

DYNASTY

— HOMES —



FINDING THE RIGHT FLOOR PLAN

Introduction

Have you been looking to purchase or build a new home, because your current home is maybe too small, too big or simply not laid out for your current stage of life. Have you been dreaming of an upgrade?

Have you been looking at existing and new homes and been getting frustrated because:

- The layouts do not seem to fit your family's needs
- You have searched the internet for home plans, but you don't know how much they will cost, if they will fit on your lot or you need to make major modifications
- Most of the homes you look at all look the same
- The right home is never on the right lot or in the right location

If any of this sounds familiar, this step by step guide will assist you to navigate the essential process of designing your custom residence from scratch. You honestly can get the home of your dreams, if you put in the work up front and really think through what you desire in your new home.

The key to this process is to stay focused on your needs vs. wants and refrain from designing a home that you cannot afford. We see it all too often that individuals work with an architect or drafter and design their dream home only to find out that they have wasted their money and time designing a home that they can never afford. It is important to find the right person to work with that can keep you on track.

The builder/design firm you choose to work with should be able to translate all the photos, floor plans, houzz ideabooks, pinterest boards etc into a buildable, affordable custom floor plan. After reading this, you will be able to:

- Clearly communicate your vision with a builder/designer
- Feel informed and confident on what you want to do within your budget

The following will outline a three step process to help you find the right firm to work with and how to make sure that person creates the house plan of your dreams.

1. Collect and Gather Information
2. Organize Your Thoughts
3. Research and Match

This process will alleviate the anxiety that comes along with such a large purchase. We believe that the home building and design process can be very rewarding and fun as your vision materializes, but it starts with working with the best people to help you along the way.

1. Collect and Gather Information

More than likely if you have made it this far to find our guide, you have already started collecting photos and/or floor plans on houzz, pinterest or various web sites... That is great, it is the first step in the journey. If you haven't don't that yet, no sweat, it's a great place to start. The trick is to keep it organized. Houzz, pinterest etc..do a great job helping you with this.

First lets separate out how you will use and live in your home with the looks and finishes you love. The first part of the "collect and gather" process is to focus on utility. You can take the same floor plan and with a few adjustments of finishes, roof lines etc... completely transform the look, feel and style of any home.

Write down everything you can think about to answer these questions.

- What bothers you about your current home? What floor plan problems do you have? How would you solve them in a new home?
- Do you need more space? Where? Living areas, bigger kitchen, more bedrooms, bigger bedrooms etc?
- Do I need a different arrangement of rooms? Do I want better access to the backyard? Better access to the laundry room or garage? Are you tired of climbing stairs to get to your bedroom? Do you need more storage space? Etc.
- What do I not like about my current home? (Focus only on arrangement, number and size of rooms)
- How would I solve the above problems in a house? If this is your first home, than think about how your family may grow and focus on visualizing yourself in a new home.
 - How does your day start? What does everyone do when they wake up in the morning? Does everyone wake up at the same time?
 - When do family members leave the house, when they come home? Do you always have a mess of things in a particular location.
 - Do you work from home? Do you have a place for the kids to do homework? How else could you make the home more efficient and enjoyable?
 - How do you entertain? Do you have people over frequently? Where would you hang out? Do you watch a lot of sports or movies? Spend a lot of time in the garage?

These thoughts will start to shape the design of your new floor plan.

- How many and what size bedrooms, bathrooms, living areas, dining areas, pantries, storage, garages etc do you need? Make sure to specific need vs want here. It is easy to get carried away and we all have to realize that budgets are not unlimited.

Bedrooms

If you have kids, how do they use their rooms now. How would you like them to use their rooms. Do they just sleep in their rooms or do they try to do their homework or have rooms for toys and video games? Do you want these bedrooms on the same floor as your master bedroom?

How much time do you spend in your master bedroom? Do you just sleep in your bedroom or do you hang out in there every evening? Do you soak in a tub in your master bathroom? What floor do you want your master suite on?

Kitchen

Are you an avid chef? Do you need big areas of open counter space or would a smaller efficient kitchen suffice? Do you need lots of open space in your kitchen because there is more than one person cooking? Does your family congregate around the island, how many people does it need to seat?

Dining

Do you need formal space for large gatherings? Or are you always on the go and just need a breakfast area next to the kitchen? Do you entertain large gatherings often or host sit down dinners where you need a big dining table and chairs? Could you use other spaces in the home to accommodate during those times.

Family/Great/Living Rooms

Do you have a formal living room that never gets used now? Where does the family hang out the most and what are they doing? Do you get together to watch movies, sports or just visit?

Floor Plan & Room Layout

Where should the rooms be located in relation to each other?

- How many sets of stairs do you want in the home? Ranch homes or sometimes called ramblers are typically one story, though they may have a finished basement with additional living space and bedrooms. Two story plans are ideal for separating entertaining areas of the home on the first floor from bedrooms on the second floor. 1.5 story plans typically offer a main floor master bedroom while separating the remaining bedrooms on the second floor. Finished basements are still common in two and 1.5 story plans as well for additional space.
- Where do you want all the bedrooms to be located? Do you want the master bedroom on the back of the home? Do you want bedrooms on separate floors or on the same floor separated or close together?
- Do you want to have a view of the backyard from the kitchen, living room, dining?
- Do you need easy access to a bathroom from the backyard or the garage?
- Do you want to unload groceries in the garage and walk them straight to kitchen or pantry.
- Do you need a mudroom or drop zone where anyone can drop shoes, backpacks, coats, phones etc?

Tour Homes

Pick a day where you can spend some time going to look at open houses that are in or below your budget. Take your list that you have created thus far and take notes so that you can compare and start to prioritize your needs and wants vs. what you will be able to afford. It is recommended to stick with new homes as part of your shopping as they will be more representative of what you can get within your budget to build new.

- Picture living in the new homes you are touring. Think about how you would live in that home with your family dynamics.
- Are the homes you tour matching your list at all? How would you change them

- What do you like the most about what you saw and what do you like the least.
- If they have them available take the home plans/layouts for the houses you like the most. Save them and take some notes on why you liked that particular one.

It is not likely that you will find a perfect plan. Like everything in life nothing is perfect, and if you feel like you found the perfect one, you should probably buy it 😊. If the plan is not available that is OK. You can recreate the elements you like from your notes.

Design Elements

In addition to the finished sq. ft of homes you tour. The overall shape and lot requirements have a big impact on cost as well as how the finishes look.

For instance, varying roof lines, gables, porches, etc are usually things added for curb appeal, but they also do add to the overall cost to build a home. Jogs in the foundation or outside walls that change direction or roofs that get very complicated typically results in wasted materials that don't necessarily add sq. ft. but a lot of times make houses look aesthetically pleasing.

Hallways are needed to travel from one part of the house to another without having to walk through a particular room to get to the next. Large entryways are an example of spaces that people tend to love but are not usually high on the list of utility. Over the years we never really here people say I have way too much storage. Plan for closets appropriately.

Bigger is not always better, sometimes making rooms too large can create dead space and once they are furnished they look bare and not necessarily bigger. Keep your intended furniture in mind as you look at homes and start to design your new home.

Roofs and front exterior elevations are one of the design elements that we change to our inventory floor plans the most. You can change between a variety of roof designs, siding types, stone, brick etc to create unique looks to any floor plan.

Finishes

So far in this document we have been focused on the home plan layout which should have help to create thoughts about square footage, number and type of rooms and overall arrangement.

The next step is to apply the same method to the style of the home to gather thoughts and ideas on the kind of finishes you like the most. The same online tools you used to gather house plan insights can be used for this as well.

We lightly touched on budget when we suggested you to tour new homes. We hope that you toured homes at or a little under your current budget, so that you can start to roughly identify the size of home and level of finishes that you can expect at your budget. We understand this is difficult because you do not know the prices of things, but your builder/design professional can help with this process.

Here are some things to think about while gathering your thoughts on how you want your new home to look and feel.

- Is there a designated style that you know you love? Examples include Craftsman Bungalow, American or Modern Farmhouse, Prairie, French Eclectic, Georgian Federal, Modern, Queen Anne, Shingle. Is your style traditional, contemporary or transitional?
- As you tour homes for sale, look how finishes are incorporated into those homes. Do you like them in real life and is your expectation from online photos inline with homes for sale near your budget.

2. Organize Your Thoughts

At this point you have gathered a lot of information and put quite a lot of thought into what you want in your new home. The size, number of rooms, plan type, arrangement etc... The next step is to organize this info into lists you can use to guide and focus your thinking to design or choose a plan with the right features that fits your budget.

Remember as mentioned, before no house is perfect. You will need to prioritize your needs and wants as you work with your budget. Don't get discouraged! Think about how great your new home will be once it is finished and you are in the home.

So take a minute now and put your needs and wants in an organized list. Start with the items you gathered related to the floor plan layout first than go through the finishes items.

If you had to give up everything to get one item or change one thing about your current home what would it be? That's the most important element of your new home! So you got the start to your list.

The next big task is to categorize your lists by thinking about every item on the list and assigning it to one of the two categories.

- Must Have
- Like to Have

This process will help control your emotions and create a positive experience from day one, because you will feel confident that you are optimizing your budget the best possible way. Sometimes it is easier to start at the bottom of your list and identify the items that are the least important to you first.

When you meet with builder/designer you can speak with confidence now about your new home vision. This list will make the process go much smoother than it would have otherwise!

3. Research and Match

Its time to find a builder/designer who you can trust to translate the work you completed already into a house plan that you can build. This is the a very important decision as a new home is a very large investment.

You can go two routes here you can try to find a home designer to design your floor plan absence a builder or you can work with a design/build firm like ourselves that will help you

along the way. Either way it is usually best to find a builder first, before you get your home design. It may sound out of sequence, but a builder that you can trust is going to be able to guide you through the whole difficult process, including finding land, designing your home, getting financing etc... A good builder will also have a large library of plans, completed homes, photos of previous work, inventory lots etc that will allow you to see things in person rather than making decisions on paper alone. They can help you find your own home designer or use their resource. Our clients sometimes love to start with one of our floor plans and refine them to meet all their criteria. You will find many different types, sizes and styles of floor plans on our website. We offer no commitment consultations to review our plans and help in this process.

One other large benefit of working with a builder first is they have knowledge of building costs and how different plans will work on different lot requirements. As we have mentioned before, it is very common for people to have plans drawn by a designer only to find out from their builder later on that it is not even close to aligning with their budget. The most important part in this stage of the process is building a relationship on trust whether it be your builder or designer. Google reviews, client testimonials etc... are all good barometers.

When you sit down with the designer or builder here are some great questions to ask:

- How do we start?
- Will we be starting with one of your existing floor plans?
- How many iterations will it take?
- What if I hate it?
- How do I know if I will be able to build this plan within my budget?
- How do I pay?
- May I see some of your work?

Evaluate the answers to these questions and the feeling you get when talking with this person. Careful planning is as important as the construction process itself.

Once you have found a match, Congratulations! It is time to start the design process. At your first appointment, take all the lists you have generated and start working on your new floor plan. If you haven't done so already with your designer, it's time to find a builder!

We hope that the information in this ebook is helpful. No home or piece of land is exactly the same so the most important piece of this puzzle is to work with someone that is both knowledgeable and trustworthy. Learn more in our article [Finding The Right Builder](#).

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