

# 6 Plans You Need for a Building Permit



Bureau of  
Development  
Services  
FROM CONCEPT  
TO CONSTRUCTION



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[www.Portland.gov/BDS](http://www.Portland.gov/BDS)

Get general information about the plans you need for most building permits for work on a house or duplex (residential). Your project may need other details, too. Please talk with one of our plans examiners for help with building plans. You can:

- Visit the Development Services Center (DSC)
- Call a plans examiner at 503-823-1456
- Book a 15-minute appointment by phone or on our website: [www.portland.gov/bds/early-assistance/15-minute-appointments](http://www.portland.gov/bds/early-assistance/15-minute-appointments)

## Preparing your plans and minimum submittal requirements

Four (4) sets of plans are required when you apply for a building permit. One set will be stamped approved and returned to you to keep at the job site. A copy of your approved plans will become a permanent record with the City of Portland.

- Check records for work permitted in the past. You may be able to find drawings on file for work done after 1976.
- Anyone can draw residential plans. The plans must include straight lines, and precise measurements. Plans must be drawn to scale.
- You can get the list of minimum submittal requirements for residential projects—what you must include for a complete application—in the Development Services Center (DSC) and on our website at: [www.portland.gov/bds/development-permit-processes/step-3-what-you-need](http://www.portland.gov/bds/development-permit-processes/step-3-what-you-need).

## Items usually required for a complete building permit application

Typical plans include:

- Site plan,
- Floor plans
- Elevation views
- Cross sections and detail drawings
- Your plans must clearly show all the work you intend to do on the building.
- Plans must show existing conditions. Clearly define existing conditions and new construction in the plans.
- Plans must show where the building sits on your property. The plans need to show the building in relationship to property lines and other buildings on the site.
- The plans must be on substantial paper. Scanned plans must be high-resolution. Also:
  - Drawings may not contain color.
  - Permanent black ink must be used.
  - Clear black and white photocopies are best.
  - Please do not turn in a tracing paper original.
  - Line quality and contrast must be easy to read and strong enough to scan.
  - Photographs cannot be part of the plan.
  - Use 12-point font for all dimensions and notes.
- All plans must be drawn to scale.
  - ¼ inch = 1 foot is the most common scale used for residential floor plans and section views.
  - 1 inch = 10 feet is the minimum scale accepted for site plans.
  - The scale used must be clearly shown and the site plan must show the entire lot.
  - Building elevations must be to scale and show the slope of the ground adjacent to the building.



## Site plan requirements

A well-prepared site plan is the most important document to include with your application. All major review groups need to approve your site plan.

Site plans must be easy to read and copy. A complete and accurate site plan will speed up your permit application reviews. It also means less requests for missing information, which can delay an application.

We designed the sample site plan on the next page to help you prepare complete site plans for your project. Make sure your site plan includes all the information from the site plan checklist.

## Site plan checklist- requirements for most site plans

The site plan must be accurately drawn to scale. The site plan must show all items that apply to your project:

- ☐ Lot and building setback dimensions
- ☐ Dimension distances between structures and property lines
- ☐ Property corner elevations (If there is more than 4-foot elevation differential, the site plan must show existing and proposed contour lines at 2-foot intervals. A separate grading plan may also be required to legibly show grading changes)
- ☐ Location and dimensions of easements and driveway
- ☐ Footprint of proposed and existing structures (including decks)
- ☐ Location of wells/septic systems
- ☐ Lot area
- ☐ Building coverage area and percentage of coverage
- ☐ Arrow pointing in the north direction
- ☐ Impervious area (structures, paving, roof overhang, etc.)
- ☐ Location of utilities (storm and sanitary sewers, water, gas, etc. including size of service and street location)
- ☐ Location of stormwater facility
- ☐ Surface drainage
- ☐ Width of adjacent right of way and curb height
- ☐ Landscape plans
- ☐ All trees 6 inches or greater in diameter: Identify tree diameter (inches), species, and location. Tree preservation and tree density requirements may apply to your project. Find more information on our website: [www.portland.gov/trees/resources/trees-and-development](http://www.portland.gov/trees/resources/trees-and-development).
- ☐ If tree preservation applies, your site plan must show the root protection zones around the trees to be preserved
- ☐ Minimum scale, 1 inch = 10 feet (show scale on plan)
- ☐ Minimum size, 11 x 17 inches
- ☐ White space sufficient for City approval stamps and notes
- ☐ Any additional requirements specific to your site or project (If needed, contact us to learn more about specific requirements needed for your site or project)

## Sample Site Plan

A sample site plan has been created to assist you in developing your site plan to move quickly and seamlessly through review process. You can download the sample site plan on our website:

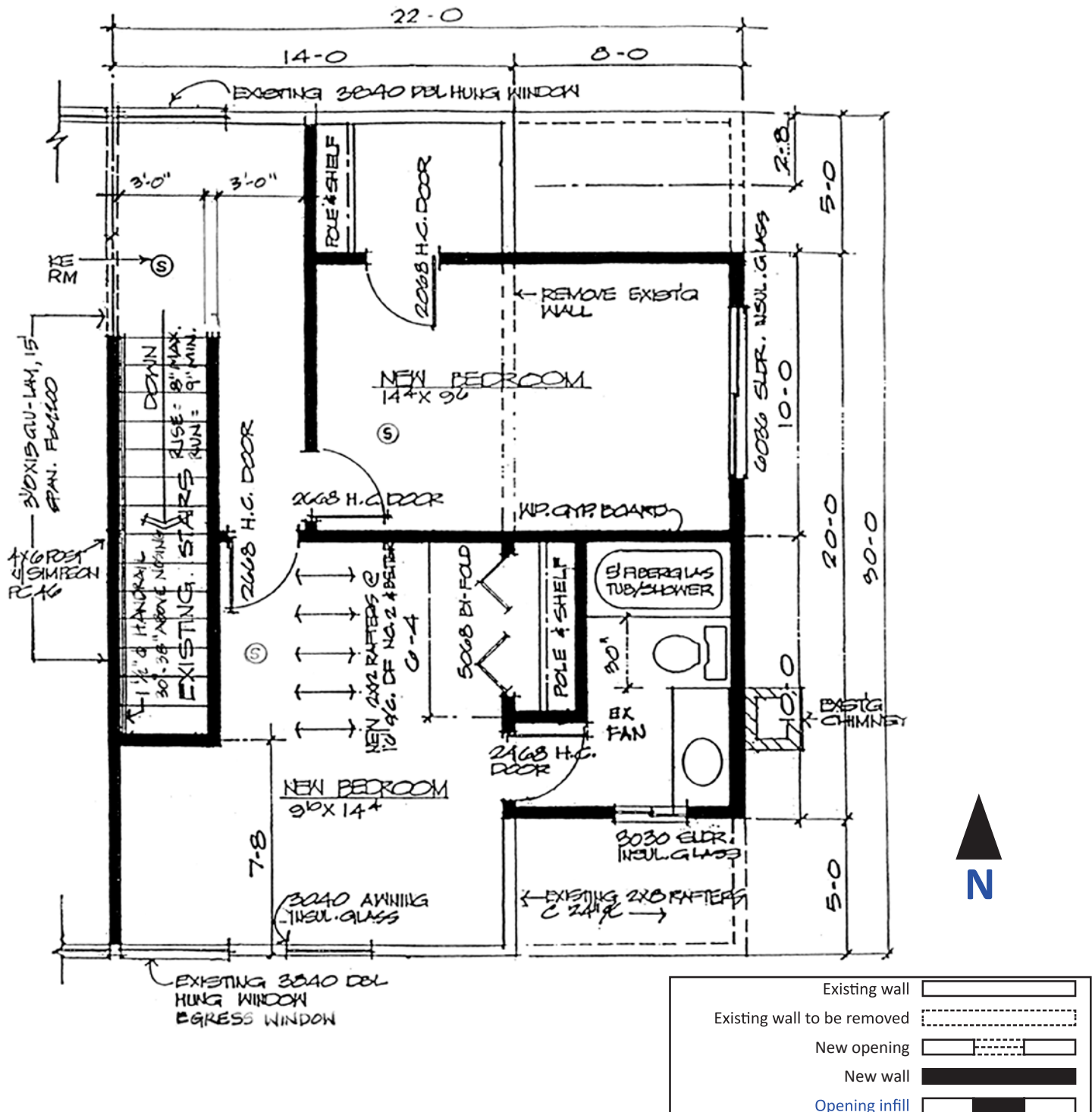
<https://www.portland.gov/bds/documents/sample-site-plan/download>

# REQUIREMENTS FOR FLOOR PLANS AND FOUNDATION PLANS

A floor plan, also known as a plan view, is what you would see if you were to look straight down at a floor or basement with the roof or floors above removed. You will need to provide a roof plan and one floor plan for each level of the building on which work is being done, that clearly shows existing and proposed work.

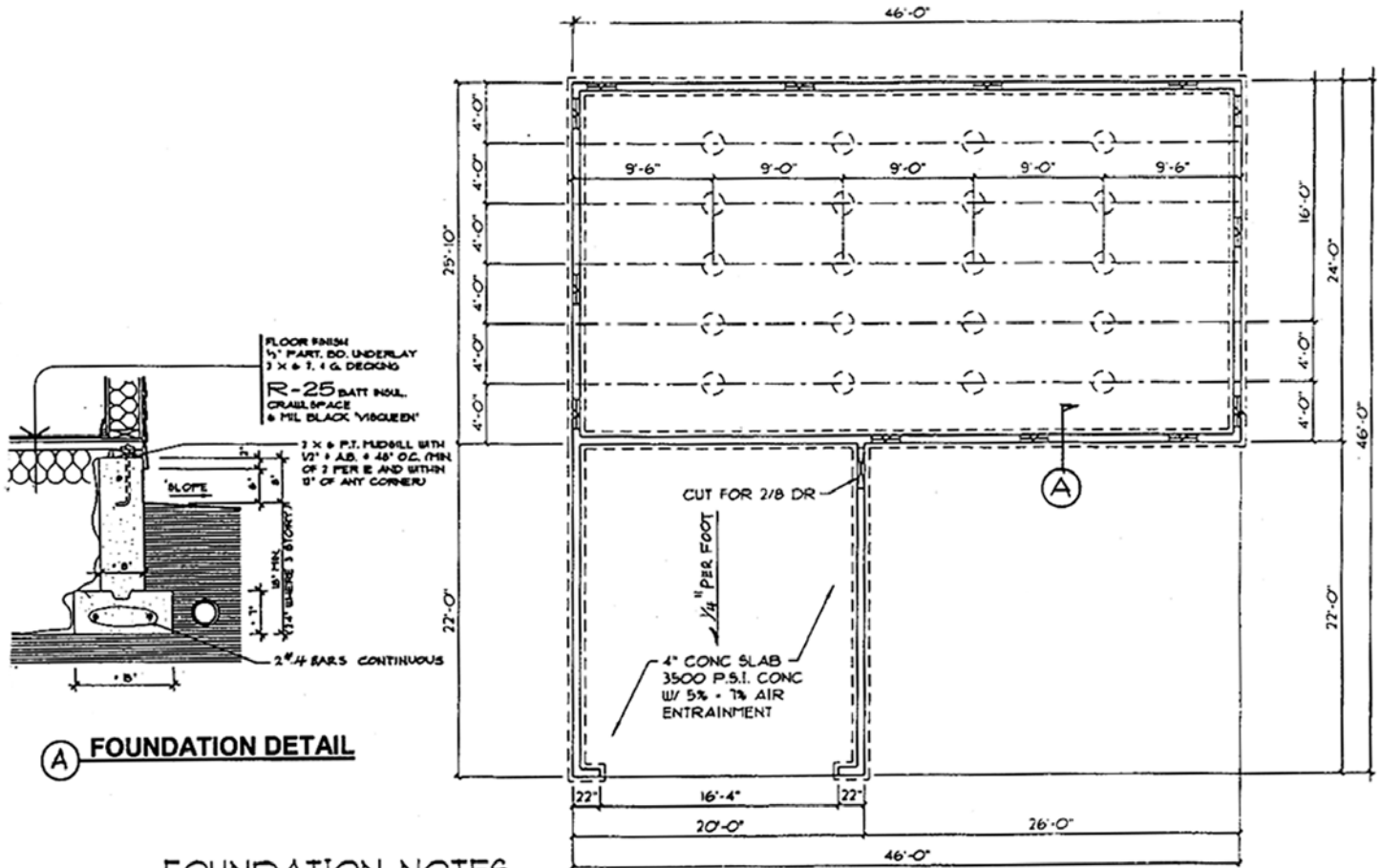
- If you are constructing a new building or an addition, you will also need to provide us with a foundation plan. This plan should show the layout, dimensions and details of continuous concrete slabs, footings, reinforcing steel, and the strength of the concrete to be used. The location of the crawl space access and the foundation vents must also be shown.
- A floor plan for each level of the building being constructed or remodeled must show the location of all full and partial height walls, the size and proposed use of all rooms affected by the work and a north arrow.

## Sample Floor Plan



- The location, size and type of each window must be shown on the floor plan.
- The location of bearing walls, headers, beams, and other structural members supporting loads from above must also be shown on the floor plans or shown on separate framing plans. Floor plans must show all steps and stairs.
- Plumbing fixtures, heating and cooling equipment, electrical outlets, switches, etc. are typically shown on the floor plan, but can be shown on separate plans.
- The floor plan must also show the location of all smoke detectors.

### Sample Foundation Detail

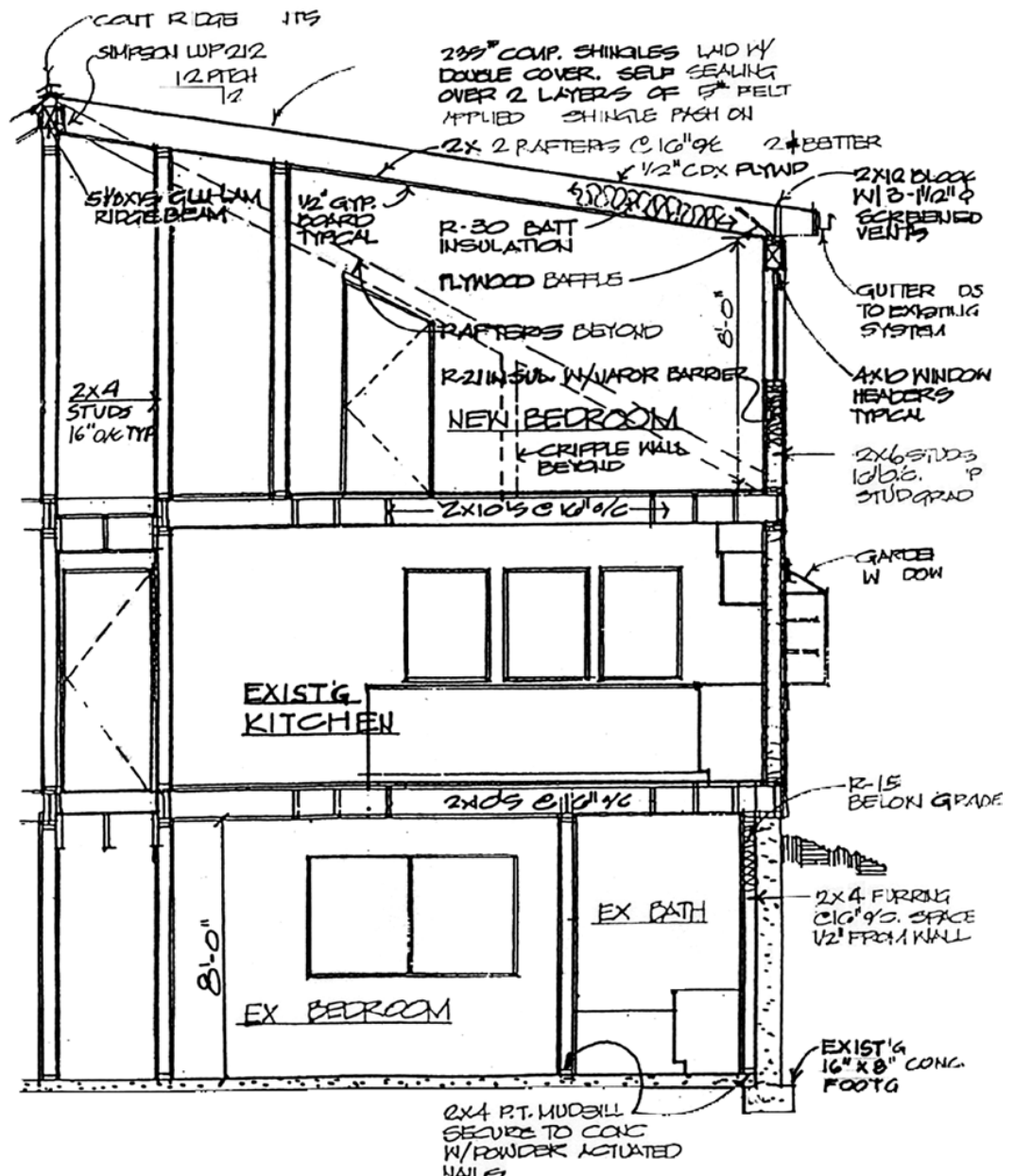




## REQUIREMENTS FOR SECTION DRAWINGS

- Section drawings, sometimes called cross sections, are what you would see if you cut vertically through a building from the tip of the roof down through the ground, and then looked at what the cut exposed. Include gutters and downspouts.
- Section drawings are a useful way of displaying structural information and information about construction materials that are needed to do our code review. Full sections for residential construction are usually drawn at a scale of at least ¼ inch = 1 foot and wall section and details at a scale of least at ½ inch = 1 foot. Partial sections may be drawn at a larger scale to show something in detail such as footings, overhangs and stairs.
- To get a building permit for new construction or an addition, you must provide section drawings that show typical building conditions.
- For simple projects, a single section drawing showing each of these items:
  - the size of the footing and the distance between ground level and the bottom of the footing
  - the size of the foundation wall and how high it will rise above the ground
  - the size and spacing of structural members such as beams, joists, studs and rafters which are not shown on other drawings
  - wall, ceiling and roof coverings and finishes
  - wall, floor and ceiling insulation
  - ceiling heights
  - eaves, decks and other projections
- For more complex buildings or additions, full sections through the work in multiple directions and at different locations may be required to fully explain the work. Separate structural section drawings or details may be required, in addition to building or architectural sections, to show the structural connections.
- For buildings containing new or revised stairways, stair details must be provided which indicate the construction materials, structural support and dimensional relationships to surrounding construction.
- The purpose of building plans is to provide the City of Portland with a complete and accurate description of your proposed project. If there is something you think you will need to explain when you come to the Development Services Center, please put it on the drawings.

Sample Section Drawing



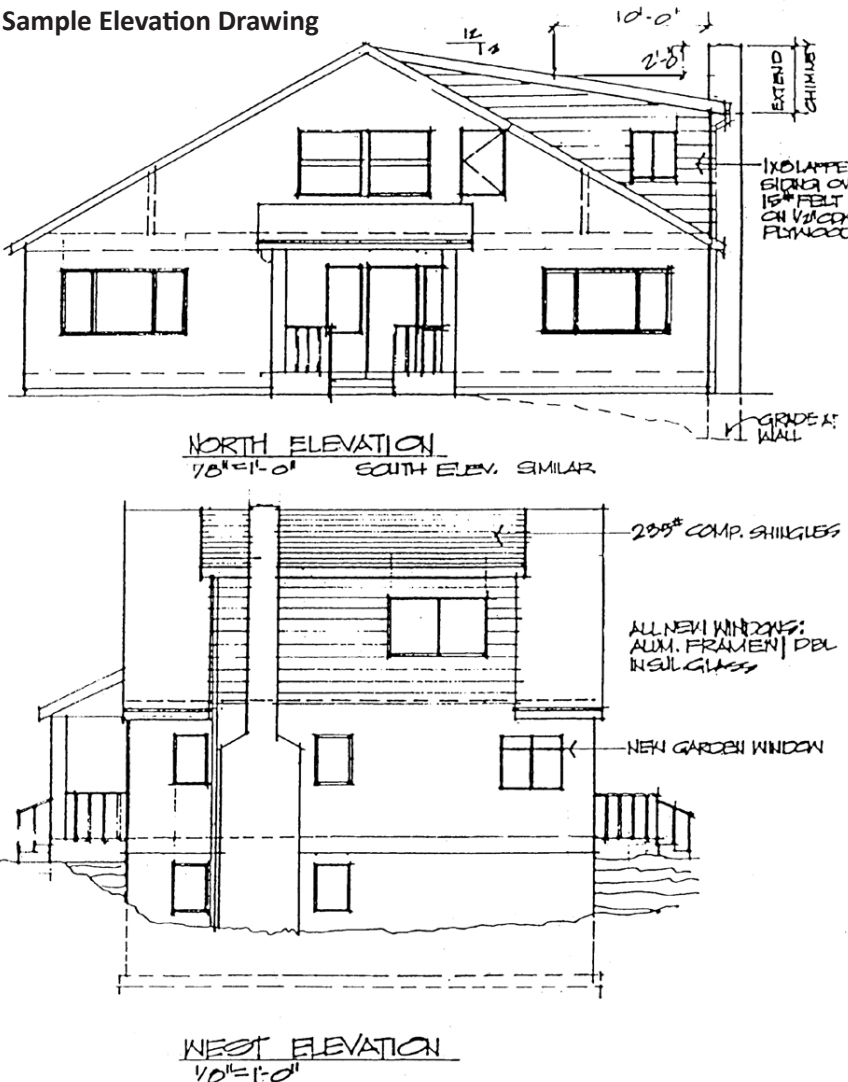
## REQUIREMENTS FOR BUILDING ELEVATION DRAWINGS

Building elevation drawings are exterior views of the building, sometimes identified as front, rear, left, right; or north, south, east, west. Any project that requires a change in the exterior of the building must have building elevation drawings.

Elevations must be drawn to scale, ¼ inch = 1 foot is the normal scale.

Elevations show the level at which the ground meets the building, the slope of the ground where it meets the building, the vertical location, size of windows and doors, the type of siding and roofing, the height and configuration of guardrails and similar features on the exterior of the building.

## Sample Elevation Drawing



## Making changes to approved plans

After you begin work, you may need to make changes to approved plans. To change approved plans, you need to show the changes on a new set of plans. Submit them online using DevHub or bring three new sets in person along with the stamped/approved set of the original plans. Then, a plans examiner and city planner will review your changed plans.

Please do not mark up the originally approved set!  
If we approve the changes one stamped plan set  
will be returned to you to keep with the original  
plans.

## More tips for a complete site and architectural plans

- Verify utility locate information with actual location of service connections before you draw them on the plans.
- The permitting process will move along more efficiently with complete and accurately prepared plans.
- Requesting the latest submittal requirements for each type of residential project is a good idea.
- All drawings/plans must be executed in the designated scale and the scale must be shown on the drawing/plan.
- Plans must be on substantial paper and in black ink. A crisp photocopy is acceptable.
- Use the checklist to make sure that you include all required items on your site plan.
- Simple projects may only need a single section drawing; more complex projects will require full sections and multiple views.
- If you have questions, concerns or need help, visit or call staff in the Development Services Center.

## Schedule an inspection

1. Call the 24-hour Requests for Inspection phone number 503-823-7000
2. Enter your IVR or permit number
3. Enter the three-digit inspection code for the type of inspection you are requesting
4. Enter a phone number where you can be reached during weekdays. Explain if you want the inspection in the morning or afternoon. Leave a voicemail with plan location or lockbox code.
5. There must be an adult over age 18 to let the inspector inside
6. Read more about residential permit inspections: [www.portland.gov/bds/residential-permitting/residential-permit-inspections](http://www.portland.gov/bds/residential-permitting/residential-permit-inspections)

## Important Telephone Numbers

DSC automated information line.....	503-823-7310
Building code information .....	503-823-1456
Planning and Zoning information .....	503-823-7526
Permit information for electrical, mechanical, plumbing, sewer and signs.....	503-823-7363
Permitting process and fee information .....	503-823-7357
Resources and records .....	503-823-7660
BDS 24-hour inspection request line (requires IVR number and three-digit inspection code) .....	503-823-7000
Residential information for one and two family dwellings....	503-823-7388
Oregon Relay Service .....	711
Tree Hotline .....	503-823-8733

## Contact Us

Bureau of Development Services  
City of Portland, Oregon  
1900 SW 4th Avenue, Portland, OR 97201  
[www.portland.gov/bds](http://www.portland.gov/bds)

### General Office Hours:

Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
BDS main number: 503-823-7300

### Permit Information is available at the following location:

- Development Services Center (First Floor)  
For Hours Call 503-823-7310 or visit [www.portland.gov/bds](http://www.portland.gov/bds)
- Permitting Services (Second Floor)  
For Hours Call 503-823-7310 or visit [www.portland.gov/bds](http://www.portland.gov/bds)

**For more detailed information regarding the bureau's hours of operation and available services:**

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE:  
WWW.PORTLAND.GOV/BDS**

Note: All information in this brochure is subject to change.

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