



Before You Visit Your First Model Home

7 Things You Need To Know Before You Visit Your First Model Home

1. **Consult an Experienced Lender** - Knowing how much home you can afford and want **before** you begin looking is critical to negotiating the best deal on your new home. In addition, it will save you time and energy because you'll know exactly what type/size home to look at. Knowing how much equity you have in your current home will expedite the purchase of your new home because you'll have a better feel for what options you can afford.
2. **Build a Confident Team** - As you visit the new model homes, take into consideration that the sales associate is representing the builder, not you, so it is critical to pick a Real Estate sales agent and Loan Officer who are well educated on all the different builders. Be prepared to inquire about new construction details, warranties, financing and the difference in pricing, quality, and lot selection if your Real Estate agent cannot tour the model with you. We have worked with many Realtors and Builders over the years, and would be in an excellent position to refer you to a few who will meet your specific needs.
3. **Pick the Best Builder for You** - To find the best house for you, consider what makes each builder unique. For example, some builders are well known for their craftsmanship, some for their innovative use of space, and others for their customer service. Your Real Estate Agent can help you evaluate all of these details, in addition to helping you compare the financial stability of the different builders.
4. **Evaluate the Community** - When purchasing a brand new home, consider the entire community surrounding your potential new home. What is currently (or will soon be) under development? How long will the area be under development? Can you live with construction (and a flat tire or two) for that period of time? Step out of your 'homebuyer role' for a minute and take a drive around the neighborhood...is it a neighborhood you would be proud to live in? To entertain friends and family in?

Check to see if there is an existing homeowner's association. If so, what are the rules (commonly called covenants) you'll have to live by? If not, will one be set up? What are the different amenities in your neighborhood? Be sure to check the availability of things like a community pool and recreation center, and verify who is responsible for the up-keep of the streets.

5. **Analyze the Options Available** - There are many options available to you when building a new home, but be sure to explore exactly what is included in the standard features before considering an optional upgrade. Many times, the standard feature offers all the benefits of the upgrade without adding to the cost at all.

Before making your final selection, note that some of your options will add value to your home without making it overpriced for your neighborhood, while others will add very little resale value to the home. In addition, you can save a substantial amount of money by adding optional features, on your own, after closing - such as air conditioning, a deck, or custom landscaping. Be sure of your choices prior to finalizing them with the builder. Change orders are a very expensive cost that can be avoided by making careful decisions upfront.

6. **Negotiate the Contract Carefully** - The building can include some safeguards for you in your contract, such as allowing you access to the site to check the progress of construction, and give you advance notice of the closing date. For your protection, it is critical to be well informed of every step during construction.
7. **Hire a Qualified Inspector** - Even though new homebuilders generally use quality material in the construction of new homes, it is always a good idea to hire a certified home inspector. They may catch things that the builder will need to fix right away, or at least put aside money to fix later.