

# **BEFORE YOU BUILD:**

## **GETTING THE LAND SURVEYED**

The first drawing and data you will need for your project. Every town requires a certified plot plan.

### **Survey Checklist**

Early in the project, especially where it appears there may be site issues, or for all new construction, the homeowner, or the design professional, will need to obtain a site survey. The following is a checklist of what you will need to do in order to work effectively with a surveyor.

#### **A. Contact Surveyor(s):**

1. Check any site or mortgage plans you may already have for a local surveyor
2. If there have been recent additions, check building department for recent surveys
3. Contact any surveyor you find related to your house to see if they do full site surveys for new homes or additions, and if they have your house/ site information on file.
4. If they don't do full surveys or are too busy or expensive, contact your architect for surveyor company recommendations.
5. Ask about their availability and costs. When can they come out and survey existing conditions?  
How long after that will the drawing be available?
  - a. A reasonable time expectation- depending on the time of year- should be 4-8 weeks.  
Spring is the busy season, so expect delays, and snow or bad weather will affect winter survey schedules.
  - b. A reasonable cost range should be anywhere from \$1000- \$2500, maybe a little more if contours or trees need to be documented.

## **B. Existing Conditions Survey**

Surveyor information request—ask your surveyor to include the following information on their existing conditions survey:

A land survey of existing house should show property lines, and provide setback distances at all corners of the house, including porches, decks and stoops. It often includes other details such as

1. Building dimensions- all sides/ around perimeter of house and garage, porches
2. Building height- max and average, first floor elevation, grade elevation at entry
3. Site contours every 2'-0" (only needed where steep slopes will affect design)
4. Lot coverage and open area calculation (existing)
5. Driveway location, fences and any major trees (with diameter over 10")
6. Scale and north arrow
7. Engineer's stamp
8. The surveyor can send the existing survey plan to you or the architect or both.

## **C. Stake corners of the property**

*TIP: Remember to specifically request that the surveyor stake all corners of the property when they come out to measure.*

## **D. Importance of an Accurate Survey**

This survey is needed early in the project as a tool to determine what will be possible in terms of design options. (The survey is the only accurate document that can be used as a planning tool.

Sometimes a mortgage plan can be off by several feet, or show property lines as straight, that are in fact curved. Or a neighbor's fence might appear to define the property line, actually be a foot or two onto your property, or it may be several feet inside your neighbor's property, causing you to think you have more space than you do.)

### **E. Permit plan- final design survey**

At the end stage of design, when the precise footprint and height of the new home or addition have been determined, the surveyor will need to plot the new construction area(s) on to the existing survey. At this point, the architect can confirm that the design fits within the site setbacks, and meets local zoning requirements. Surveyor info request—ask surveyor for the following information on the final design survey:

1. A land survey of existing house should show property lines, and provide setback distances at all corners of the new house, or additions, including porches, decks and stoops
2. Building dimensions- all sides/ around perimeter of house and garage, porches, decks, pools... (Cross hatch or dot in any portion of the building to be demolished.)
3. Building height, new- max and average, first floor elevation, grade elevation at entry.
4. Lot coverage and open area calculation (new)
5. Driveway location, new curb cuts
6. Scale and north arrow
7. Engineer's stamp and signature

### **F. Town Building Dept Requirements for Original Survey**

Review Building Permit Application form for survey requirements or determine the Town Building Dept requirements for how they want the stamped original survey delivered. (Some towns require that the surveyor print his final survey showing all additions directly onto the Permit Application)

*Survey drawn at 1:20 scale, along with their original stamp and signature.*

1. Inform the Surveyor of this requirement, and get their mailing address.
2. Mail them to the surveyor with a note requesting that they contact the architect for a plan with the final new construction dimensions, or your architect may have you give the surveyor the final plan. (If you act as the middleman just be certain you have all the most recent changes.)
3. The surveyor will need to return one copy to you, signed and stamped.
4. Pass the survey/ permit application on to the builder.

**G. Confirm that the architect gets a copy of the final survey**

Make sure to send the architect a copy of the final survey to review for any possible problems in the final dimensions prior to submitting application.

**H. Notes:**