



### Stratford Office

368 Huron Street, Stratford, Ontario, N5A 5T5

Phone: (519) 271-9923 (1-800-468-1476) Fax: (519) 271-5353

jecstrat@jecinc.on.ca

### What you should be considering....

New home buyers usually have a mental picture of what their new house will look like. They spend time going over the house plans with their builder, making small changes to make sure everything is perfect. Attention should also be given to your new property outside of the house.

In most areas, a lot grading plan is required to get a building permit. This drawing shows your property, its dimensions, the proposed location of your new house, and how the ground around your house will slope. It may also show things like swales, fences, and easements. Your builder may arrange for the drawing to be done, but you should let them know that you want to approve it, because once the lot grading plan has been approved, changing it is a difficult process.

It's important to know that there is a difference between a survey plan (legal plan) and a lot grading plan (site plan). Aside from some legal differences, the lot grading plan shows more information than the legal survey which basically shows property dimensions and bearings. This article concentrates on lot grading plans.

Many people have trouble picturing what the final grading will look like when it's finished. Selecting a professional who will help you through the process is a very good idea. Among other methods, they can show you other lots that are similar to how your finished lot will look.

It is wise for you to ask for any items in the boulevard to be shown. This is not usually required by the municipality, but you don't want to be surprised by a street light right beside your driveway entrance.

Remember, many lots are sold in partially finished subdivisions, so some things may be added in front of your house even after you move in. A reduced form of the subdivision drawings are usually attached to the subdivision agreement that is filed at the registry office. This document is available for the public to review, usually for a small cost. Full sized versions are often split between the municipality's engineering department and the hydro company, but you can ask the person creating your lot grading plan to get that information and show it on the lot grading plan. You may find that the house you would like doesn't suit the lot you have selected.

Some people also wish to have their central air units and hydro and gas meters hidden from view. These items can be shown on the site plan to give you an idea of their visibility from the road.

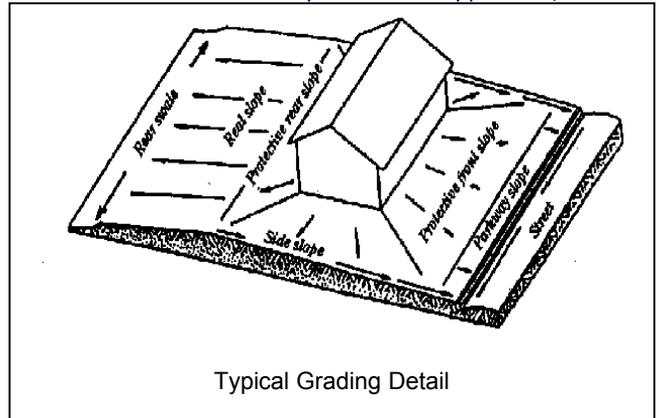
There are four main items that you should look for: steep slopes in locations that would prevent enjoyment of your yards (retaining walls are sometimes a suitable replacement for steep slopes); fences in locations dictated by the subdivision drawings; easements that might prohibit the use of land for structures; and swales. You may also want to find out where rain that falls on your yard goes.

Swales are depressions in the ground. Much like the opposite of the crest of a wave they are named after, they form a trough. Swales, which resemble small open ditches, help transfer water away from your property. They normally follow a property line and you may have one in your back yard or side yard. Swales typically drain a number of yards. It is important that you don't fill in or block the flow of water in a swale, since you would create flooding in your neighbour's yard. If your neighbor's yard floods, sooner or later, your yard will be subject to flooding as well. The location of sheds and gardens shouldn't interfere with swales.

The site plan will also show the source of your drinking water and where your sewage is going. Often these items have more impact in rural areas where things like wells and septic beds can affect the placement of buildings.

Many municipalities hold a grading deposit to ensure that the lot grading plan is followed. They also usually have the legal right to regrade your property to match the approved lot grading plan if you've made unapproved changes. However, they rarely follow this route unless a problem is brought to their attention and damage to another property is expected to be major.

Understanding how your property is going to look before it is built will ensure that you are not surprised by the final product. It also means that you're following some good advice - get it in writing. Time spent in planning before construction starts will help ensure you're able to enjoy your property to the fullest.



Typical Grading Detail