



# GUIDE TO CUSTOM HOME BUILDING

*Thinking about building a custom home? Our guide will help you prepare for all the questions, decisions, and steps to realize your vision of building a custom home.*



# Building a Custom Home Starts with Decisions

## First things first!

Building a custom home can be a daunting task. As a potential owner/stakeholder, you should be prepared to be involved and early and often in making decisions.

Your contractor will need input from you in order to be sure the project moves forward efficiently.

The number of decisions can vary depending on how hands-on you wish to be or not to be. Either way, the pre-construction and construction phases will involve decisions to get your project off on the right foot.

We hope this comprehensive guide provides you an easy to follow outline which will be useful in allowing you to be prepared for your homebuilding project.

Use the worksheets at the end of this guide to help you organize information and begin planning for your custom home build.

## What is in this Guide?

1. **What is the Difference?** *pg. 3*  
Custom, semi-custom, or production builder?  
Understanding the difference can help you choose the type of builder that best fits your situation.
2. **Five Decisions for a Better Custom Home Build** *pg. 4*  
With so many decisions to make, where do you start?  
These are the essential decisions to get you started on a successful project.
3. **Who is Who on Your Team?** *pg. 8*  
Get to know what to look for and what to expect from each member of your custom home build team.
4. **Five Essential Phases of Pre-Construction** *pg. 9*  
Before the shovels hit the ground, understanding what happens at each step of pre-construction ensure you have a good experience from start to finish.
5. **Planning & Design Worksheets** *pg. 10-11*



# What is the Difference?

When it is time to build your dream home, a custom home builder provides some services and advantages you will not find with production and semi-custom builders. Understanding these differences can help you make the right choice for your needs.



## PRODUCTION HOME BUILDERS

Production home builders usually have a variety of floor plans to choose from and are typically constructed as part of a master planned community which may or may not have amenities centers/recreational areas.

Some production home builders are able to keep costs low due to limiting the number of options available and because they build on volume often have greater purchasing power with subcontractors and suppliers. The cautionary tale here is that because they can be under pressure to deliver homes at a low price point and appealing to the masses to move product, their product is often code minimum and can be of inferior quality.



## SEMI-CUSTOM HOME BUILDERS

Semi-custom home builders will often start with a number of floor plans which serve as a starting point for the homeowner to customize.

A semi-custom home build usually offers greater flexibility for changes to floor plans and more selections for finishing options than a production home builder.

This type of home build is the middle of the road solution and is most suitable for those who wish to have most control over the finishes but don't have the desire or specific vision for a designed and built to order custom home.



## CUSTOM HOME BUILDERS

Custom home builders typically work with a team of architects, engineers, interior designers to bring your vision to reality.

Custom home building allows you, the homeowner, the most control over the final result — and offers the greatest opportunity for input into the many variables and potential decisions.

At the same time, because of the wide range of options and costs, it can be more difficult to predict from a cost perspective. Clear vision and decision-making upfront helps avoid costly change orders.

Because of the bespoke nature of a truly custom home, these homes are typically of superior construction quality.





# Five Key Decisions

Building your custom home starts with some key decisions. Use the worksheets at the end of this guide to help you organize information and begin planning for your home build. Here are Five Key Decisions that will give you a solid foundation for the building process:

1

## Assemble your team

Including but not limited to general contractor, design team (architect, engineers, interior design, etc.), realtor (for site selection if not already done), and lender (if financing required). Generally, the earlier you have your team assembled the better. Consider how you intend to procure your custom home construction project. There are a number of options for assembling your team:

You can opt to have one team member serve as the single point of contact for your team, or have multiple contracts with different companies and maintain ongoing contact with each individually. When you decide how to manage the project, be realistic and consider your own ability to stay in contact with multiple services and coordinate with the team.

Also consider if you want to build your team by gathering **bids** or **negotiating** for certain services:

In most custom home builds, we recommend the **negotiation method**, particularly if you do not have a fully-engineered and complete set of construction plans. The negotiation method lets you select your team members based on qualifications and comfort level, much the same as you would select a doctor or accountant.

If you do opt to gather bids, take time to qualify the builders prior to inviting them. Also, be sure to procure a fully-designed set of construction documents and specifications. This will help make it more likely that you get apples-to-apples bids.





# Five Key Decisions

2

## Decide on a budget

Before setting off on a design, we recommend getting a feel for local market conditions to get an approximate idea of cost per square foot.

It's always a good idea to ask for cost per square foot based on the TOTAL square feet (SF), NOT just under air conditioning (AC) footage. While under "under AC" is a widely used metric, that doesn't account for construction needs on the outside of the home — whether it's an outdoor kitchen or pool, or expanded garage space. Remember these figures can vary widely and are influenced by many factors.

At Coastal Craftsmen Construction, our cost typically runs \$200-\$250/SF on the total square footage. However, design is the main driver of construction costs. Many times, clients will jump ahead on the design without considering the impacts to the budget and are very surprised to see that the design far exceeds their intended budget, leading to stress and potentially costly redesign efforts.

By including your selected general contractor in the conversation about budget as early on in the process as possible, you will have a clearer understanding of the factors that impact costs and options for managing your budget.

Do not forget to include design costs, permitting costs, fixtures and furniture in your total budget. Site selection will often play a major role in total cost. Here in Florida, that is especially true for low lying areas.





# Five Key Decisions

3

## Confirm financing

Once you have decided on a budget, check with a few lenders to ensure you are able to receive financing for that total budget.

4

## Design

Keep a list of ideas you wish to incorporate into the architecture and design of your custom home. Consider the critical or "must-have" components of your custom home. Also, keep a list of components or design features that are "wish list" items, or items you might like but can sacrifice if budget becomes an issue. Use the worksheets at the end of this guide to get started!

There are also several helpful apps and websites for researching and organizing your ideas and wish lists. For example, creating "Ideabooks" on [houzz.com](https://www.houzz.com) or "Boards" in Pinterest gives you an easy way to show your builder and architect specific examples of what you want.

Some key questions to have answered for your team include:

- 1) One story or multi-level
- 2) How many bedrooms/bathrooms
- 3) Pool or no pool
- 4) Number of garage spaces
- 5) Level of finishes

Be sure to take time to drive through potential neighborhoods where you would like to build to get some ideas.







# Five Key Decisions

5

## Site Selection

This is key to finding a suitable location for your home build.

As stated on the previous page, driving around potential neighborhoods can help give you insight on the location best suited for you.

If the neighborhood is part of a homeowners association, be sure to obtain a copy of the Homeowners Association (HOA) rules and regulations and any documents pertaining to new construction requirements. Often HOA's will have a list of required items for a new construction home. You should turn this list over to your design team and general contractor.

If you have a large plot of land to build on, consider how you wish to configure the lot, as this will be important in determining final lot costs.

# To build your dream house, start by building your dream team!

Keep in mind that the process of building your dream custom home is a long and complex process — but it is highly rewarding!

**The secret to success is having your preferred team in place.**

These team members will be your trusted consultants guiding you through the homebuilding process with many variables and challenges. You should have a good connection with each team member for a positive working relationship throughout the project.



## CONTRACTOR

Responsible for scheduling and coordinating the field related activities and tracking the financial status of the project.

Normally, the contractor is the main contact and coordinator of all stakeholders for the project process.



## ARCHITECT

Responsible for capturing the design, assembling construction documents for contractor's use in permitting.

Your architect will be the lead design team member and will hire sub-consultants, including the engineers.



## LENDER

Responsible for financing the project on behalf of the owner.

Selection of a lender can make a difference to the overall process.

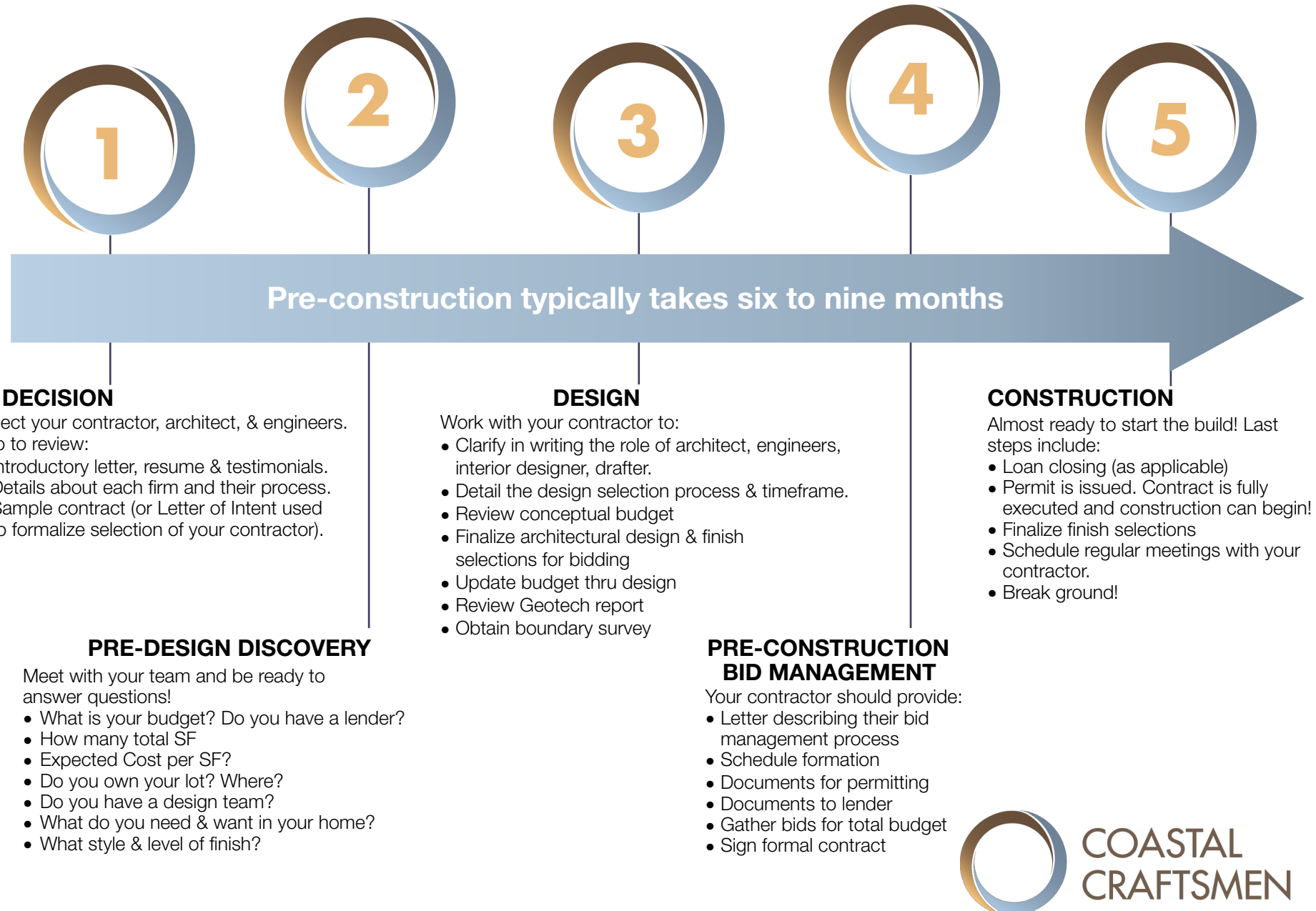


## DESIGNER

Responsible for coordinating interior spaces and interior furnishings to ensure the color palette of the interior is what you, the owner, desires.



# Five Essential Phases of Pre-Construction



# My Custom Home: Get Started Worksheet

	CONTACTS & OVERVIEW INFO	NOTES
<b>TEAM</b>	Lender/Financing: Design team: Architect: Engineers: (Structural engineer, MEP engineer, Site/Civil engineer) Interior designer: General Contractor: Realtor:	
<b>BUDGET</b>	Based on total square footage: Cost specifics: Design services (incl. Architect & Interior Designer services) Build & Materials (General contractor & Engineering services) Permitting costs (may be in architect or general contractor services) Special Fixtures & Furnishings OTHER BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS	
<b>DESIGN</b>	1) One story or multi-level? 2) How many bedrooms/bathrooms? 3) Pool or no pool? 4) Number of garage spaces, type of driveway/road access needed? 5) Level of finishes (standard to luxury)  Add your own design specifics & priorities...	

# My Custom Home: Must-Haves & Wish Lists Worksheet

	ROOM/SPACE	DESIGN & SPACE	FINISHES & FIXTURES
<b>MUST HAVE</b>	Kitchen Bathrooms Bedrooms Entry Living room Laundry Storage Outdoor space Garage		
<b>WISH LIST</b>	Kitchen Bathrooms Bedrooms Entry Living room Laundry Storage Outdoor space Garage Pool Game Room Gym Pool Bath Playfield Lanai, Deck Dock		
<b>OTHER NICE TO HAVE</b>			



# Coastal Craftsmen Construction

*A Concierge Approach to your Homebuilding Experience.*

Coastal Craftsmen works with you providing you with a single point of contact and a tailored approach to coordinating and managing all aspects of your dream home build.

Our **focus** is to provide our clients a truly personal homebuilding experience from concept, to design, through construction, and after construction service.

Our **goal** is to make the construction process as transparent as possible, so you never feel like you are in the dark. We do this by providing constant communication throughout the build.

Our **approach** is simple: Do whatever is in the best interest of the client, and refuse to do anything that is contrary to that principle. We consider ourselves your personal concierge through the whole construction process.

*Is a custom home build right for you?*

*To schedule a free consultation, call 239-462-4496*







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