



“How much does a custom home cost?”

by Richard Price

It's a question custom homebuilders hear all of the time. Everyone expects an answer even though the builder hasn't seen any blueprints or learned about the type of finishes that might be desired in the home. It's almost like asking what a bag of groceries cost. That same bag might be have expensive steaks or just inexpensive paper towels. It's really difficult to answer although the builder may have a range in which their homes typically fall.

The reality is that the homeowner decides how much a home costs. Going in to this whole process, the homeowner should have a budget in mind for the home, excluding the land, and an idea of its living area square footage. The building designer or architect should be aware of this information while designing your new home. I would recommend using a building designer or architect that is active in and knowledgeable of the neighborhood in which you are building. They will be familiar with the typical finishes and features in the area and will know if your budget is realistic or not. It makes no sense spending time and money designing a home that you can't afford.

Having a builder involved in the process can be beneficial as well. He or she will be even more knowledgeable about construction costs than the building designer, and will be an invaluable source of information regarding materials used and methods employed in building your home. Remember that in a custom home, there aren't very many standard features that a builder uses time after time. Take windows as an example. They are available in aluminum, vinyl, wood, aluminum clad wood or a composite material to name a few. Each has their pros and cons and different price points. Factors to consider in selecting which type of window is best for you might include your budget, appearance, required maintenance, and the style of your home.

Windows are just one item of many that must be specified for a builder to price a home. The specifications may always be modified should they cause the price of your home to be greater than your budget. The starting point for the modifications should be the features of the home that are expensive in relation to their importance to you. Your builder should have several ideas readily available.

Determining the cost of a custom home is a joint effort between homeowner, builder and building designer. Working closely with a custom builder to learn about your options and make informed decisions will make you more comfortable with the building process. It will also develop your expectations as to what the builder will deliver.

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