HOW TO READ A SURVEY

Understanding Residential Property Boundaries & Key Features

What Is a Survey?

A survey is a detailed map of a property that shows boundary lines, structures, easements, and any encroachments. It protects buyers and homeowners by confirming legal property lines and identifying potential issues.

Key Elements to Look For:

1. Property Boundaries

- Outlined in bold or dashed lines
- Include measurements in feet (e.g., 50.00')
- Look for directional notations (N, S, E, W) and degrees (e.g., N89°32'15"E).

2. Legal Description

- Typically found in the title block
- Contains lot number, block, subdivision, and county
- Used in legal documents like the deed

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3. Improvements

- Outlines of the home, garage, fences, patios, pools, etc.
- Ensures structures are within property lines
- Look for labels like "Brick House," "Concrete Drive," "Wood Fence"

4. Easements

- Designated utility or access areas (e.g., "10' U.E." = 10-foot Utility Easement)
- Cannot be obstructed by permanent structures
- May be found at the front, side, or rear of the property

5. Setback Lines

- Minimum distances structures must sit from property lines
- Commonly shown as dashed lines
- Ensures compliance with zoning regulations

6. Encroachments

- When a structure crosses onto a neighboring property or easement
- May include fences, driveways, or buildings
- Could require correction before closing

7. North Arrow & Scale

- Arrow shows orientation of the property
- Scale (e.g., 1" = 20') helps gauge size and distance

Why It Matters:

- Confirms the property being purchased matches the legal description
- Identifies potential issues (e.g., boundary disputes or zoning violations)
- Required by lenders and title companies for closing

Helpful Tips:

- Compare the survey to the actual property
- Review easements and building lines with your title company or agent
- Request an updated survey if the current one is outdated or missing improvements