

10 Questions to Ask Any ADU Builder

With Helpful Notes to Guide Your Discovery Process

1. Do you handle the full zoning and permitting process, or will I be responsible for it?

Why this matters:

The permitting process is complex and time-consuming. Some companies leave this entirely to the homeowner. A true full-service builder guides the process so your project stays on track.

2. Are you licensed with the HCRA and legally authorized to build ADUs in Ontario?

Why this matters:

Only builders registered with the Home Construction Regulatory Authority can legally build homes in Ontario. This protects you, your investment, and your warranty rights.

3. Do your builds include Tarion warranty coverage?

Why this matters:

Tarion provides important protection for homeowners. If there are defects or issues after construction, you want guaranteed support, not a builder who disappears.

4. Who completes the zoning study, engineered drawings, and site plans, and how experienced are they with ADUs?

Why this matters:

Many companies outsource these items. That's fine as long as they work with specialists who understand ADUs, the materials being used, and local municipal expectations. A consistent design team reduces mistakes and costly revisions.

5. Will you represent me with the municipality and conservation authority, and what is my role in those meetings?

Why this matters:

Most municipalities require the property owner to attend meetings, but a good builder will lead the conversation, explain the project, and ensure you are supported every step of the way.

6. What is included in your price, and what will I need to arrange separately?

Why this matters:

Some companies appear cheaper because they leave out major items like site prep, inspections, or utility trenching. Understanding exactly what is and isn't included helps you avoid unexpected costs later.

7. Do you manage municipal inspections and communication during the build?

Why this matters:

Inspections are required at several stages. A full-service builder coordinates these and communicates with the city so you don't have to navigate the process alone.

8. If my property needs a minor variance, who prepares the application and attends the hearing?

Why this matters:

Not every builder is comfortable handling variances. A builder who manages this for you helps reduce delays and ensures your project remains compliant.

9. If something goes wrong after the ADU is complete, who do I contact?

Why this matters:

A reliable builder offers support after the build and stands behind their work. If a company sells kits or uses unregulated contractors, you may have no one to call if issues arise.

10. What level of energy efficiency do your builds achieve compared to Ontario Building Code minimums?

Why this matters:

Energy efficiency affects comfort, long-term costs, and resale value. Builders who exceed minimum codes offer a better-performing ADU and lower utility bills.
