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Recommendations for Using Your COTTAGE BUILDING PLAN SET

Thank you and Congratulations on your Cottage Plan purchase. We hope our Plan Set will provide you and your family the information necessary to build and enjoy a beautiful and functional backyard addition that will be a point of pride and an excellent financial investment over the coming years.

Please feel free to give us a call or send an e-mail to let us know how your Project is progressing. If you'd like, you can add pictures or comments about your Project on our [Facebook Page](#).

Getting You Started:

This document is intended to instruct you on how to start the process of project planning, budgeting, permitting, building and/ or contracting of your new cottage. Since you are reading these instructions, we assume you have successfully downloaded and opened your Plan Set. If you are having problems downloading, viewing, coping or printing your plans, please refer to our Website for instruction under "Product">"Free Downloads"> [Instructions on Downloading Our Files](#).

RECOMMENDED STEPS IN STARTING YOUR COTTAGE PROJECT

First Step- Print a Copy of the Plan Set:

Using the instructions provided, we recommend you print at least one copy of the Building Plans at full size (24" x 36") and read them carefully. Make notes on the plans and highlight things that you will need to remember when buying, building or permitting your Cottage. We recommend you print the "Rendering Sheet" in full color and stick it up on the wall someplace where you can see it when studying the plans. It's going to come in handy to visualize what's going on when you're reading the plans.

2nd Step – Preliminary Site Layout:

If you followed our instructions about doing a Site Assessment before buying our Plans, you probably already know where the building will be located, where the utilities will run and what the setback distances will be. If you have not done an assessment of your property, you really should download a free copy of our **"Site Assessment Questionnaire"** now and do a little research about your site conditions and your local building and zoning requirements before proceeding much further. You'll find the Site Assessment document on our website under **"Products">"Free Downloads"**.

Assuming you know something about your local requirements, we recommend you do an approximate layout in your backyard showing where the building will be placed. Place some wood stakes in the ground at the corners of the cottage and wrap the stakes with brightly colored flagging. Make some notes about what you observe, including:

- 1) Where the water, sewer and electrical lines will run,
- 2) Note the grade differences across the proposed building footprint
- 3) Locate trees and major landscape elements
- 4) Determine the access to the building site for trucks, concrete pumps and personnel
- 5) Determine the direction of water flow across the site

Whether you decide to build for yourself or hire a contractor, this preliminary layout is going to tell you and others a lot about the scope of the Project, the associated site problems and probable costs.

3rd Step – Ask for a Preliminary Plan Review at the Building Department

It's a good idea to print a complete copy of your plans and take them to the Building & Zoning Department before formally applying for a permit. There will undoubtedly be something they want added or changed to meet local requirements. You wouldn't want to pay for printing everything twice.

You will need to take some kind of **Site Plan** with you to show the Building Department. They'll want to know where you are going to place your cottage, how you will connect to the needed utilities and if there are impediments to placing the Cottage in your chosen location. If you have a copy of our **"Site Assessment Questionnaire"** you will find a sample site plan and a blank site plan sheet attached to the end of that document. Again, you'll find the Site Assessment document on our website under **"Products"> "Free Downloads"**.

You can use the blank site plan sheet to create your own site plan. Using the information gathered in your preliminary building layout and the information shown in our Building Plan Set, sketch your cottage, the existing house, trees, fences, setbacks and utilities onto the plan.

If you have followed the recommendations noted in the **"Site Assessment Questionnaire"** and still cannot put together an acceptable Site Plan yourself, you can send us the information you have collected and we will give you a quote to prepare a formal Site Plan drawing. Information pertaining to ordering a custom site plan can be found on our website under **"Products"> "Custom Site Plans"**.

When you have your Plan Set and Site Plan in hand, take it to the Building, Planning and Zoning Department and ask them for a Preliminary Review. They will tell you if you'll need anything else to submit for a permit. You should ask at this time for a Building Permit Application, the cost of the permit and how many copies of the plans will be required.

If you are from **California or Coastal Florida** the Building Department may ask for Engineering Documentation such as Certified Structural Calculations, Energy Code Conformance, Green Code Documents, Heating and Cooling Calculations and/or Fire Sprinkler Plans. Please see our Website for ordering information on our **"Permit Documentation Packages"** which describes how to order a custom set of Engineering Documents for each of our Cottages.

If you are from any other state you probably will not need any additional Engineering. If one or more engineering documents are requested by your Building Department, please call or e-mail us for information on obtaining such.

4th Step – Establish Your Budget:

Assuming things went well at the Building Department and you now know everything that must be included in your Project, it's a good idea to put together your Project Budget at this point. For most people that is going to include:

- 1) The materials required to build your Cottage,
- 2) Probably a few new Tools,
- 3) At least some Labor performed by Subcontractors,
- 4) Your Permit Fees and other Miscellaneous Costs.

About Material Costs – If you're building a Cottage yourself, the building material purchases will represent by far the largest part of your costs. And even if you're a veteran builder, assembling the quantities, material prices and sources for purchasing everything can be quite a demanding and frustrating task. To assist the builder with this critical job, we have created a custom **"DIY Material List"** Estimate and a set of **"Vendor Purchase Orders"** for each of our Cottage Plan Sets. If you have not already purchased these valuable documents for your cottage, we highly recommend you do so. For additional information on our estimating products, go to our website and click on the Products Tab at the top of the blue Main Menu Bar, then click on **"Material Price Lists and Purchase Orders"**.

About Tools – What tools you'll need is largely dependent on what part of the work you'll be doing yourself. We discuss the matter of tools and DIY capabilities in the **"How to"** Section of our website under the sub-section labeled **"Can I do It Myself?"** It might be a good idea to read this section before deciding what tools to budget for or buy.

About Sub-Contractor Hiring – On our website we provide a section called **"What Work Should I do Myself"**, in which we try to summarize the pros and cons of hiring a sub-contractor to do certain phases of the work. We would usually recommend getting a local electrician and plumber to handle their trades. There is normally too much training time and too little to be gained by doing those tasks for yourself. For a more in depth discussion of the issue, please read the noted section of our site at the **"How to"** link under the **"information"** drop down. Whatever you decide to do, just remember to get at least two bids from each trade and use our drawings and specifications as a reference in your final contract.

Permitting and Other Fees – Permit and inspection fees are a few of the things you'll need to consider when arriving at an overall price for your new cottage. To try and help the DIY Builder realistically estimate these costs, we have prepared a short summary of some of the miscellaneous cost items you might want to add to your final estimate. This information is shown on our website page under **"Other Things to Include in Your Project Budget"** under the **"Information/How to.."** dropdown list.

5th Step – BUILD THAT COTTAGE! - This informational sheet is far too small in scope to try to explain how to actually build your Cottage, however we do recommend that you make use of the many excellent publications available to builders. The place we suggest you start is with *The Craftsman Book Company* (<https://www.craftsman-book.com>). You'll find construction information on virtually any trade from carpentry to concrete to plumbing and electrical.

If you have a problem interpreting the drawings or need some help with permitting, just send us an e-mail or give us a call and we'll try to help.

Have fun with your Project and remember to let us know how you're doing.

Robert R. Garant, PE
President