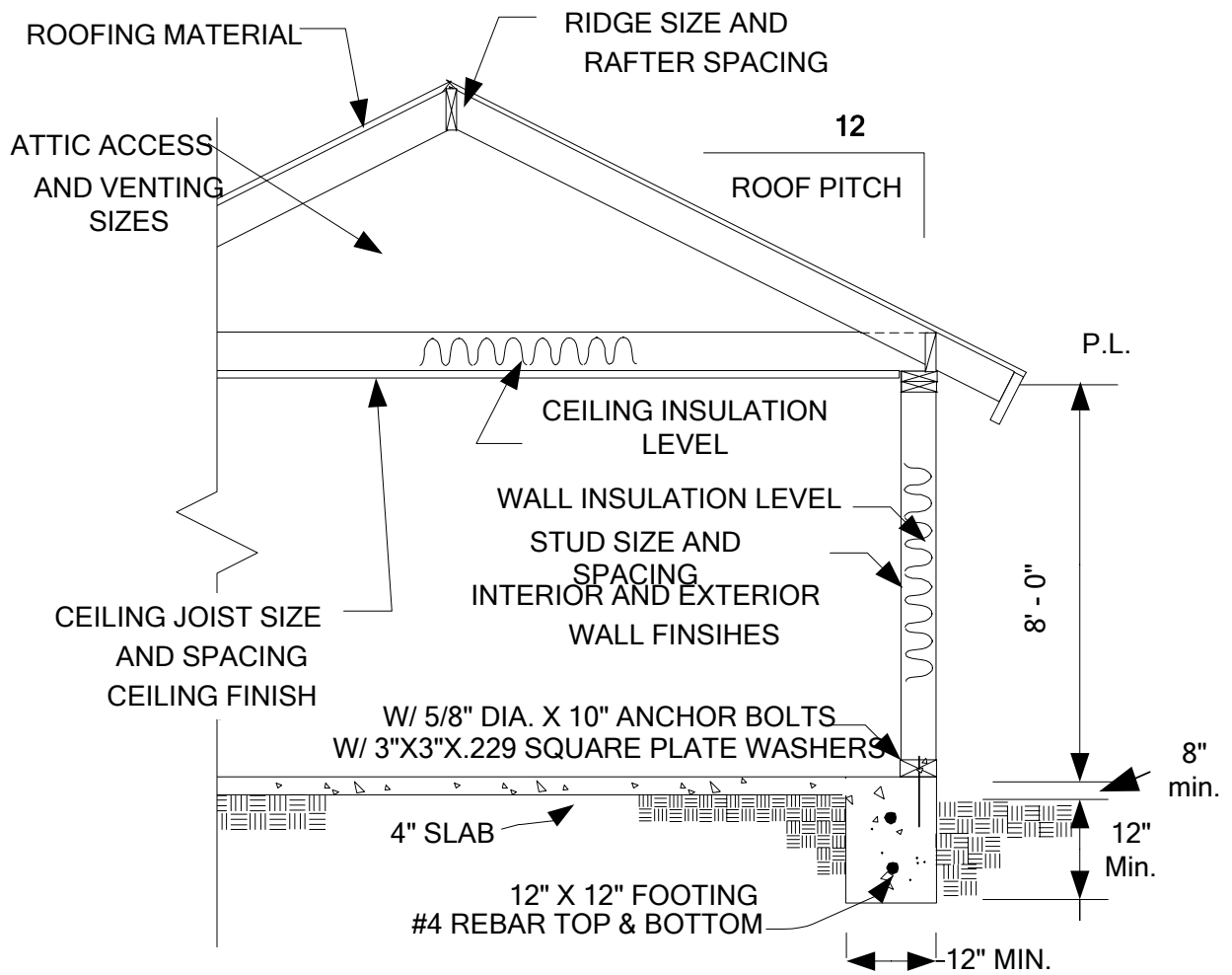


SAMPLE FLOOR PLAN

ALL ROOFING MATERIAL SHALL BE
INSTALLED PER THE MANUFACTURERS
INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS



SAMPLE REAR ELEVATION



SAMPLE CROSS SECTION

THE BUILDING AND LIFE SAFETY DIVISION

The Building and Life Safety Division is one of four City divisions responsible for the enforcement of City regulations concerning construction on private property.

The Planning and the Engineering Divisions are responsible for administration of land use regulations and work within the public right-of-way, respectively.

The Fire department is responsible for fire and life safety provisions within the California building codes.

It is the Building and Life Safety Division's overall goal to provide a safe, pleasant living and working environment for all of our citizens. If you have questions about development projects, please feel free to contact us and we will respond promptly.