



**Dickson Development Corporation**  
A Tradition of Innovative Quality Construction

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## Building Success 101

*Q: Should I have an architect help me select my builder?*

A: If you have already engaged an architect to draw the plans for your house, by all means ask that person to suggest possible candidates and to join you in interviewing builders; most know and have worked with local builders in the past who might be a good match. However, it's often best to find a builder first, essentially to work with a design professional to help ensure that your budget is considered through the design process. It's heartbreaking (and leaves a bad taste) to invest time, effort, and money into architectural drawings that you

## Finding the Right Builder

There is a ton of information about how to find a builder for your new home. This newsletter, in fact, is one way we use to impart information about our company in hopes of being a good match for your project.

Unfortunately, most of what you read or hear from non-builder "experts" reduces the decision to numbers, specifically the cost estimates that a few builders provide in a competitive bidding process. To us, basing such an important decision and arguably one of the largest investments of your life on mere numbers is at least incomplete and at worst, a potential nightmare scenario. Frankly, we'd rather not be your builder if your evaluation of our capabilities rests entirely on how much we think it will cost to build your new home.

Instead, we encourage and have found success (read: satisfied clients) by suggesting a different tact. It's a comprehensive approach that admittedly takes a little more time than just collecting bids, but one that can result in truly finding the right builder for your unique situation and budget.

It starts with identifying what's "right" for you, a unique definition that requires a solid vision for your project and some personal introspection. For instance, if you are planning to build a large custom home, you should look at builders in your area that specialize in and have a track record of building those types of homes.

Narrow that list by investigating each builder's website, calling their references, the Better Business Bureau, or your local building association chapter.

Based on your current personal and professional relationships, consider the types of personalities you like and respond to best. You'll probably spend more time with your builder over the next several months than almost anyone else.

You won't know if you're 'compatible' until you meet face-to-face. If you're confident in one builder, either from your research or a strong referral, you may not feel the need to meet with any other candidates. But if you are truly starting your search from scratch, without a referral from a trusted source, we suggest you develop a short list of 3-4 builders and invite them to make a presentation in your home or their office -- as much to glean their methods as to gauge compatibility.

find out later -- from your builder -- are too expensive to build. Better to have the whole team together from the start.

At those meetings, be open and honest about your project. If you have a set of architectural plans, show them. Request that each candidate bring photos of projects that are similar to yours in style and size. Inquire about how they define "quality" construction and how comfortable they are about green building ... if that's something you care about.

Finally, ask the builder (or builders) about their financial stability and, in turn, share your project budget and financial plan. There's no sense in trying to forge a good working relationship if you demand a builder's financial status but won't be forthcoming about what you can afford and how you'll pay for your new home.

Once you find a builder that's earned your confidence in their skills, financial stability, understanding of your project, and (most important) their ability to communicate with you, it's time to refine and sign a contract and get your builder involved in the project as soon as possible. Having a builder on the team early helps ensure that everyone is moving in the same direction and toward the same goal of realizing the home you envision.

Warm regards,

*Richard*

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