

# Plan your Allan Block Garden or Landscape Wall Projects



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## Before Installation Begins

A little bit of planning will make your project go faster and turn out right. A detailed site plan drawn to scale will help foresee design and construction challenges and provide an accurate reference for estimating.

## Job Site Considerations

### Lot Lines and Utilities

- Confirm lot lines and wall location. Your local municipality will have a copy of your lot survey on file. The survey will identify property lines and provide a scaled template to help with your site plan.
- Call your local utility companies to confirm the location of underground utilities. Buried utility lines are not only dangerous, they may prevent you from locating your project where you want.
- Building permits may be required if the wall is above a certain height. Check to see what your local city code requires. Contact your local AB Dealer for more information.

### Drainage and Water Management

Managing water around your gardens is important for two reasons: your plantings require good moisture conditions, and proper drainage will prevent water from ponding or running into areas it's not wanted - like your basement.

- Always grade your beds to move water away from the house foundation.
- Make sure water moves freely off of walkways and patios.
- Slope areas above the walls to send rain water around the sides if possible.
- Check sprinkler lines before and after construction.

For more detailed information on water management see [allanblock.com](http://allanblock.com).

### Neighbours

It is always nice (and smart to) to let your neighbors know about your project before you begin if it is larger than a small garden wall application.

### Soils

Soil conditions are important in any garden or landscape. Check to see what kind of soil you have before starting.

- Sandy soils are easy to work with. They will not stick together and allow for good drainage.
- Clay soils are harder to work with and drain poorly. They retain moisture and will form a ball when rolled. Most soils will be classified as clay and can be used in the project, however additional reinforcement may be needed.
- Good organic soils are always best for planting beds. Soils will stick together until pressure is released. They should not be used to build the walls.

If you have poor soil conditions, consider removal and replacement. Planting beds need to have 6-12 in. (150 to 300 mm) of well-drained organic soils.





### Reasons for Landscaping

- Create Curb Appeal
- Add an Outdoor Patio or New Living Area
- Build a Raised Garden
- Increase Your Usable Space
- Feature Water Accents
- Beautify Your Entryway
- Correct a Drainage Problem
- Enhance Your Landscape with Flowing Curves, Stairways or Planters

### Wall Base / Wall Rock

To build a good wall, you need a firm foundation, or base. Plan on using clean, granular rock underneath the base course. Good drainage and compaction will add to the quality and performance of your finished wall.

We refer to the material used for the base, within and behind the block as "Wall Rock". Crushed or smooth stone, ranging in size from 0.25 in. to 1 in. (6 to 25 mm) is ideal. Your CCI / AB dealer will have what you need.



### Base or Foundation

You must build on solid ground. If your site has soft, wet soils, or if the area was previously excavated, the foundation's soil may need to be replaced with good base materials and firmly compacted.

### Determining Wall Height

A detailed understanding of the site elevations and grade changes are needed to determine wall heights. Starting at the lowest point, mark your grade changes in 1 ft. (300 mm) increments on the plan. See [allanblock.com](http://allanblock.com) for more information.

### Hills or Slopes

If building on a hill or a slope, the placement of your wall will determine how much soil will need to be removed or brought onto the site. A "cut" site is where you cut into the hillside and remove the soil. A "fill" site is where you will need extra soils to fill in behind the entire wall. You will need to plan ahead to have good backfill materials brought onto the site. See [allanblock.com](http://allanblock.com) for more information.

### Tools

A set of simple tools is all you need to build great Allan Block walls.

- 4 ft and Torpedo level
- Gloves & Knee pads
- Rake & Shovel
- Wheel barrow
- Broom
- Chisel and hammer
- Wooden stakes
- Hand tamper
- Safety glasses
- Tape measure
- Rubber mallet
- String line



### Equipment

Plate compactors, concrete saws, skid loaders and transit levels are very useful when building a taller landscape wall. These are available at most equipment rental centers.

