How to Obtain Building Permits and Inspections for a Structure Constructed Without Permits

Structures constructed without permits represent unique challenges for both the owner/permit applicant and the permitting agency. In most cases the permit process is essentially the same as for a new structure, but applicants should be aware of the following special circumstances and requirements for this type of project:

1. As with any building permit application, two (2) complete sets of plans and a third site and floor plan are required. The plans must demonstrate compliance with the current version of the California Building Code. The current code adopted by Butte County and the State of California is the 2013 California Building Code.

2. Provide written verification from a special inspection/structural testing agency approved by the Butte County Building Division that the size and depth of the footings as constructed match the approved plans and minimum code requirements.

3. Provide written verification from a special inspection/structural testing agency approved by the Butte County Building Division that reinforcement steel has been installed according to the approved plans and minimum code requirements. Ultrasonic or non-destructive testing is typically performed for this testing.

4. The means of attachment of the structure to the foundation and any hold downs specified in the design must be accessible for inspection. When the means of attachment are visible in a crawl space, an access opening must be provided within 20 feet. In slab construction sections of the wall coverings must be removed to allow visual inspection of the means of attachment.

5. Provide written verification by an engineer licensed to practice in the State of California that the building is structurally sound.

6. Provide written verification by an electrical contractor licensed by the State of California that the electrical system is installed in compliance with current code. This shall include verification of required branch circuits, conductor and breaker size, and grounding and bonding continuity.

7. Components of the electrical, plumbing, and mechanical systems will be required to be exposed by the removal of cover plates, access panels, and portions of wall covering.

8. Provide a pressure test on gas and water piping.

Other situations encountered during plan review or inspection may require additional discussion and determination by the Building Division.

Sincerely,

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