

**Building a Custom Home  
From Concept to Construction in**

**12 Meetings**

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When it comes to life's big events, most of us inherently like to know what's next. You know...First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes a mini-me in a baby carriage. Except, rarely does life happen so—to be wonky—so linearly. The same is true of designing and building a custom home. While many people would prefer it to be a linear process, in reality the experience is fundamentally non-linear.

That's not to say, however, that it should be fraught with uncertainty. On the contrary, at Jay Corder Architects the design process is built on an orderly framework of 12 meetings and deliverables that serve our clients as a point of reference as well as an expectation setter. We like to call it a touchstone, which, while cannot be classified as linear, hopefully evokes at least as much calm and confidence as an arbitrary timeline.

1

**Preliminary Concepts**—All ideas are on the table during this fun meeting. This is the time for clients to use any and all reference tools and to play around on Pinterest and Houzz, then share their whims, big ideas and must-have features so high-level goals and aesthetics are well defined for all parties.

2

**Plan Concepts**—Another fun and engaging meeting, the goal here is to discuss a variety of site planning possibilities, nail down how the client would like their home to flow, and merge these two critical ideas into a diagram that we will then use to generate schematic floor plans.

3

**Schematics**—Today, clients get an exciting first glimpse of what their home might look like. After presenting and reviewing schematic plans based on preliminary conversations, the process gets furthered with lively commentary, on-the-fly revisions and additional brainstorming.

4

**Refined Schematics and Massing**—The refined and revised schematics presented today are based on commentary from our previous meeting as well as ongoing client conversations and continued architectural design processes. We'll also take a look at very initial massing (aka the house in 3D) and discuss the design's exciting potential. It may feel like being part of an HGTV show as we use interactive modeling software to take clients on a walkthrough from the front door to the swimming pool!

5

**Final Schematics**—It's a big day in the process, as all commentary should be captured in the schematic presented today. This meeting should serve to finalize the overall design of the house, and we will prepare documents to submit to the client's general contractor so they can, in turn, provide an initial estimate of construction costs.

6

**Schematic Estimate Review**—Today, things get even more real as clients get initial insight into their home's construction costs. We'll likely spend a lot of time discussing the higher cost line items, as well as the overall scope of the project. Using historical data, we will "value engineer" the project to help clients determine how to proceed and where any construction cost challenges can be addressed from a design standpoint.

7

**Design Development**—After design goals are refined and realigned based on initial estimates, this meeting gives clients a new look at the modified house. There will be another, more fully detailed walkthrough of the house via our interactive software as well as a review of initial lighting schemes, cabinet layouts, suggested exterior finishes, and other details. Similar to the earlier schematic process, we will capture and convey any further comments and design refinements in this truncated version, and prepare for re-issue to the general contractor.

8

**Design Development Estimate Review**—This meeting should be a validation of the work put into the project so far. We will have already submitted greater detail and much more information to the general contractor in an effort to hit a construction cost that is very close to our agreed upon target. There may be further decisions for the client to make today, but we will guide them right through it.

9

**Construction Documents at 50 Percent**—With a budget set and a design the client loves, we will receive written approval of the design development documents and begin the work of producing technical and detailed house drawings for use in construction. About halfway through this process, we will sit and review any subtle changes or developments that may have occurred as we work to make the client's home real. Final comments and coordination with consultants such as an interior designer, landscape designer and structural engineer will also be reviewed and integrated.

10

**Construction Documents at Substantial Completion**—While no set of drawings is ever truly complete, we love showing off our hard work at this stage and this meeting will be the culmination of every hour spent to date. We will walk clients through the entire set of drawings and specifications and (just in case) provide one last opportunity for additional comments, considerations or revisions. The goals today are for us to receive the client's final approval on the project's design and to submit this set of drawings to the contractor for final, formal bids.

# 11

**Final Bid Review**—Review—If we've done our due diligence as a team, this meeting should be a relative formality. The cost of construction should be well within standard margins and the bid should be thorough and complete, leaving no detail unconsidered. Our hope is to leave the client with a tentative construction schedule in place and a smile on their face! Construction is about to begin!

# 12

**Pre-Construction Meeting**—Meeting—Largely administrative, this meeting includes all pertinent team members to coordinate final details for construction commencement, set expectations on schedule and determine benchmark site meetings. From here, we will begin actively administering the construction to ensure that the intent of the approved design and the client's desires are followed as planned.

**Parallel Tracks:** Throughout the course of these meetings, we will insure that all relevant parties are coordinated or otherwise involved relative to our critical path. We will keep our client continuously informed and updated—especially if a consultant or other related process begins to threaten progress. Clients will likely be directly involved with most of the consultants or other action items, but we provide overall guidance. Other processes, governing bodies and consultants include, but are not limited to:

- General contractor vetting and selection,
- Landscape design and interior design vetting and selection,
- Audio-visual (AV), lighting and mechanical/electrical/plumbing (MEP) vetting and selection,
- Engagement with structural engineering,
- Permitting,
- Variances (if needed), and
- Other governing bodies such as HOA, neighborhood associations, etc.