

Accessory Buildings - Residential Requirements for Building Permit

OVERVIEW

This guide outlines Building Inspections and Current Planning requirements for detached accessory buildings located on single, two-family, ground-oriented multi-family, and row housing residential lots. A sample set of plans is included as an example of the expected level of detail and information required for a building permit application. The requirements for an accessory building with a secondary suite is in our guide [Home Suite Home - Secondary Suites in Nanaimo](#).

BUILDING CONSIDERATIONS

Detached buildings that do not create a hazard and are under 10m² (107.64ft²) do not require a building permit, but must comply with the setback and height requirements set out in "[Zoning Bylaw 4500](#)" for accessory buildings. All other construction and additions to existing buildings require a building permit prior to commencing construction. See additional considerations below.

Buildings less than 55m² (592ft²) in building area do not require a conventional foundation. Larger buildings require a conventional footing and foundation wall design as per the [BC Building Code](#) (BCBC), Division B, Section 9.15. An example foundation is included with the example plans on the cross-section drawing.

Plans and building permit application requirements for an accessory building containing a secondary suite will be more complex than plans for a typical accessory building used for a garage or workshop. The Building Code and application requirements will be similar to a single-family dwelling application. These requirements are not covered in this guide.

The attached sample plan shows an unheated garage. If your plan is to include plumbing or create a conditioned space with heating and insulation, the requirements will be similar to building a single-family dwelling. See our guide [Insulation for Residential Additions](#). Both the BC Building Code and the BC Plumbing Code requirements will apply to your structure and must be reflected in your plan submission.

ZONING CONSIDERATIONS

An accessory building is not permitted without a principal use on a property. A principal use is typically a dwelling unit in residential zones.

Accessory buildings shall not be closer than 1.2m to a principal use building or other accessory building, measured between foundations. Where an accessory building contains a secondary suite, 3m is required between the principal building and the accessory building.

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ZONING CONSIDERATIONS cont'd

| Zone | Rear Yard Setback | Rear Yard Setback - Lane |
|---|-------------------|--|
| R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R10, R14, AR1, or AR2 | 1.5m | 1.0m 3.0m – where dedication to achieve the required lane width has not taken place |
| All Other Zones | 3.0m | 1.5m 3.0m – where dedication to achieve the required lane width has not taken place |

Accessory buildings with a gross floor area less than 10m², not permanently affixed to the ground and not exceeding 3m in height are permitted a rear yard setback of 1.5m.

Where the lot is a through lot, one accessory building may be located within one of the front yard setback areas up to 1.5m from the front and side yard lot lines, provided the accessory building has a gross floor area of less than 10m².

An accessory building is not permitted within the front yard, side yard, or flanking side yard setback, as established for principal buildings within the applicable zone, except where the side yard setback is 0m, an accessory building shall not be closer than 1.5m to any side lot line.

The maximum height of an accessory building varies, depending on the roof pitch.

| Roof Pitch | Maximum Height |
|------------|---|
| < 6:12 | 4.5m |
| ≥ 6:12 | 5m |
| ≥ 8:12 | 5.5m |
| ≥ 6:12 | 7m - where a secondary suite on the second floor has a ceiling height of 2.1m and has floor area no greater than 80% of the first storey, <u>or</u> is located outside of the required yard setback area for a principal dwelling, <u>or</u> is in an R8, R9 or CC3 zone. |

The gross floor area of all accessory buildings on a lot depends on the zone.

| Lot in Zone | Maximum Gross Floor Area |
|---|--|
| R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, R6, R7, R10, AR1 or AR2 | The total combined gross floor area of all accessory buildings on the lot shall not exceed 100m ² AR1 and AR2 any portion of an accessory building used for agriculture shall not be included in the calculation of gross floor area |
| All Other Zones | The gross floor area of an accessory building shall not exceed that of the principal building |

A maximum of 42m² used exclusively for parking purposes may be excluded from the calculation of gross floor area for an accessory building where a garage or carport does not exist within the principal building.

Confirm the specific requirements for your lot in [“Zoning Bylaw 4500”](#), Section 6.6, or contact Current Planning at the City of Nanaimo prior to moving forward with your project.

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ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Restrictive covenants (registered on title), watercourse, riparian setbacks, steep slopes, utility right-of-ways, and zoning setbacks to the property lines may affect the location of your accessory building regardless if a building permit is required or not. Determining if any of these factors will affect the location of your accessory building is the responsibility of the property owner.

A survey by a British Columbia Land Surveyor (BCLS) will be required if the proposed building location is within 0.15m (6") of the setback requirements, or if the proposed height is within 0.305m (1') of the maximum height permitted. A BCLS may be required at the discretion of the Building Official where the lot has an irregular shape or the survey iron pins cannot be located and where natural grade cannot be determined.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- ☐ [Building Permit Application](#) – Online only.
- ☐ [Appointment of Agent](#) – The Appointment of Agent form is required if the permit is to be applied for, revised, or issued to someone other than the registered owner. Complete the form online as part of the Building Permit (BP) application process.
- ☐ [Application Fee](#) – Required where the estimated value of construction exceeds \$20,000. The application fee will be requested after your online BP application has been accepted.
- ☐ [Access Application](#) – Online form to be completed as part of the BP application process for a new building driveway or access change to an existing driveway.
- ☐ **Plans – to scale 1/4" = 1' or 1:50** showing the specifications of the structure. To be submitted as part of the online BP application process. For a sample of the expected level of detail and information required for a building permit application, see the attached sample accessory building drawings. Electronic plan submissions – hand drawn or computer generated – are to be in PDF format and must be a clean copy with no watermarks or other interfering mark-ups. Drawings are to be on minimum 11" x 17" plain white paper (no graph paper), drawn in dark blue or black ink. Photographs of plans or documents are not accepted. Clearly identify if the accessory building is heated or unheated.
- ☐ **Site Plan – to scale 1/16" = 1' or 1:250** showing the dimensions of the parcel, the existing dwelling, all existing accessory buildings and the proposed new accessory building. Include the natural and final elevations of the corners of the proposed building, and if a new driveway is proposed, the elevation of the slab and access point at the street. Include setback locations and dimensions of all existing buildings. Include the location and the dimension of any right-of-ways, easements, environmental or riparian setbacks.
- ☐ **Truss Layout, Manufactured Floor Joist and Engineered Beam Layouts** (if used) from the truss, beam manufacturer with point loads identified. More information can be found in our guide, [Manufactured Floor Joist, Beam & Truss Roof Systems](#).
- ☐ [Business Licence](#) valid in the City of Nanaimo is required for builders, contractors, and developers.

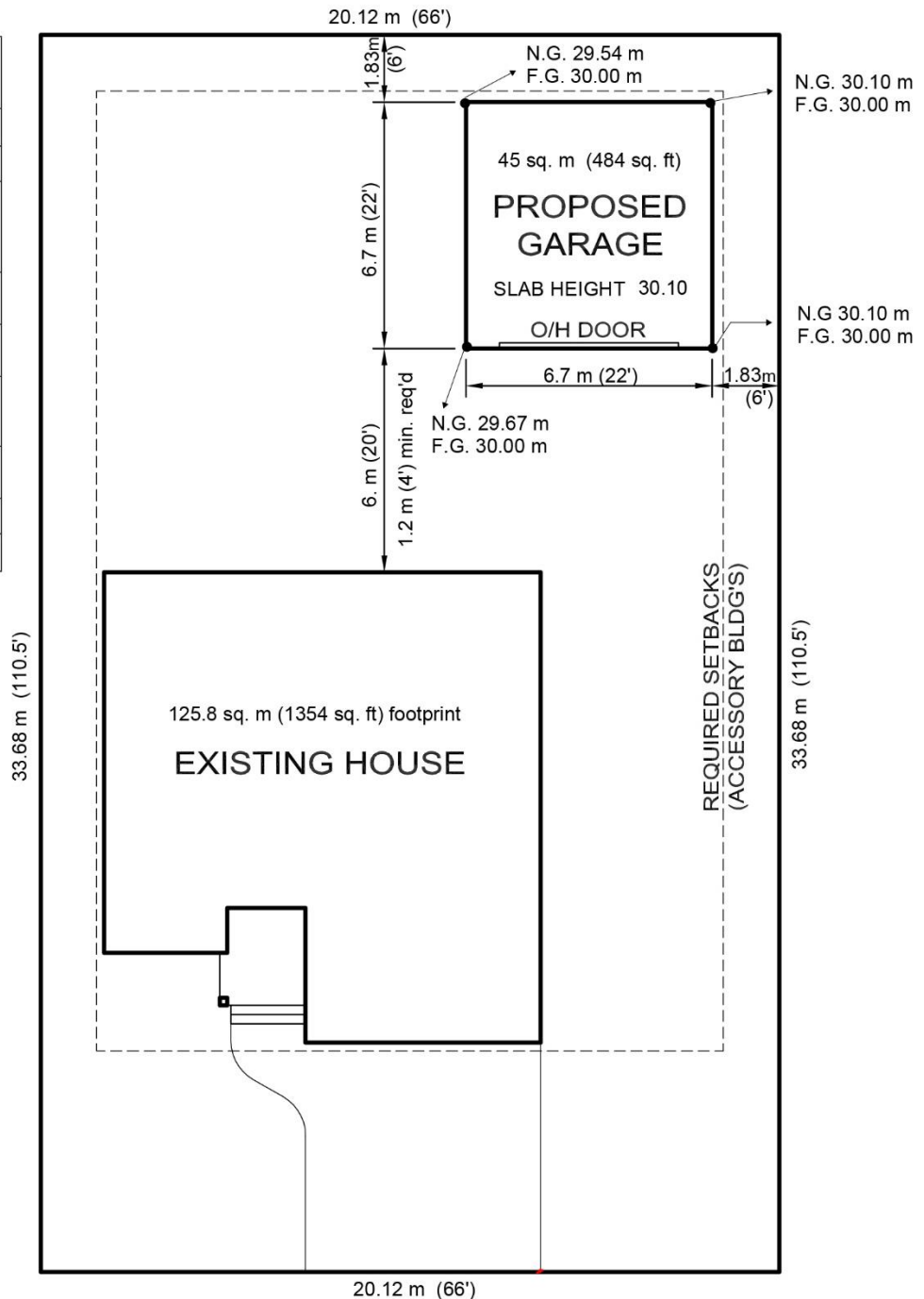
If you have any questions or require clarification, please contact Building Inspections at 250-755-4429.

This guide should not be used as a substitute for existing building codes and other regulations.

The building owner is responsible for compliance with all codes, bylaws, and other regulations.

EXAMPLE PLANS ACCESSORY BUILDING ON A RESIDENTIAL LOT

| PROPOSED GARAGE HEIGHT CALCULATION IN METRES | |
|--|-------|
| Average natural grade | 29.85 |
| Average finish grade | 30.00 |
| Accessory building max. height for < 6:12 roof pitch 14.76 ft. | 4.50 |
| Maximum building elevation | 34.35 |
| Proposed roof peak elevation | 34.21 |
| PROPOSED GARAGE SLAB CALCULATION | |
| Elevation at back of sidewalk | 30.58 |
| Proposed garage slab | 30.10 |
| Driveway length | 28.04 |



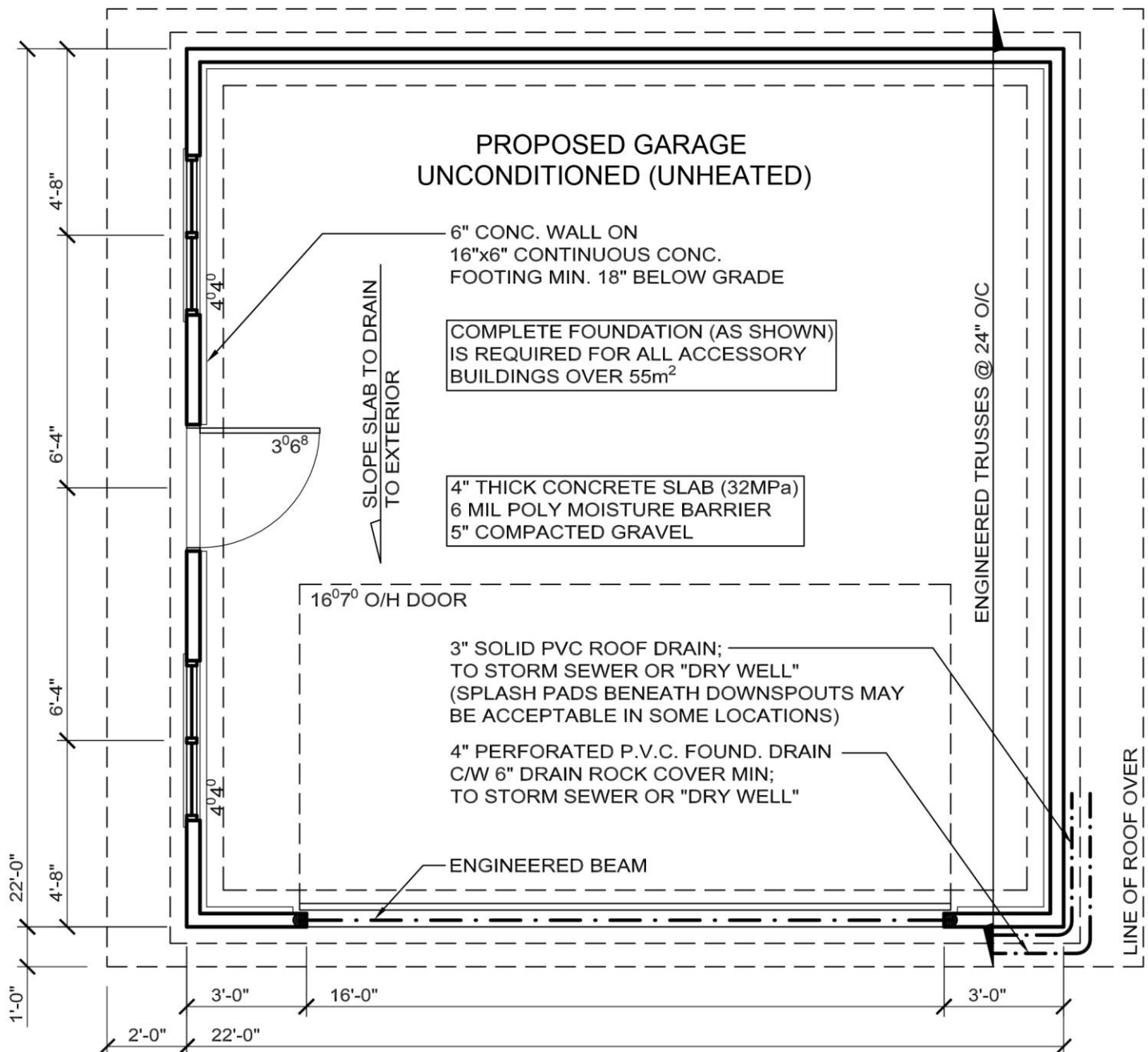
• 30.58 Edge of pavement

SITE PLAN

SCALE: 1 : 250

EXAMPLE STREET

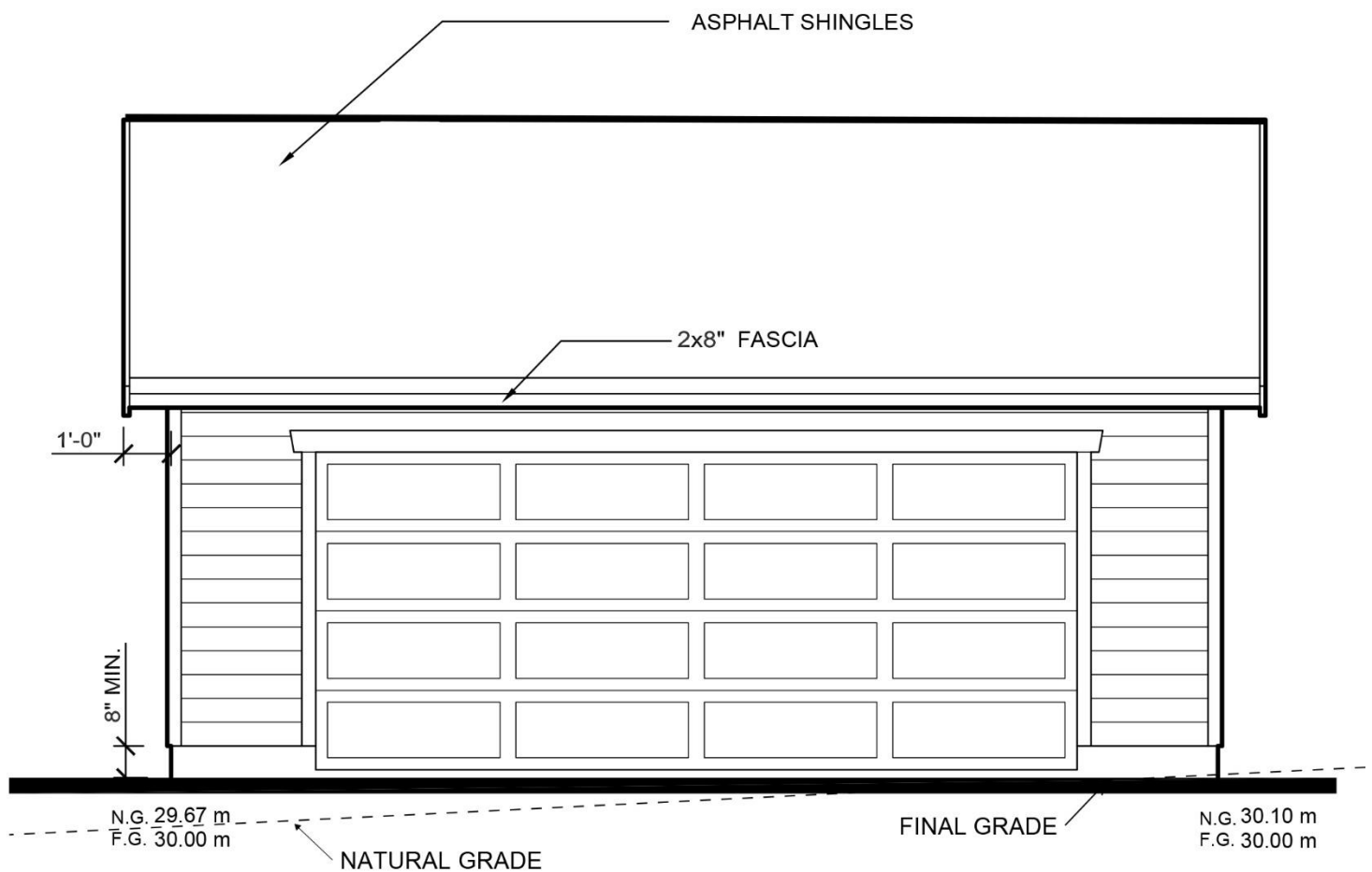
EXAMPLE PLANS ACCESSORY BUILDING ON A RESIDENTIAL LOT



FOUNDATION / FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: $\frac{1}{4}" = 1'-0"$

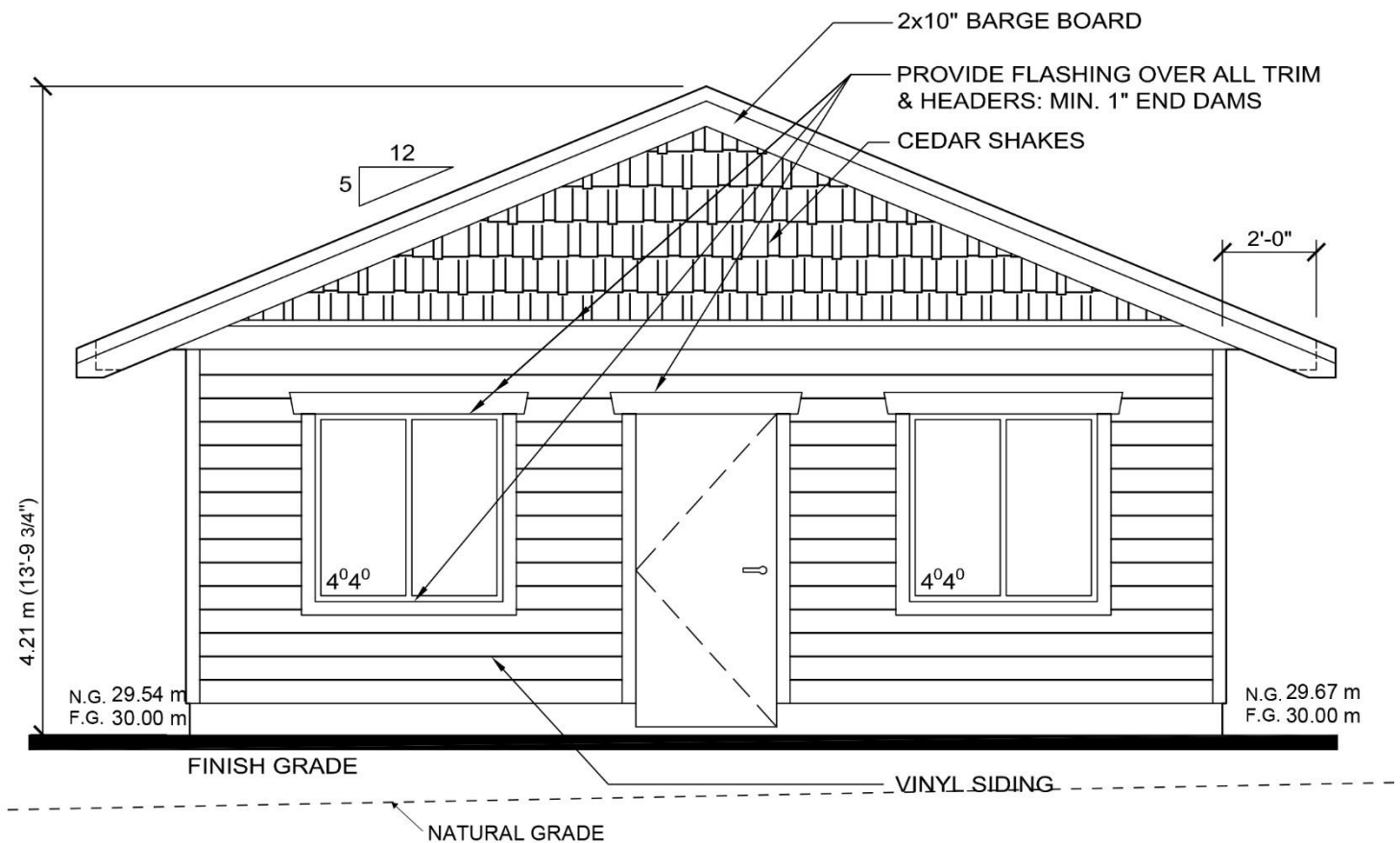
EXAMPLE PLANS
ACCESSORY BUILDING ON A RESIDENTIAL LOT



FRONT ELEVATION

SCALE: $\frac{1}{4}" = 1'-0"$

EXAMPLE PLANS ACCESSORY BUILDING ON A RESIDENTIAL LOT

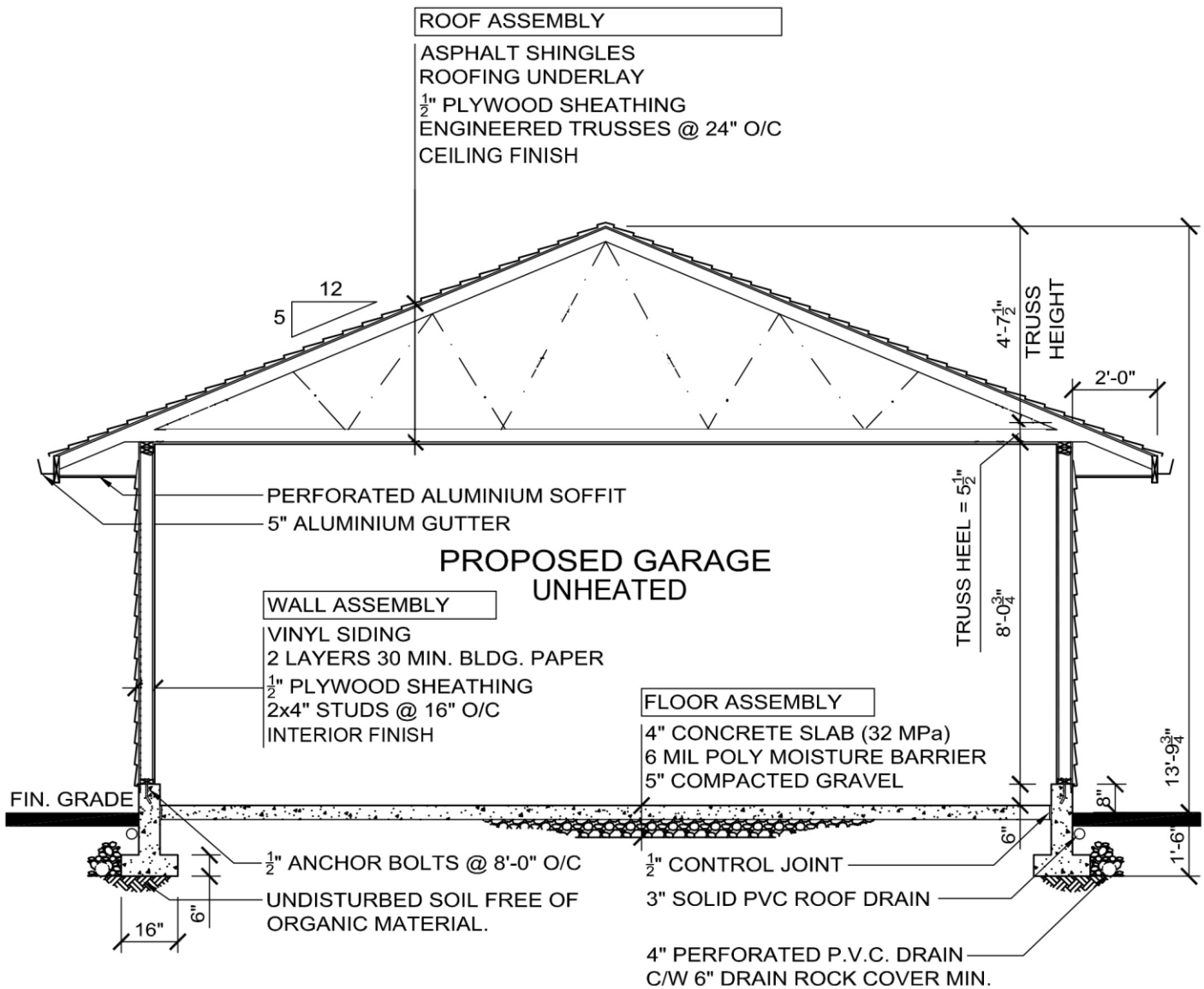


LEFT ELEVATION

SCALE: $\frac{1}{4}" = 1'-0"$

EXAMPLE PLANS

ACCESSORY BUILDING ON A RESIDENTIAL LOT



CROSS SECTION

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"