

FAQ / General Information

What is a Feature and Contour Survey and what is the process!

Feature and Contour surveys are the most commonly undertaken of all surveys. Before you build a new home, extension or subdivide the first step is to get a feature and contour survey done. This process involves the surveyor coming to the property and collecting information with their surveying equipment. This equipment records the position and height of features on and around your property. The typical feature and contour survey plan contains many different things but the most important for design and council requirements include the following.

Kerbs / Footpaths / Crossovers

Driveway / Fence / Retaining Walls

Buildings / Neighbours Buildings

Services – Water Meter / Power Dome Power Lines / Trees / Bore

Sewer & Water Mains

Pavers / Slabs / Concrete / Veranda

Spot levels including in neighbours property.

When would I typically require a Feature and Contour Survey!

Home Extension / Renovation - If your intention is to extend or renovate your existing property the main goal of the feature and contour survey will be to accurately locate the house including all openings eaves, roof pitches, floor levels and verandas. Also important are the features surrounding the area to be renovated such as fence boundary locations and neighbouring property locations. These surveys sometimes only require survey of the side of the property under renovation, but if you are planning to go upwards with a second story extension the whole site will have to be surveyed so council planners can see the locations of neighbouring buildings and roofs and make sure your proposed building plans meet government requirements.

New Building Design – If you are planning to demolish an existing home and plan to build a new one a full site feature and contour survey will be required. This survey will capture all of the above mentioned features and levels of your property. It will also capture your neighbour's ground levels near the boundary and the location of their buildings. Collecting plenty of information along the boundaries on your neighbour's property allows your architect to design new retaining walls to sufficiently support the ground which before may not have been retained to local government building standards.

Retaining Walls / Landscape Design- If you are planning to build a new retaining wall either within your lot or on the boundary between you and your neighbour's lot it is always advised to get a feature and contour survey done. Picking up the elevations and changes in grade around the area to be retained will give the engineers the information they will need to design the wall in a structurally stable way.

Most Landscape Architects / Designers utilise the services of Land Surveyors also by using Contour and Feature Surveys. The accuracy of surveyor's plans allow these designers to expand their creativity and design more creative and complicated designs in and around your garden space.

Swimming Pool Construction - also requires a feature and contour survey. The main reason for this is so local council can see how your proposed pool will fit in with the existing land. They will want to see sufficient information on the survey particularly if you are building near a boundary that may have a change of height to your neighbour's property.

Land Subdivision – Nowadays the Planning Commission WAPC require an accurate and detailed feature and contour survey when submitting an application for subdivision in Western Australia. As part of the application the WAPC want to see the proposed boundaries for the new lots and all associated dimensions and areas. The easiest way of doing this is by overlaying the new boundaries on the feature and contour survey plan. The survey can become very important when trying to work out distances and allowances in particular with Survey Strata or Battle Axe lots.