

Educational Corner "Stones" - FIELD EXAMINATIONS

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THE SURVEY REVIEW DEPARTMENT (SRD) FIELD EXAMINATION

One important component of the Survey Review Department Comprehensive Review process for a firm or government agency are field examinations of three or more of the reviewed surveys.

During the SRD staff's cursory review of the submitted file materials, individual surveys will be selected on a random basis, if no particular issues are identified. However, when questions or uncertainties about individual surveys are observed by the reviewer; such as a contradiction between the field notes and the plan over setting of final monumentation, or substantial variation of a surveyed boundary from occupational evidence, a Field Examination Request Form is prepared indicating specific concerns to be resolved by the site inspection.

When all the materials for an area under review have been received and processed to ensure complete submissions, the locations of the surveys selected for field examination are plotted on the relevant map to allow for systematic and efficient travel throughout the area.

THE SITE VISIT WITH THE OWNER/ OCCUPANT

Where an owner or occupant is at the site, the examiner identifies him/ herself and the assistant as representatives from the AOLS, and outlines the process by providing the following factual statements:

- as a self-governing profession, we are also self-monitoring;
- all survey firms in the province are subject to review of their work;
- generally, on a five year rotational basis, survey files are requisitioned for review from several firms at the same time in the same area; and the files are reviewed to ensure compliance with Standards and Regulations for

surveys;

- as part of the process, some of the files are selected, on a random basis, for a field examination; which involves the examiner's attendance at the property corners and along the boundaries to confirm that what is shown on the plan conforms with what is found on the ground, and to ensure adherence to required standard practices.

The examiner has a copy of the plan under review during the site discussion; to assist in explaining the process, and to

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assure the owner/ occupant that the plan was legitimately acquired. Also, the examiner openly carries a camera so that picture taking is to be expected.

Generally, the information provided above is sufficient to inform the owner/ occupant; however, the responses provided to the questions that occasionally arise are as follows:

- the examiner is not conducting an independent survey, and has no opinion about agreement or disagreement with the survey;
- any observations or concerns that the examiner may have about the survey being reviewed will be directed to the attention of the survey firm that completed the plan for explanation or clarification; a summary of findings or opinion is not provided to the owner/ occupant;
- while the examiner may mark, uncover, or show the owner/ occupant

one or more monuments that they could not find themselves, the examiner is not expressing an opinion either way about the validity of the monument; merely that their surveyor has shown it on the plan in relation to his/ her opinion.

With few exceptions, the examiner provides a standard letter from the Department either directly to the owner or occupant at the site or by placing the letter in the mailbox or the door. Similar to the verbal presentation, the letter outlines the Department's authority and responsibility to conduct a Peer Competence Review of all survey firms within the province, together with assurance that the selection of the survey is not indicative of any particular concern with the firm that completed the survey.

THE GENERAL EXAMINATION

General field examination observations are made at each site, to ensure that:

- all monumentation shown on the plan is in the ground, or to identify specific reasons to account for its removal since the survey;
- the plan is an accurate representation of field conditions;
- no other evidence that should have been located or shown is extant;
- there are no unregistered easements apparent on the ground that should have been located and shown on the plan.

THE SPECIFIC EXAMINATION

As previously indicated, the initial staff review may indicate items of specific concern to be addressed during the field examination; or the examiner may identify specific issues at the site that are not apparent from the review of the plan or field notes. Such issues include, but are not limited to, the following:

- identification and location of overlapping eaves, and troughs for the surveyed or adjacent buildings;

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- identification of markings for monumentation shown as “origin unknown” on the plan and field notes under review;
- where front corner monumentation was not set for an SRPR, determine whether it could have been set;
- surveyed lines that run through buildings, or in conflict with well-settled occupation limits;
- natural boundaries monumented and illustrated in accordance with a theoretical or prior location, in conflict with the actual current location, and which may have resulted from natural or artificial causes.

THE FIELD EXAMINATION REPORT

Since, most often, the field examiner is not completing the Comprehensive Review of each firm, he/ she makes specific notations on the field examination copy of the plan, and such further notes as may be necessary to clarify the findings and concerns noted. Together with

those notes and any photographs taken, a written report is prepared for each of the surveys examined. The reports are internal to the Department, and are for the assistance of the OLS consultant performing the assigned Comprehensive Review.

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Overall, the field examination provides the connection to the ground that the Comprehensive Review requires to facilitate identification of inadequate or problematic field procedures and processes.



Sites to See

The following is a list of web sites from the A.O.L.S. or related organizations. Every effort has been made to ensure that the addresses are up-to-date and correct.

If your firm's web site is not listed here and would like to be, please contact the Association office:

Association of Canada Lands Surveyors

<http://home.magi.com/~acs/laatc/>

Ryerson Polytechnic University

<http://www.ryerson.ca/~civil/index.html>

Verhaegen Stubberfield

Hartley Brewer Bezaire Inc.

http://www3.sympatico.ca/vshbb_inc

Geodetic Survey Division, Geomatics

Canada, Natural Resources Canada

<http://www.geod.nrcan.gc.ca>

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