

Site Suitability Test

This exercise will help ensure that your site can legally and physically accommodate the type and size of project you envision. In addition you will be able to use all the documentation collected, the square footages calculated, and the drawings developed in future phases of your project, should you decide to move forward on the site.

Collect Basic Site Information

A. Analyze zoning and other development regulations:

Determine that proposed use is permitted (make sure you can build the type of project you want)

Determine required setbacks.

Identify height, bulk, floor-area ratio, or footprint restrictions.

Determine parking and driveway requirements—number of spaces and size.

Determine required open space minimums (public and private) and other on-site recreation or environmental requirements.

Determine if any special permits, regulations, planning procedures (variances, design review, public hearings, environmental tests/data) are required.

B. Identify key site elements:

Those you want to keep (trees, plants, ponds, views, etc.)

Those you can't touch (wetlands, utility structures, etc.).

C. Identify any “hidden” constraints to the physical development of the site:

Legal easements across the property

Buried cable, piping, etc.

Rights of way across the property

Drainage, flood elevation requirements, geotechnical issues, etc.

D. Obtain site documentation

Topographical map

Parcel map showing legal boundaries and adjacent parcels

Sanborn map, aerial photos and/or other documents showing configuration of adjacent properties to scale, if possible.

Calculate Gross Sizes

E. Determine how much gross parking you need

Analyze zoning and/or other local ordinances concerning parking requirements
Determine number of parking spaces you will need or be required to provide—
usually based on number of units or number of bedrooms.
Multiply by 350 square feet per car (or the actual square footage your
jurisdiction requires).

F. Determine how much gross area your building will need.

Determine the maximum number and general mix of units you intend to provide.

Using the unit size rules below:

Multiply the number of units of each type by their average area.

Add all the areas together.

Add 15-30% for circulation and other uses such as community rooms, etc.

The total equals the gross building area you will need to achieve your desired unit
mix.

Typical Affordable Housing Unit Sizes

First, check with HUD and your local building department regarding any required
minimum room sizes and dimensions. Then review the dimensions and sizes of
successful developments of similar type in your area. Unit size will vary
depending on user profile, income level, and budget issues. The following are
general ranges and exclude garages, porches, exterior storage, etc. Add 10% for
fully accessible units.

<u>Unit Type</u>	<u>Size range</u>
Studio—	300-400sf
1BR flat—	500-600sf
2BR flat—	780-900sf
3BR flat—	950-1150sf
4BR flat —	1100-1300sf
2BR TH—	850-950sf
3BR TH—	1000-1200sf
4BR TH—	1200-1350sf

Develop Feasibility Sketch

G. Draw base sketch of site.

Based on the documentation assembled in Step D, draw a sketch of the site and surrounding building footprints, streets, and sidewalks.

Use a scale between 1:20 and 1:40, depending on the size of the site.

H. Delineate usable area.

Draw setback lines.

Locate and sketch in key site elements identified earlier.

Locate and sketch in any site constraints.

Make copies of the drawing.

I. Draw parking.

Using the gross square footage for parking calculated in Step E, draw a rectangle—at the same scale as the site sketch—with one dimension 60 feet wide and as long as is required to fit all parking spaces needed. This will give you a general idea of how much space your parking will consume.

Make sure the parking is accessible to a street.

J. Determine the basic building type(s) you want.

Considering your population, local building types, budget, zoning, and site constraints, choose a basic building type and height. eg 4 story elevator-served stacked flats over an on-grade parking garage; two story townhouses over flats with surface parking; attached single family duplexes with surface parking; etc.

You may want more than one building type on the site.

For more information on building type consult the **Dwelling Types Overview** in the Tools section of the Design Advisor.

K. Draw the building footprint.

Using the gross square footage for your building calculated in Step F, draw a rectangle or group of rectangles—at the same scale as the site sketch—that will accommodate the total area needed for the building.

The size and shape of the rectangle(s) will depend on the building type or types that you have chosen.

For example, if you are planning a 4 story apartment building with corridors, the building might be 50-60 feet wide and 100 feet or more long.

If you are planning triplexes of two townhouses over a flat each footprint might be about 30 feet x 40 feet, and you'll need to calculate how many of these footprints you'll need to handle all your units.

This gets complicated quickly, so it is adequate to get a rough idea of the gross area and see if it fits. Consult a local architect or other building professional for typical sizes and shapes for common building types.

- L. Layout your parking and building footprint on your site sketch.
 - Make sure everything “fits” in a way that is straightforward and reasonable, not overly complicated or intricate.
 - Make sure all site constraints are respected and all key site elements are preserved.
 - Make sure that parking has access to a street.
 - Make sure that the minimum required open space is accounted for and that it can actually be used by the occupants.
 - Finally, make sure that the building footprint, parking and required open space don’t take up every last inch of the site. Roughly 10% of the site should be “left over” to allow flexibility when actual development begins.

Analyze Results

If the building footprint, parking and open space fit cleanly on the site—with a minimum 10% of “left over” area—there is a good chance that the site will physically accommodate your project. If the site is also accessible to the amenities and services your occupants will need (see **Access to Services Checklist**) then it will probably be a good place to locate your project.

Example
Site Suitability Test

Name of Project INDEPENDENT HOUSING
Address of Potential Site DOVE STREET
Date _____

Basic Site Information

A. Zoning and other regulations

5 - LOTS ARE ZONED FOR 2 FAMILY
OCCUPANCY - A SPECIAL PERMIT
WOULD BE REQUIRED TO COMBINE
SITES & MULTI-FAMILY OCCUPANCY

B. Key site elements

TRANSFORMER FOR ADJACENT GROCERY.
OVERHEAD ELECTRIC LINES.

C. Hidden constraints

SHALLOW FOOTING ON ADJACENT
ROWHOUSE
EASEMENT

D. Site documentation

ATTACHED SURVEY & SANBORN

Example (con't)

Gross Sizes

E. Parking

THE ZONING ORDINANCE DOES NOT PROVIDE SPECIFIC PARKING REQUIREMENTS IN THIS DISTRICT - MOST PARKING IS ON THE STREET. THE OWNERS WOULD LIKE 8-10 SPACES.

A SINGLE LOADED PARKING AREA WOULD BE 43' WIDE (25' FOR ROAD PLUS 18' FOR THE PARKING SPACE) AND 84' LONG (6 SPACES OF 10' IN WIDTH PLUS TWO 12' WIDE SPACES FOR ACCESSIBLE PARKING)

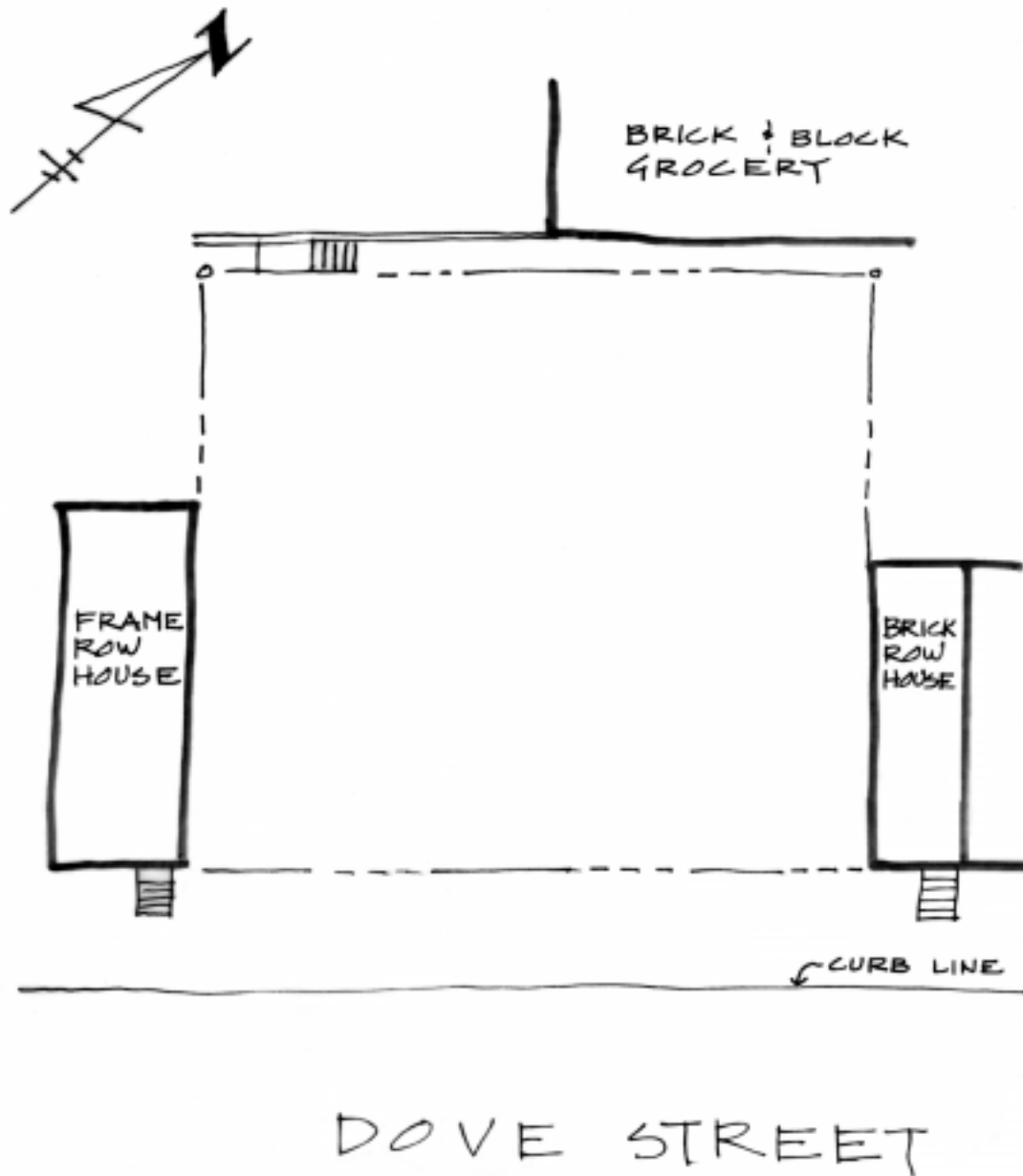
F. Building

THE ZONING ORDINANCE FOR THIS SITE REQUIRES THAT NEW CONSTRUCTION BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE EXISTING CONTEXT. ONE OF THE REQUIREMENTS IS THAT THE HEIGHT OF THE BUILDING MUST BE BETWEEN THAT OF THE ADJOINING STRUCTURES.

Example (con't)

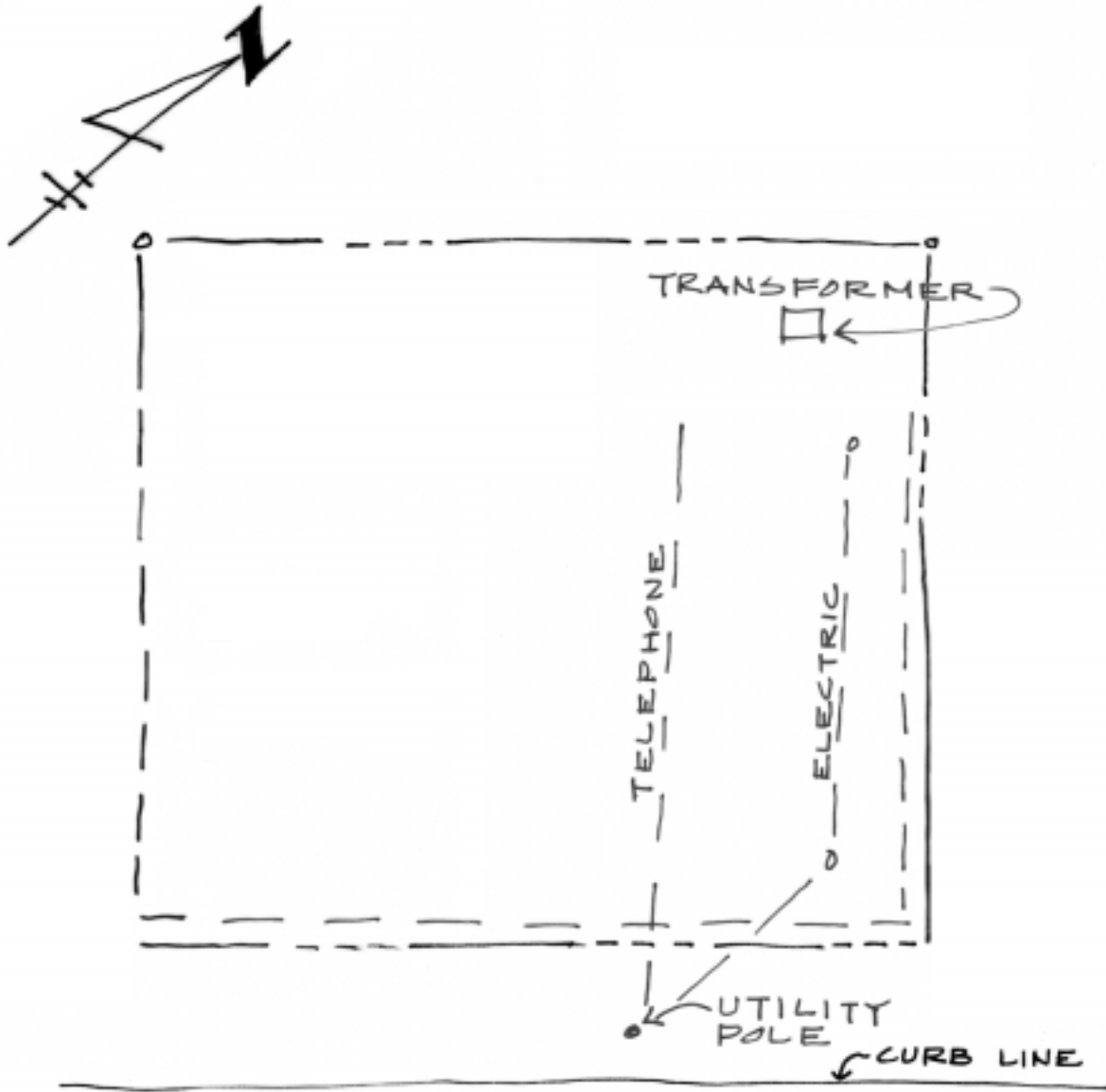
Feasibility Sketch

G. Base sketch of site.



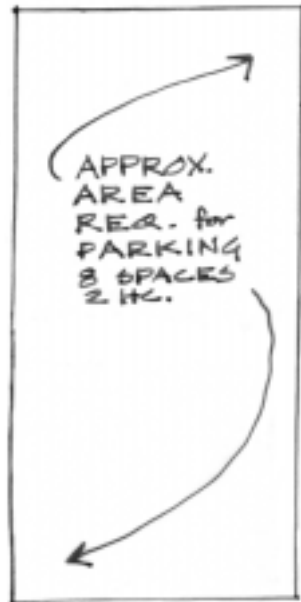
Example (con't)

H. Usable area.



Example (con't)

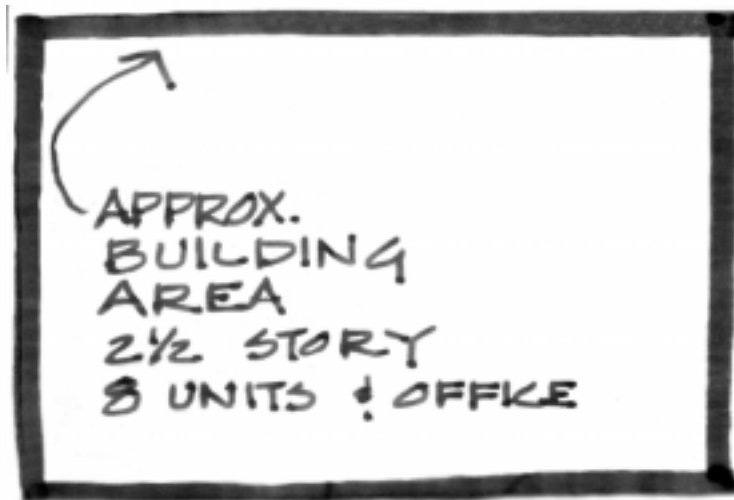
I. Parking.



J. Basic building type(s)

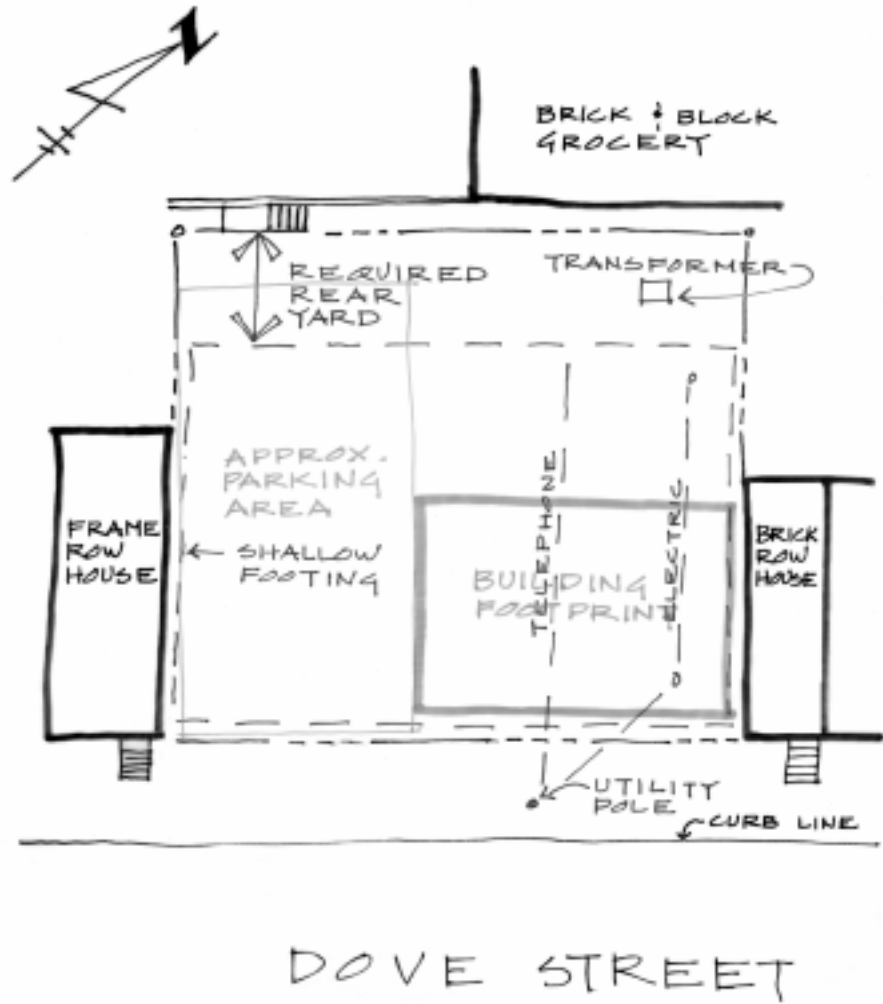
THREE STORY APARTMENT BLOCK WI. ELEVATOR TO INCLUDE PROPORTIONS FROM AREA ROW HOMES.

K. Building footprint.



Example (con't)

L. Layout parking and building footprint on your site sketch.



Analysis

Discuss whether/how the site “works” and how you know. Is there 10% left over and how could you tell? What about this process made you confident that you could proceed with next phase?

SITE WORKS WELL. IT COULD ACCOMODATE MORE PARKING OR UNITS IF REQUIRED.