

# Lexington Building Notes

*A series of notes to assist the homeowner/contractor through the permitting and construction process*

## Plot Plan Requirements

Effective 11/13/06

This Building Note has been prepared to provide the property owner, contractor and surveyor with a list of information which must appear on plot plans submitted with building permit applications.

The Lexington Zoning By-Law and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts State Building Code both require submittal of a plot plan to the building department prior to issuance of a building permit. The plot plan must contain all information required by the Building Commissioner to confirm that the proposed project will comply with the Zoning By-Law and the State Building Code.

### What is a Plot Plan?

A plot plan (or site plan) is an accurate, scaled drawing or map of a piece of property showing its size and shape and the size, shape and precise location of man-made features (buildings, structures, drainage easements, fences, walls, driveways, etc.) on the property.

Plot plans show both what currently exists on the site and what physical changes are proposed on the site.

### Mortgage Inspection Plan

A mortgage inspection plan is an approximation of the location of the structure on a lot. It is prepared for bank purposes only. A mortgage inspection plan or an existing plot plan that does not show proposed additions can usually be acceptable for the following types of projects:

- Demolition of existing structure
- Dormers and second floor additions that do not increase the site coverage.
- Decks, minor additions, and minor accessory structures that clearly have sufficient setbacks, allowing for the inherent inaccuracies of a mortgage inspection plan (to be determined by the building official)

You should not alter your mortgage inspection plan by drawing your proposal on the plan. Instead, you should use the mortgage inspection plan as a basis to prepare your own plot plan, drawn to scale, showing your proposed project. Your application for a building permit should include the plot plan and the unaltered mortgage inspection plan.

### ***The following information is required on the plot plan:***

- Address of project
- Owner's name
- Assessor's parcel number
- North arrow
- Identification of the drawing's scale
- Property lines and property dimensions
- Location and identification of any easements
- Identification of adjacent streets (by name), right-of-ways, paper streets, alleys or other adjacent property
- Location and dimensions of all parking areas, driveways, and other paved areas (existing and proposed)
- Location, size and shape of any structures presently on the site and of those proposed for construction.
- Dimensions showing front, side and rear distances from building to property lines, distance between structures, size of structures, porches and decks.
- Dimensions of roof overhangs and other architectural features such as bay windows, chimneys and gutters
- Identification of exactly what work is to be done, including the changes that are proposed to the physical features of the site or existing structures (clearly distinguish existing from proposed features).
- Location, construction material and height of any existing or proposed retaining walls, fences, etc.
- Location of brooks, ponds, drainage ditches, etc.



Where the building official determines that the plan may not be of sufficient accuracy to determine compliance with all applicable rules and regulations, he/she may require that a certified plot plan be prepared by a registered land surveyor.

### Certified Plot Plan

Certified plot plans, prepared and stamped by a land surveyor who is registered in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, are required for the following types of projects:

- All new buildings and structures (including pools)
- Additions and decks, where the setback may be in question (as determined by the building official)
- Fences, walls and retaining walls in excess of 6' in height when located close to the required setback (to be determined by the building official)

***For certified plot plans, the following items are required:***

- Address of project
- Owner's name
- Name, address, phone number and original stamp of Registered Land Surveyor
- Zoning district designation
- Location and description of any easements
- Assessor's parcel number
- Middlesex County recording number for any easements or other pertinent legal features
- Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) information
- North arrow
- Identification of the drawing's scale. Scale must be sufficient to clearly show all required details.
- Property lines and property dimensions
- Identification of adjacent streets (by name), alleys or other adjacent public property
- Proposed plan must be consistent with approved subdivision plan (where applicable)
- Required zoning setback line
- Location, size and shape of any structures presently on the site and of those proposed for construction or demolition
- Dimensions showing existing (if any) and proposed front, side and rear distances from building to property lines, distance between structures, size of structures, porches and decks
- Type of foundation (full basement, slab-on-grade, etc.)
- Show roof overhangs with dashed line. (Note: roof overhang is the total of eave and gutter)
- Dimensions of other architectural features such as stairs, bay windows, chimneys, porches and decks.

- Location, elevations and construction type of all existing and proposed retaining walls and fences
- Identification of exactly what work is to be done, including the changes that are proposed to the physical features of the site or existing structures (clearly distinguish existing from proposed features)
- Brooks, creeks, drainage ditches and any other surface water
- For major construction or demolition (projects subject to the provisions of the Lexington Tree By-Law), show specific location, size and species of all trees at least eight inches in diameter (measured four and one-half feet above the ground) that are located in the required setback area. Show all such trees that are to be removed (include all trees removed in the 12 months preceding the application for a building permit).

***In addition to the above, the following information is required for all new buildings:***

- Names of abutters
- The plan should include the entire lot plus an overlap onto adjacent lots (minimum 20' wide or to the buildings on the adjacent lots)
- Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and site coverage calculations (where required by the zoning by-law; usually required for other than one- and two-family projects)
- Proposed elevations of the footing, the top of foundation and the basement floor
- Existing and proposed grading must be shown on the entire lot (unless it is labeled "to remain undisturbed")
- Existing and proposed grades at the property corners and at the corners of the proposed structure (contour lines in 1' intervals, except in areas steeper than 10%).
- Proposed number of stories and height of structure. Note: the Lexington Zoning By-Law measures stories and height of structures from average natural grade
- General site conditions must be labeled (wooded, meadow, cultivated fields, etc.)
- Wetlands and/or floodplains within 100' of subject lot (project may also require approval of the Conservation Commission)
- Street and/or alley pavement type and widths, or note if unimproved
- Curbs and sidewalks (existing and proposed): type, location, dimensions, elevations
- Size, type and location of sewer and water mains and connections, and drainage connections, both existing and proposed.

- Existing and proposed storm drains, catch basins, water mains, fire hydrants, water meters, power, street light, signal and transit poles
- All other elements between the pavement edge and property line (electrical ducts, electrical vaults, electrical conduits, handholes, ditches, culverts, bus zones, street signs, cable, gas, telephone, etc), both underground and overhead
- Location and dimensions of all parking areas, parking spaces, handicapped parking, and other paved areas (existing and proposed). Existing and/or proposed driveway location, material and slope. For residences, driveway is to be a minimum 5' from property line (dimensioned). See zoning by-law for other requirements.
- Maximum 12% slope is allowed on property. Maximum 1.6% slope is allowed from property line to street pavement. See typical driveway section, available from Engineering Department.
- Location and description of any signage, including handicapped parking and directional signs
- Proposed and existing on-site water disposal systems (drywells), detention systems and/or septic systems.
- When required by the zoning by-law, a separate lighting and landscaping plan may be required (for most non-residential projects)

Some items may be waived by the Building Commissioner if the project is relatively minor.

### **General Information**

It is strongly recommended that drainage leaving the lot not impact neighbors. Any water leaving the lot should be directed to an approved constructed swale or drainage system. Show any proposed swale work on the plan.

### **Plan Submittal:**

For all new buildings, and where otherwise required by the building commissioner, a series of three certified plot plans will be required during the course of the project:

1. **To accompany application for building permit:** Proposed plot plan (with all of the above applicable information)
2. **After foundation has been placed, prior to framing:** As-built foundation plan, showing setbacks to foundation and footing/foundation elevations. Show both proposed and as-built conditions
3. **At project completion, prior to final inspection:** Final as-built final plot plan (with as-

built conditions of all of the above applicable information)

For projects other than new buildings, where the as-built setback might be in question (for example, pools), a proposed and an as-built plot plan may be required by the Building Commissioner.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

*Q: Is my mortgage plan a Certified Plot Plan?*

A: Your mortgage plan may state that it is certified and it may even mention "Plot Plan", but these types of plans are not Certified Plot Plans. Mortgage Plans are used by lending institutions to ensure that there is actually such a property and that the property contains improvements on it. Mortgage Plans are official, but in no manner should they be considered a Certified Plot Plan, due to their inherent inaccuracy.

*Q: Is there a copy of my Certified Plot Plan on file somewhere?*

A: You might be able to find a copy filed with the building department. Sometimes a plot plan is filed with the Registry of Deeds.

*Q: I have a Certified Plot Plan, but it is a few years old. Is it good enough to use?*

A: In some cases, an existing plot plan might be acceptable. However, there may have been changes in the lot, new easements, etc. that do not show on the existing plan. Therefore, for all new construction a new certified plot plan is required. For other less major projects you can often have your "old plan" updated and re-certified by a Registered Professional Land Surveyor.

## **Additional Information**

Links to electronic versions of **Lexington Building Notes (BNs)** and other helpful publications are available on our website at [ci.lexington.ma.us/OCD/Building/Forms.htm](http://ci.lexington.ma.us/OCD/Building/Forms.htm).

Paper copies of these documents are available from our Customer Service desk at Town Hall, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington, MA 02420, 781-862-0500 X211