



## ***New Construction – Don't Go it Alone!***

Whether you are simply visiting new construction sites - each offering various floor plans and elevations based on a builder's model home or going the full blown custom home building route, you will want to be represented throughout the process. Remember the site agent works for and represents the builder. Would you step into a court room without an attorney? Your Realtor® can help you not only locate building lots or acreage but also help you make informed decisions throughout the home building process.

### **The 5 Step Home Building Process**

- ① **Decide on your budget.**
- ② **Find a location, location, location!**
- ③ **Chose a builder**
- ④ **Chose a design**
- ⑤ **Build your home**

### **The 10 Phases of Custom Home Building**

**1. Research** - The first step in any major project is to learn as much as possible about the subject at hand. Building a custom home is no exception. However, a surprisingly large number of people seem to think that anyone can design and build the home of their dreams without first spending the time to thoroughly learn what is involved. This is all too often a recipe for disaster.

**2. Pre-Construction** - After you settle on a suitable design, you will need to identify all of the materials and finishes that you want to go along with it. There are literally thousands of items that go into the construction of a new home and every single one of them must be specified by someone. Those items not specifically mentioned or clearly defined will almost certainly wind up being something other than what you thought they would be. Be sure that you put everything in writing and in as much detail as necessary to create clear, complete, and accurate construction plans and specifications. Besides their importance in building your new house, these documents will be needed in order to create an accurate budget. You cannot realistically expect to know how much your house will cost to build, until you know exactly what you are trying to construct.

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***Not spending sufficient time to learn what's involved in the home building process is all too often a recipe for disaster!***

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**3. Site Work** - Now we're having some fun! Trying to find water 300 feet below the surface and counting the dollars in every dry foot along the way. Paying to clear all those big, beautiful, trees off your premium priced wooded lot. Buying tons and tons of fresh, clean, stone to spread on the ground for a construction entrance so it can get buried under the mud from your once wooded lot. Digging out tons of earth to construct the foundation of your new home only to find that the water you had been looking for 200 feet away and 300 feet down was only 6 feet under the surface the whole time.

If you are prepared for what may happen, this can be a very exciting time during the building of your home. You will finally get to see where your house will sit, how big it will be, and what views you will have. This is the first physical work on the long and sometimes bumpy road to realizing your dream.

**4. Foundation** - The foundation is the structure on which the rest of your house is built. Whether it is stone, concrete, steel, or wood; a basement, crawl space, pilings, or slab on grade, it needs to be strong and square and dry.

This is not a good place to try to save money. Be sure the footings are properly sized and reinforced for the loads that will be carried. Build the walls to be able to withstand the forces of the earth that they will need to hold back. And, invest in a waterproofing system that will protect areas below grade.

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*A home is only as good as the foundation upon which it rests!*

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**5. Framing** - Many people consider the framing stage to be the most exciting. When the framing crew finishes the first floor deck, you will finally be able to take your first walk around your new house. It is an indescribable moment. Framing will take anywhere from a week for a small house, to several months for a larger one. You will be able to watch the basic structure take shape very fast. Your home will suddenly have walls, a roof, and windows. This is also the time when the first on-site changes will probably take place. Room sizes and layouts become much easier to see in 3 dimensions. Even the best architect frequently finds something that didn't turn out quite the way it was envisioned on paper.

**6. Rough-ins** - As the individual trades converge on your house, things will appear to slow down considerably. In reality, a lot more work is actually being done on your house during the rough-in stage, it just isn't as dramatic. During the next several weeks or months, dozens of people will be installing the inner workings of your house. Plumbing, heating, air-conditioning, lighting, security systems, central vacuum lines, television cable, entertainment systems, computer networks, exhaust fans, phone lines, fireplaces, and scores of back-ups and nailers for things yet to be installed. This may not be an exciting time, but it is very important that everything and everybody be properly coordinated. Take the time to get things right at the rough-in stage, and you will save yourself lots of aggravation later on.

**7. Interior Finishes** - When you are absolutely certain that everything has been roughed-in properly, it is time to finish the walls, install the doors & trim, hang the cabinets, put down the hardwood flooring, install ceramic tile, and cover everything that doesn't move with either paper, plastic, or paint. This is also just about the time that you start worrying about the fact that your existing house still hasn't sold and the kids are going to have to change schools midterm. Well don't get too concerned yet. There is still a lot of work to do before you will be able to move into a completed home. After the paint, the next things to be installed are the light fixtures, counter tops, appliances, plumbing fixtures, mirrors, shower doors, security systems, door knobs, towel bars, and toilet paper holders. Most of these things will even be installed in the correct locations.

**8. Exterior Finishes** - While work is progressing inside, there is much to be done outside as well. Keep in mind that almost all the exterior finishes need to be designed and installed to keep out the elements and protect the main structure for as long as possible. The exterior finishes might be any combination of brick, stone, stucco, vinyl, aluminum, concrete, or wood. Before you make a final decision, you need to take into consideration the weather conditions in the area where you are building and how much time you will be able to spend on maintaining the outside of your house. How much will you really save by not using brick if you are going to have to paint every few years?

**9. Landscaping** - Landscaping can tie your house together with the land. Properly placed trees can help keep your house cooler in the summer and protect it from cold winter winds. The walks, patios, pool, walls, pond and plantings that make up a landscape can easily represent a sizeable expense, yet they are very important in making a new house look and feel like a home. All too often, because this is one of the last phases of the job, people forget about the importance of blending the structure with nature. Be sure to make a reasonable budget for landscaping and try very hard not to spend it on something else.

**10. Completions** - Even when you think the project is just about complete, you will still have some of the most frustrating work ahead of you - the punch out work. Replacing those two broken tiles, hiding that bad drywall seam, fixing the squeaky floor in the dining room, or getting the plumber to come back and move the powder room faucet up to the master bath, where it belongs, just seems to take forever. Most likely it won't be very long before you will need to make the switch from learning how to build your home to learning how to repair your home. When the time comes, here is my recommendation for the [best home repair book](#).

*In the meantime, the best advice I can offer you is to gather as much information as possible before you build and seek out the advice of a seasoned Realtor® who can help guide you along the way!*

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