

Buyer How To : Site Locations

Finding land or a lot site for your cedar log home can be challenging. If you haven't yet located land, you'll want to work with a broker in the area who understands the ins and outs of lots and land in your area. If you're building in an area new to you, you'll want to get a good picture of the climate as well — average snowfall and/or rain totals, temperature ranges, hours of daylight, potential for winds from hurricanes or strong storms. Here are some of the factors to consider when looking at land:

- **Rules and Regulations.** The broker will be able to identify subdivisions where a log home is permitted under the covenants, ensure that the site is buildable, and will know the area where the site is located.
- **History.** Take a visit to the Register of Deeds to determine what the use of the land has been for the past 50 to 75 years. A well-forested area near a river might have been the site of a factory. In rural settings, a dairy or pig farm might have waste disposal issues that could affect water. Some rural areas have been used as informal local dumps for appliances and vehicles, which might also affect water quality.
- **The Building Envelope.** Walk the land – including the boundaries – to determine any potential issues that could affect where you site your home. Examine the features within the building envelope, the area that allows for setbacks, easements and other boundary issues. How you position your house within the building envelope is key to being able to fit the home to the landscape, maximize natural solar light and exposure, and orientation of the rooms within the home.
- **Surveys, Soils, Septic.** Make sure that you obtain a plot plan and recent survey. Using your plot plan, identify where soil tests have been performed in relation where you think you might locate your home. If municipal water or sewer is available mark where those utilities might be accessed.
- **Topographical Features.** Talk with your broker about other characteristics that may affect your building site. Ask whether there is rock ledge that might need to be blasted before building a foundation or if low-lying areas will need additional fill. Determine whether there are wetlands on the property and what restrictions might apply to their proximity to your home. If there is a seasonal stream or vernal pool on your land you may want to inspect the land in the spring after a good rainstorm.
- **Codes and Environmental Impact.** Most states have restrictions relating to building near bodies of water, cutting trees, and runoff water management. A visit to the town or municipal code enforcement officer will answer a lot of questions about potential limitations to building on a particular parcel.
- **On-site Meeting.** Your local Katahdin dealer or representative will also have a lot of insight on local conditions, restrictions and land conformations. If you're considering a particular parcel, you'll want to meet your dealer or representative on location to conduct an on-site review. This will help the dealer to identify which styles of log homes will suit the unique topography of the land. Try to keep an open mind about the style of home that will best suit your needs as well as suit the property. As one dealer puts it: "It's easier to find a floor plan to fit a lot than to find a lot to fit a floor plan."