A Simple Guide to the Design Build Process

From Concept to Reality

Winfrey
DESIGN · BUILD

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Conceptualize and Design

Before the first sketch can be drawn, determining where your home will be built is the necessary first step. Addressing issues in the design such as neighborhood restrictions and covenants combined with orientation of the home on the lot are all part of this first tier of the process. If you have a lot, great; you've got a good head start. If not, choosing a building partner with knowledge of the market and real estate experience will help identify candidate properties that fit your criterion and can be beneficial in negotiating the best price.

houzz

The next step is to identify what your initial parameters for the house will be and getting a reliable early estimate as to the cost for the desired end product so that you can match your wish list with the budget you have in mind. This includes obvious tangible things like number of rooms and other space requirements but it also includes much more subtle items that relate to the overall style and feel of the home. Clipping magazine photos, taking pictures of things you like and doing a lot of leg work used to be the only way to compile these ideas for sharing with a designer or builder. Now, thanks to sites like *Houzz* and *Pinterest*, you can compile "idea books" or "boards" that highlight specific elements or even complete looks and materials that will help define how your home is going to look and feel.

Pinterest

A good builder realizes that different architects/designers are sometimes known for and associated with different styles. He can take the information gleaned from these initial meetings and suggest designers that are a good fit both for their design aesthetic and for their ability to produce practical plans that are more efficient to build.

Once this choice is made, you will start to work immediately with the design professional you have chosen while the builder starts to look at the construction timeline and helps coordinate plans from other professionals like soil and structural engineers. Their work is an integral part of the plans to be submitted for building permit approval by the city or entity where the construction will take place.

from wikipedia...

Design–build is a method to deliver a project in which the design and construction services are coordinated by a single entity known as the design–builder or design–build contractor. In contrast to "design–bid–build," design–build relies on a single point of responsibility contact and is used to minimize risks for the project owner and to reduce the delivery schedule by overlapping the design phase and construction phase of a project.

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Define Scope and Budget

As the initial review plans are being drawn, having a design-build partner involved keeps the process moving and they can use the same ideas and notes you collected for the architect/designer to help formulate a very specific scope of work that will spell out exactly what is provided by the builder and the level of finishes, selections and allowances for every aspect of your evolving project. A Letter of Intent between parties is often drafted at this stage.

At this point an experienced builder can guide you through these decisions and help you quantify certain "what-if" scenarios based upon a hierarchy of what is important to you and the effect on the budget. About the time you receive the final plans for permit, the builder should also have his hard numbers from trades and vendors and be able to give you a detailed construction budget and timeline for review, adjustment and approval. Both the scope of work and budget will be important addendum to the contract and a builder that requires you to be as specific as possible at this stage knows it will prevent misunderstandings and poor communication during the actual build.

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Sign Contract and Build

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To begin this phase you should have a set of plans ready to submit to the city and you should know how much it is going to cost you to have a qualified partner build it and pull the whole project together! This budget could be based on either a fixed price contract or cost plus contract and formalized using contracts we recommend and are able to use as members of the *Custom Builders Council* of GHBA. Depending on the financing arrangements, your bank may have a vetting process for your builder and a draw structure and procedures that depend on solid company financials and accountability throughout the process.

Then the fun begins. A year can go by in no time and at times even the tightest builder's jobs will seem in disarray or appear to be dragging but at other times the changes occurring daily will excite you and give you an inkling of what your new life will be like. A good builder will have a way to help you organize and understand the selections you need to make and when you need to make them to keep your project on time. We use a custom job-specific web portal to post pictures, track selections and other job related documents including the schedule that will give you the same information we have in real time. Change orders should be minimal at this point but they are addressed and tracked through the same online portal.

During the actual build is when the builder's people skills and organizational skills make the difference in moving a perfectly planned project through to the finished jewel that becomes your home. This is where patience, persistence and perseverance in the face of sometimes momentum killing but unavoidable issues have to be dealt with and the job has to keep going if by sheer force of will. The right builder will have this knack but will also have the ability to share your passion and put a little of his own into your final creation. Good luck!

> " It all starts over a cup of coffee and an informal meeting where I get a chance to get a feel for what you want in terms of size, layout and style. It also gives you a chance to get to know my style and get some great feedback based on my experience. "

A Word From Bruce

Although we have broken this down into several broad categories, at the end of the day having a custom home built is a complex collaboration involving up to several hundred tradesmen and suppliers. It can take 10 to 16 months or more from conception to move-in and that is with an experienced builder adhering to a very precise schedule. We do not leave anything to chance in the planning stage and our efficiency in managing the process has been honed through years of practical experience and a detailed scope before the first nail is driven.

Having gone through the process 4 times for myself, I can say if you do decide to go for it you are in for a rewarding experience and the end result will be truly customized and designed exclusively for you and the way you live. Let me share some of the reasons Winfrey Design Build would make a good partner for you on this journey...

I am committed to employing people and hiring trades that are at the top of their industry and are capable of bringing new ideas and perspectives to the work I ask them to perform. I pride myself on having the schedule pinned down as early as possible to allow us the chance to notify these trades and get on their schedules so delays are minimized.

I am also committed to leveraging technology wherever possible in the systems and the way WDB operates internally but also in the way we track everything from selections to schedules and share it with our customers through each homeowner's own private job specific web portal. Accessible from anywhere.

I have an excellent financial record with the banks that have financed my customers' jobs and my own projects that I will gladly furnish for your verification. I also have numerous industry credit accounts with ample limits for large projects and an on-time payment history across the board which may also be verified. I hope that and the reputation I have for professionalism and fairness with my trades speaks to the confidence you should have entrusting me with your project.

Finally, If you are remotely thinking about undertaking a design build project, I can help you look at the whole picture and give you a quick but detailed evaluation as to what you can expect in a number of key areas regarding time, cost and challenges before you spend any money and make the commitment necessary to see this through to completion. I enjoy talking to people about their projects and the prospects of a new unique challenge always gets my creative energy flowing; please call me at 713-875-8481 or email me at bruce@winfreydesignbuild.com if you would like to learn more about what we can do for you.

Thank you,

Bruce Winfrey
President

www.winfreydesignbuild.com

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