
10

TIPS WHEN BUYING LAND



BRYAN CANAVAN

New Home Sales

0477 600 088 | bryan.canavan@stroudhomes.com.au

☎ 1800 STROUD
www.stroudhomes.com.au

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Buying your own block of land and building the house of your dreams can be one of the most fulfilling and exciting experiences of your life.

However, it's important that you research your block carefully before you sign a contract. As well as price and size, there are a number of other issues you will need to take into account that could have an impact on your future home and lifestyle.



TIP 1: LIFESTYLE

The neighbourhood you live in can have a huge impact on your lifestyle and happiness.

Location is important and can affect the re-sale value. What kind of infrastructure and amenities are nearby? How far away is transport, schools, shops, parks, community facilities and employment centres? Will you need to commute to work? Will the neighborhood satisfy you and your family's needs now and in the future?

You will also need to check for negatives. Is the property affected by noise? Are there trains, airports or industrial sites nearby? Is the land under a flight path? What is the view like? Potential negatives might include power pylons, parking lots and train tracks.

Finally, check out the quality of the homes in the neighborhood. Do people take pride in their homes and gardens? Is this a neighborhood you can see yourself living in?

TIP 2: SHAPE

The shape of the land is an important consideration when buying a piece of land.

The most cost effective block is a regular-shaped, flat block with wide frontage that provides good access for the builder.

Irregular, angular and battle-axe shaped blocks can often present construction problems. Consult with a professional builder to see how you can get the best out of the block and ensure you don't waste any precious space.



TIP 3: ENCUMBRANCES

Visit your local council to check if there are any encumbrances on the land, such as easements or covenants. Easements may restrict your building options. For example, an adjoining landowner might have a right to access his property through your land, or there may be drainage or sewerage lines passing through your property. Easements can have an impact on where you position your house or if you want to install a pool in the backyard.

Additionally, check if there are any covenants over the land. There may be restrictions on building materials, colour schemes, home styles and heights.



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TIP 4: **SLOPE**

Blocks with a steep gradient can present some unique challenges but also create some great opportunities. Sloping blocks may require excavation and retaining walls, which will incur significant costs.

TIP 5: **SOIL TYPE**

You may want to commission a soil test from your builder prior to signing the contract. The results will determine the stability of the soil and the type of foundations required. Sandy and light soils may require extra reinforcement, while rocky soil or thick clay may require excavation. In both cases, you will be looking at added expenses.

TIP 6: **ORIENTATION**

Consider the orientation of the site. Your block's exposure to the sun, wind and rain may affect the type of the home that you want to build. Make sure the block you choose gets adequate sunlight throughout the day. Houses are more comfortable to live in if they're positioned well on the block. Maximising the northern aspect is ideal.

TIP 7: **UTILITIES**

Before buying your block, ensure all services such as gas, water, electricity, sewerage, telephone and communications cabling are available. Although most blocks in established areas are fully serviced, some blocks in the outer suburbs or rural areas may not have all services available.

TIP 8: **SMELLS AND SOUNDS**

Realise that you might be trading exhaust fumes from city buses for the lovely odors produced by pig farms. Horses along country roads drop steaming piles of waste. It's not like anybody carries a plastic bag and picks up after their horses.

TIP 9: **TREES**

They look great but can prove costly to remove and will constantly drop leaves into gutters and swimming pools. If you have trees on your block, decide now: are they staying or will you remove them.



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TIP 10: ANY OTHER COSTS TO CONSIDER?

- Is it likely **rock** will be present underground?
- Will **retaining** be required?
- **Bushfire mitigation:** Will this be required?
- **Acoustic mitigation:** Will this be needed?
- **NBN** (National Broadband Network) Will this be available in my area?
Should I pre-wire my home during construction?

You builder will be able to advise on all of the above.

Once you have decided and purchased a block of land the next step is to start building your dream home. Find out what you should consider when choosing a home design for your block of land by talking to your builder.



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