

12 STEPS TO SHOWING IMPROVEMENTS ON A PLAT

When you apply for a building permit to do exterior work on your property (such as building an addition or adding a deck), you must include a building plat – a plat map that includes drawings of all existing and proposed property improvements such as the house, the driveway, the deck you want to build, etc.

The plat should also show all trees that measure at least 4.5 feet above the ground and have circumferences of 12 inches or more. (See the Urban Forestry Administration website, <http://ufa.ddot.dc.gov/ufa/site/default.asp>, for information about Tree Removal Permits.)

You may order a plat map from the Office of the Surveyor in the Department of Buildings.

Below are directions to help you draw building improvements on the plat map. The plat you receive from the Office of the Surveyor is a scaled drawing of the lot(s) your house sits on.

1. The scale of the drawing is shown on the plat at the top left of the page. For example, the scale may be shown as: "Scale: 1 inch = 10 feet". Typical scales are 1 inch = 10, 20, or 30 feet.

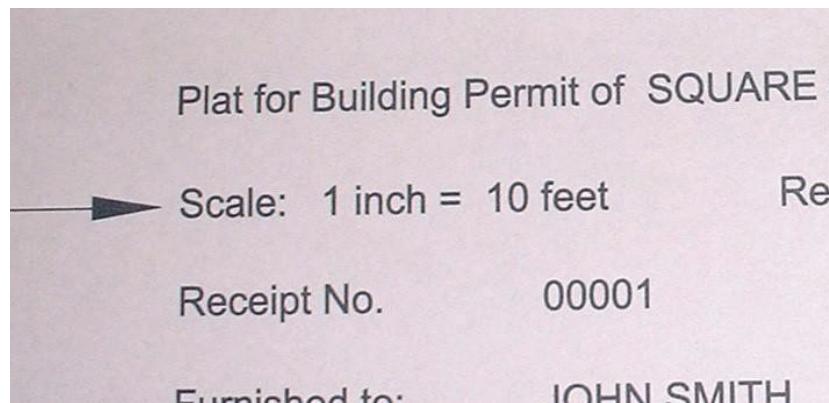


Fig. 1 Scale formula

2. You will need an engineer's scale to draw on your plat map. An engineer's scale is a ruler-like instrument used to measure distances. You can buy one purchased at most office supply stores for less than \$5.00. You may also borrow one from the Office of the Surveyor or the Homeowners Center.



Fig. 2 Engineer's scale

3. You may be able to get a copy of the dimensions of your existing property from:
 - Your Mortgage Survey – Most homebuyers receive mortgage surveys of their properties showing the house and improvements such as decks, sheds, and fences. These scaled drawings show the dimensions of the structures and the distances they are from your property line.
 - Office of the Surveyor – The Office of the Surveyor may have the dimensions of your house when it was built in Survey Jackets, or Wall Reports that the builder filed.
4. If the Office of the Surveyor doesn't have your house's dimensions and you have no survey of your property, you may want to hire a private DC-licensed surveyor. The licensed surveyor can give you professional, scaled drawings of your house and its improvements.
5. Once you have the correct dimensions of the structures on your property and their distances from the property line, you can draw the house and improvements on the plat map.
6. To draw the house and improvements on the plat, first identify the scale of the drawing and rotate the engineer's scale to the same scale. Each mark or tic on the scale would be equal to 1 foot.

For example, if your survey shows that your house is 10 feet from the left property line, lay the engineer's scale with the 0 end on the front line of the plat and count 10 tics. Then place a small mark on the plat using a pencil.



Fig. 3 Measuring 10 feet from the property line

7. If the survey shows your house is 8 feet from the front property line, place the scale along the side property line and count back 8 tics.

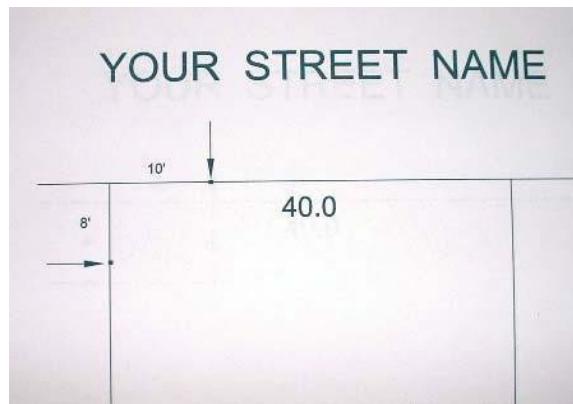


Fig. 4 Measuring 8 feet from the property line

8. Using the scale as a straight edge, connect the dots with light pencil lines. This will show the left front corner of your house.

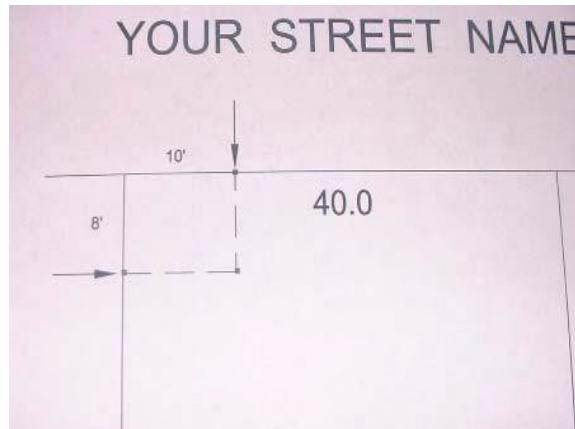


Fig. 5 Drawing the left front corner of your house

9. Based on the survey information, place the 0 end of the scale next to the mark you made. Measure along the pencil line the distance shown on the survey (for example, 20 feet). You now have the front line of your house.



Fig. 6 Drawing the front of your house

10. From this line, you can draw the rest of the house using the distances shown on the survey.

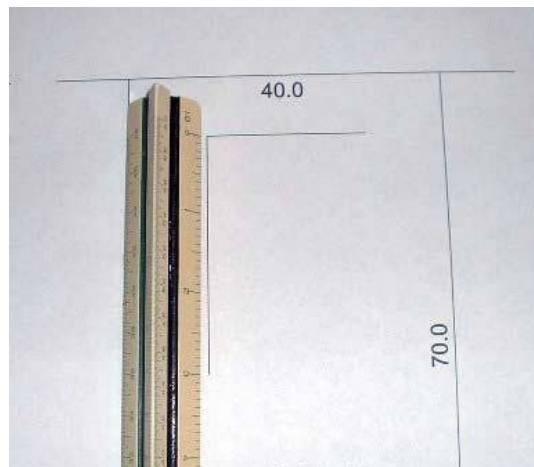


Fig. 7 Drawing the rest of your house

11. Pencil the lines lightly first so that any mistakes can be easily erased. Darken with a pen after you've finished the drawing. Show existing house lines as \\\\\\\; new construction as solid lines; and fences as ----x x--. The example below shows a backyard fence and a new deck.

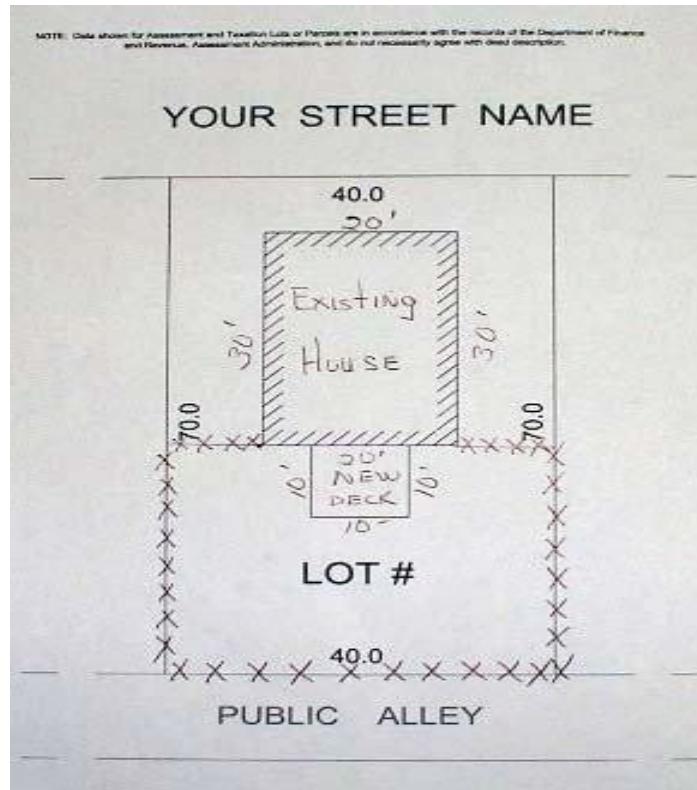


Fig. 8 Completed plat map

12. You need three copies of the completed plat map for most permits. You may want to draw on one plat and make copies. (A copy machine in the Office of the Surveyor prints paper sizes up to 11" X 17" for \$1.00 per copy.)