

Building a Home on Your Lot - Tips From a Custom Home Builder

Buying a Lot – Ten Questions to Ask

10 Questions to Ask Before Signing a Contract



As a custom home builder in the Raleigh area, we're often asked these kinds of questions - and we're **pleased to provide some tips** to keep in mind as you make your decision about what lot to buy.

What questions should you ask before signing a contract?

•1. Does the lot need a septic system, or is there access to city or county sewer?

A septic system costs more than the fees and equipment required to hook up to a city or county system. If a perk test has not yet been completed, you'll want to make your offer contingent upon completion of test, to ensure that a septic system can be supported.

•2. Does the piece of land have access to city or county water, or is a well required?

Hook up fees to connect your lot to a city or county water supply will most likely be less than the cost of drilling a well. But land that is further from a city center generally costs less – so there are advantages to both choices. Just make sure you know what that water cost might be.

•3. What is the projected growth for this area?

No matter where you're buying, it's a good idea to find out what kind of growth is anticipated. Growth can bring retail, more housing, manufacturing, and higher traffic.

•4. Zoning -

What type of home can you build?

Zoning can in some cases determine whether manufactured or mobile homes are allowed, or can place limits on the size or type of home.

How big is the lot required to be?

If the area around your lot is zoned R-10, that means that it can be subdivided into lots that are no smaller than 10,000 square feet. R-40 means lots no smaller than 40,000 square feet, or nearly an acre. This might tell you something about the spacing of future homes.

Manufacturing or retail?

You'll want to check to see if the land right next to yours is zoned for office, commercial, or manufacturing. Zoning can always change, but chances are with this kind of zoning, you may end up amongst buildings that aren't homes.

•5. What is the soil quality?

If a soil test hasn't been done, you may want to ask for one. Poor soil can mean difficulties in building a foundation or putting in a septic system.

•6. What kind of road access is there?

A piece of land that looks like a steal of a deal may not have road access, or may have a gravel or dirt road leading from a main road. Ask what kind of road frontage the lot has.

•7. Is there a natural hazard disclosure?

A natural hazard disclosure will tell you if there are known soil problems, protected habitats on the land, or fire hazards. Ask your agent.

•8. Are there any easements on the property?

An easement is a guaranteed access to your land. This can be anything from a shared driveway to a wide access area for Progress Energy.

•9. What kind of grade is there?

Make sure your lot will have good water run off. You may want your builder or another expert to give an opinion. Check out the lot right after a rainstorm. Some changes may be able to be made, but it depends on the total drainage available.

•10. Has a recent survey been completed?

If a survey has been completed recently, you'll see the little flags marking the boundaries of the lot. Make sure you understand where your lot begins and ends, and walk the lot before signing.

If you're already working with a custom home builder, **the builder may be able to help you make a final decision**, or let you know if your choice will work well for the home plan that you've selected. You may want to work with a real estate agent - **a good land agent will know what questions to ask**, and will help you find the answers.

You may want to narrow down your **choices of home plans** ahead of time, so that you'll know for sure that your new home will fit correctly on your new piece of land.

Ask about getting a **free building cost estimate** – Stanton Homes can provide an initial estimate for any floor plan, and give advice on the best choice of home for your budget and needs.

