

Establishing Building Envelope

Many residents inquire of the office of Building Codes and Zoning wanting to build a new home or add to an existing home. The short answer is, all of this must be inside the building envelope. If a home is torn down, the new structure must now be built completely inside the building envelope. How do you determine the building envelope? If you received a survey when you purchased your home, then you may be ahead of the curve. If not, you will need to have a survey performed in order to establish and document a building envelope.

1. To do this you will need to measure from the white sideline on the street to the closest point of the house and every house on that side of the street within the block. Or 1,000 feet in each direction. **Example:** (5 houses on your side of the street, House “A” measures 100ft., “B”=135’, “C”=85’, “D”=118’, “E”=92’), that would be an average of 106ft.
2. Your new front setback is now 106ft. You would measure the width of the lot at this (point) newly established front setback. Half of that width is your building envelope. Let’s say that the width is 100ft., so $\frac{1}{2}$ or 50ft. is your building envelope.
3. You can slide that 50ft. building envelope either to the right or left, as long as it is no closer to the side property line than 20% of the front setback width, which in this case would be 20ft. For many established homes wanting to add an addition, you may find that a portion of the home will not fit entirely inside that envelope. **(In this case, that portion is out of compliance and the envelope must now encompass as much of the home as possible but no closer than 20% to the side property).**
4. The rear setback for residence “B” (most of the City) is 60 feet from rear property line where you can start construction up to a height of 25 feet. Then 85 feet from the rear property line where the structure can reach a max height of 40 feet.

Before you inquire with the building codes and zoning department, it would be advisable to have a survey.

- The survey will need to show the averages of front setbacks on the same side of street.
- The newly established building envelope (Front, side and rear).
- All structures on the property

Two other components to this equation are “*F.A.R.-Floor Area Ratio*” & “*Footprint*” of the home. To figure these you can find the building application on our web site www.citybellemeade.org