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JAMAICAN HOME BUILDER'S GUIDE



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JAMAICAN

HOME BUILDER'S GUIDE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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This project has been in development for quite some time and its completion would not have been successful without the support and assistance of our family and friends. Their constant reminders of its need and importance in assisting Jamaicans building their own homes with the vision of raising their families with a sense of pride and dignity has been a driving force in bringing this project to fruition.

Special thanks to Ms. Dionne Palmer and the staff at the Technology Innovation Centre at UTECH for believing in our company and helping us to realise our vision and continuously develop positively in this market place.

If we are able to assist one family realize their building a home, then our goal is achieved.



THE REASON FOR THIS BOOK

PHASE 1: DESIGN

DESIGNING YOUR HOME

- What do Architects do?
- Why should you hire a trained professional?
- Questions to ask yourself before seeing your Architect
- What should you do before engaging an Architect ?
- Choosing your lot
- How to find an Architect
- How to select an Architect
- What do Architects ask?
- What are the different design options available?

GETTING YOUR DESIGN APPROVED

- What do you need for building approval?
- What is the approval process?
- How long will it take and how much will It cost?

PHASE 2: BUILDING

BEFORE YOU BUILD

- Find your team
- Select your builder

MONITORING THE CONSTRUCTION

- Selecting your builder
- Plan your budget
- Negotiate a contract
- Monitor the construction

PHASE 3:MANAGING YOUR COSTS

FACTORS WHICH WILL INFLUENCE YOUR COST

- Size of the house
- Shape of the house
- Reducing wastage(use of materials, efficient use of resources)
- Site preparation
- Cost over runs
- Inflation and market conditions

HOW TO REDUCE YOUR COST

- Some features that cost a bit more
- Material selection
- Choosing devices (what type of devices?)
- Reducing your running cost
- Suppliers

THE REASON FOR THIS BOOK



THE REASON FOR THIS BOOK

1

To give a clear understanding of what architects really do.

Almost every time that we meet with new clients we go through extensive sessions explaining to them and educating them on the design process and the various factors involved in designing their projects. It has been surprising to learn how little most persons really know about what we do. As such, we decided to create a source of information that could be used as a guide for our company's clientele as well as the public at large that would enable an understanding of what architects really do and would in turn assist in development of the profession of architecture in the Caribbean. Our aim is that this guide will provide information that will help educate and sensitise persons wanting to or thinking about building homes in the Caribbean.

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

We are a group of Caribbean architects committed to making high quality architecture by providing information to educate the public about architecture and its relevance to our Built Environment and to creating a sustainable future.

DESIGNING YOUR HOME: HOW TO APPROACH IT

So... you are thinking about building your house?...



DESIGNING YOUR HOME: HOW TO APPROACH IT

2

The house/home is a place for family and loved ones.

While thinking about building your home, there are some important questions you should ask yourself:

WHAT DO ARCHITECTS DO?

Architects typically help you to realise your design objectives and guide you through the design and construction process of your project. The services given by an architect extends much further than producing a set of drawings or blueprints. In fact, blue prints are merely an old way of making multiple copies of hand-drawn technical drawings in the construction industry. You would not be paying for a blueprint-you would be paying for the design. A blue print is just a photocopy.

An architect designs to the clients' specifications and coordinates the entire construction team, selects materials and building systems to achieve production and cost efficiency, ensures building quality standards, and manages the work processes for the team to enable the project to be constructed.

Your architect will analyse your project site (where you would like to build) to determine the following:

1. Best configuration: Your architect will determine the type of house you want and the configuration that best fits your site. For instance, split level, single storey, multi story, or terraced configurations.

2. Best placement and orientation: Your architect will observe and record the best views for placement and orientation for your house on the proposed project site.

3. Ventilation: Your architect will record the wind direction, flow and patterns to ensure that your house is well ventilated and naturally cooled.

4. Solar gain or energy reduction: Your architect would visit and analyse your site and document the sun path to calculate and design your shading devices to reduce the solar gain in your house and consequently reduce your energy costs.

An architect will design your house to your specifications. Your architect will listen to your needs and design your home to fit your needs and lifestyle.

WHY HIRE A TRAINED PROFESSIONAL?

For most persons, building your house is one of the largest and most important undertakings you will ever accomplish in your lifetime. Many people take on twenty five year mortgages or build over many years toward the completion of their homes. The majority of home owners will own only one house in their lifetime. So ask yourself: **if I am going spend all this money building my house, do I want just anyone to do it for me, or do I want someone who is professionally trained and who knows what they are doing?** Also, like most people, if you have a limited budget for the project, **wouldn't you want to get it right the first time and make every dollar count?** Wouldn't you be interested to know ways in which you can save on your construction expenditure? How many horror stories have you heard of persons who bypassed an architect, only to regret it many years and hundreds of thousands of dollars later? Hiring an architect at the start of the home building process saves you time, money, and many of the stresses that come hand in hand with home construction and ownership.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE SEEING AN ARCHITECT

So you've decided that you want to hire an architect. What next?

Here are some important questions that you need to ask yourself before seeing your architect.

Living Requirements:

How do I live?

How many people will reside in this house?

■ Possible answer: 3 - 6 persons

What are their ages, gender and living preferences?

■ Possible answer: Late 30's - male and female, 5 months – male (both must have separate bathrooms)



- Do I like large open spaces or do I prefer a compartmental layout?

Possible answer: Large open spaces

- How long do I anticipate living in this house?

Possible answer: At least 10 years then rent it for income in retirement plans.

- Do you like to entertain or have frequent visitors and guests?

Possible answer: Yes

Design Requirements:

- What are the internal spaces I require? E.g. bathrooms, bedrooms etc.

Possible Answer: 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, kitchen, dining room, living room, foyer

- Which spaces are optional vs. a necessity?

Possible Answer: Optional items – outdoor kitchen, patio, lap pool, family/ games room, bedroom #4 and 5, office, cinema

- Which space is the house is most important to you?

Possible Answer: Master bedroom

- Do you want to complete the house in phases? If so what will comprise each phase of the project? .

Possible answers: It may be necessary to complete in phases; phase 1 comprising of necessary elements and phase 2 comprising of optional elements

- Should your design allow for a future expansion? If so what new spaces would you require?

Possible answers: Office or study, covered space for two more cars

- Is there an architectural style which you prefer?

Possible answer: Mediterranean; Modern with lots of glass to see the amazing view

- Will your design include a pool, hot tub or spa, sport court, greenhouse, guesthouse, detached office or studio, extensive landscaping or extensive interior design

Possible answer: greenhouse, pool

All these questions are essential, as most persons are only able to afford one house in their lifetime. You must therefore think of your house as a customized product that is designed and constructed solely for you. You will be paying for this house and living in it, so it is of utmost importance that it both fits your lifestyle and your living preferences.

Another factor to consider in building your house is climate. The Caribbean has a tropical climate, where we have an abundance of sun, wind, and rain. With worldwide increases in fuel cost, there is an increasing need to design your house in close relation with climate considerations so as to make the home more energy efficient. Why not design your house in such a way to take full advantage of prevailing winds with the introduction of courtyards for cooling and cross ventilation and adopt design measures to reduce solar gain on the building such as building placement and orientation on the site in conjunction with the usage of appropriate materials.

The daily path of the sun is known as it relates to each season, therefore your house can be designed to reduce solar gain (heat) with the use of adequate shading devices and designing appropriate openings sizes, consequently, reducing your dependency on air conditioning for cooling your house. These design considerations take full advantage of the natural climatic factors in which your house is being built and could significantly decrease our daily energy consumption, thus saving you money in the long term. It makes no sense to be penny wise while building your house and pound foolish with its long term expenses.

■ Sun



■ Wind



■ Water



Our climate offers many more opportunities for energy reduction with the installation of solar panels and solar water heaters, as well as water catchment and recycling devices that can provide far more energy than we can possibly need on a daily basis. Instead of spending your resources on oversized rooms and spaces you really might not need, consider spending this money on energy devices that will reduce your maintenance costs, and still allow you to achieve your need to live comfortably.

Most people buy house plan books at their local pharmacy or drive around looking at other houses in an attempt to seek out design ideas for their own house. Some people copy design elements of particular houses, or copy, the design of entire

houses when making decisions to build their own house. While this may sometimes benefit your architect by communicating to him or her ideas about what you feel is visually acceptable, the design presented might not be appropriate for the site that you would like to develop.

Most people pay top dollar for hill side lots with spectacular views and quite often the house neither relates to the slope of the land nor acknowledges the view. It seems a waste to pay for such a site and not maximize it for its chosen use. For instance, what is the sense in creating small windows that hide the view rather than celebrate it? Most of the land that is available for sale are in the mountains, therefore there is an abundance of hill side lots.

It should be considered that building on a slope is more expensive than building on a flat piece of land. Most people take the approach of excavating the hill side by blasting or clearing the land with heavy duty equipment. However, it is cheaper to design your house in relation to the land's attributes rather than trying to fit the land to the proposed house's attributes by blasting and erecting expensive retaining walls. Let the land govern the design of the house rather than the other way around.



WHAT TO DO BEFORE ENGAGING AN ARCHITECT

Being properly prepared is always a wise idea. It is therefore important that you have some idea of what you want before you approach your architect. Be clear about your preference of architectural style, your budget and the spaces you require. It is good to take photographs or collect magazine clippings, tile samples, have an idea of fixtures you would like, and identify architectural features such as hip roofs, mouldings, and stone cladding that you desire. This will allow you to clearly express your requirements, needs, demands, fancy, and desires to your architect and in turn reduce the production time of your design while ensuring that you get exactly what you want. Doing your personal research is to your benefit.

CHOOSING YOUR LOT

Choosing the lot on which you will build your house is very important. When choosing your lot you should take each the following into consideration:

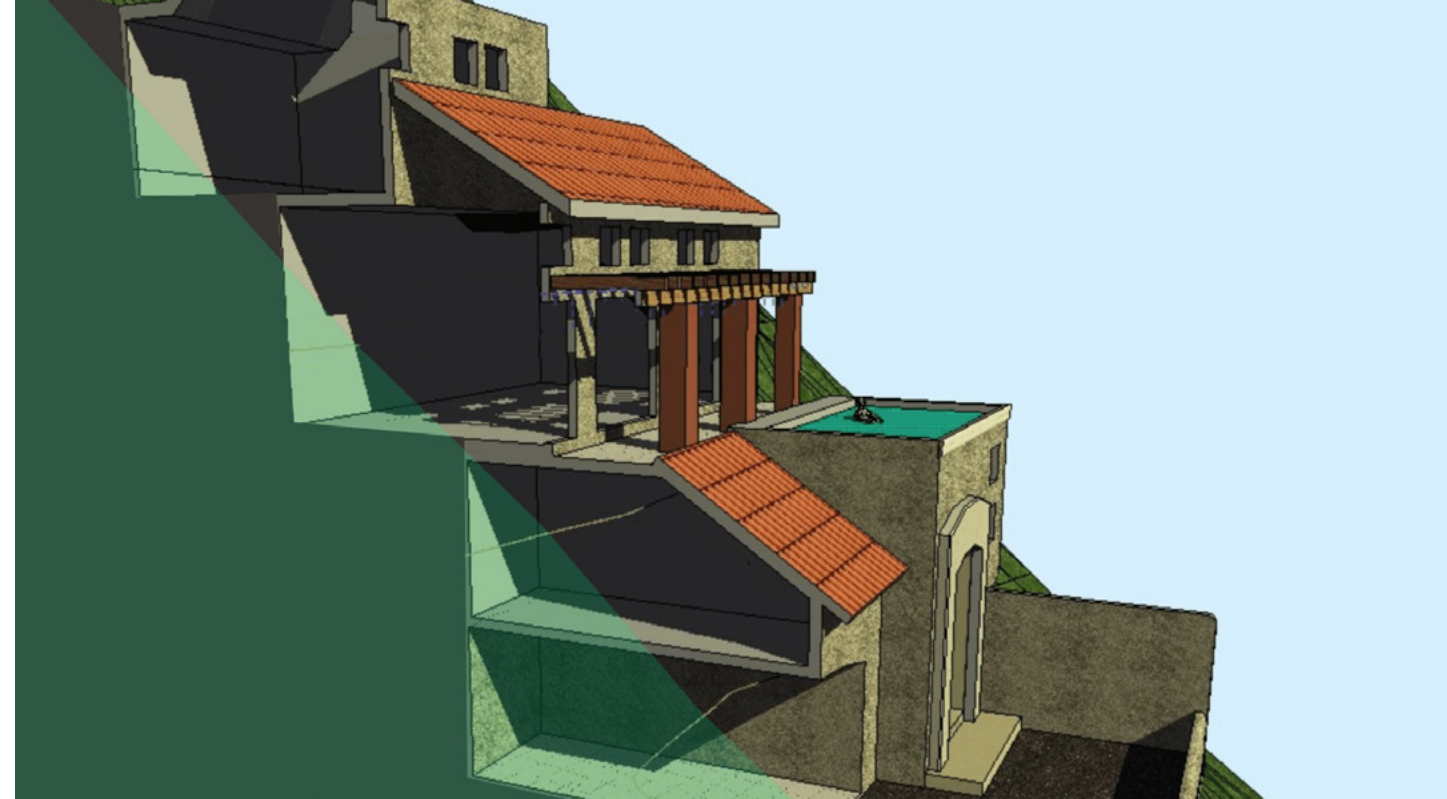
SLOPE

The lot of land that you choose can drastically increase the cost of your construction. Different land conditions have different advantages and disadvantages. Sloping lots tend to have better views because they are elevated above other buildings. Getting, or being able to access great views can be a major selling point in, or an advantage to buying a lot. However, it also involves a more rigorous site preparation process. You may need to pay for blasting of rocks and leveling areas of the lot with heavy duty equipment such as tractors, backhoes and trucks to toe away waste and rubble. The rental of this equipment can be very costly and increases your construction cost tremendously. You may also have to construct retaining walls and culverts to catch and direct rain and storm water from roofs and hard ground surfaces.

Flatter plots of land often times do not offer you a view, but they have provide the advantage of not having to spend a lot of your construction budget on preparing the land for the construction of your project.

ACCESS

Means of access to your lot can influence the design of your house. The terrain of the land will dictate the point of entry to your lot. Your access will consequently affect where you place the entry to your house and how you traverse or circulate from one area to another internally. It will also affect



Let the land govern the design of the house rather than the other way around.

the slope or steepness of your driveway and your experience in traversing, such as the ability to turn and reverse vehicles into and out of your lot.

RESTRICTIONS

What is the prevailing architectural style of the area? Is it a Spanish style, Mediterranean style .etc? In some residential areas there are strict agreements (covenants) that govern the architectural style of the buildings, height of the house, number of stories, colours to paint external walls and roofing materials to be used in the design and construction of your house.

Size and Proportion-What is the proportion between the size of your house and your lot? If you build out to the boundary your house becomes imposing and the beauty of the design can be lost. Why not leave green spaces for recreation to be enjoyed by children and family? Green spaces can also be on your roof if you have limited land to play with on the ground. Building a green roof is great design option.

Geography-What are the geographical features such as wells and water courses that might affect the design of your house? If you have a well on your property it still belongs to the government and it cannot be claimed as your own although it is on your land. If you are buying a beach front property, the beach is still public property and owned by the government and you now have to think about how you control access from the beach by or from your house and from passerbys.

HISTORICAL VALUE

If you buy a property whether in a city, or in the country side with a historic (old) building, there may be reasons for concern. If there is a historic building on your lot you may not be able to demolish or significantly change its appearance because it is of, or possesses historical and/or social history, and cultural value and significance. It is important to verify with the local historic and preservation societies in your country if the building is on their lists for historical significance and value. There have been cases in the past where persons have bought lots with the intention of demolishing a derelict structure only to find out that it's a protected building (although unpreserved) and therefore were not allowed to develop their land in the way they had intended. This occurrence could cause you to lose on your investment.

LAND CONDITIONS

Soil and Stability: No it's not only dirt. The type of soil on your lot can significantly affect the construction cost of your project. Different types of soil have different bearing capacities. Bearing capacity is the ability of the soil to withstand the loads (weight) of the house without significant displacement/movement. If the bearing capacity of your soil is low it may affect the type of foundation system you use, i.e., a strip, raft, piers or pile foundations. Some foundation systems are more expensive than others and depending on the soil quality it may not make economic sense to build on the lot but instead to sell it. The foundations may cost more than the house itself and this may not be the most cost effective way of building. Another question to ask yourself is if your lot has a history of, or is prone to landslides?

Water Drainage: Is your house near a river, beach or stream? If so, this could mean that you might be at risk of, or prone to overflows and flood damage. You might have to consider raising your house off the ground to allow for water to run off and under the house towards its natural flow and direction. If your house is being placed on a lot that has a history of being a drainage course or water shed you may need to design special features to redirect the water so as to prevent the destruction of your investment and personal property.

Devon House in St. Andrew, is a prime example of a building protected, owing to its historical significance. ►



NOISE

Depending on where your lot is situated you could have to face the possibility of noise from various sources. Is your lot near an airport, highway, or major roadway? This would need to be taken into consideration when designing your house in order to limit the amount of noise that enters the building. To constantly be exposed to or inconvenienced by external noise can be very uncomfortable, distressing, irritating and torturing especially when trying to rest.

ZONING, BUILDING CODES AND REGULATIONS

Zoning: Zoning requirements regulate what can be built in particular areas of a city or rural area in order to control the development of the built environment. You need to investigate the zoning requirements affecting or applicable your lot. What may have been a great view can easily disappear with the construction of a new high way , large scale housing development or commercial complex in front or beside your lot, thereby decreasing the

value or features of your lot. Your zoning regulations will stipulate what may be constructed legally in your surrounding area.

Building codes: Building regulations are legal stipulations, ordinances and requirements that ensure correct methods of construction which ensures consistency in construction, and safety for the occupants of the house or dwelling. These are often times reinforced by your local planning authorities and parish councils. These regulations will specify standards for how close you can build to the boundary of the property, beach, rivers and neighbouring lots, concrete mixtures, reinforcement for floor slabs roofs and finishes. Your design cannot be approved if any of these regulations have not been adhered to.



HOW TO FIND AN ARCHITECT

Finding the right architect to design your house or building project can be a daunting task for most clients but there are simple methods that you can use to make your selection simple.

1. You can find an architect to design residential, resort, and commercial building types in a local telephone book or the local architects associations (e.g. Jamaica Institute of Architects).

**Office no.1, Ground floor,
Incorporated Master builders Building
5 Oxford Park Avenue, Kingston 5
P.O. Box 251, Kingston 10, Jamaica, W.I.
Tel: 926-8060,
email:jia@cwjamaica.com**

2. For restoration projects you can contact local historical societies (to assist in maintaining your buildings historic and social value). E.g. Jamaica National Heritage Trust (website www.jnht.com).
3. You can verify if your architect is certified to practise by contacting the Architect's Registration Board of Jamaica and confirm his/her license to practice architecture in Jamaica (website www.arb.com/jm).

HOW TO SELECT AN ARCHITECT

In order to design/build your customised designed home you have to take the following into consideration:

1. Each architect has a different design approach and style.
2. Your project will take several months to be realised and you will have to work closely with your architect during this time. You should therefore choose someone that you can communicate with, and someone that will be willing to listen to your requests and give you honest and objective advice that will positively address your needs and desires.
3. Interview your architect. Ask to see their portfolio, software used in the production of the design; ask about their design process and what makes them different and why they are the right choice for your project.



4. It helps to know what you want in order to identify which architect can fulfil your needs.
5. Identify a house that you like and ask the owner, friends or neighbour about the architect and their experience working with them.
6. Request literature that describes the firm's design philosophy, specialisation, qualification and experience. Ask how long the project will take and if you are being cued. If you are borrowing money to finance your project this could significantly affect the interest paybacks of your project, if you have a long time to wait for its design and production.
7. Discuss fees and anticipated construction cost of your project.



WHAT DO ARCHITECTS ASK?

Your architect will want to know about how you live daily. He or she will be interested in your habits, rituals, wants and dislikes. Even if you are working on a tight budget, it makes no sense to cut on the design process - after all you will have to live with all of the choices that you have made. Design changes in construction are costly, so you really do not want to make any bad decisions or regrettable mistakes.

1. **Your architect will ask some of the following questions to begin your project:**
2. How do you live and how do you need to live?
3. Your architect will enquire about your daily routine in order to see how you use your
4. space.
5. What architectural style would you like the house to be designed in?
6. How much time do you spend in each room every day?
7. Do you need separate areas for entertaining, computer usage, studying?
8. What do you like or dislike about the house you currently live in?
9. How long do you plan to live in this house?
10. What is your budget?
11. Do you want to construct your house in phases?
What security measures you would like to be incorporated into the design?
Is it a weekend home for short term usage?

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT DESIGN OPTIONS?

- A. A custom designed plan is one that is designed by architects to meet the precise specifications of the client who commissions the project. This usually takes considerably more time (as much as 300hours) to produce, as it involves client interviews presentations and collaboration of various construction professionals involved in a project team, all working towards the single goal of meeting the needs of an individual client.



B. A pre-designed (stock) plan is one that is not custom designed but instead sold to many different people. They are usually pre drawn or designed to, and can be ordered from a catalogue, magazine or website.

C. A customisable (predesigned) plan facilitates minor modifications by changing the windows, door types, colours, sliding a door, adding a dormer roof and so on. However, it is still not considered or classified as a “custom design”. A customisable design is not commissioned by an individual but rather designed for and made available to many persons/potential client(s).





GETTING YOUR DESIGN APPROVED

3

WHAT IS THE BUILDING CODE?

Building codes are standards in different countries or regions which are put into place to create and ensure the structural safety of buildings. They are laws and regulations established and enforced by government, usually reinforced through your city or local parish council. However, some parishes may have additional requirements, more stringent regulations because of climatic or geographic conditions specific to that area. If you live in the earthquake, flooding plains or the hurricane high risk areas there will be more stringent regulations to construct a building to ensure occupant safety. The building code includes information about fire prevention and safety, structural requirements, water supply and waste removal and drainage etc.

WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS?

Getting building approvals is a process of checking your design to see if it is in breach or of the standards outlined in the building code. Your design is sent into the local parish council or building regulation department to be checked by individuals who should be knowledgeable about the building code of the country to make an assessment of the information presented in the design. All the checks are not often times done in the same place and therefore copies of the design have to be sent to different agencies to check

GETTING YOUR DESIGN APPROVED

- *Unregulated buildings along a gully bank.*



- *Kingston & St. Andrew's Regulatory Body KSAC.*



and verify different things. Your design or construction drawings are sent to agencies such as National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA), Ministry of Health, Fire Department, and National Works Agency (NWA) to name a few. Each agency will check for particular things in relation to the regulations they enforce and issue approvals or rejection based on the relating information presented on the drawings submitted by your architect.

WHAT DO YOU NEED FOR BUILDING APPROVAL?

Information needed for your building approval.

1. **Completed application form.**
2. **Minimum of 4 copies of building plans** or construction documents. (All residential plans are to be drawn to a minimum scale of 1:75).
3. **Title Blocks** on all drawings to include the following information:
 - Sheet numbers
 - Name of applicants
 - Name of architect and contact number
 - Date drawing was done
 - Type of development
 - Address of proposed development
 - Size of building
 - All necessary notes** as it relates to construction/design.

Proof of Ownership: to include a certificate of title, current tax receipt and sales

4. agreement, parent title, current tax certificate and land diagram or letter from attorney relating to the transfer of property and current tax receipt.
5. **Fees and Charges:** the cost to submit your plans to the building authorities are calculated based on the gross floor area and type of the building stated on the plan by the architect and verification by the authorities. (E.g. residential, commercial, etc.)

An Architect will provide you with a lot more information than the basic requirements for submitting for building approval. This information is needed to do a proper costing for the project and to develop the project accurately and to the right standards and specifications. An example of this additional information is door and window schedules, bathroom and kitchen elevations and details, finishing and painting schedules, fixture and equipment schedules, ironmongery schedules etc.

The Typical list of basic drawings needed for approval of a residence is:

1. Site plan
2. Floor plans (scale 1:50)
3. Sections (minimum of two (1 longitudinal and 1 cross-sectional) at scale 1:50).
4. Minimum of four elevations for new houses.
5. Foundation plan (scale 1:50) showing column pads, stiffeners and footings.
6. Structural details (scale 1:20) this must include footing details, lintel, beams, stiffener details and staircase reinforcement.
7. Roof plan (scale 1:50) showing all structural members (sizes, spacing, roof pitch etc. and reinforced concrete roof slab).
8. Electrical plan (scale 1:50) and legend indicating placement of fixtures and outlets.
9. Drainage Plan (scale 1:50) and legend indicating placement of all sewage and waste water components.
10. Drainage details (scale 1:50) :septic tanks, manholes, trap gully basins, tile fields.

N.B. Typical information that would be shown for a Site plan on a set of approval drawings are as follows:

Define on site plan all survey pegs to the lot.

Show all areas of impermeable site coverage showing all the trees over 6m in height and 600mm in girth.

The length and bearing of all boundaries.

The existing site sanitary and storm water drainage and the proposed method of sanitary and storm water drainage shown.

Permanent site datum, finished levels of ground and floors related to datum boundary levels sufficient to check height to boundary.

Existing land contours at a maximum of 3m increments.

Any existing or proposed buildings to be clearly defined and dimensioned from boundaries and other buildings.

Plumbing layout and position of sanitary drains, septic tanks, absorption pits, soak away pits, tile fields to be shown and their distance relative to boundaries to be stated.

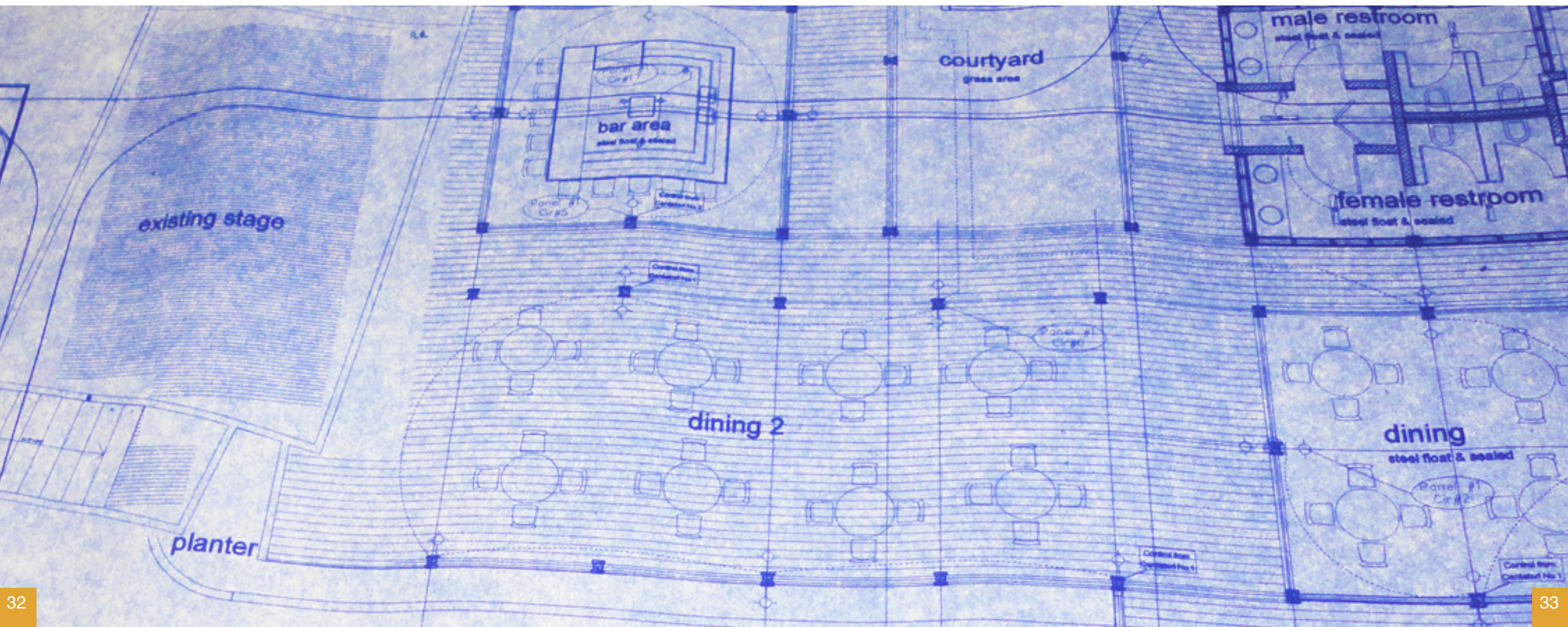
Provide details of vehicular access and where applicable car parking spaces and vehicular manoeuvring on the property.

Dimensions must be shown for parking spaces.

The North point.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE AND IT COST?

See Overleaf ▶



INFORMATION FOR BUILDING APPROVALS FOR ALL PARISH COUNCILS IN JAMAICA



KINGSTON & ST. ANDREW

WHAT IS THE COST PER SQ. METER FOR SUBMITTING A RESIDENTIAL PLAN FOR APPROVALS?

The cost of the plan depends on the zone in which the building will be located; different rates are applied to different zones, which are highlighted on a map not available to the public. The KSAC, upon receiving an application, makes an assessment to determine the cost associated with the plan based on the zone, as well as the type and location of the building.

HOW MANY COPIES OF CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS DO YOU NEED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL?

Single family dwelling (SD): 4 copies of drawings are needed (fire approval is not required); commercial developments (CD), such as a townhouse, and subdivisions need 6-8 copies (prior fire approval must be granted).

HOW LONG WILL THE APPROVAL PROCESS TAKE?

A single family dwelling may take 90 days while a development can take longer depending on how well the drawings were done, the applicant's response to requests for amendments and the turnaround time of the external bodies that must also approve/ review the drawings namely the Ministry of Health (MoH), NEPA, Mines & Geology Department, NWA and TCPA.

WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS (WHERE DO THE DRAWINGS GO)?

Single family dwelling: an application is submitted to the Planning and Building Department and a final decision made at the approval meeting. Development: same as for the single family dwelling, except the drawings and application are also forwarded to MoH, NEPA, Mines & Geology, NWA and TCPA for review/ approval before being presented at the approval meeting.

WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE SET OF DRAWINGS FOR THEM TO BE APPROVED?

The architect will know what should be on the drawings – it would be all the items on a standard drawing. A complete listing is available at the KSAC Registry, which is on the ground floor of the Parish Council building.

WHAT DAY OF THE MONTH ARE APPROVAL MEETINGS HELD?

Two approval meetings are held every month on the first and third Wednesday.

CLARENDON		
WHAT IS THE COST PER SQ. METER FOR SUBMITTING A RESIDENTIAL PLAN FOR APPROVALS?	HOW MANY COPIES OF CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS DO YOU NEED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL?	HOW LONG WILL THE APPROVAL PROCESS TAKE?
SD: \$112.00 per Square meter CD: \$112.00 per square meter Plus \$1,000 for inspectio	SD: 4 copies; CD: 8 copies	6-8 weeks (was usually 2-3 months but they are working on reducing this)
WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS (WHERE DO THE DRAWINGS GO)?	WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE SET OF DRAWINGS FOR THEM TO BE APPROVED?	WHAT DAY OF THE MONTH ARE APPROVAL MEETINGS HELD?
The application is submitted to the Parish Council where it is forwarded to two departments - Health (checks for sewage) and Road & Works (check for structural detail) for a SD and five departments – Health, Road & Works, NEPA, Fire and NWA for a CD.	The usual details such as roof, elevation, location, eve, drainage, all structural details and parking (for commercial residential developments).	Meetings are held once per month on the first Thursday

HANOVER		
WHAT IS THE COST PER SQ. METER FOR SUBMITTING A RESIDENTIAL PLAN FOR APPROVALS?	HOW MANY COPIES OF CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS DO YOU NEED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL?	HOW LONG WILL THE APPROVAL PROCESS TAKE?
SD: \$120 per square meter; CD:\$200 per square meter plus \$3000 for inspection (single-storey) or \$6000 for inspection (two + storeys).	6 copies – this number may vary depending on location and structure but 6 is usually the maximum required.	SD: 4-6 weeks if outside Negril (if the area is within the Green Island to Negril area then an application must first be made to the Green Island Planning Authority and then the parish Council) and everything is ok; CD: 2-3 months because the plans must be submitted to the Kingston Fire Department.
WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS (WHERE DO THE DRAWINGS GO)?	WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE SET OF DRAWINGS FOR THEM TO BE APPROVED?	WHAT DAY OF THE MONTH ARE APPROVAL MEETINGS HELD?
The application is submitted to the Parish Council (PC) and reviewed by their internal Road & Works Department (building officers do a site and structural integrity check) and MoH (who check ordinance); CD: the documents are submitted to the Fire Department, MoH, Road & Works and NWA (depending on the location and if it deals with a highway entrance)	The architect will know what should be on the drawings – it would be all the items on a stand-ard drawing. A complete listing is available at the KSAC Registry, which is on the ground floor of the Parish Council building.	Once per month on the first Tuesday.

MANCHESTER

WHAT IS THE COST PER SQ. METER FOR SUBMITTING A RESIDENTIAL PLAN FOR APPROVALS?	HOW MANY COPIES OF CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS DO YOU NEED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL?	HOW LONG WILL THE APPROVAL PROCESS TAKE?
SD: \$110 per square meter; CD: \$150 per square meter Plus \$1,600 for inspection.	SD: 3 sets; CD: 5 sets (for multi-family & commercial) depending on road access because they might need to go to NWA.	SD: 6-8 weeks; CD may take longer
WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS (WHERE DO THE DRAWINGS GO)?	WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE SET OF DRAWINGS FOR THEM TO BE APPROVED?	WHAT DAY OF THE MONTH ARE APPROVAL MEETINGS HELD?
Application is made to the PC where it goes to the Supt. First (for cost) then to the Planning Department (of the PC); CD: also goes to Fire Dept, Health Dept and sometimes NEPA and NWA depending on the road access and the type of structure.	Standard set of drawings and proof of ownership.	Once per month on the third Thursday.

PORTLAND

WHAT IS THE COST PER SQ. METER FOR SUBMITTING A RESIDENTIAL PLAN FOR APPROVALS?	HOW MANY COPIES OF CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS DO YOU NEED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL?	HOW LONG WILL THE APPROVAL PROCESS TAKE?
SD: \$150 per square meter; CD: \$200 per square meter. Plus \$8,600 for inspection	SD: 3 or 4 copies (the applicant will receive 1 or 2 approved copies); CD: 7 copies	SD: 4-6 weeks; CD: can't say how long because of NEPA and NWA involvement.

PORTLAND CONTINUED

WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS (WHERE DO THE DRAWINGS GO)?	WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE SET OF DRAWINGS FOR THEM TO BE APPROVED?	WHAT DAY OF THE MONTH ARE APPROVAL MEETINGS HELD?
The application is submitted to the PC and reviewed by Health and Road & Works (usually have good turnaround times); CD: application is reviewed by Health, Road & Works, NWA, NEPA and Fire Department	Proof of ownership, up-to-date tax receipt and standard drawing set.	Once per month on the second Tuesday.

ST. ANN

WHAT IS THE COST PER SQ. METER FOR SUBMITTING A RESIDENTIAL PLAN FOR APPROVALS?	HOW MANY COPIES OF CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS DO YOU NEED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL?	HOW LONG WILL THE APPROVAL PROCESS TAKE?
SD: \$120 per square meter; CD: \$190 per square meter Plus \$4,500 for inspection.	SD: 3 copies; CD: 6-8 copies	SD: 8-10 weeks; CD: 10-12 weeks
WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS (WHERE DO THE DRAWINGS GO)?	WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE SET OF DRAWINGS FOR THEM TO BE APPROVED?	WHAT DAY OF THE MONTH ARE APPROVAL MEETINGS HELD?
Application submitted to PC, reviewed by Health and Road & Works; for CD: Health, Road & Works, Fire Dept, and maybe NEPA & NWA.	Draughtsman/ architect will know what to put on the drawings; SD: 2 copies of proof of ownership and 2 copies of the surveyor's diagram/ report; CD: 3 copies of proof of ownership and 3 copies of surveyor's diagram/ report.	Once per month on the second Tuesday.

ST. ELIZABETH

WHAT IS THE COST PER SQ. METER FOR SUBMITTING A RESIDENTIAL PLAN FOR APPROVALS?	HOW MANY COPIES OF CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS DO YOU NEED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL?	HOW LONG WILL THE APPROVAL PROCESS TAKE?
SD: \$100 per square meter; CD: \$150 per square meter	SD: 5 copies; CD: 5 copies usually, unless plans have to be sent to NEPA because of drainage issues. Plans for Santa Cruz are automatically sent to NEPA because of drainage issues.	SD & CD: 6-8 weeks, depending on time of submission (if an application is submitted close to the approval meeting then it will have to wait until the next month's meeting to be approved, after going through due process).

WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS (WHERE DO THE DRAWINGS GO)?	WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE SET OF DRAWINGS FOR THEM TO BE APPROVED?	WHAT DAY OF THE MONTH ARE APPROVAL MEETINGS HELD?
Application submitted to PC and reviewed by Health and Road & Works; CD: MoH, Fire Dept, and sometimes NEPA and NWA (certain areas are marked as drainage problem areas and plans for these areas are automatically sent to NEPA.	Drawings, proof of ownership, 2 application forms (they only request a tax receipt if the Title is not yet in the applicant's name eg. common law relationships).	Once per month on the first Wednesday.

ST. JAMES

WHAT IS THE COST PER SQ. METER FOR SUBMITTING A RESIDENTIAL PLAN FOR APPROVALS?	HOW MANY COPIES OF CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS DO YOU NEED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL?	HOW LONG WILL THE APPROVAL PROCESS TAKE?
SD: \$120 per square meter; CD: \$200 per square meter plus \$4000 site inspection fee, regardless of size or type of residence.	SD: 4 sets; CD: 6-8 sets	One month (depending on how long it takes to get a signature)

ST. JAMES CONTINUED

WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS (WHERE DO THE DRAWINGS GO)?	WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE SET OF DRAWINGS FOR THEM TO BE APPROVED?	WHAT DAY OF THE MONTH ARE APPROVAL MEETINGS HELD?
Application submitted to PC and reviewed by Health and Road & Works; CD: reviewed by Fire Dept, MoH, NEPA and sometimes NWA if it is on the roadway.	Title, surveyor's ID/ sketch plan, letter from lawyer	Once per month on the first Thursday.

ST. MARY

WHAT IS THE COST PER SQ. METER FOR SUBMITTING A RESIDENTIAL PLAN FOR APPROVALS?	HOW MANY COPIES OF CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS DO YOU NEED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL?	HOW LONG WILL THE APPROVAL PROCESS TAKE?
SD: \$150 per square meter; CD:\$180 per square meter	SD: 3 copies; CD: up to 10 copies (depends on number of storeys, location, main road, development area etc) – NEPA gets 5 copies, Fire Dept 2 copies and so on.	SD: 6-8 weeks; CD: up to 6 months depending on the type of commercial agency and if they have to consult with external entities.

WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS (WHERE DO THE DRAWINGS GO)?	WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE SET OF DRAWINGS FOR THEM TO BE APPROVED?	WHAT DAY OF THE MONTH ARE APPROVAL MEETINGS HELD?
Application is submitted to the PC who will then forward it to the relevant bodies and departments and have the approval meeting.	Proof of ownership and up-to-date land tax	Two meetings per month; one is tentative and is held on the first Thursday of every month and a guaranteed meeting on the third Thursday of each month.

TRELAWNY

WHAT IS THE COST PER SQ. METER FOR SUBMITTING A RESIDENTIAL PLAN FOR APPROVALS?	HOW MANY COPIES OF CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS DO YOU NEED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL?	HOW LONG WILL THE APPROVAL PROCESS TAKE?
SD: \$120 per square meter; CD: \$196 per square meter plus \$2500 site inspection fee for up to 300 square meter & \$5000 over 300 square mete	SD: 3/ 4 copies; 7 copies (min)	6 – 8 weeks; same time frame for both SD and CD once there are no problems and the external agencies return the application in a timely manner.

WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS (WHERE DO THE DRAWINGS GO)?	WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE SET OF DRAWINGS FOR THEM TO BE APPROVED?	WHAT DAY OF THE MONTH ARE APPROVAL MEETINGS HELD?
Application submitted to PC and is forwarded to their Road & Works dept, then MoH; CD: Road & Works then MoH then Fire and if necessary NWA and lastly NEPA.	Drawings, title, property tax receipt and surveyor's ID.	Once per month on the first Thursday.

WESTMORELAND

WHAT IS THE COST PER SQ. METER FOR SUBMITTING A RESIDENTIAL PLAN FOR APPROVALS?	HOW MANY COPIES OF CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS DO YOU NEED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL?	HOW LONG WILL THE APPROVAL PROCESS TAKE?
SD: \$120 per square meter; CD: \$180 per square meter plus \$1500 site inspection fee (for both each stage of development)	SD: 4 copies; CD: 6 copies (any multi-residence)	6-8 weeks for both

WESTMORELAND CONTINUED

WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS (WHERE DO THE DRAWINGS GO)?	WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE SET OF DRAWINGS FOR THEM TO BE APPROVED?	WHAT DAY OF THE MONTH ARE APPROVAL MEETINGS HELD?
On submitting plans take the application to Road & Works for fee assessment, pay fee and the application is input in the system and forwarded to the relevant departments for inspection and recommendations.	Proof of ownership, application.	Once per month on the first Wednesdays.

ST. CATHERINE

WHAT IS THE COST PER SQ. METER FOR SUBMITTING A RESIDENTIAL PLAN FOR APPROVALS?	HOW MANY COPIES OF CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS DO YOU NEED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL?	HOW LONG WILL THE APPROVAL PROCESS TAKE?
SD: \$100 per square meter; CD: \$160 per square meter Plus \$5,000 infringement \$1000 for pit	SD: 4 copies; CD: can go up to 9/ 10 copies (2 – Fire Dept, 1 – Health, 2 – NWA, 2 – NEPA, 2 – Road & Works and 2 for the applicant) It is recommended that the applicant visit the PC with an outline first, for guidance.	SD: 4 weeks; CD: 6 weeks

WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS (WHERE DO THE DRAWINGS GO)?	WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE SET OF DRAWINGS FOR THEM TO BE APPROVED?	WHAT DAY OF THE MONTH ARE APPROVAL MEETINGS HELD?
Application submitted to PC and reviewed by Health and Road & Works; CD: application reviewed as indicated above in # 2.	Regular drawing set, proof of ownership and tax receipt.	Once per month on the Tuesday following the second Thursday of every month NB. Portmore is separate; the St. Catherine Parish Council has a particular jurisdiction.

PORTMORE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

WHAT IS THE COST PER SQ. METER FOR SUBMITTING A RESIDENTIAL PLAN FOR APPROVALS?	HOW MANY COPIES OF CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS DO YOU NEED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL?	HOW LONG WILL THE APPROVAL PROCESS TAKE?
SD: \$150 per square meter; CD: \$320 per square meter (townhome)	SD: 4 copies; CD: 10 copies)	SD: 6-8 weeks; CD: up to 3 months
WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS (WHERE DO THE DRAWINGS GO)?	WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE SET OF DRAWINGS FOR THEM TO BE APPROVED?	WHAT DAY OF THE MONTH ARE APPROVAL MEETINGS HELD?
Same as for St. Catherine PC (get document outlining their jurisdiction)	Same as for St. Catherine PC.	Once per month on the first Tuesday.

ST. THOMAS

WHAT IS THE COST PER SQ. METER FOR SUBMITTING A RESIDENTIAL PLAN FOR APPROVALS?	HOW MANY COPIES OF CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS DO YOU NEED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL?	HOW LONG WILL THE APPROVAL PROCESS TAKE?
SD: \$110 per square meter (one family, one kitchen); CD: \$200 per square meter. Plus \$2,700 for inspection.	SD: 4 sets (or min. of 3 – also applies to two family homes); CD: 7 sets; the architect should have indicated the applicant's name on each page of each set of the drawings and the applicant should have signed same.	SD: 90 days

ST. THOMAS CONTINUED

WHAT IS THE APPROVAL PROCESS (WHERE DO THE DRAWINGS GO)?	WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE SET OF DRAWINGS FOR THEM TO BE APPROVED?	WHAT DAY OF THE MONTH ARE APPROVAL MEETINGS HELD?
SD and two-family homes: Application submitted to PC and forwarded to the Supt. and then the Health Dept; CD: Supt, Health Dept, NWA, Fire Dept, then NEPA who might forward it to any other organization they want comments from.	2 copies registered title with applicant's name (if the sale is incomplete a copy of the sale agreement and receipt is needed), letter of possession (from the lawyer or NHT; the copy marked 'To Whom It May Concern' is for the PC), certificate of payment of property tax (issued by the Collectorate at no charge), ID, TRN number and 2 copies of the surveyor's report. No document being submitted needs to be notarized unless you are using someone as your agent. In that case, an appointment letter (written and signed by the applicant) must be signed by a member of the notary public; the z submitted to the Secretary General. The agent must present their ID and TRN number when making the application.	Once per month on the first Wednesdays.

BEFORE YOU BUILD



BEFORE YOU BUILD

4

FIND YOUR TEAM

Your construction team is integral in the efficient construction of your building project and achievement of your overall goals. Each member of that team must be focused on the same objectives and goals in order that you will meet your deadlines and get maximum value for your money. Your key team members will include a Land Surveyor, Architect, and Builder, and may also include a Structural Engineer and a Quantity Surveyor. In choosing to buy a stock plan, you would already have in your design package information from your quantity surveyor and structural engineer, saving you the time and money of having to collaborate with these individuals separately for building approval.



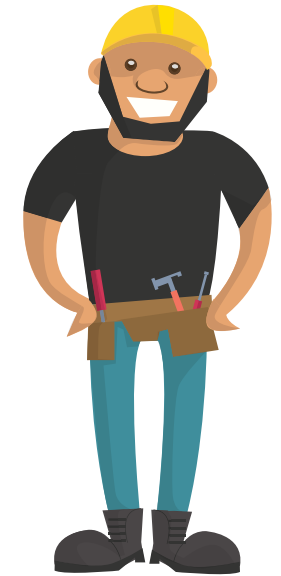
Land surveyor

A land surveyor is an important person who performs a physical recording of your property. In doing this, they will use special equipment to record and verify land titles, existing buildings and structures, physical features such as trees, rocks, boulders, plants and locate boundary markers (pegs) for your lot. In order to choose your house plan it is important to know the size, boundaries and physical features of your lot so you can ascertain if the house plan you have chosen can in fact fit your land.



Building Contractor

Your Building Contractor is responsible for building your project to the design specifications and standards of the architect or designer within a specified timeframe and budget. He manages his site personnel or team to create time schedules and deliverables towards the timely completion of the project specified by the client and architect.



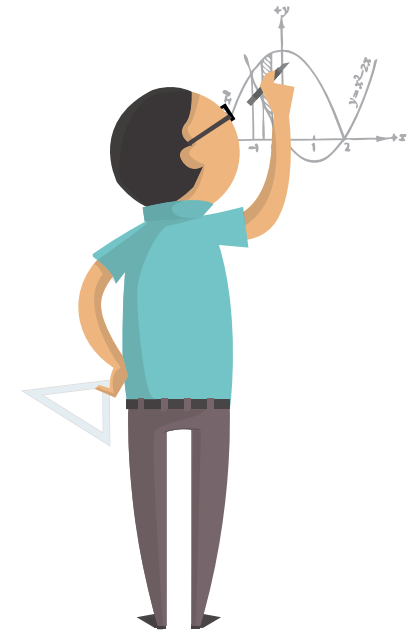
Quantity surveyor

A Quantity Surveyor is your building accountant /economist. This person will help you to manage your resources and money to build your project. A Quantity Surveyor is often times overlooked in the overall building process but is integral in the timely delivery of your project and in determining the cost for labour, time and materials. They are trained to manage the money and funds paid out to building contractors and personnel at every stage of the project from conception to completion.



Structural Engineer

Your structural engineer will determine sizing your structural members (columns, beams, and support walls, foundations, retaining walls, and roofs), to support and create your building or structure. He or she calculates and specifies the size of structural members, the amount of steel or reinforcement that is required, and locations to be placed within the house for it to maintain its structural integrity and withstand various loads and forces in nature.



MONITORING THE CONSTRUCTION



MONITORING THE CONSTRUCTION

5

SELECTING YOUR BUILDER

Unless you are already a contractor or own a construction company, you will need a team to help you build your house. Selecting who you work with is very important, so have criteria for your selection process.

Meet with builders that have built projects of a similar nature in terms of size, quality, and features (finishes, roofs, walls) of the house you want. Ask them for referrals from their previous projects/clients and ask them to show you a portfolio of work they have completed. This may seem a bit tedious, but it pays off in selecting the right builder for you. Wouldn't you prefer to save yourself a lot of grief, loss of time and money by doing this research up front? A building team is a "temporary marriage" so select your professionals well. It could be the difference between a blissful union and a frustrating one.

◀ *Select a builder whose portfolio and referrals deem them competent to take on your dream home. This will save you from much disappointment.*

PLAN YOUR BUDGET

All dreams have a cost and every dream needs resources to make it happen. You will most likely need a construction loan or mortgage of some sort to build or construct your home. Find out early the size of the loan for which you qualify as soon as possible as it will help you to immediately estimate the amount of money you will have at your disposal to spend on the project. This money is your construction budget. Your budget will determine the size of the house or the features and finishes you would like to include. It will also help you to determine if your dream will have to be built in phases or put on hold. It is therefore very important to get the estimated cost of your project before you begin to build so that this will enable you to plan how to distribute and allocate your funds and resources in order to make your project happen.

NEGOTIATE A CONTRACT

NEVER ATTEMPT TO BUILD WITHOUT A CONTRACT!

Sign a contract with your building contractor before you start building your project. This contract must be signed and dated by you and the contractor agreeing to a description of project tasks or scope of work to be performed, delivery times, costs associated and measures for resolving conflicts that may develop throughout the construction of the project.

Many people tend to make verbal agreements and in the future experience deep regret because the other party bears no liability in the timely delivery of the project constructed or has no means of recovering losses created by the contractor. This is gambling with money that you have borrowed or your lifesavings to build your house... money doesn't grow on trees!

If the person that you are making a verbal agreement is with is a friend or recommended by someone you know who you feel means you well, they should have no problem signing a contract.



MONITOR THE CONSTRUCTION

How do you know if your building contractor is building your project to the specifications of the contract or design by the architect? You are not a trained building professional, so hire someone to perform periodic checks for you. You can consult an architect, engineer, or experienced building professional. These persons will perform checks and report any problems or anomalies with the works being constructed and advise you on how to proceed. You will save time and money by going this route rather than trusting blindly that you are getting value for money. A large part of monitoring your construction includes managing your time, labour and resources on site throughout the construction period. You can go the route of employing a quantity surveyor to provide periodic checks and to determine how much money should be paid out with each claim from the building contractor. You can also get up-to-date buildings rates and cost information for various construction tasks, materials, and components for a small fee from a local master builders' association office. They provide a frequently updated booklet on costing and rates which is also referred to by contractors and quantity surveyors for current building and construction costs and rates. (Master Builders' Association office, Address: 4 Oxford Road, Kingston 5)

Hire a trained building professional, who will perform checks to ensure your project is being built to contract specifications. ►



A modern two-story house with a balcony and large windows. The house has a light-colored facade and a balcony with a metal railing. The sky is blue with some clouds.

FACTORS WHICH WILL INFLUENCE YOUR COST

FACTORS WHICH WILL INFLUENCE YOUR COST

6

MANAGING YOUR COSTS

If you have a limited budget, arming yourself with information about ways in which you can save money is of great importance. You would be surprised that the smallest detail in the design of your house can make a big difference in your overall construction cost. For example, you may chose to use marble tiles rather than porcelain tiles, however, you could have chosen a porcelain tile that gives the same look and feel as the marble tile you love.

These are some common factors that will affect your cost:

SIZE OF THE HOUSE

The number one rule is the bigger your house is in size the more it is most likely to increase your construction budget. Size = Cost. Let your size (area/square footage) be in line with your budget. You could be more comfortable than you imagine in a smaller home. You can be comfortable in a smaller house and live a good life if designed properly. There are various ways to create space saving features and arrange your internal spaces so that your house will create a feeling of openness while minimising your overall square footage/area.

SHAPE OF THE HOUSE

The shape of your house will dramatically affect your cost. A rectangular or square home will cost less than one which has multiple curves or is circular in shape. In addition, designing your home with acute angles and corners can significantly increase the amount of materials and labour required to build it and therefore increase your cost or break your budget.

REDUCING WASTAGE

Wastage in design and on a construction site is one of the major contributors to the loss of resources and money on a construction project. It is important to design your home within modules of measurements that correspond with the sizes that components are supplied. E.g. Steel members and timber planks.

The majority of construction components that will be used to construct your home will come in dimensions divisible by two feet. Using even measurements would reduce material wastage by not having to discard wood or chop masonry blocks to get the required irregular dimensions or measurements of your design.

For example, if your wall is curved and built from masonry blocks you may face some wastage by having to cut or chop blocks in half depending on the radius of that curved wall. The smaller the radius of the curve, the smaller the block pieces that will make up that curve and will be required in order to construct the curve. Masonry blocks are not curved in shape or come in smaller sizes.

SITE PREPARATION

The physical condition of your lot or land will significantly affect the cost of you construction. Building a flat lot will cost less than a steep or sloping lot. If you haveto do a lot of trucking away from the site, digging or blasting to lay foundations, this will greatly increase your costs. In short, you really “pay for the view”, and lessening your site preparation by designing the house to fit the land will save you money.

COST OVER-RUNS

It is rare that the originally agreed price bid for by the contractor will stay the same throughout and until the end of the construction process. The price of construction can be increased with changes made to the original design during construction, or by encountering or resolving problems that could not be foreseen before actually beginning construction. It is therefore good to be clear about what you want before you start construction. You may also find rocks on your lot that require blasting after you begin to dig for you foundation which will increase your costs immediately. It is wise to allow for an additional five to ten percent of the estimated cost as a contingency for things which are unforeseen. If you do not end up spending this money you can consider it as savings.

INFLATION AND MARKET CONDITIONS

The majority of construction components (e.g. steel, wood, locks, fixtures and fittings) will be imported from abroad. This means that based on the foreign exchange rates and import costs the price of your purchases, you may see an increase or fluctuation of your cost during your construction. It is therefore wise to purchase these items early and store them away. You will find that storing them will be cheaper than buying them as the need arises.



HOW TO REDUCE YOUR COST



HOW TO REDUCE YOUR COST

7

SOME FEATURES COST A BIT MORE

There is a reason why real estate agents spend a lot of time showing you the kitchen and bathrooms of a home they are selling. These are the areas that often times require the most detailing and cost the most within a home. The finishes and fittings help to define the value of the house. There are a few things that cost a bit more in a house such as type of fixtures, cabinets, suspended, coved and vaulted ceilings, roof coverings, high roof pitches, the number and size of windows and doors. Some places in a house are more special than others. It is therefore important to decide what is special and which items you want to spend most of your resources on. You can have some of the above mentioned features, but carefully decide where to put them. For instance, if you like to entertain, and your kitchen is the focal point of your house that hosts your guests, then conversations with friends and family will make your kitchen a special place, making the kitchen even more special in relation to the finishes and fixtures you choose.

MATERIAL AND FIXTURE SELECTION

Choosing your materials can be a very daunting process because there are so many to choose from. How do you know how to choose within your taste and budget? In choosing your materials and fixtures you first have to think about your sense of style and the decor that you want to coordinate throughout your house. An interior designer

is an important person at this stage of the project. They will help you to choose your colour palette or scheme, and furniture and fixtures that best fit your house design and taste. Not every colour goes well with another and there are colour palettes that work for different types of rooms, usage and activities. Do you know what these are?

There are varying materials and fixtures to fit every budget. Choose finishes relating to the room type and location of the spaces. E.g. choose non-slip tiles for wet areas and stairways, and porcelain or ceramic tiles for high traffic areas within the house. Although marble is loved by most, it requires a lot of maintenance to remove scratches formed from shoes and movement of equipment and furniture. Porcelain therefore is a viable alternative that can be made to look like marble while having the advantage of durability, and low maintenance. It is possible for you to have the look of marble without the price.

REDUCING YOUR RUNNING COST

It's easier to plan and implement energy saving methods from the design stage of your project rather than trying to reduce your energy costs after the house is built. Think about all the things you will need to run your house each month. Think of ways to generate or store water, power and to manage your waste. You can also go the route of choosing low energy devices for air conditioning units, stoves, clothing irons, refrigerators and water heaters. Decide certain things early. Do you really need to have water from public water sources to flush your toilets? Why not catch and recycle your water for flushing or waste disposal? In this tropical climate, you have sun radiating through your roof almost every day, so why not use it to produce energy and to heat your water for bathing and washing. Reducing your running cost requires forward thinking about the way you live and what you need to live. It also involves spending some more today in order to save money in the future. Equipment and devices for saving on energy and water

will pay for themselves in a short time in the savings that you receive. It's a wise decision to reduce the cost of the internal finishes and fixtures and spend more on reducing the running cost of your house.

SUPPLIERS AND CHOOSING A PRODUCT

There are many producers of components, materials, and fixtures for houses. All suppliers will try to convince you that their products are the best to choose. So how do you arm yourself with information to make the right choice? Firstly, are these products made to function in your climate? E.g. Tiles made in different parts of the world have different reactions to our local climate which can cause shrinking, cracks and breakage after installation.

What is the expected lifespan of this product? Is there a warranty attached? Does it require specialised installation or maintenance? and What are the energy requirements of that product? Does this product have a good history of performance in the marketplace? Is it an old product? or Is it the most current by the manufacturer?

Ask your sales clerk to provide you with product information. And if they don't have any in possession, the internet is an excellent source of valuable feedback from various blogs and communities for almost any product you will buy or consume. Never buy a product for the simple reason that it looks good and it's bright and shiny in the show room, because it might not live up to its expectations outside of that show room and that would be like throwing your money away.



CONCLUSION

YOUR TOOLKIT IS READY AND YOU ARE EQUIPPED TO BUILD!

Building the house of your dreams will be one of the most fulfilling things you will do in your lifetime. Seeing your ideas materialize with each step of the building phase and knowing that at the end of the process you have had a significant input in orchestrating to the final detail is very important. Your home is the place in which your friends and family will make their future memories is both an invaluable and rewarding feeling. It is hoped that this guide will assist in making the memories you will have of and in your house enjoyable ones, even through the design and building phase. Taking on the challenge of building your house can be a daunting one, but it doesn't have to be!

By using the information presented in this guide as your home building stepping stones, you will be in the position to maneuver almost every aspect of and difficulty that arises during the building process. You will be better able to make informed decisions and maximize the resources spent on this venture during the design through to the construction phases, and even while occupying your new house.

It is intended that the information provided will give you a more holistic view of the building process and the various aspects you should consider so that your dream of building the house you have always imagined becomes a magnificent reality. We hope that we have made the entire building process easier to understand, so that you can effectively plan your budget/costs, while also giving you design options and also enabling you to seek information that will empower your home building dreams.

Take the stress out of building your house! Take the time to prepare, seek proper assistance and advice from an architect, and make the right selections before the first block is laid.

Damian Edmond
ARCHITECT



