

SMBUILD Custom Home Building Cheat Sheet: Sacramento Region

1. Zoning & Local Ordinances (Sacramento Focus)

- **Zoning Codes:** Research zoning laws through the City of Sacramento Zoning Code to ensure the property is suitable for residential construction. Sacramento's Single-Family Residential (R-1) and Multi-Family Residential (R-2, R-3) zones are the most common for custom homes.
- **Property Line Setbacks:** Pay attention to setbacks, which define the minimum distance between the property lines and the home structure. The typical requirement for single-family homes is 5-10 feet from side property lines and 15 feet from the rear.
- **Height Restrictions:** Most residential zones have a maximum height limit of 35 feet for homes in Sacramento, but you should confirm for each property.
- **Flood Zone Considerations:** Check the FEMA Flood Map for properties in flood-prone areas to determine floodplain requirements and potential flood insurance needs.
- **Parking Requirements:** Sacramento generally requires two parking spaces per dwelling (either in a garage, driveway, or combination).

2. Permits & Approvals (Sacramento-Specific)

- **Building Permits:** Apply through the Sacramento Development Services for building permits. All custom homes need approval for building, plumbing, electrical, and mechanical work.
- **Planning Permit:** A Planning Permit might be required for custom homes that are outside the general code or require variances from zoning laws.
- **Design Review Process:** Sacramento requires a Design Review for certain projects, especially for homes in historic or special overlay districts.
- **Stormwater Management:** Sacramento has stormwater regulations that may require detention systems or permeable surfaces to handle runoff, depending on the property location and size.

3. Design & Planning

- **Architectural Design:** Work with a licensed architect to ensure the custom home design is not only aesthetically appealing but also adheres to all local codes. Focus on energy efficiency and green building practices, which are highly valued in Sacramento.
- **Energy Code Compliance:** Make sure designs adhere to the California Title 24 Energy Standards for insulation, windows, lighting, and HVAC. Sacramento is subject to some of the most stringent energy efficiency standards in the state.

- **Site Assessment & Soil Test:** Sacramento's diverse soil conditions (clay, sandy, etc.) can affect the foundation design. Ensure proper soil testing to determine the most suitable foundation system.
- **Accessibility Standards:** If the home is intended for aging-in-place or needs ADA compliance, incorporate wider doorways, accessible bathrooms, and other design elements.

4. Construction Requirements

- **Foundation:** Standard foundations in Sacramento vary from slab-on-grade to pier-and-beam depending on soil type. Be sure to include a soil report as part of your foundation plans.
- **Framing & Roofing:** The framing should adhere to California Residential Code (CRC) standards, and roofing materials should be chosen for fire resistance due to the region's dry climate.
- **Electrical, Plumbing, & HVAC:** All systems should meet National Electrical Code (NEC) and California Plumbing Code standards. Due to Sacramento's summer heat, energy-efficient HVAC systems are essential.
- **Fire Safety:** The region is prone to wildfires, so consider fire-resistant materials (stucco, metal roofing, non-combustible decks) and defensible space requirements for custom homes built in the wildland-urban interface.

5. Utilities & Sustainability

- **Water Supply & Sewer:** If the property is in a developed urban area, water and sewer connections will likely be handled by Sacramento Utility Services. In rural or suburban areas, you may need to install a septic system or a well.
- **Solar Power:** SMBUILD should consider incorporating solar-ready roofs into custom homes, as Sacramento offers significant state and federal incentives for solar power installations.
- **Green Building Certifications:** Sacramento supports LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) and Build It Green certifications. Sustainable features such as rainwater harvesting, gray water systems, and energy-efficient appliances are highly sought after by homeowners.
- **Waste Management:** Sacramento's green building programs require proper waste diversion during construction. Aim to recycle and divert at least 50% of construction debris.

6. Inspections & Compliance

- **Building Inspections:** Schedule required inspections during construction, including for foundations, framing, electrical, plumbing, and final inspections. Be sure to get SMBUILD's licensed inspectors involved.

- **Final Occupancy Permit:** Once construction is completed, obtain a final Occupancy Certificate from the City of Sacramento to ensure everything complies with local codes.

7. Timeline & Budgeting

- **Construction Timeline:** Custom home construction in Sacramento typically takes 8-14 months, depending on the complexity of the design and permitting process.
- **Budgeting:** SMBUILD should set aside 10-20% contingency for unforeseen costs. On average, custom homes in Sacramento range from \$250 to \$500 per square foot, depending on finishes, materials, and complexity.
- **Pre-Construction Costs:** Include costs for surveys, soil testing, site clearing, and any preliminary engineering work in the initial budget.

8. Local Considerations & Trends

- **Sacramento Housing Market:** The custom home market in Sacramento is growing, with demand for both modern and traditional designs. Consider designs that focus on California Contemporary or Craftsman-style homes, as these are popular in the region.
- **Water Conservation:** Due to Sacramento's semi-arid climate, integrating water-saving features like drought-tolerant landscaping and low-flow fixtures is a must.
- **Local Builders' Association:** Consider joining the North State Building Industry Association (BIA) to stay updated on industry trends and to network with other builders in the Sacramento area.

9. Marketing & Client Relationships

- **SMBUILD Branding:** Highlight your expertise in building custom homes that meet Sacramento's unique needs. Focus on sustainability, modern design, and energy efficiency.
- **Client Expectations:** Clear communication with clients is essential. Ensure clients understand the permitting process, expected timelines, and budget parameters. SMBUILD should offer regular updates throughout the project.
- **Showcase Past Projects:** Leverage your portfolio of completed custom homes in Sacramento to attract potential clients. If you haven't already, consider creating a SMBUILD website that showcases your work and testimonials.

Pro Tips for SMBUILD in Sacramento

- **Modular Home Options:** Consider offering modular custom homes to cut construction time and costs without sacrificing quality. This can appeal to buyers looking for faster move-in dates.

- **Fire Safety Focus:** If building in fire-prone areas, focus on fire-resistant materials and defensible space. This is a major selling point for buyers in the Sacramento region.
- **Energy Efficient Homes:** Energy-efficient homes are not only eco-friendly but are also appealing to buyers due to potential cost savings in utilities. Use SMBUILD's expertise in green building to differentiate your custom homes.
- **Strong Relationships with Local Officials:** Develop positive relationships with local permitting and inspection offices to ensure smoother approvals and faster permitting processes.

This SMBUILD Custom Home Building Cheat Sheet for Sacramento is designed to give you a roadmap to successfully navigate the local regulations, market, and construction challenges while ensuring your projects stay on track.