

## *Home Lot Buying Tips*

At **Fine Line Homes**, we want your custom home to be just right, down to the ground it sits on. Buying the proper lot is challenging, but it's just as important to your satisfaction as the house itself. The last thing you want to do is build your perfect home on an imperfect lot.

Our team is ready to help you purchase property that's suitable for the type of home you want to build. But if you'd like to do the legwork yourself or just want to know more about the process, these tips will help you avoid common mistakes and guide you in what to look for and consider as you're viewing lots.

### Size

The size of the lot is perhaps the most basic consideration. Lots look different on paper than they do in person. They can also be deceiving when they're empty, without the home, garage and driveway that will eventually fill them.

It's essential to make sure you'll have enough space for the children to run, or the garden you've always wanted, or the swimming pool you plan to install a few years down the road. To ensure long satisfaction, look into the future and consider how your needs may change, and then take that vision into account when you're choosing a lot.

You can change your home size, but the lot size is usually something you're stuck with. An inadequate lot can throw a wrench into the best-laid home plans.



# Position

In real estate, the mantra is location, location, location. And location is indeed important, but the position of the lot is also crucial when you're building a custom home. It will dictate the style of house you can build, as well as the details of the home's systems.

If you want a walk-out basement, for example, your lot's topography must be amenable to those plans. Want a ranch-style home? They're better suited to a wider lot. A two-story home, however, could be built on a narrower lot.

If you plan to use passive solar energy or solar panels your lot should have limited tree coverage and have proper position to take full advantage of the sun for as many hours a day as possible. If you plan to install a wind turbine, a hill is ideal. Second-best is an area clear of trees and other structures, far from neighbors' homes.

These are just a few of the ways that your lot's orientation and topography can affect what you're able to build.

# Drainage

We've heard the horror stories. A customer buys a lot in the winter, only to discover when spring arrives that it is underwater. Sufficient drainage is another crucial element of choosing the right lot.

Different areas have differing water tables, the point where the ground becomes saturated with water. It's important to know your lot's water table before you build a house with a basement, for instance. The water table height changes with the seasons, and the lot's drainage capacity must be adequate for its highest point.



Ways to determine the water table height range from scientific methods such as examining available data on topography and water tables in the area, to the unscientific method of hiring a dowser, a person who is said to be able to discern where the water is on a piece of property and how close it is to the surface. You can also contact us and we can dig special test pits to determine where the water table is as well as analyze general soil conditions. This should be done regardless before starting any home building project.



## Water

Speaking of water, how will your water requirements be met if you purchase a certain lot? Will you have city water, or will you be using a well? If you use a well, will the area's groundwater supply give you enough gallons per minute? Will the water be suitable for drinking or is there other costs related to water filtration and purification that need to be considered. These are all important considerations as you consider where to build.

## Septic

Water table height and other soil conditions can also affect your septic system design. In areas with high water tables, a special treatment plant with an on-grade or above-grade field might be required. These types of advanced septic systems can cost double the cost of a traditional septic system. Other soil conditions also affect the construction of a septic system, which can increase the system's price. You may be aware of what friends and neighbors have paid for their systems, but that isn't always a good gauge of how much yours might cost. It's largely dependent on the details of your lot, rather than on the size of your home.

## Third Party

To make sure your lot purchase goes smoothly, we recommend that you bring in a third party to look over the details. Even if you've done your homework, a real estate agent has years of experience in making these types of purchases and is an invaluable backstop to see that your interests are protected.

