Custom Home Zoning Checklist

What to confirm about a lot before you design or buy

Before you make an offer on land

1. **Confirm the zoning designation directly**
   Contact the municipal planning department rather than relying on a listing description or a neighbouring property's zoning.
2. **Ask about site-specific exceptions**
   Some lots carry additional conditions attached specifically to that address, separate from the general zoning category.
3. **Ask about conservation or easement overlap**
   A lot near a ravine, watercourse or utility corridor can carry review layers beyond standard zoning.

While the design is taking shape

1. **Share the zoning envelope with your designer early**
   Setbacks, height and lot coverage limits should inform the layout from the first sketch, not after it is finished.
2. **Ask directly whether a variance may be needed**
   If a favourite design element does not fit the zoning envelope, find out early whether a minor variance process applies.
3. **Keep a written record of what the municipality confirms**
   Notes from planning department conversations are useful reference points later in the permit process.

Questions to bring to your design and build team

1. **How does this lot's zoning compare with similar lots nearby**
   Ask your builder to explain what is typical for the area and where this lot differs.
2. **What would trigger a minor variance here**
   Ask which specific design choices are closest to the zoning limits on this property.
3. **What is the realistic sequence of approvals**
   Ask for a general order of zoning confirmation, permit application and inspections for this specific project.

Confirm the zoning first, then let the design follow it.

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