



All About Land

Three things to keep in mind when searching for your perfect section.





The first step is to find that perfect piece of land on which to build your dream.



Your perfect home starts with the perfect section.

So you've started on the journey to building your new home – congratulations! The first step is to find that perfect piece of land on which to build your dream.

> Read on to learn more about orientation, technical categories and contour – three key things to consider before committing to your section, to ensure your home is future-ready.

When looking for land, you'll have your wish list in mind, with considerations like location, outlook, suburb, school zone and access. These are all extremely important points, but it's also essential to consider some more technical aspects.

Once you've narrowed down your shortlist, the best thing you can do before making a final decision is to reach out to us. There are a number of technical things that we can use our knowledge and experience to help you with, and it's all complimentary and part of the service when working with Milestone Homes.



» Orientation

Possibly one of the most important factors in your purchasing decision is the orientation of your site. It will dictate everything about your build and the way you live, long after we've handed over the keys.



For most people, the aim with orientation is to get all-day sun throughout the living areas, to maximise any views and to provide welcoming outdoor entertaining spaces.

Clients often identify a plan or layout they really like before finding the land, but it is vitally important to be open to changing a plan – it's a lot easier than changing how the sun moves! There is also often a 'good' and 'bad' side of the road, depending on where the sun rises and sets. This factor has a huge impact on what's possible with any home design.

Our entire design process starts with orientation, as this dictates where rooms are positioned. We strongly recommend coming in and talking with one of our consultants before you purchase your section. They can look at how your preferred house plan sits on the site and advise on whether the sections you're considering will achieve the outcome you're looking for.

» Contour



While a flat piece of land is undoubtedly easiest to build on, they can be hard to find in some regions of New Zealand, and many people desire the views that contour affords.

From gently sloping sites to steeper grades, our teams have the knowledge and experience to advise you on the best way to approach your design and build. Again, flexibility is key here, as it is always more affordable to design a house to fit a section than relandscaping a section to fit a house.

Geotech Reports

No matter what your section looks like, acquiring and reviewing a full geo-tech report is a fundamental first step.

If your section is part of a subdivision, the geo-tech report will have been completed and provided to council as part of the subdivision consenting process. Larger scale developments also have an 'Earthworks Completion Report' which states conditions and recommendations once the development has been completed.

Admittedly these documents don't make for the best evening reading, but our teams are well versed in the terminology and can break them down into plain English for you. We can help you understand the recommendations for your site or even certain areas of your site. We can also let you know what engineering will be required through the design, consent and construction stages of your build.



Land Adjustments

If you're looking to build on a sloping or contoured piece of land, there are various structural changes that can be made in order to create a stable building area for your home.

Cut and Push

In this scenario we cut the high part of the section and push it to the low part of the section to create a level platform. This will often turn a sloping site into a flat one, but there are limitations depending on soil type and foundation requirements.

Retaining Walls

Retaining walls support the ground and can range from simple timber or rock walls, right up to concrete tilt panels or blocks. Once they exceed 600mm high they generally need a drainage system behind them and walls exceeding 1m high generally require engineering input. Any retaining wall structure and drainage system must be within your boundary.

Batter

This is a slope that is created as an alternative to a retaining wall. The land is essentially recontoured with a slope to a cut platform, or if the house is sitting high, we may slope (batter) the platform down to the road or a boundary.

Consent Notices

A consent notice is a form of covenant between the council and the landowner that is imposed through a subdivision consent. They will be noted on the Certificate of Title, and we can source these for you. Consent notices can range from stormwater detention and coverage requirements, right through to ground conditions and engineering involvement, and they have the potential to greatly impact the design and cost of your home. It is essential that you're aware of these before purchasing a section to build your home on.

House Design

Naturally your house may take on a huge range of styles or layouts, but there are some clever ways to make designs work on a sloped section. For example, a split-level floor may be an ideal solution on a mildly sloping site.

In this scenario, one area of the house is lower than another by about 3 - 5 steps. Often the lower part is a garage to allow for easy access from the road. The garage may also have a higher stud, to match the house roof height and accommodate a boat or campervan. Split level floors are more expensive than standard floors but can mitigate the need for a higher retaining wall and help with daylight angles too.

» Technical Categories

Our teams have extensive experience working with all TC classifications. We are happy to talk you through the implications of the TC rating on your preferred sections and advise you on any likely cost implications.



Land Adjustments

Technical Category (TC) relates to the condition of the ground that is being built on. TC terminology became commonplace after the earthquakes in 2010 and 2011 and is most commonly cited around the Canterbury region and the relevant territorial authorities. Depending upon your location in the country, you may not see any reference to Technical Categories in your engineering reports. In basic terms, the TC designation relates to the make-up of the ground and its predisposition to liquefaction in the event of an earthquake.



What does each TC rating mean?

» TC1


TC1 is 'good ground' with limited tendency to liquefy. No extra work is required to build on TC1 land.

» TC2

TC2 land is subject to liquefaction and is often found where there have been historic rivers or where there is a high water table. TC2 land can require additional preparation work and/or foundation strengthening.

» TC3

TC3 land is generally only found in Christchurch and is where land has liquified previously. TC3 land requires extensive geo-technical investigation.



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We know it's a lot to think about! That's why we're here to help.

If you're out searching for land, our teams are here for you. The first step is to give us a call and we can discuss what you're wanting to achieve and point out some important things to look for. Once you have your shortlist sorted, we'll happily meet you all around the region to point out the pros and cons of each site and give you honest advice.

At Milestone Homes, our mission is to work alongside you to achieve your ultimate goal of creating a fantastic new home, and that starts with taking a good hard look at the land it will be sitting on.

Wherever you're up to in your search for land, Milestone Homes is here to help. For advice, assistance or simply an ear to talk to, we're here for you.



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