

A

Acre: A plot of land comprising 43,560 sq. ft.

Adhesive: A natural or synthetic material, generally in paste or liquid form, used to fasten or glue boards together, lay floor tile, fabricate plastic laminates, etc.

Adjustable Rate Mortgage (ARM): A mortgage loan in which the interest rate changes throughout the life of a loan as an index changes with the market.

Aggregate: A mixture of sand and stone and a major component of concrete.

Air-Dried Lumber: Lumber that has been piled in yards or sheds for length of time. The minimum moisture content of thoroughly air-dried lumber is usually 12 to 15 percent.

Air Space: The area between insulation facing and interior of exterior wall coverings. Normally a 1" air gap.

Alcove: A recess opening off a wall of a larger room. Often used as a sitting area, coatroom, or storage area.

Allowance: A sum of money set aside in the construction contract for items, which have not been selected and specified in the construction contract. For example, selection of tile as a flooring may require an allowance for an underlayment material, or an electrical allowance, which sets aside an amount of money to be spent on electrical fixtures.

Americans with Disabilities Act: The Americans with Disabilities Act, which gives civil rights protection to individuals with disabilities similar to those, provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, State and local government services, and telecommunications.

Amortize: The method of paying down the principal of a loan over a period of time. In a traditional 30 year loan the amount of the loan is repaid, or amortized, with payments that also include interest over 30 years.

Ampere (Amps): The rate of flow of electrical charge. $\text{Current} = \text{voltage} / \text{resistance}$.

Anchor: Any fastener (usually metal) used to attach parts, such as joists, trusses, posts, etc., to masonry or masonry materials.

Anchor Bolt: A threaded rod inserted in masonry construction to anchor the sill plate to the foundation.

Annual Percentage Rate (APR): Annual cost of credit over the life of a loan, including interest, service charges, points, loan fees, mortgage insurance, and other items.

Appraisal: An expert valuation of property.

Apron: Trim used under the stool on interior windows.

Arcade: A series of arches supported by columns or piers to provide an open passageway.

Arch: A curved structure that will support itself and the weight above its curved opening by mutual pressure.

Architect: One who has completed a course of study in building and design, and is licensed by the state as an architect. One who draws up plans and sometimes supervises the construction of homes.

Areaway: Recessed area below grade around the foundation to allow light and ventilation into basement window.

Aromatic red cedar: Similar characteristics to (Western) red cedar. Primarily used in construction for chests and closet linings for its mothproof value.

Arris: A sharp edge formed when two planes or surfaces meet. Found on edges of moldings, doors, shelves, and in cabinet construction.

Ash Pit: The area below the hearth of a fireplace, which collects the ashes.

Asphalt shingles: Composition roof shingles made from asphalt impregnated felt covered with mineral granules.

Assessment: A tax levied on a property, or a value placed on the worth of a property.

Assessor: A public official responsible for the evaluation of property for the purposes of taxation.

Assignee: A person to whom a transfer of interest is made in connection with a mortgage or contract for a home or piece of property.

Assignor: A person who makes an assignment for a mortgage or contract for a home or piece of property.

ASTM: American Society for Testing Materials.

Atrium: A central hall or open court within a structure.

Attachment: The legal seizure of property to require payment of a debt.

Attic: The space between the roof and the ceiling.

Attic Access: An opening that is placed in the dry walled ceiling of a home providing access to the attic. Sometimes found in halls, closets or garages.

Attic Ventilators: In houses, screened openings provided to ventilate an attic space. They are located in the soffit area as inlet ventilators and in the gable end or along the ridge as outlet ventilators. They can also consist of power-driven fans used as an exhaust system. See LOUVER.

Awning Window: An out swinging window hinged at the top.

B

Back Charge: Billings for work performed or costs incurred by one party that, in accordance with the agreement, should have been performed or incurred by the party to whom billed. Owners bill back charges to general contractors, and general contractors bill back charges to subcontractors. Examples of back charges include charges for cleanup work or to repair something damaged by another subcontractor, such as a tub chip or broken window.

Backfill: The replacement of excavated earth into a trench around and against a basement foundation.

Baffles: Device to help achieve a ventilation space between insulation and roof sheathing. It helps assure airflow from the eave vents in attics and cathedral ceilings.

Balcony: a deck projecting from the wall of a building above ground level.

Balloon Framing: A system of framing a building in which all vertical structural elements of the bearing walls and partitions consist of single pieces extending from the top of the foundation sill plate to the roof plate and to which all floor joists are fastened.

Balloon Loan: A loan that comes due and must be paid off or refinanced because the final payment is much higher than the monthly payments.

Balusters: Usually small vertical members in a railing used between a top rail and the stair treads or a bottom rail.

Balustrade: A series of balusters connected by a rail; generally used for porches and balconies.

Band Joist: Vertical member that forms the perimeter of a floor system in which the floor joists tie in. Also known as the rim joist.

Banister: A handrail with supporting posts used alongside a stairway.

Barrel Vault: A vaulted ceiling of semi-circular shape, creating a dome-like appearance.

Base Shoe: A molding used next to the floor in interior baseboards.

Baseboard: The finish board covering the interior wall where the wall and the floor meet.

Basement Foundation: A basement is a usable foundation that typically has ceiling heights of 8' and is often finished off as living or storage space.

Batt: a roll or sheet of insulation designed to be installed between members of frame construction.

Batten: Narrow strips of wood used to cover joints or as decorative vertical members over plywood or wide boards.

Batter Board: One of a pair of horizontal boards nailed to posts set at the corners of an excavation, used to indicate the desired level, also as a fastening for stretched strings to indicate outlines of foundation walls.

Bay Window: Any window space projecting outward from the walls of a building, either square or polygonal in plan.

Beam: A structural member transversely supporting a load.

Beam Ceiling: A ceiling in which the ceiling beams are exposed to view.

Bearing Partition: A partition that supports any vertical load in addition to its own weight.

Bearing Wall: A wall that supports any vertical load in addition to its own weight.

Beech: A whitish to reddish brown hardwood used especially in construction for interior and exterior cabinet parts. Blends well with birch for stained kitchen cabinets and vanities.

Bench Mark: A mark on some permanent object fixed to the ground from which land measurements and elevations are taken.

Birch: Hard and heavy light reddish brown hardwood. The most widely used hardwood veneer for flush doors, cabinetwork, and paneling. Mill products include interior trim, flooring, sash, and trim.

Blind Nailing: A method of nailing so that the nail is not visible.

Board Foot: A method of lumber measurements using nominal dimensions of 1 in. thick, 12 in. wide, and 12 in. long, or the equivalent.

Bonus Room: A room with no specifically designated function, unlike a living room, bedroom, or kitchen. Is not included in the initial square footage.

Bottom Plate: The lowest horizontal member of a wall, which rests on the rough floor, to which the studding is nailed.

Brick: A solid masonry unit composed of clay or shale. Formed into a rectangular prism while soft and burned or fired in kiln.

Brick Veneer: A facing of brick laid against and fastened to sheathing of a frame wall or tile wall construction.

Bridging: Small wood or metal members that are inserted in a diagonal position between the floor joists at mid span to act both as tension and compression members for the purpose of bracing the joists and spreading the action of loads.

BTU (British Thermal Unit): The amount of heat required raise one pound of water one degree F.

Building Code: A comprehensive set of laws that controls the construction or remodeling of a home or other structure.

Built-Up Roof: A roofing composed of three to five layers of asphalt felt laminated with coal tar, pitch, or asphalt. The top is finished with crushed slag or gravel. Generally used on flat or low-pitched roofs.

Bundle: A package of shingles. Normally, there are 3 bundles per square and 27 shingles per bundle.

Bureau of Land Management: The branch of government in charge of surveying public lands.

C

Cantilever: A projecting structure supported on one end, such as a balcony.

Central Air Conditioning: A system, which uses ducts to distribute cooling and/or dehumidified air to more than one room or uses, pipes to distribute chilled water to heat

exchangers in more than one room, and which is not plugged into an electrical convenience outlet.

Carport: A garage not fully enclosed.

Casement Window: A hinged window, usually metal, that opens out.

Casing: Molding of various widths and thickness used to trim door and window openings at the jambs.

Caulking: A waterproof material used to seal cracks.

Central Heating: A system by which the heat from a single source is distributed with ducts.

Chain: A unit of land measurement 66 ft. in length.

Chamfer: A beveled edge on a board formed by removing the sharp corner. Generally used on moldings, edges of drawer fronts, and cabinet doors.

Chase: A slot or continuous groove built in a masonry or frame wall to accommodate ducts, pipes, or conduits.

Chimney: A vertical flue for passing smoke from a heating unit, fireplace, or incinerator.

Chipped Grain: Wood surface that has been roughened by the action of cutting tools. Considered a defect when surfaces are to be smoothly finished.

Chord: The horizontal member of a truss connecting the lower corners.

Circuit: Two or more wires through which electrical power flows from the distribution panel to one or more outlets or fixtures, then back.

Circuit Breaker: A safety device that breaks the flow of electrical current whenever a circuit becomes overloaded.

Clear Title: A title to property that is free of any defects.

Cleat: A piece of wood, normally used in frame construction, fastened to another member to serve as a brace or support.

Clerestory: An outside wall of a room or building that rises above an adjoining roof and contains windows.

Coffered Ceiling: A ceiling with recessed square panels, bordered with trim for ornamental purposes.

Collar Beam: Nominal 1 or 2 in. thick members connecting opposite roof rafters. They serve to stiffen the roof structure.

Computer Aided Design (CAD): Using the computer to perform drafting and design functions.

Concrete: A mixture of cement, sand, and gravel with water.

Concrete Block: A hollow concrete 'brick' often 8" x 8" x 16" in size. Often used in low rise commercial and some residential construction.

Concrete Form: A temporary structure built to contain concrete during pouring and initial hardening.

Conditions and Restrictions: The term used to designate any conditions to which the use of land may not be put and the penalties for failure to comply.

Conduction: The flow of heat through an object by transferring heat from one molecule to another.

Conduit: piping made out of plastic or metal used to protect electrical wire.

Construction Loan: A short-term loan taken for the expressed purpose of building. Installment payments are made and when the building is complete, the loan is usually replaced by a longer-term mortgage.

Contract: An agreement between a seller and purchaser. The title is withheld from the purchaser until all required payments to the seller have been completed.

Convection: Refers to the transfer of heat by moving fluid (liquids and gases).

Conventional Framing: A method of roof framing which uses rafters and joists. These framing members are measured, cut, and hoisted into place by building professionals at the jobsite during construction. Also referred to as stick framing.

Coping: A cap or top course of a masonry wall to protect lower areas from water penetration.

Corbel: A ledge or shelf constructed by laying successive courses of masonry out from the face of the wall.

Core: The inner layer or layers of plywood. The core may consist of veneer, solid lumber, or composition board.

Corner Bead: A lightweight strip of metal, angled to reinforce corners in drywall.

Corner Braces: Diagonal braces at the corners of frame structure to stiffen and strengthen the wall.

Cornice: The part of a roof that projects out from the wall.

Cornice Return: That portion of the cornice that returns on the gable end of a house

Counter Flashing: A flashing used under the regular flashing.

Cove: Molded trim of a concave shape used around cabinet construction and other built-ins.

Crawl Space: The shallow space below the floor of a house built above the ground. Generally it is surrounded with the foundation wall.

Crawlspace Vent: An opening to allow the passage of air through the unexcavated area under a first floor. Ideally there should be at least two vents per crawlspace.

Cricket: A device used at roof intersections to divert water.

Cripple: A structural member that is cut less than full length, such as a studding piece above a window or door.

Cross Bracing: Boards nailed diagonally across studs or other boards to make framework rigid.

Crown Molding: A decorative molding used at the top of cabinets, at ceiling corners, and under a roof overhang.

Cul-de-sac: A street or court with no outlet, which provides a circular turn around for vehicles.

Cull: Building material (especially boards) that is rejected because of defects or below useable grade.

Cupola: A small, decorative structure built on the roof of a house. It is often placed over an attached garage and may also be used for ventilating purposes.

Current: Term used to describe electrical flow.

Curtain Wall: An exterior or interior wall, which provides no structural support.

D

Dado Joint: A groove cut across the face of a board to receive the end of another board. Often used in quality shelf and cabinet construction.

Damper: A movable plate, which regulates the draft of a stove, fireplace, or furnace.

Dead Load: All the unmovable weight in a structure and the weight of the structure itself.

Deed: Actually, any one of many conveyancing or financing instruments, but generally a conveyancing instrument, given to pass fee title to property upon sale.

Dentil: One of a series of small projecting rectangular blocks forming a molding under an overhang, most common in colonial-style homes.

Dimension Lumber: Framing lumber, which is 2 in. thick and from 4 to 12 in. wide.

Distribution Panel: The main box through which electrical power is brought into the home and then distributed.

Dome: A roof used over an entryway or a complete structure in the form of a hemisphere.

Dome Structures: Structures incorporating design elements of the geodesic dome or triangular space frames.

Door: A sliding or hinged structure, covering an opening to a cupboard, closet, room, building, etc. May be used as an entrance or exit. Usually constructed of wood, glass, or metal, depending on its service.

Doorjamb: Two vertical pieces held together by a head jamb forming the inside lining of a door opening.

Doorstop: The strips on the doorjambs against which the door closes.

Dormer: An opening in a sloping roof, the framing of which projects out to form a vertical wall suitable for windows or other openings.

Double Glazing: Making a pane of two pieces of glass with air space between and sealed to provide insulation.

Double Header: Two or more timbers or lumber joined for strength.

Double Hung: Refers to a window having top and bottom sashes, each capable of movement up and down.

Douglas Fir: A yellow to pale reddish soft wood. The leading veneer wood primarily converted into plywood and widely used in building and construction. Lumber used in general construction. Mill products used for sash, flooring, and doors.

Downspout: A pipe, usually of metal, for carrying rainwater from roof gutters.

Dressed Size: The actual size of lumber after jointing and surfacing.

Drip Cap: A molding placed on the exterior topside of a door or window frame to cause water to drip beyond the outside of the frame.

Dry Wall: Interior covering material, such as gypsum board or plywood, which is applied in large sheets or panels.

Dry Well: A pit located on porous ground, walled up with rock, which allows water to seep through; used for the disposal of rainwater or as the effluent from a septic tank.

Ducts: In a house, usually round or rectangular metal pipes for distributing warm air from the heating plant to rooms, or air from a conditioning device or as cold air returns. Ducts are also made of composition materials.

Duplex Outlet: Electrical wall outlet having two plug receptacle.

Dwarf Wall: A low wall built to retain an excavation or embankment.

E

Earnest Money: A partial payment made as part of the purchase price to bind a contract for property.

Earth Sheltered Dwelling: A structure, which uses soil to reduce heat loss (or gain).

Easement: An area of a piece of property given rights to another for the purpose of placing power lines, drains, and other specified uses.

Eastern fir: A softwood similar to spruce in its general characteristics. Used for siding, moldings, and general construction.

Eave Vent: Vent opening located in the soffit under the eaves of a house to allow the passage of air through the attic and out the roof vents.

Eaves: The lower portion of the roof that overhangs the wall.

Egress: A means of exiting the home. An egress window is required in every bedroom and basement.

Electrical Service Panel: Refers to the high-voltage electrical system's first point of entry into a home beyond the meter.

Elevations: The exterior view of a home design that shows the position of the house relative to the grade of the land.

Ell: An extension or wing of a building at right angles to the main section.

Energy Efficient: Method of construction or building practice by which less energy is used or consumed to produce the same level of energy service. 2. Materials, appliances, or other items designed to reduce consumption of energy while providing a specific energy output.

Equity: The market value less any loans against a property.

Escrow: An agreement in which the parties deposit money and/or legal documents with a third party who handles the transaction.

Escutcheon: Door hardware, which accommodates the knob and keyhole.

Excavation: A cavity or pit produced by digging the earth in preparation for construction.

Expansion Joint: A bituminous fiber strip used to separate blocks or units of concrete to prevent cracking due to expansion as a result of temperature changes.

Expansive Clay: A type of soil, which swells when wet and produces very high-pressure against underground walls.

F

Façade: The front elevation or face of a structure.

Face Brick: Brick of better quality used on the face of a wall.

Face Size: The exposed width of a modeled piece of lumber after installation.

Face Veneer: Veneer selected for exposed surfaces in plywood. Especially selected for fancy paneling.

Faced Insulation: Insulation with an attached vapor retarder (kraft paper or foil-backed paper).

Facing: Any material attached to the outer portion of a wall used as a finished surface.

Fascia: A horizontal board nailed onto the ends of the rafters.

Fiberboard: A building board made with fibrous material and used as an insulating board.

Fiber Glass Insulation: An energy-efficient glass fiber product manufactured by Owens Corning to ensure the best thermal and noise control performance available.

Fill: Sand, gravel, or loose earth used to bring a sub-grade up to a desired level around a house.

Filled Insulation: A loose insulating material poured from bags or blown by machine into walls.

Fire Cut: The angular cut at the end of a joist designed to rest on a brick wall.

Fire Stop: A solid, tight closure of a concealed space, placed to prevent the spread of fire and smoke through such a space. In a frame wall, this will usually consist of 2 by 4 cross blocking between studs.

Fire Wall: Any wall designed to resist the spread of fire between sections of a house. Firewalls are commonly used between the main structure and an attached garage. Fire resistant materials are designed specifically for this purpose.

Firebrick: A brick that is especially hard and heat-resistant; used in fireplaces.

Fireclay: A refractory mortar used to lay firebrick in the bed and walls of a fireplace.

Flagstone: Flat stone used for floors, steps, walks, or walls.

Flashing: Sheet metal or other material used in roof and wall construction to protect a building from water seepage.

Flat Ceiling: A ceiling with no change in elevation.

Flue: The space or passage in a chimney through which smoke, gas, or fumes ascend. Each passage is called a flue, which together with any others and the surrounding masonry make up the chimney.

Flue Lining: Fireclay or terra cotta pipe, round or square, usually made in all ordinary flue sizes and in 2 ft. lengths. Used for the inner lining of chimneys with the brick or masonry work around the outside. Flue lining in chimneys runs from about a foot below the flue connection to the top of the chimney.

Fly Rafters: End rafters of the gable overhang supported by roof sheathing and lookouts.

Footing: A masonry section, usually concrete, in a rectangular form wider than the bottom of the foundation wall or pier it supports.

Forced Air Heating: A common form of heating with natural gas, propane, oil or electricity as a fuel. Air is heated in the furnace and distributed through a set of metal ducts to various areas of the house.

Foundation: The supporting portion of a structure below the first-floor construction, or below grade, including the footings.

Framer: The carpenter contractor that installs the lumber and erects the frame, flooring system, interior walls, backing, trusses, rafters, decking, installs all beams, stairs, soffits and all work related to the wood structure of the home. The framer builds the home according to the blueprints and must comply with local building codes and regulations.

Framing: The studs, rafters, joists, sole plates, and roof plates that form the skeletal structure of a house.

Frieze: In house construction, a horizontal member connecting the top of the siding with the soffit of the cornice.

Frost Line: The depth of frost penetration in soil. This depth varies in different parts of the country. Footings should be placed below this depth to prevent movement.

Furring: The use of wood strips (or other materials) as a method of finishing the interior face of masonry wall. Furring provides a space for insulation, helps prevent moisture transmission, and provides a level surface for paneling or other surface finishing treatment.

Fuse: A device often found in older homes designed to prevent overloads in electrical lines. See Circuit Breakers.

G

Gable: The portion of the roof above the eave line of a double-sloped roof.

Gable Vent: A louver mounted in the top of the gable to allow the passage of air through the attic.

Gain: (a) A recess or notch into which a door hinge fits flush with the surface. (b) Refers to the way heat is extracted from solar radiation.

Garrett: An attic or unfinished part of a house just under the roof.

Girder: A large or principal beam of wood or steel used to support concentrated loads at isolated points along its length.

Glazing: Placing of glass in windows or doors.

Grade: The surface of the ground around a building.

Gravel Stop: A strip of metal with a vertical lip used to retain the gravel around the edge of a built-up roof.

Green Building: A method of constructing a home or another structure using energy efficient or recycled materials and energy efficient construction practices to reduce consumption of energy, water and other resources, protect occupant health, reduce waste, and reduce the building's impact on the environment.

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupt (GFCI): A breaker or receptacle that detects excessive electrical current flow and stops electrical flow in the circuit. It is a required safety feature in many areas of the home where there is an increased risk of shock.

Grounding: The connection of an electrical system to the earth. It is used to prevent damage and minimize the danger of electrical shock

Grout: A plaster-like material used to seal between ceramic and other tile in kitchens, showers, and baths.

Gusset: A plywood or metal plate used to strengthen the joints of a truss.

Gutter: A channel along the fascia to direct rainwater to a downspout.

H

Hanger: A metal strap used to support piping or the ends of joists.

Hardwood: Wood produced from broad-leaved trees or trees that lose their leaves. Examples include oak, maple, walnut, and birch.

Header: (a) A beam placed perpendicular to joists and to which joists are nailed in framing for chimney, stairway, or other opening. (b) A wood lintel.

Hearth: The inner or outer floor of a fireplace, usually made of brick, tile or stone.

Heat Exchanger: A device for removing heat from water or air and transferring the heat to another medium. Baseboard convectors are water to air heat exchangers.

Heat Pump: A device, which uses compression and decompression of gas to heat and/or cool a house.

Hickory: A hard and heavy brown to reddish brown hard wood. Used as face veneer for decorative interior plywood paneling and as solid lumber in special flooring applications. Pecan, a variety of the hickory family, has similar properties and construction applications.

Hip Rafter: The diagonal rafter that extends from the plate to the ridge to form the hip.

Hip Roof: A roof that rises by inclined planes from all four sides of a building.

Hose Bib: A water faucet made for the threaded attachment of a hose.

Hot Wire: The electrical wires (typically black or red) used to carry current as distinguished from the neutral wires (usually white)

House Drain: A horizontal sewer piping within a building, which receives waste from the soil stacks.

House Sewer: The watertight soil pipe extending from the exterior of the foundation wall to the public sewer.

Humidifier: A device, generally attached to a furnace, to supply or maintain humidity in a home.

Humidistat: A controlling device to regulate or maintain the desired degree of humidity in a house.

I-Beam: A steel beam with a cross section resembling the letter I. It is used for long spans as basement beams or over wide wall openings, such as a double garage door, when wall and roof loads are imposed on the opening.

Improvements: Any additions to property, which tends to increase its value, such as buildings, streets, sewers, etc.

Incandescent Lamp: A lamp in which a filament gives off light when sufficiently heated by an electric current.

Insulated Concrete Form (ICF): It is steel reinforced poured concrete that allows the forms to stay in place and become a functional part of the house. The walls and floors will be concrete.

Insulating Board: Any board suitable for insulating purposes.

Insulation: Materials for obstructing the passage of sound, heat, or cold from one surface to another.

Interior Trim: General term for all the finish molding, casing, baseboard, and cornice applied within the building by finish carpenters.

J

Jack Rafter: A rafter that spans the distance from the wall plate to a hip, or from a valley to a ridge.

Jalousie: A type of window consisting of a number of long, thin, hinged panels.

Jamb: The side and head lining of a doorway, window, or other opening.

Joist: A horizontal structural member, which supports the floor or ceiling system.

Junction Box: An electrical box used for wire splicing.

K

Keystone: The piece, usually wedge shaped, at the top of an arch.

Kick Plate: A metal, wood or plastic strip, placed at the lower edge of a door or on a riser of a step to protect it from damage by accidental kicking.

Kiln-Dried-Lumber: Lumber that has been kiln-dried, generally to a moisture content of 6 to 12 percent.

King Post: The central upright piece in a roof truss.

Knee Wall: A low wall resulting from one-and-one-half-story construction.

L

Lally Column: A steel column used as a support for girders and beams.

Laminated Beam: A beam made of superimposed layers of similar materials by uniting them with glue and pressure.

Landing: A platform between flights of stairs or at the termination of a flight of stairs.

Lap Siding: Slightly wedge-shaped boards used as horizontal siding in a lapped pattern over the exterior sheathing. Varies in butt thickness from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch and in widths up to 12".

Lath: A building material of wood, metal, gypsum, or insulating board that is fastened to the frame of a building to act as a plaster base.

Lattice: A framework of crossed wood or metal strips.

Leader: A vertical pipe or downspout that carries rainwater from the gutter to the ground or storm sewer.

Lease: A contract for the use of land for a period of years with a designated payment of a monthly or annual rental.

Ledger Strip: A strip of lumber nailed along the bottom of the side of a girder on which the joists rest.

Legal Description: A written indication of the location and boundaries of a parcel of land. Reference is generally made to a recorded plat of survey.

Lien: A legal right or claim that one party has against a property as a security for a payment obligation.

Lintel: A horizontal structural member that supports the load over an opening such as a door or window.

Live Load: A load that is not derived from the actual structure, but from furniture, snow, people, or other weight placed upon surfaces.

Load: The amount of power or watts on a circuit or distribution panel.

Load-Bearing Wall: Includes all exterior walls and any interior wall that is aligned above a support beam or girder. Normally, any wall that has a double horizontal top plate.

Lookout: A short wooden framing member used to support an overhanging portion of a roof. It extends from the wall to the underside surfacing of the overhang.

Lot: A measured amount of property (land) having fixed boundaries.

Lot Line: The line forming the legal boundary of a piece of property.

Louver: An opening with a series of horizontal slats so arranged as to permit ventilation but to exclude rain, sunlight, or vision. See ATTIC VENTILATORS.

M

Main: The principle water pipe from which other pipes branch.

Mantel: The shelf above a fireplace, also used in referring to the decorative trim around a fireplace opening.

Maple: Both hard and soft maple are generally light tan and used in construction where hardness is a major factor. Used for expensive cabinetwork, flooring, doors, and trim. Often used for interior railings, posts, and furniture.

Masonry: Stone, brick, concrete, hollow-tile, concrete-block, gypsum-block, or other similar building units or materials or a combination of the same, bonded together with mortar to form a wall, pier, buttress or similar mass.

Mastic: A flexible adhesive for adhering building materials.

Mechanic's Lien: The right given to a contractor or material supplier over a property for material supplied or work performed and not yet paid.

Metal Wall Ties: Strips of corrugated metal used to tie a brick veneer wall to a framework.

Millwork: Lumber that is shaped to a given pattern or molded form. It includes dressing, matching, and machining. Examples include casing, base, panel door parts, and stair rails.

Miter Joint: A joint made with the ends or edges of two pieces of lumber cut at a 45-degree angle and fitted together.

Modular Construction: Construction in which the size of all the building materials is based on a common unit of measure.

Moisture Barrier: A material such as specially treated paper that retards the passage of vapor or moisture into walls, and prevents condensation with the walls.

Monolithic Slab: A slab foundation that is part of the footings.

Mortar: A mixture of cement, sand and water, used by the mason as a bonding agent for bricks and stone.

Mortgage: A document used to hold property as security for a debt.

Mullion: A vertical bar or divider in the frame between windows, doors, or other openings.

Multiple Listing Service (MLS): A real estate brokerage service organized by local brokers to share real estate listed for sale.

Muntin: A small member, which divides the glass or openings of sash or doors.

N

Neutral: The wire in an electrical system (usually white) that carries current when there is unbalance load.

Newel: A post supporting the handrail at the top or bottom of a stairway.

Niche: A recess in a wall, usually designed to contain ornamental statues or other decorations.

Nominal Size: The size of lumber before dressing, rather than its actual size.

Nonbearing Wall: A wall supporting no load other than its own weight.

Nosing: The rounded edge of a stair treads.

O

On Center (o.c.): The measurement of spacing for studs, rafters, joists, and other framing members from the center of one member to the center of the next.

Outlet: Any type of electrical box allowing current to be drawn from the electrical system for lighting or appliances.

Overhang: The projecting area of a roof or upper story beyond the wall of the lower part.

P

Pallet: An inexpensive wood skid used to stack and ship construction materials such as a brick or concrete block.

Panel: In house construction, a thin flat piece of wood, plywood, or similar material, framed by stiles and rails as in a door or fitted into grooves of thicker material with molded edges for decorative wall treatment.

Paper, Building: A general term for papers, felts, and similar sheet materials used in building without reference to their properties or uses.

Parapet: A low wall or railing around the edge of a roof.

Particle Board: A composition board made of wood chips or particles bonded together with an adhesive under high pressure.

Partition: A wall that subdivides spaces within any story of a building.

Passive Solar Heating: Involves capturing, storing, and using solar radiation (the sun's energy) to heat a dwelling without the use of fans or pumps to circulate the heat.

PDF: A PDF file is a Portable Document Format of your home plan. This is a computer document format designed to capture formatting information (i.e. fonts, graphics, color, etc.) from many different desktop publishing applications making it possible to send, open and print documents in their intended format regardless of the different applications used by the creator or the recipient.

Pecan: See HICKORY

Periphery: A boundary or complete outside edge of a parcel of land or an object on a drawing.

Phase Change Material: A material capable of storing large amounts of heat as they change from solid to liquid. They are slow to release the stored heat and are, therefore, interesting as possible thermal mass materials.

Pier: A masonry pillar usually below a building to support the floor framing.

Pilaster: A portion of a square column usually set within or against a wall for the purpose of strengthening the wall; also, a decorative column attached to a wall.

Pine, ponderosa: Light reddish colored softwood used especially for a sash, doors, and screens in the softer grades. Harder grades are used for joists, rafters, studs, sills, sheathing, porch columns, posts, balusters, and stair rails.

Pine, white: Softwood of light tan color used for door, sash, interior and exterior trim, siding, and panels. Lower grades are used for sheathing, sub-flooring, and roofing.

Pine, yellow: Softwood of medium texture, moderately hard, and a yellow to reddish brown color. Used for joists, rafters, studding, and general construction where extra strength and stiffness are required.

Pitch: The slope of a roof usually expressed as a ratio.

Plant Shelf: A decorative feature approximately 8 feet above the floor, normally associated with volume ceilings that add high spaces/shelves to use for decorative purposes.

Plaster: A mortar-like composition used for covering walls and ceilings, usually made of portland cement mixed with sand and water.

Plat: A drawing of surveyed land indicating the location, boundaries, and dimensions of the parcel. The recorded plat, usually sent to an appropriate governmental office or the county recorders office, also contains information as to easements, restrictions, and lot number.

Plate: Sill plate is a horizontal member anchored to a masonry wall. Sole plate is bottom horizontal member of a frame wall. Top plate is top horizontal member of a frame wall supporting ceiling joists, rafters or other members.

Platform Framing: A system of framing a building in which floor joists of each story rest on the top plates of the story below or on the foundation sill for the first story, and the bearing walls and partitions rest on the sub-floor of each.

Plenum System: A system of heating or air conditioning in which the air is forced through a chamber connected to distributing ducts.

Plot Plan: An overhead view plan that shows the location of the home on the lot. Includes all easements, property lines, set backs, and legal descriptions of the home. Provided by the surveyor.

Plumb: Perfectly vertical, a term often used for the placement of doors and windows.

Plumbing Fixture: A receptacle or device from which water is dispensed and/or drained, such as a bath, toilet, or faucet.

Plywood: A piece of wood made of three or more layers of veneer joined with glue, and usually laid with the grain of adjoining plies at right angles. Almost always an odd number of plies are used to provide balanced construction.

Polyethylene Vapor Barrier: Plastic film used to prevent moisture from passing through unfaced insulation. Both 4- and 6-mil polyethylene are preferred because they are less likely to be damaged during construction.

Porte-cochere: A carriage entrance leading through a building or wall into an inner courtyard. Also, a roofed structure covering a driveway at the entrance of a building to provide shelter while entering or leaving a vehicle.

Portico: A covered entryway attached to house, usually open on three sides and supported by posts or columns.

Post and Beam Construction: Wall construction consisting of posts rather than studs.

Precast: Concrete shapes which are made before being placed into structure.

Prefabricated Houses: Houses that are built in sections or component parts in a plant, and then assembled at the site.

Preframed Panels: Fabricated panels consisting of precut lumber and plywood manufactured to standard dimensions ready for structural use.

Preservative: Any substance that, for a reasonable length of time, will prevent the action of wood-destroying fungi, borers of various kinds, and similar destructive agents when the wood has been properly coated or impregnated with it.

Punch List: A list of discrepancies that need to be corrected by the contractor.

Purlins: Horizontal roof members laid over trusses, to support rafters.

Q

Quarry Tile: A man-made or machine-made clay tile used to finish a floor or wall. Generally 6" X 6" X 1/4" thick.

Quarter Round: A small molding that has the cross section of a quarter circle.

Quoins: Stone or other building materials set in the corners of masonry sections of a house for appearance.

R

R-Value: A measurement used to describe the resistance to temperature changes in insulation.

Rabbet: A groove cut along the edge of a board producing an L shaped strip. Used as trim and in joint work in cabinet construction.

Radiant Heating: A method of heating, usually consisting of a forced hot water system with pipes placed in the floor, wall, or ceiling; or with electrically heated panels.

Radiation: The flow of heat from a warm source through space in waves of infrared or visible light energy.

Rafter: One of a series of structural members of a roof designed to support roof loads. The rafters of a flat roof are sometimes called roof joists.

Rail: The horizontal framing pieces of a panel door.

Rake: Refers to the slope of the roof at the end of a gable, where the outside part of the overhang forms an upside down V.

Random Rubble: Stonework having irregular shaped units and no indication of systematic course work.

Rebar: Ribbed steel bars installed in foundation concrete walls, footers, and poured in place concrete structures designed to strengthen concrete. Comes in various thickness' and strength grade.

Red Cedar: A reddish to dull brown softwood. The premier wood for shingles used in the United States because of its durability, ease of working, and lightweight. Also used for interior and exterior trim, sash, doors, and siding.

Red Oak: Hard and tough hardwood used for flooring, interior trim, stair treads, and railings. Popular as a face veneer plywood for paneling and cabinetwork. A rich light to medium brown in color. White oak has similar characteristics and applications.

Redwood: Light to deep reddish brown softwood. Mill products include sash, doors, blinds, siding, and trim. Extensively used for garden furniture and exterior decking.

Register: The open end of a duct for warm or cool air; usually covered with screening.

Reinforced Concrete: Concrete with steel bars or webbing embedded for strength.

Retaining Wall: A wall that holds back an earth embankment.

Reveal: The side of an opening for a window or door, between the frame and the outer surface of the wall.

Rheostat: An instrument used for regulating electric current.

Ridge: The top edge of the roof where two slopes meet.

Ridge Board: The board placed on edge at the ridge of the roof into which the upper ends of the rafters are fastened.

Ridge Vent: A vent mounted along the entire ridge line of the roof to allow the passage of air through the attic or cathedral ceiling.

Riprap: A wall or foundation of random stone to prevent erosion on an embankment.

Rise: In stairs, the vertical height of a step or flight of stairs.

Riser: Each of the vertical boards closing the spaces between the treads of stairways.

Riser Wall: A short wall.

Rough In: The installation of all parts of the plumbing system that can be completed prior to the installation of fixtures, including drainage, water supply, vent piping, and the necessary fixture supports.

Roof Sheathing: The boards or sheet material fastened to the roof rafters on which the shingles or other roof covering is laid.

Roof Vent: A louver or small dome mounted near the ridge of the roof to allow the passage of air through the attic.

Rough Opening: A framed opening in a structure into which doors, windows, and other finished trim are set.

Run: In stairs, the net width of a step or the horizontal distance covered by a flight of stairs.

S

Saddle: Two sloping surfaces meeting in a horizontal ridge, used between the backside of a chimney or other vertical surface and a sloping roof. Also called a cricket.

Salt Box Roof: A side gable with one side long and extending down to the first floor and the other side short covering the second floor.

Sash: A single light frame containing one or more lights of glass.

Screw Pile: A pile, often made of steel, with a spiral or helical blade fixed to the lower end by which the pile is screwed or twisted into the ground taking a firm hold and acting as a support column or foundation.

Scuttle: A small opening in a ceiling, which provides access to an attic or roof.

Section: A rectangular area of land used in the survey system which is approximately one mile square bounded by section lines. The section system may then be divided into halves, quarters, or smaller units. One square mile comprises 640 acres.

Septic Tank: A concrete or steel tank where sewage is partially reduced by bacterial action.

Setback: A zoning restriction, which applies to the location of the home on a lot.

Setback Lines: Lines that indicate the required distances for the location of a structure in relation to the boundaries of the property.

Shakes: Roofing or siding shingles made from split wood.

Sheathing: The structural covering, usually wood boards or plywood, used over studs or rafters of a structure. Structural building board is normally used only as wall sheathing.

Shed Roof: A flat roof, slanting in one direction.

Shim: Small thin pieces of wood or other material used to fill in gaps or level surfaces.

Shoe Mold: The small mold against the baseboard at the floor.

Short Circuit: An improper connection of a hot wire with another hot wire or neutral.

Sidelight: A vertical window beside a door or another window.

Siding: The finished covering of the outside wall of a frame building, whether made of horizontal weatherboards, vertical boards with battens, shingles, or other material.

Sill: The lowest member of the frame of a structure, resting on the foundation and supporting the floor joists or the uprights of the wall. The member forming the lower side of an opening, as a doorsill.

Skylight: An opening in a roof covered by glass or plastic material to admit natural light.

Slab Foundation: For a slab foundation, the site is leveled off, and a trench is dug around the perimeter of the home site. Gravel is then spread across the site, and concrete is poured approximately four inches thick over wire mesh and a moisture barrier. In areas of load bearing walls, trenches need to be dug to allow for additional thickness at this location. Slab foundations have no piers or floor joists, and the concrete slab is the floor system.

Sleeper: Usually a wood member embedded in concrete, as in a floor, that serves to support and to fasten sub-floor or flooring.

Smoke Chamber: The portion of a chimney flue located directly over the fireplace.

Soffit: Usually the underside of an overhanging cornice.

Softwood: Wood produced from coniferous trees or trees that bear cones. Most commonly used at the pines, but also includes such trees as fir, spruce, redwood, and cedar. The term has no reference to the actual hardness or softness of the wood.

Soil stack: The main vertical pipe, which receives wastewater from fixtures in a building.

Solar collectors: Devices for trapping the sun's energy.

Solar radiation: The sun's energy.

Solid bridging: A solid member placed between adjacent floor joists near the center of the span to prevent joists from twisting.

Span: The distance between the structural supports of beams and girders.

Spruce: Pale yellowish softwood used for general building purposes as planks, dimension stock, and joists. Millwork products include doors, casing, and trim.

Square: A unit of measure-100 sq. ft.- usually applied to roofing material. Sidewalk coverings are sometimes packed to cover 100 sq. ft. and are sold on that basis.

Square Footage, Heated: The finished living square footage of the home that is heated and/or cooled. Heated square footage does not include bonus rooms, future rooms, garages, porches, decks, patios or unfinished basements unless otherwise noted.

Square Footage, Living: The square footage in a home that is heated and/or cooled. The space occupied by two-story rooms and stairwells is counted once in the lower floor's square footage. Living square footage does not include garages, bonus rooms, or porches unless otherwise noted.

Square Footage, Unheated: Spaces of the structure that are not heated and cooled such as the garage, carport, unfinished basement, attic space, bonus room, future space, deck, porch, patio, or screened porch.

Stick Framing: A roof framing method by which the framing members (rafters and joists) are measured, cut, and hoisted into place at the jobsite by building professionals during construction. Also referred to as conventional framing.

Stretcher Course: A row of masonry in a wall with the long side of the units exposed to the exterior.

Stile: The vertical sidepieces of a panel door.

Stool: The horizontal ledge or strip as part of the frame below an interior window.

Stretcher Course: A row of masonry in a wall with the long side of the units exposed to the exterior.

Stringer: A long, horizontal member, which connects uprights in a frame or supports a floor or the like. One of the enclosed sides of a stair supporting the treads and risers.

Stucco: Most commonly refers to an outside plaster made with portland cement as its base.

Studs: The vertical-framing members of a wall.

Sub-Floor: Any material, usually plywood, nailed directly to floor joists. The finish floor is attached over the sub-floor.

Sump: A pit in a basement floor which collects water and into which a sump pump is placed to remove the water.

Survey: A description of the measure and marking of land, including maps and field notes, which describe the property.

Suspended Ceiling: A ceiling system supported by hanging from the overhead structural framing.

T

Tail Beam: A relatively short beam or joist supported in a wall on one end and by a header at the other.

Take Off: The list of materials necessary to complete a job.

Taping: The process of covering drywall joints with strips of paper or mesh and coating with joint compound to produce a smooth, seamless surface.

Termite Shield: A shield, usually of non-corrodible metal, placed in or on a foundation wall or other mass of masonry or around pipes to prevent passage of termites.

Term: The length of a loan.

Terrazzo Flooring: Wear-resistant flooring made of marble chips or small stones embedded in cement and polished smooth.

Thermal Mass: Materials, which can store large amounts of heat such as stone, masonry, or concrete.

Thermo Siphoning: Is the result of a fluid expanding and rising.

Thermostat: Automatic device for controlling temperature.

Threshold: A strip of wood or metal with beveled edges used over the finish floor and the sill of exterior doors.

Title: Evidence indicating the rights a person has to the ownership and possession of land.

Topography: Usually refers to site characteristics such as contour of the land, trees, or other natural features.

Top Plate: The horizontal member nailed to the top of the studding of a wall.

Tract: A specified area of land.

Transom: A window placed above a door or permanent window, which is hinged for ventilation.

Trap: A u-shaped pipe below plumbing fixtures designed to create a water seal and prevent sewer odors and gases from being released into the habitable areas.

Tray Ceiling: A decorative ceiling treatment used to add volume and/or height to a room. 2 Common types are: 1) Angled area toward the center leading to a flat ceiling surface, and 2) Stepped square edged leading toward the center of the ceiling.

Tread: The horizontal board in a stairway on which the foot is placed.

Trim: The finish materials in a building, such as moldings, applied around openings (window trim, door trim) or at the floor and ceiling of rooms (baseboard, cornice).

Trimmer: The longer floor framing member around a rectangular opening into which a header is joined.

Troweling: The finishing operation, which produces a smooth, hard surface on concrete slab.

Truss: Structural members arranged and fastened in triangular units to form a ridge framework for support of loads over a long span.

Truss Framing: A method of roof framing by which carefully designed framing members (trusses) are composed of multiple triangles and connected to metal fastener plates. Pre-engineered trusses are designed and assembled by the truss manufacturer and shipped to the building site.

U

Underlayment: A material placed under finish coverings, such as flooring or shingles, to provide a smooth, even surface for applying the finish.

Unfaced Insulation: Insulation with no attached vapor retarder (kraft paper or foil-backed paper).

Utility Room: A room used for laundry, heating equipment, telephone wiring, or janitorial purposes.

V

Valley: The internal angle formed by the junction of two sloping sides of a roof.

Valley Rafter: The diagonal rafter at the intersection of two intersecting sloping roofs.

Vapor Barrier: A waterproof membrane or plastic sheet used in insulation. The sheathing faces the heated area to control dampness.

Vaulted Ceiling: A ceiling that angles upward on one or both sides to create volume in the room.

Veneer: Extremely thin sheets of wood produced by slicing or rotary-cutting a log.

Veneered Construction: Type of wall construction in which frame or masonry walls are faced with other exterior surfacing materials.

Ventilation: Creates a positive flow of air that allows the house to "breathe" and helps prevent moisture build-up year-round.

Vent Stack: A vertical soil pipe connected to the drainage system to allow ventilation and pressure equalization.

Veranda: An open porch alongside a building. Usually covered by a roof for protection from the sun or rain.

Volt: A unit of electrical force. Volts = Current (amps) x Resistance (OHMs).

W

Wainscot: Surfacing on the lower part of an interior wall when finished differently from the remainder of the wall.

Walk Through: A final inspection of a home before "closing" to look for and document problems that need to be corrected.

Wall Tie: A small metal strip or steel wire used to bind tiers of masonry in cavity-wall construction, or to bind brick veneer to the wood-frame wall in veneer construction.

Water Conditioner: A device used to remove dissolved minerals from water to make it soft. Generally used in houses supplied by well water, which contains calcium, magnesium, and other minerals, to remove hardness that causes scale buildup in plumbing.

Weather Strip: Strip of metal or fabric fastened along the edges of windows and doors to reduce drafts and heat loss.

Weep Hole: An opening at the bottom of a wall, which allows the drainage of water.

White Oak: See Red Oak

Window: An opening in a wall or roof of a building to provide light, air, view, etc., but containing glass to keep out the weather.

Wood Grade: A designation given to the quality of manufactured lumber.

Working Drawing: Drawing used by workman in construction. Shows all structural detail such as electric, plumbing, partitions, etc.

X

X-Bracing: Crossbracing forming the letter X. Used in floors and partitions.

Y

Yard: A tract of ground adjacent to a building.

Yard of Concrete: One cubic yard of concrete is 3' x 3' x 3' in volume, or 27 cubic feet. One cubic yard of concrete will pour 80 square feet of 3" sidewalk or basement/garage floor.

Yard Lumber: Lumber generally found in a lumber yard, that is, lumber graded for general building purposes.

Z

Z-Bar Flashing: Bent, galvanized metal flashing that is installed above a horizontal trim board of an exterior window, door, or brick run. It prevents water from getting behind the trim/brick and into the home.

Zero Lot Line: The construction of a building on any of the boundary lines of a lot. Usually built on the front line, such as a store built to the sidewalk. (See also: Zero Side Yard).

Zero Side Yard: The building of a subdivision with each house built on a side boundary line. This gives more usable yard space on narrow lots. An easement for maintenance is given over a portion of the lot adjoining each house.

Zoning: The division of a city or county by legislative regulations into areas (zones), specifying the uses allowable for the real property in these areas.

Zoning Ordinance: A law (generally at the city or county level) controlling the use of land and construction of improvements in a given area (zone).