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THE DESIGN PROCESS

Before you talk to a residential designer or home builder, there are a few questions to ask yourself...

WHERE DO WE START?

It is helpful for a designer to know roughly what you want and what your budget is BEFORE the design is done. Some people search for the perfect plan in a plan book, some draw their own on graph paper, and some bring their ideas to the designer for a truly creative and unique design to suit their individual needs.

WHAT DO YOU NEED IN THIS HOUSE?

Unfortunately, not everyone is in a position to put everything they WANT into their next house. A good exercise is to separate your WANTS from your NEEDS – what is essential for the way you live, and what 'would be nice if we have room in the budget'. Think about how many bedrooms and bathrooms you need, as well as extra rooms such as a home office, formal dining or living area, or media room.

WHAT DO YOU WANT IN THIS HOUSE?

This is where you get to dream! Spend time looking in plan books and magazines for neat ideas to include. Take pictures of houses you admire - draw sketches of things you've seen. Visit showhomes, take a brochure, and make notes on it with you liked and didn't like. Keep it all together in a home design scrapbook, and bring this along when you meet with the designer you've chosen to pull these ideas together into your next house – this will be a handy reference tool for you.

DO IT RIGHT – PLAN AHEAD!

A new home is one of the biggest investments of your life, and this is the time to do it right! Afterthoughts are sometimes quite costly and difficult to work in on the job site, so it's best to get it on the plan ahead of time. Spending a little extra money on design time is worth it when compared to the big headache of trying to move stuff around on-site to accommodate something you didn't think of until it was already done! Talk to other home owners about the things they learned while building their home - everyone has a story to tell of things they didn't think of or wished they had done better.

LOCATION, LOCATION...

Bring a copy of your lot information - this includes lot size (make sure your copy has both lot-line dimensions and their corresponding surveying angles), grade information, utility right-of-ways and/or locations, etc. If there are any architectural guidelines or restrictions, bring these as well. The more information the designer has at the beginning, the smoother the design process.

ABOVE ALL, STAY FLEXIBLE!

You can't normally fit 2000 sq.ft. of dreams into a 1200 sq.ft. floor plan, so some things might have to change from your original idea. At DPdesign, you are getting more than a draftsman – you're getting a designer with creative expertise and outside-the-box design ideas. Give your designer the latitude to 'design', not just draw what everyone else already builds. Why build the same house as your neighbor when the option of a unique and creative home exists for you?

NOTE:

Home plans, whether from a showhome brochure or off the internet, cannot be directly copied, as this is a copyright violation. Plans must be modified in a major way to avoid this, so it is best to find a designer that can take the elements of a plan or plans you like and create a custom one to fit your family's specific needs. Don't be afraid to do the research yourself – browsing plans on the internet or touring showhomes in the area is a great way to discover what you like and don't like; however, understand that sometimes not all of your ideas can be incorporated into one cohesive plan.

A FINAL WORD...

Enjoy the process! Designing and building your new home should be an enjoyable experience, not a stressful one. Find someone you can trust to recommend quality professionals for construction and design in your area.