

## 8. SITING YOUR NEW RESIDENCE II

In the previous chapter we discussed how to pick out the proper house site and road location for your new lot. In this article I'd like to discuss the actual siting of your new house.

The first step is having a clear idea of what spaces need to be incorporated into your new house. Make a list of the rooms required and their approximate sizes, take this to the site, you can then begin to put together the layout of your house. Place the more public spaces like the dining room, living room and kitchen on the southern and western side of the site. The lived in spaces will be much more comfortable with good natural light and heat gain during the cold winter months. Place the more private spaces like bedrooms and bathrooms on the quiet side (away from roads and driveway) of the site and preferably with eastern orientation so you wake up to the sun. Garages should be on the least attractive part of the site and if possible bermed in on the Northside. Closets, utility rooms and other accessory spaces should never be located on exterior walls, they should be ingeniously incorporated internally.

Now that we've determined the rooms needed their sizes and their approximate locations let's look at other site issues. One of the most important issues is balancing cut and fill in the excavation work for your new house. This is achieved by a very basic principal, set a height for your finish floor that matches a contour (a certain ground elevation) that runs approximately through the middle of the house. This means that where the finish floor is below the line of natural grade, the soil will be removed and placed in the areas where the finish floor is above the natural grade. This will save you money by eliminating the need to either import or export soil to the site during construction.

With a finish floor level set you can now look at how the rooms will work together on the site. Maybe stepping down into the Living Room will add a gracious feel to the room if you do this make sure the Living Room is located on the site such that two or three (never more) steps are needed. Never add steps just to have steps in a house unless there are needed for existing grades. Another pet peeve of mine is garage location. Do not make the garage the first thing you see when you drive up to your house. Tuck it back in the corner of the house, let the living spaces of the house be the first visible elements you see as you drive up to the house. This is much more attractive than an 18' garage door.

Another important element is outdoor spaces. When doing your house siting keep in mind that 6-8 months out of the year we have wonderful weather. Make sure you provide areas for developing outdoor spaces either now or later. If your doing yard walls follow existing contours and let the wall match the form of the terrain, if they don't they will look out of place. Think about other things also like where a vegetable garden might go, where the dog run may be, where you will park your boat or RV, where you will stack your firewood. Though these things seem trivial or small the time to look at these things is now.