



GOVERNMENT OF BERMUDA  
Ministry of the Environment, Planning and Infrastructure Strategy

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Department of Planning

## Land Surveys and How They Help

The purpose of this guidance note is to help you understand the importance of land surveys. Surveys help you, your architect, your contractor and technical officers in the Department of Planning.

### **Importance of Land Surveys**

Accurate and up-to-date surveys are critical to the planning, designing, budgeting and construction process. They enable technical officers to be sure that your building project is within the boundaries of your lot and that it conforms to the policies of the Bermuda Plan 2008. Land survey work is carried out by qualified land surveyors who can provide –

- a) an up-to-date survey or deed plan showing the boundaries of your property;
- b) an up-to-date survey showing the topography or slope and shape of your land; and
- c) the 'setting out' for your building project.

### **Deed Plan**

A deed explains, in written form, the size and extent of your land. A deed plan, or site or survey plan, which shows your property as a drawing normally accompanies the deed. Your architect and the technical officers assessing your application need an up-to-date deed plan so that they can –

- Know the actual site area of your property and use this as a basis for calculations such as site coverage; and
- Have the ability to check the location of your proposed building in relation to your neighbour and any adjacent roads.

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### **Topographical Survey**

A topographical survey shows more than the boundary information than you will find on your deed plan. It shows the topography (that is, slope and shape) of your land and the exact locations of existing buildings, tanks, cess pits, trees, rock cuts and walls on your property. This survey is vitally important, in particular, for the contour information it provides. This is because your architect cannot accurately determine the contours of your land from the government's ordnance survey maps or topographic mapping database. Architectural plans based on those maps may be incorrect. House designs based on inaccurate contours can result in over excavation, which can potentially lead to additional, unplanned and costly retaining walls. With a proper, detailed topographical survey, your architect can design a house that takes into account the true site conditions. You can plan and budget for your building project with precision. Technical officers can fully understand and establish the final built form for which you seek permission.

### **Setting out**

Setting out involves having your corner boundary marks posted and the proposed building's footprint flagged at its corners by a qualified land surveyor. Your contractor needs to ensure this is done in order to avoid building too close to your boundary or building on your neighbour's property by mistake. Accurate setting out is equally important for excavation. It allows your contractor to easily see where to make rock cuts and dig holes. The technical officers who carry out building inspections will insist on a land surveyor setting out the project. The setting out process is the first required building inspection.

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