Reading a plot in Cyprus before you buy it

What coverage, density and setbacks mean for the house you actually want.

> DRAFT — pending technical review by C.F.L. This guide sets out how the process is structured and what to ask about it, and the practice has not yet signed it off. Read it to know the shape of the thing; confirm anything a decision rests on with us, or with the relevant authority, before you act on it.

> THE QUESTION THIS ANSWERS
>
> What should I check before buying land in Cyprus?

Before buying land in Cyprus, establish four numbers for that specific plot: coverage (how much of the plot the footprint may occupy), density (total permitted floor area), height, and setbacks from each boundary. Together they define the envelope any building must fit inside, and they are knowable before you offer. Then check the physical facts that do not appear in a listing — the plot's shape after setbacks, its slope, whether it has legal usable access, how far services are, and what the neighbouring plots are permitted to build.

The key facts

- Four figures define what a Cyprus plot will carry: coverage, density, height and setbacks.
- Coverage limits the building footprint; density limits total floor area across all storeys.
- Setbacks can remove more usable area than the coverage figure suggests, especially on narrow or irregular plots.
- Two plots of identical area can carry very different buildings once setbacks are applied to their actual shapes.
- Slope is a retaining, drainage and access cost that a flat plot does not carry.
- Legal usable access and distance to services are rarely stated in a listing and are not minor costs.

— A view is only protected by what the neighbouring plots are permitted to build.

— The planning position attaches to the land, not the owner, so it can be established before you commit.

In more detail

A plot is not a blank site. It arrives with a set of rules that decide how much building it will take, how tall, and how close to its boundaries — before anyone draws anything.

Those rules are knowable before you offer. This guide is about reading them, and about the handful of physical facts that turn out to matter more than the view.

Four numbers decide most of it

Coverage, density, height and setbacks between them define the envelope your building has to fit inside. Everything else is design.

— **Coverage.** How much of the plot's area the building footprint may occupy. This decides whether you get the ground-floor spread you pictured.

— **Density.** How much total floor area is permitted. This decides the size of the house, across all its floors.

— **Height.** How tall, usually expressed in storeys and in metres. This interacts with density: the same floor area can be spread or stacked, and the plot decides which.

— **Setbacks.** How far the building must sit from each boundary. On a narrow or awkwardly shaped plot these can remove more usable area than the coverage figure suggests.

The shape of the plot matters more than its area

Two plots of identical area can carry very different buildings. Once setbacks are applied to a long narrow plot, or one with an odd corner, the remaining buildable area can be materially smaller than the headline figure implies.

Slope does the same thing to cost. A fall across the site is not a problem in itself — it is a retaining, drainage and access question, and those have prices attached that a flat plot does not carry.

Access, services and the things that are not on the listing

Whether the plot has a legal, usable access. Whether services reach it, and if not, how far away they are and who pays to bring them. These are rarely in a listing and they are not minor.

A plot that needs a new access road, a long service run, or significant retaining is still a good plot at the right price. It is a bad plot at the wrong one, and the difference is knowable in advance.

Views, neighbours and what can be built next door

A view is only protected if something protects it. The relevant question is not what the neighbouring plots look like today but what they are permitted to carry — because that is what may eventually stand between you and the sea.

This is the same coverage, density and height exercise, run on the plots around you rather than your own.

Common questions

Can I find out what a plot allows before I own it?

Yes. The planning position attaches to the land, not to the owner, and it can be established before you commit — which is the point of doing it then.

The agent says the plot is 'buildable'. Is that enough?

It tells you it is not unbuildable. It does not tell you the envelope, and the envelope is what decides whether your brief fits.

How much does slope really cost?

It depends entirely on the fall, the ground and the design response. It is a real cost that a flat plot does not carry, and it should be priced before you offer rather than discovered afterwards.

Plot viewing checklist

Answer these before you offer, not after. Every one is checkable in advance, and every one changes the price you should be willing to pay.

- [ ] 01 Zone, and the coverage, density, height and setback figures that come with it
- [ ] 02 Buildable area after setbacks are applied to this plot's actual shape — not its total area
- [ ] 03 Whether the house you want fits inside that envelope
- [ ] 04 Slope across the site, and what retaining or levelling it implies
- [ ] 05 Legal, usable access to the plot
- [ ] 06 Distance to services, and who pays to bring them
- [ ] 07 What the neighbouring plots are permitted to build
- [ ] 08 Whether anything is already built on the plot, and whether it matches its permit
- [ ] 09 Title and ownership position confirmed
- [ ] 10 Any restriction, right of way or shared arrangement affecting the land

Need this checked against a specific property?
C.F.L. Architects, Engineers and Consultants Ltd — Limassol, Cyprus.
https://cfl.ochi.cy/services/plot-zoning-consultation

This guide is general information about how the process is structured, not advice on a specific property. It states no fees, statutory periods or legal thresholds — those depend on your plot, your authority and the current regulations, and should be confirmed for your case.