



CITY OF ORINDA

Development Standards

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The purpose of residential development regulations are to regulate the location, height, appearance and use that may affect the character of quality of residential areas in the City. Use the Development Standards Handout for commonly asked questions regarding property setbacks and building heights. To determine the development standards for any property, you must first determine the zoning district the property is located in. Follow the steps in the [Zoning District Handout](#) to determine the property's zoning district.

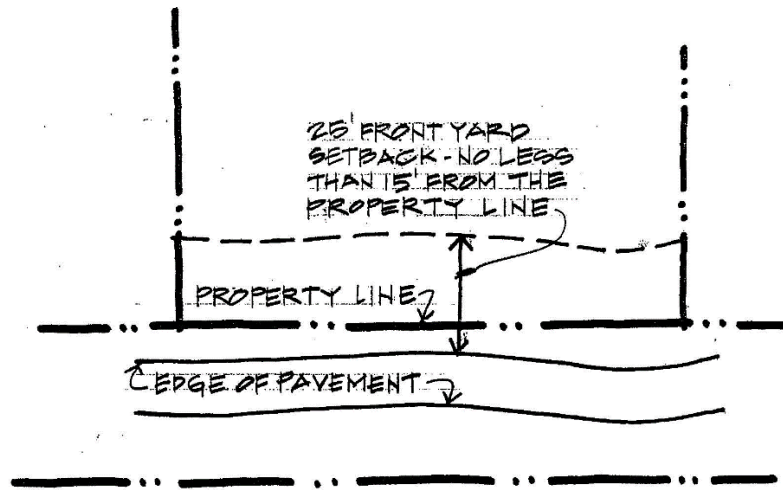
DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS ([§17.4.2](#))

Zoning District	RVL-E	RVL	RL-40	RL-20	RL-15	RL-12	RL-10	RL-6	RM
Minimum Yard Setbacks (feet)									
Front Yard ¹	25	25	25	25	20	20	20	20	15
Side Yard	50	50	15	15	10	10	10	5	10
Total (Combined) Side Yard ²	100	100	40	35	25	25	20	15	20
Rear Yard	25	25	15	15	10	10	10	5	10
Side and Rear Yard with Street Frontage ¹	25	25	25	25	20	20	20	20	15
Maximum Height									
Building Height (feet)	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27
Building Height (stories)	2 ½	2 ½	2 ½	2 ½	2 ½	2 ½	2 ½	2 ½	2 ½
Aggregate Building Height (feet)	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35

¹ The Front, Side and Rear Yard Setback may, at the applicant's discretion, be measured from the edge of the existing paved roadway rather than from the property line (i.e., the right-of-way boundary), provided the resulting setback measures no less than fifteen (15) feet from the property line with street frontage. [See Section 17.4.2 Graphic below]

² The Total (Combined) Side Yard Setback is the combination of both Side Yard Setbacks. The Total (Combined) Side Yard Setback requirement shall not apply to those portions of the property located more than 50 feet from the front property line.

Section 17.4.2 Graphic: Front, Side and Rear Yards with Street Frontage



SETBACKS FOR NONCONFORMING LOTS ([§17.4.4](#))

The following alternative setback requirements shall apply to existing legal lots that do not meet the residential property standards contained in Schedule [17.4.2](#).

- A. *Legal Nonconforming Lot Less Than One Hundred Twenty Feet Deep.* On a legal lot that is less than one hundred twenty (120) feet deep, the minimum front yard setback shall be twenty (20) feet.
- B. *Legal Nonconforming Lot Less Than One Hundred Forty Feet Wide.* On a legal lot with a Front Lot Width of less than one hundred forty (140) feet, the following Side Yard and Total (Combined) Side Yard Setbacks shall apply:

Font Lot Width	Single Side Yard Setback	Total (Combined) Side Setback	Side and Rear Yard with Street Frontage
Less than 140 feet	15 feet	35 feet	20 feet
Less than 120 feet	10 feet	25 feet	15 feet
Less than 100 feet	10 feet	20 feet	15 feet
Less than 80 feet	5 feet	15 feet	15 feet
Less than 60 feet	5 feet	10 feet	15 feet

C. *Rebuilding or Remodeling a Nonconforming Residence.* A structure on a lot which was legal when created may be improved or replaced and a new home may be built on that legally-created lot, subject to the requirements of the Orinda Municipal Code.

WATER CHANNEL (CREEK) SETBACKS ([§17.4.6](#))

Water Channel Types:

- **Type I** - A major channel that receives water from several tributaries and includes, but is not limited to, San Pablo Creek, Moraga Creek, Brookside Creek, and Laterwasser Creek.
- **Type II** - An ephemeral/intermittent or perennial tributary channel that has well-defined channel bed and banks.
- **Type III** - An ephemeral swale or other small channel that is distinguished from Type I and II channels because it does not have well-defined channel bed and banks.
- **Type IV** - A man-made channel, such as a road-side ditch, that occurs where no channel previously existed.

	Channel Type					
	Type I		Type II		Type III	Type IV
Perennial or Intermittent/Ephemeral	–	–	Perennial	Intermittent/Ephemeral	–	–
Side slopes*	Steeper than 2:1	Equal to or Shallower than 2:1	–	–	–	–
Setbacks** (feet)	45	35	45	30	15	0

*Horizontal distance relative to vertical distance

**All setbacks are measured from the top of the bank or from the furthest extent of banks undercut by creek, whichever results in the greatest setback. Where opposing bank heights differ, the lower bank height applies to both sides of the channel for purposes of measuring the side slope and setback.

No structure may be built, except for second story additions that do not encroach into the required setback beyond the existing first floor structure, and no grading is permitted in the setback of a water channel, unless the project meets the following conditions:

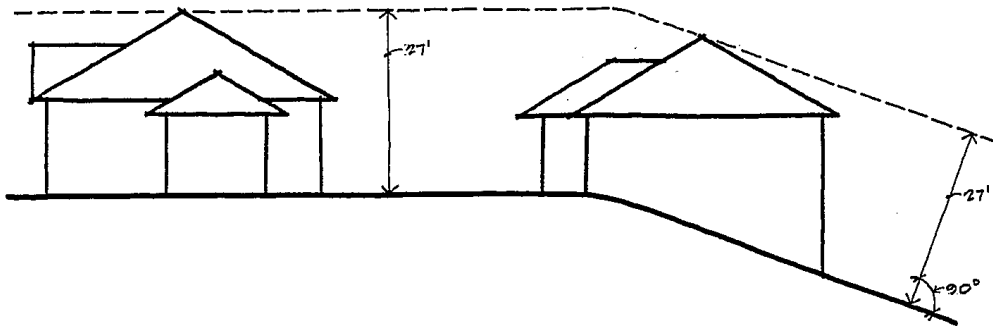
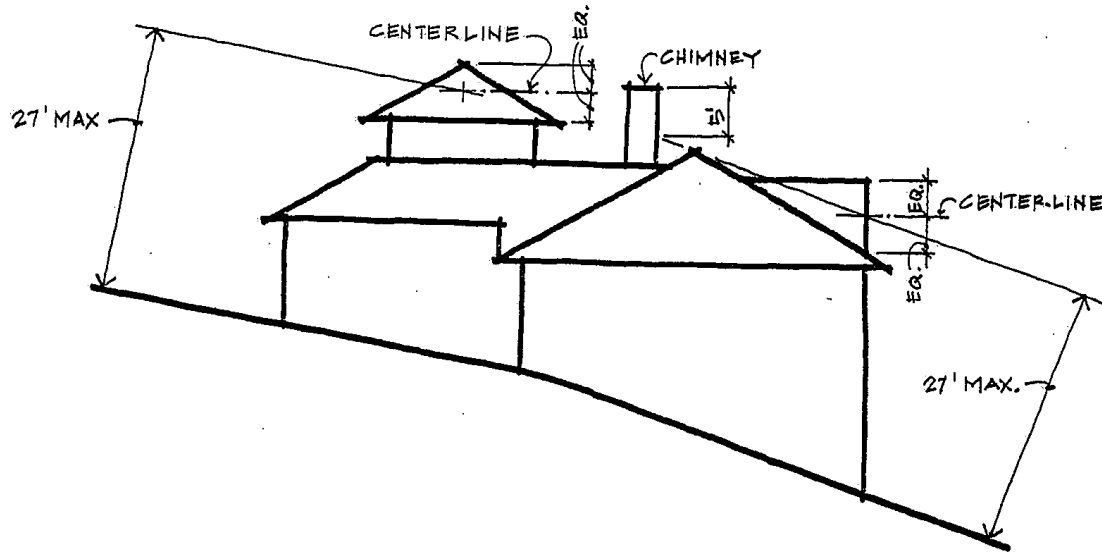
1. The project proponent obtains approval from the City Engineer; and
2. The project proponent is granted an exception under [Chapter 17.32](#).

If a project is proposed on the bank of a water channel or in an area of the site that is undeveloped and in a natural state, then the City may hire a biologist to perform a biotic assessment at the applicant's expense and the decision-maker shall consider the findings of this biotic assessment when reviewing the exception application.

HEIGHT MEASUREMENT (§17.4.19)

The height of a structure shall be measured perpendicular from the existing grade. A chimney may exceed the permitted height by five feet. The height of architectural projections such as towers and dormers, shall be measured to the midpoint between the top plate and the roof ridgeline.

Section 17.4.19 Graphics



AGGREGATE HEIGHT MEASUREMENT (§17.4.20)

The aggregate height of a structure is a plumb line measurement to the highest roof ridgeline taken from the top of the lowest foundation.

Section 17.4.20 Graphics

