

# **PROCEDURES FOR BUILDING IN THE CITY OF LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN, GEORGIA**

To Property Owners and Building Contractors:

In order to maintain an efficient process for obtaining building permits and subsequent construction of structures in the City of Lookout Mountain Georgia (“the City”), the following requirements and information are made available to all applicants.

## **1.0 Where to Apply**

Application for a Building Permit shall be made directly to the City Clerk, Dana Driver at City Hall, 1214 Lula Lake Road, Lookout Mountain, Georgia 30750 during business hours, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

## **2.0 Who Must Apply**

A Building Permit is required for all of the following reasons:

- a. Any construction that in any way changes the exterior appearance of a home or other structure. This would include the addition of rooms, dormers, decks, porches, fireplaces, carports, garages, or any other structure as defined in the adopted Zoning Regulations.
- b. Not included in the requirement for a Building Permit are repairs, replacement of siding or roofing, or other work that could clearly be considered as repair or maintenance of an existing, conforming structure.
- c. Enclosure of existing porches, decks, breezeways, etc. with walls or glass that causes the outdoor space to become interior space.
- d. Addition or construction of sunrooms, greenhouses, portable storage buildings.
- e. Construction of all fences, no matter where they are located on the property.
- f. Swimming pools, placement of fuel tanks and fuel tank structures, emergency generators and structures, or communication structures.

## **3.0 What is involved in the Review**

- a. The Applicant must submit the required documents (noted later in this letter) and apply for a permit at City Hall. A complete set of the required documents must be submitted no later than 7 working days prior to the monthly Planning Commission Meeting which occurs on the second Tuesday of each month at 5:00, at City Hall. If documents are received after the deadline, their consideration will be deferred until the following monthly meeting without exception.
- b. The documents will be reviewed for compliance with the City’s adopted Zoning Regulations and the Standard Building Code, 1997 Edition. If errors or problems are found with the submitted documents, the City Building Official will attempt to contact the Owner to allow the opportunity for corrections and changes to be made before the upcoming meeting.
- c. The City Building Official will, at his convenience, visit the site to review the proposed work to assure that the documents accurately represent the work to be performed.
- d. The City Building Official will present the project to the City Planning Commission during the monthly meeting and make his recommendation for or against approval based on local Zoning Regulations and the Standard Building Code requirements.
- e. The Planning Commission will consider the Building Official’s recommendations and will vote to approve or reject the request.
- f. If the request is rejected, the Applicant may make a request for review by the Zoning Variance Board.
  1. This group meets on an As-Needed basis at the request of the Property Owner and the Planning Commission to consider variations from the established Zoning Regulations.
  2. Normally, consideration for a variance is only given for hardship reasons such as oddly shaped property configurations, topography, limitations due to natural features, or other special reasons.
  3. Variances granted shall not establish a precedent for any future consideration, and no Property Owner shall be allowed to use past incidences of approval in their case.

4. The Property Owner is encouraged to seek approval from neighbors for variances. A letter written by adjacent neighbors will be accepted as part of the consideration for a variance. However, Variance Board members are not obligated to give approval based on such letters and will weigh the interests of the community at large to a greater extent than the opinions of neighbors in their decisions.
5. The Variance Board will carefully consider the information submitted, as well as the recommendation of the Building Official, and will judge whether the Variance Request should be accepted or rejected.
6. If a Variance Request is rejected, the Applicant may take the matter to the City Council for consideration. The City Council shall have final say in all such matters.

#### 4.0 What is Required for Review

- a. The Property Owner shall provide a minimum of two sets of all of the following information: Owner's name, address and phone number; address of the proposed project. The General Contractor's name, address, phone number, Georgia Contractor's license number and expiration number, proof of insurance coverage by the Contractor for this specific project.
- b. The following plans:
  1. It is not necessary for drawings to be provided by a registered Architect . However, the drawings must be to scale, clearly legible, and complete enough for the Building Official and the Planning Commission members to make an educated assessment of compliance with Zoning and Building Code regulations.
  2. Unclear or incomplete drawings will not be accepted. The Property Owner will be required to resubmit drawings that meet acceptable standards.
  3. At the very minimum a site plan, floor plans, exterior elevations, a foundation and framing plans for each level, a roof plan, and a clear description of exterior materials to be used must be submitted as follows.
  4. A site plan showing the location of the proposed project in reference to all property lines and indicating compliance with City Building Setback requirements. All existing and new structures and fences shall be shown and located by dimension in reference to existing property lines. This drawing may be a tax plat from the Owner's deed documents, with notes as needed to clearly and convincingly show compliance with setback requirements. In cases where the Owner is proposing a structure that is very close to or in violation of required setbacks, a boundary survey by a registered Surveyor should be provided.
  5. Floor plans of each level showing new and existing work, dimensions, and notes needed to clearly describe the scope of the work to be performed, the materials used, and the appearance of finishes.
  6. Exterior Elevations showing existing and new work. Indicate materials to be used.
  7. A Foundation Plan showing location of all footings around and within the structure, **This is one of the most important drawings in the required package.** In most cases it must be prepared by a Registered Structural Engineer, especially in cases where retaining walls are required due to site conditions. (Please contact the Building Official for verification).
  8. Typical Wall Sections showing materials, structural members, heights, etc. as needed to describe the work being performed.
  9. Where plans are purchased through a Plan Service or Magazine or other generic source are used to construct a structure, the Property Owner is required to provide "Site Specific" information, including a Site Plan, Engineered Specific Foundation Plan, and other documents that may be necessary to show to adaptability of the stock plan to the specific location. Absence of such information will require rejection by the Building Official.
- c. One set of this information shall be returned to the Owner for his records, and one set retained by the Building Official for the City's records.

## **Building Setback Requirements**

- a. No building can be located closer to the property line than indicated below. In many cases lots are large enough that there is no real concern with building over the setback line. In these cases, it is not necessary for the Owner to provide a survey of the property, or stake the corners for verification. However, in those cases where the new work may encroach, the Owner shall, at the Building Official's discretion, provide proof that the setback lines are not violated.
- b. Building setback lines shall be as follows:
  - Front Setback: 35 feet.
  - Rear Setback: 25 feet.
  - Side Setbacks: 15 feet.
  - Corner lot Front Setbacks: 35 feet on each street.
  - Through Lots: 35 feet at each end facing a street.

## **5.0 Fences**

- a. All proposed fences require a Building Permit, regardless of location on the property, type, or size.
- b. The procedure for approval is the same as for new construction except that the Property Owner must provide letters of opinion from adjacent neighbors. Rejection by neighbors weighs heavily on the decision of the Planning Commission.
- c. Property Owners are required to obtain a copy of the City's fence ordinance prior to submittal of documents for approval. Compliance is required.
- d. Although this may seem to be a simple issue, it is, in fact, one of the most contentious issues in the community between neighbors. The Planning Commission takes this matter very seriously. Property Owners must prove that the proposed fence is not objectionable to their neighbors, and does not pose a public nuisance by blocking sight lines to oncoming traffic, etc.
- e. All swimming pools shall be enclosed with a fence that is a minimum of four feet tall with an automatic latch. There are other specifics to pool fences that must be met. Regulations are available at City Hall.

## **6.0 General Permit Procedures**

- a. Once plans are submitted within the allowed timeframe they will be reviewed by the Building Official.
- b. Once approved, a Building Permit will be issued. The cost of the permit will be determined from a formula set out in the Standard Building Code.
- c. Work may not commence until the building permit is acquired and the fee is paid in full. Failure to do so will result in a demand to cease work, and a possible fine.
- d. Following receipt of a Building Permit, but not until one is issued, the Owner may proceed.
- e. The Property Owner's Contractor must contact the City Clerk at least 24 hours in advance to request an inspection by the City Building Official at the following times:
  1. Temporary Power Electrical Inspection if the project requires temporary power.
  2. For a Foundation Inspection. The Contractor shall not call before all footings are dug, steel reinforcing is completed, and he is ready to pour.
  3. For a Framing Inspection. All primary and incidental framing must be complete. This inspection should coincide with the Electrical Rough-in inspection. All framing shall be left exposed. No insulation shall be in place, and all areas shall be left open for review.
  4. For a final Electrical Inspection.
  5. For a Final Inspection. This will occur after the Contractor has reached the point of Substantial Completion, but has not vacated the site.
  6. A Certificate of Occupancy shall be issued after the Final Inspection. Failure to attain the Certificate of Occupancy may cause serious consequences to the Owner.
  7. If the Building Official finds work at any time during the duration that does not comply with the Standard Building Code or other ordinances in effect, he shall have the right to reject that portion of the work and require that the Contractor comply. If the Owner does work through his personal efforts or those of a hired person that does not comply with the Code, he shall

be required to correct deficient work regardless of cost or difficulty. Regardless of who performs the work, it shall be the Owner's responsibility to assure that all work is performed within the Code.

8. The Building Official will make one visit for each phase of the work that he inspects. Additional visits required to check on corrections or to revisit issues shall be performed as an addition to the cost of the original permit fee, and shall be paid by the Owner. The amount charged shall be \$100.00 per visit, regardless of the time spent by the Building Official. Payment for additional visits must be made in full before the visit will be performed.

## **7.0 Basis for Approval Includes the Following**

- a. The Property Owner or the person or company retained to provide plans for the proposed project is responsible to become familiar with, and to abide by the regulations of the following Codes and Ordinances. Failure to comply shall not release the Property Owner from responsibility.
- b. Compliance with the Standard Building Code, 1997 Edition.
- c. Compliance with the Zoning Ordinances of the City of Lookout Mountain, Georgia.
- d. Compliance with the National Electrical Code.
- e. Compliance with State of Georgia Ordinances and regulations that supercede local ordinances where applicable although not adopted by the City of Lookout Mountain, Georgia.
- f. Please note that in cases where property is to be subdivided and creates new lots that were not part of the originally platted City, there are certain restrictive Ordinances that apply. For instance, newly platted lots must be a minimum of 35,000 square feet. There are also very specific procedures that must be followed in the re-platting process. It shall be the responsibility of the Property Owner to review the pertinent Ordinances and comply. Failure to do so will result in delays in the process.
- g. All Zoning Ordinances are available at City Hall.

## **8.0 Other Information**

- a. A copy of the Zoning Ordinances is available for review at City Hall. It shall be the Property Owner's responsibility to assure that he or his designer shall comply with all provisions, as well as those of the Standard Building Code, 1997 Edition.
- b. The total area of structures on a given property shall not exceed 25% of the property area.
- c. Accessory buildings. Pools and storage buildings shall not encroach over the building setback lines.
- d. Accessory structures may be used as a residence only, but not more than four people not related by blood may reside on any property in the single family zone of the City.
- e. All requests for inspections, as well as questions about regulations must be made through the City Clerk. Final answers and opinions shall only be made by the City Building Official.
- f. Any person who starts construction before a Permit has been approved is subject to a fine of two times the normal cost of a Building Permit. The person will be required to submit plans to the Building Official and meet before the Planning Commission at its next regularly scheduled meeting. If the plans are approved the person will then be allowed to commence, but only after the Permit fee and fine have been paid in full.