HAMILTON
HOMES

TIPS FOR BUILDING YOUR CUSTOM HOME

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN BUILDING YOUR CUSTOM HOME

TIPS FOR BUILDING YOUR CUSTOM HOME

For years you've dreamed of owning a home that fits your needs and wants perfectly. After deciding that none of the current homes on the market come anywhere close to your picture of the perfect home, it's time to take matters into your own hands. It's time to build your own house. Now that you're ready to get your custom home built, you're probably wondering where to begin. Don't worry. We're with you every step of the way. We'll take you through the basics, so you understand how the custom home building process works and know exactly what to do as you begin building your dream home.

MONEY TALKS

1) DO YOUR HOMEWORK!

Building a home begins long before the foundation is poured. Whether you plan on buying your new home with cash you've saved up or getting financed through a lender, it's always a good idea to think through your funds before getting serious with your building plans. If you don't have cash in the bank, you may need to consider getting a loan.

2) SHOP AROUND.

Shop around for a lender who will work with you to provide you the best financing possible. Make appointments with lenders who will present different financing options, depending on your credit, needs and budget. By searching online for more financing information and getting detailed facts from expert lenders, you'll be able to avoid major and minor pitfalls. If you're buying land, it might be best to pay cash. Lenders tend to charge higher interest rates when you purchase land because of the potential lower resale value. Consider preparing this list of questions before meeting: How much should I set aside for a down payment? What will the monthly payment look like? Do you provide financing to help me build the home (constructional financing)? What about permanent financing? If you'd like to find reputed lenders in your area, you can visit the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development's website (www.hud.gov) and find lenders close to you.

3) FINANCING IS EASY.

Once you've shopped lenders, you'll probably want to get a constrcution loan or a construction-to-permanant loan. A construction loan requires you to go to a bank or lender and show them your gameplan for construction. Once the lender has a better idea of your plans, you can obtain a loan to pay your custom home builder. A construction-to-permanant loans means that when construction has ended, you will be able to obtain permanent financing upon completion of your custom home.

LOCATION. LOCATION. LOCATION.

It's easier to change the floor plan of your home than the land you build your home on. Have you always dreamed about living in a cabin in the woods? If woods are in a short supply in your neighborhood, explore the area to find lots that fit your specifications. There are a few options when it comes to finding the perfect location to build your dream custom home.

1) DEVELOPED COMMUNITY LOT: It's important to know if the developed lot in which you'd like to build has any style restrictions or covenants for building. Developed lots may have rules about anything from size of your home to the color of your shingles. You will want to make a call to the developer to make sure you have a complete list of rules and regulations.

2) UNDEVELOPED LOTS: There's a lot to consider when purchasing a vacant lot. You will want to go walk the property with a builder. You may need to do soil tests. You will need to discuss your options for well versus city water and even your options for septic systems. You will need time to survey the land, install utilities and figure out government zoning restrictions. It may seem like there is a lot to consider, but connecting with a team of professional Indianapolis custom home builders will help you get clear on a plan of action.

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"Hamilton Homes is simply the best ! During the past twenty years we have enjoyed working with Rick, Carolyn & Trent on four separate homes ! Two were new and two were remodeling projects. Great quality, Communication and follow-up. I can't imagine working with anyone else."

- Dick and Mary Beth Oakes

ABOUT HAMILTON

Rick Hamilton founded Hamilton Homes in 1987 as an outlet for his need to construct homes that stood out as innovative and unique. His philosophy has always been to build homes and to manage his business with the highest degree of honesty, integrity and professionalism. Rick got his start in the industry in 1971 through renovating and remodeling homes. From that point on, construction became a passion. Bringing a great, old home back to life is truly special in Rick's eyes. He has the ability to see the big picture, looking outside the box to create a home that looks and feels perfect.

VISIT US ON LINKED IN: www.linkedin.com/pub/rick-hamilton/15/727/b06

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3) SURROUNDING AREA: Scope out the area of interest to see what surrounds the lot. Do you want to live near a public road? How about neighbors? Drive around and find out what is in the area. Do some online research, or ask an Indianapolis custom home builder if you need help deciding among the options. You may want to consider nearby schools, grocery stores and restaurants. What necessities of life do you want close by? Do you love parks? How many parks are in the area? Are you willing to travel to escape city life, or would you rather commute to work? When you find a great community by a great lot, it's a win-win.

STYLE AND FLOOR PLAN

Simple. Remember you're building YOUR custom home. By definition, your custom home should look how you want it to look. So, think big! Make a list of exactly what you want your home to look like. It's all about your personality and wants at this point. How have you pictured your dream home? This is your opportunity to make your dreams a reality.

Explore online sites that specialize in sharing innovative ideas. Try searching on Pinterest, Houzz and other websites for ideas that get your creative juices flowing. Cut out pictures of homes you love from magazines. Compile the pictures so you're ready to show your builders what you have in mind when you meet. Once you get your ideas on paper, it will be a lot easier to narrow down your specifications.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

How many stories do you want? Is a basement in your list of necessities? How many rooms would you like? Do you need space for a library, piano, pool or a movie theater? Do you want a huge backyard, or would you be content with a smaller backyard with a larger deck? Will you want to finish your basement? What are your hobbies? Do you need to save room for an art or a recording studio? This is your time to get imaginative and clarify exactly what you want in your custom built home.

START THE INTERVIEWING PROCESS

Here's where you start involving the professionals. You wouldn't try to build a car from the ground up on your own, right? It's the same with building your custom home. Unless you have a lot of free time to research online and watch YouTube videos all day, we'd highly recommend talking with people who have made building custom homes their specialty. It's completely acceptable to weigh your options and find honest people who will provide the best customer service and work as you begin building your home.

HERE ARE TWO ASPECTS TO UNDERSTAND WHEN DECIDING WHICH CUSTOM HOME BUILDERS TO START INTERVIEWING:

1) HOME SITE: With all the research you've done, you should be pretty well prepared to take your ideas to a builder. You may already have a home site that you'd like to build on. Find a builder who is willing to visit your site. Often, builders will have a design team that will work with you to clarify your plans. Keep asking questions!

2) BUILDER: In the initial stages of planning, finding the right builder and design team will save you time and money, streamline the building process and generally help give you a picture of what the finished project will look like before the first nail is even driven. Many people make the mistake of hiring an architect to draw up the plans for a custom home before actually going to a custom home builder. You'll be spending a lot of time with the builder you choose and living in the space that they design, so be sure to choose someone who understands your needs and desires problem with doing that is that many architects don't design with with any kind of budget in mind. You could design a dream home and spend thousands on a floorplan and design, only to find out that actually building the home is far beyond the scope of your budget. Instead, find a builder who can design with a budget in mind. A good builder/design team should have the overall picture and be able to see obstacles before they become an issue.

HERE'S A RECAP OF THE TYPICAL INTERVIEW PROCESS:

Choose a home site that you love and realistically lines up with your budget. Find an

"After living in one of Rick Hamilton's for the last 11 years I knew that if I ever built or remodeled a home, he was definitely the go to company for my next step in a home. The proven quality of my home was evidence enough. Hamilton Homes attention to detail, creativity, and always with the latest technology available. The past history with his company was all my wife and I needed to award the company the responsibility to doing a $700,000 + remodel to my new home. The management style always kept us informed on the status of the project as well as a detailed reporting of the costs. The integrity of the company is of the highest level. The sub contractors are the top craftsman in the business carefully selected over the years of being in the business.

- Adrian and Pat Brown

WHAT IS THE BUILDERS ASSOCIATION OF GREATER INDIANAPOLIS?

PROMOTE. EDUCATE. NETWORK. These three initiatives are the foundation of what the Builders Association of Greater Indianapolis (BAGI) offers its members. BAGI gives members several opportunities throughout the year to network so they stay up to date on industry standards.

WHAT IS THE BUILDING PARTNERS OF CENTRAL INDIANA?

The Building Partners of Central Indiana (BPCI) exists to facilitate a more efficient, innovative, and price effective method for a group of Select Custom Builders to sell homes, remodeling projects, or commercial projects in partnership with a group of Preferred Vendors. Because of this cooperation and team work, the BPCI is continually raising the bar for what it means to be a member of this group for both the Builders and the Vendors.

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experienced builder who fits your needs and ideas. Ultimately, you will want to be working with someone who is open to questions and ready to share your vision.

CHOOSING A HOME SITE AND THE BUILDER

1) TIME TO CHOOSE A HOME SITE. There are few different types of home sites to consider. You may want to choose a site that is developed and ready for building. In this case, ask the community developer if they have a list of approved builders or if you can choose your own builder. Visit the community's sales organization and find out which home sites will be up for sale. Ask for a plat map (showing the divisions of land) and go explore the home sites.

If you decide to build on acreage, find out what it will take to develop the land. Make sure to find out if the lot has been surveyed by a registered surveyor. Ask if the deed has been approved by planning commissions, the health department and the county tax map department. Find out if there are any outstanding liens (legal rights someone has to a property until their debt has been paid back) such as easements that would slow down construction. Is the land in a flood plain? If so, the land's value may decrease. Walk around the boundaries of the acreage and picture what it will look like with your newly built custom home on different areas of the land.

As you're walking around the home site or acreage, think about how many trees you want in your yard, what size of yard you'd like, if you want a walk out basement (which will require a slope somewhere in the site), the kind of view you want while sipping your morning coffee on the patio and how close you want to be to your neighbors. All of these questions will help you decide on the perfect lot to purchase.

2) HOW TO CHOOSE A BUILDER: Learn all you can about the Indianapolis custom home builders in the area. Talk to people in the community and find out which builders they would recommend. Check out the builder's website. Consider homeowner and bank testimonials and peruse their portfolio of custom built homes. Do the designs match with your dream home ideas? After you've done your own research, interview different builders, keeping the following questions in mind.

How many homes have they built in the Indianapolis area? Are they a member of the Building Partners of Central Indiana and the Builders Association of Greater Indianapolis? What type of warranty do they make available? Do they have model homes you can tour? How would they compare themselves to other builders? How often will you have access to the home as it's in the building process? What standard features do they provide in their homes? Who will oversee the building process? Who will be your main point of contact? How long will the entire process take? When will the final price of your home be determined? How (and when) can

you make changes before or during construction? You get the idea. Once you find an Indianapolis custom home builder who's a great fit, make your decision.

STAY IN THE KNOW DURING THE PROCESS OF BUILDING YOUR CUSTOM HOME

Congratulations! You've chosen your home site and your builder. Now it's time to get to work.

1) INVOLVE YOUR BUILDER FROM DAY ONE. Take time to sit down with your builder and someone on staff who can design plans or modify your current plans to fit your home site.

2) THE FIRST NONREFUNDABLE DEPOSIT WILL NORMALLY BE APPLIED TO YOUR FINAL HOME PRICE. Make sure to be prepared to pay a nonrefundable deposit to have working drawings prepared. After this, the bidding starts for subcontractors. You'll have a better idea of the price once all the bids come in.

3) SIGN THE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH YOUR BUILDER. At this point you've given the go ahead, and you're ready to break ground. Be prepared to pay another nonrefundable deposit which will go toward your final price. Often you will pay the cost plus a percentage when building a custom home.

4) KNOW THE BASIC BUILDING TIMEFRAME. The size and complexity of your

WHY CHOOSE HAMILTON?

Bringing a diverse background in management, marketing and construction to the table, Rick is able to give Hamilton Homes the edge it needs to make the building experience wonderful while also ensuring our clients receive exceptional value and service..

home will dictate the timeframe. If you involve a reputed builder from the start, you can streamline the process by avoiding unplanned changes to your custom home during the process. When changes are made, the price is changed and the purchase agreement is amended. If you've taken the time to walk through the project and clearly communicate your desires to your builder, you will minimize time and costs spent on changes.

5) UNDERSTAND THE CHANGE ORDER PROCEDURE. While change orders can happen as a builder works through a large project, make sure you understand how the builder handles the change order procedure. Remember: as you make changes to the original plans, the entire process may become more drawn out and expensive.

WHO IS RESPSONSIBLE FOR WHAT?

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE BUILDING PROCESS: As you visit the building site during construction keep an eye out for things that concern you or that you may want to change. Find out when you need to make decisions about the appliances, such as carpet, light fixtures, cabinets and other items. Be aware of the date everything should be finished, and pen in the closing date on your calendar as soon as you find out when it will be. Stay in close touch with your lender if you're working with a new home loan. Consider hiring a moving company, but wait until you take possession and obtain homeowner's insurance before moving your belongings into your new home.

YOUR BUILDER'S RESPONSIBILITIES: As various portions of your project are completed, your builder will send you draw requests in order to pay subcontractors for services. The builder will oversee all aspects of the job site, including insurance, subcontractor supervision and required permits. The builder will also help you determine which showrooms to visit and guide you through the process of choosing the best products and appliances. They will provide a home warranty program on your closing date.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR HOME IS FINISHED: You're almost there, just a few more steps until you become the proud owner of your custom home. Once the builder contacts the county building department and gets a certificate of occupancy, they will invite you to an orientation where they will walk you through your new home. The "walk through" is a great time to ask questions.

On this final settlement date, you will sign all the closing papers, which may include financing papers. You'll get the keys to your new dream home. Take pictures to remember this moment, and breathe a deep sigh of relief. Now it's time to enjoy your new home! Congratulations!

STEPS TO ENSURE YOU'RE ON THE PATH TO SUCCESS AND YOUR NEW CUSTOM BUILT HOME:

If you didn't get enough details from the tips above, here are a few more easy tips when it comes to building your custom home.

1) DESIGN A VISION BOARD AND LOOK AT THE DETAILS DAILY. Here's where Pinterest comes in. Make a few Pinterest boards and add more pins daily. If you'd rather make an actual vision board instead of "pinning," grab some magazines and start snipping pictures you love. Share your ideas with your builder and make sure those ideas are written into the agreement. With so many elements to building a custom home, you will want everything that you want for your home in writing. It makes it easier for you because you know what you will be getting, but it also makes it easier for the builder, who uses the agreement to create a checklist for when the custom home is built. Remember, if it isn't in writing, your builder may not be aware that you wanted it.

2) GET YOUR TOOLKIT READY. Compile samples of all the items you want to include in your home. Keep a list of non-negotiable items in your toolkit to reference when making budget decisions. You want to end up with items that complete the home of your dreams.

3) PLAN. PLAN AGAIN. AND THEN, PLAN SOME MORE. The better your plan,

the more room you have to make adjustments early on in the building process. Buy some graph paper, and start mapping everything out. With detailed planning, you can limit mistakes and errors. You'll save yourself and the builder time and energy, as they'll have a better idea of how you want the layout of your home. Because making changes to the building process takes time and money, making specific plans early on will keep you from going over budget and over schedule.

4) READ YOUR CONTRACT. As you read over the building contract, make sure all the necessary details are included. Ensure that all the aspects of the job are included in writing so you won't have any surprises. Take this opportunity to double-check that everything is in budget. You've planned extensively this far into the process. It's worth taking a few minutes to check the contract for accuracy before signing on the dotted line. Once again, if it isn't in writing, your builder may not realize you want it.

5) TRUST THE EXPERTS. Work alongside your builder to make decisions about the layout of your home. You know what you want, and your builder will know what works and what doesn't. Where do you want appliances like your washer and dryer? If you want them on the second floor near bedrooms to make laundry less of a chore, ask your builder how to make the plumbing infrastructure accessible to the second floor. Which way is a door supposed to swing? Make sure doors are installed properly the first time around. You should also give yourself enough room to move in. While you may have ideas about how to save on space and costs, you should trust your builder. They know from experience that the 3-foot-wide hallway you want is really going to frustrate you down the road.

Building a custom home requires a lot of thought, time and effort, but the finished product is entirely worth it! Remember, you're not in it alone. Finding a custom home builder with a great reputation and trustworthy work ethic will take the pressure off as you begin your journey designing your dream home. Before you know it, you'll be enjoying your new custom built home, exactly how you like it.

HAMIILTON IS A BUILDING PARTNERS OF GREATER INDIANAPOLIS MEMBER

BPCI BUILDER MEMBERS ARE ASSURED TO:

- Have Consistent Standards and written expectations for all Vendors and Subcontractors to follow
- Maintain an Accurate Schedule that insures the home is built in a timely and orderly fashion
- Have Field Supervisors on the job site
- Have written Scopes of Work and Job Checklists
- Maintain credit by paying invoices promptly
- Maintain themselves and require that all their vendors maintain appropriate insurance standards/warranty procedures

(continued)

- Attend required education seminars pertaining to quality standards
- Maintain OSHA requirements
- Have an accurate/efficient way to communicate with vendors and home buyers, ensuring that changes are implemented correctly
- Be part of a select group of the Builders Association of Greater Indianapolis
- Agree to Adhere and Build to the BAGI Quality Builder Standards

HOME BUYER'S CHECKLIST

- Does the builder or remodeler have a permanent business location and a good reputation with local banks and suppliers?
- How long have they been in the building business? It usually takes three to five years to establish a financially sound business. Will they be around after the construction is complete to service any warranties?
- Is your builder a member of the Builders Association of Greater Indianapolis?
- Is your builder a member of the Building Partners of Central Indiana?
- Does the builder have sufficient workers compensation and general liability insurance? If not, you may be liable for any construction-related accidents on your premises.
- Will the builder provide you with names of previous customers? Ask them if they would hire the builder/remodeler again.
- Have you seen the builder's work, both completed and in progress? Check for quality of workmanship and materials.
- Are you able to communicate with the builder? Remember you will be in close contact with them throughout the construction process and afterward as you live in your new home.
- Will the builder provide you with a complete and clearly written contract? The contract will benefit both of you. Review it carefully.
- Be cautious of unusually low-priced bids. If the builder is unable to pay for the materials and labor as the project proceeds, this may indicate a potential problem.

READY TO GET STARTED?

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