



Design **Build**
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SELECTING A RESIDENTIAL DESIGN BUILD CONTRACTOR

So you want to build a new home, How do you choose a residential design build contractor?

So, you have decided to build a new home. How do you get started? Choosing your design build contractor. Selecting a builder is an important first step, not to be taken lightly. Doing your homework will pay off in the end but...Where do you go to find out about builders?

Open Houses

My first suggestion is to get out into your community and visit some open houses to get a feel for what kind of home you would like to live in. Do you want to build a two-story? A rambler? A multilevel? A walk out? Check out the open house ads in your local publications. At times, they may state "Builder will be present." This is an excellent chance to visit with the builder or builder representative. Check out his work. What sets him apart from other builders? By visiting a number of homes, you will be able to see and notice the differences in construction, price, standard building styles, and amenity options that are offered from builder to builder.

Area Builders Association

You want to choose a builder with a good reputation who builds a quality home at a fair price. The second place you might want to check with is the Area Builders Association BUT KEEP IN MIND NOT ALL BUILDERS ARE MEMBERS. Builders cannot join or be a builder member of the Area Builders associations without being a licensed contractor in good standing with the community. Call and ask your local area builders association for a list of builders in your area that they would recommend.

Banks and Lending Institutions

Banks and lending institutions are also an excellent source for attaining names of quality builders. Before you set up an appointment with a builder, it is a good idea to talk with a bank first to see what kind of monthly payments you can afford and what price range of homes you would be comfortable with. This will help your builder in directing you to the right building site, style of home, and to what amenities you might want to consider.

Home Shows

Another good source in locating a builder is to check out home shows like the Midwest Area Spring Home Shows (usually are the first weekends in February-March). This is a great place to talk to builders, get a lot of great ideas, and learn about exciting products for your new home. In addition, there are many educational seminars to attend throughout the weekend.

Showcase Of Homes

Many communities, have a Spring and or Fall Showcase of homes. The Showcase displays homes that are completely finished – 100% inside and out, and many of them are fully decorated with furniture and accessories. With the up-turned economy there are generally more homes to view. This is an excellent opportunity to check out a large variety of builders, home styles, and different types of construction. You will see the latest and greatest in new building material and design build ideas.

Construction Sites

When gathering information on a builder, you might want to stop out at one of his construction sites to check out his work and to talk with some of his subcontractors and employees. Ask them if they would choose that builder to build their own personal houses and why. How are the subcontractors or employees to work with? Do they have a high turnover or do they have a select group of people that have been with them a long time and work on every home to ensure continuity in quality control?

Other Considerations

Does the builder have design services in-house, or can they recommend someone to you?

Will the builder help you with the site selection, or do you have to find your own lot?

Do you have to take out your own construction loan or will the builder take care of that and what are the pros and cons either way?

If you are a person that needs a lot of hands on help, you may want to seek out a smaller hands-on builder rather than going with a larger builder that builds multiple track homes.

Make sure the builder is a licensed contractor in the State you want to build and that he carries current insurance on the property and everyone that works on your home.

References

Ask the builder for a list of references and call them. Ask them how the builder was to work with. Was he helpful as to informing you about different choices when making selections on materials, flooring, lights, cabinets, etc.? If an issue arose during construction, how did he handle it? How were change orders handled? How was the communication? Was he easy to get a hold of? Did he return phone calls in a timely manner? How about after closing? Did he come back to take care of things? Last but certainly not least, would the homeowner recommend this builder to you and why?

Have A Connection

Most importantly, when choosing a builder, find one that you feel comfortable with. One who connects with you and your ideas of what you want to achieve. This is your home. Give your builder as much information as you can about what you like. The more information you give him, the more success he will have in helping you in your decision making. Find a builder that is more concerned with helping you design and build your dream home with all of its special and unique qualities than he is with how things have always been done. Find someone who shares your passion, who listens to your ideas, and who is excited to take on a new opportunity and explore new possibilities.

Building a new home should be fun and exciting, not a chore.
Do your homework and enjoy!