

Choosing a Custom Home Builder

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The most important decision you make in building a new home is picking the builder. Rather than sending your plans to several builders and then talking to the cheapest one or two, seek out the best builders and work with them to get the best home you can afford. Cheap builders are usually cheap because they cut corners, and they often cost more in the long run.

Step 1 – Identify the Builder

Start by asking people you know. Ask the local building inspector. He/she knows quality construction and should have no financial stake in the choice you make. Ask the local lumberyard. They will refer you to one of their clients, but they also know quality construction. If you use a local lawyer, he/she may be able to guide you. They have legal incentives to not lead you astray. Be careful asking a realtor. They usually receive a commission on builder referrals, and that cost is passed on to you.

Step 2 – Initial interviews with a prospective Builder

After gathering names of several prospective builders, setup initial interviews with each one. Meet face to face with the builder and listen to your gut. Does this person feel right? The focus of this meeting should be getting to know the builder. Learn as much as possible about him and how he does business. A list of recommended interview questions and items to look for in a well-built house can be found on our website at <http://www.mccansebuilders.com/>

If this interview goes well, you will need to inspect his work. Ask for a list of homes under construction as well as several homes at least a year old. If he does good work and has a solid reputation, this should not be a problem. If he will not share this information, look elsewhere.

Step 3 – Inspect homes under construction

Try to visit these homes during a work day so that work is being done on the house while you are there. You want to talk to his employees and subcontractors. If you know someone with significant construction experience, bring him along. Do his employees seem competent? Are they proud of their work?

Is the jobsite reasonably neat? (Ask the neighbors.) Are the subcontractors local? (Will they be around to be accountable?) What do the subcontractors think of the builder and his work? If the employees or subcontractors have anything bad to say about the builder or his work, look elsewhere.

Step 4 – Interview owners & inspect finished homes

Walking through one or two completed homes and interviewing the owners is the most important step in the selection process. A house over one year old is better than brand new because there has been time to see what problems might develop with the house and how the builder dealt with them.

At the end of all this exhaustive research, if you feel good about the builder and his work, sit down with him, go over plans, and negotiate a deal. Good luck!