PROKOP CUSTOM HOMES

35 Essential Questions to Ask Before Building Your Custom Home

A practical homeowner’s guide to choosing a builder, understanding estimates, and planning with confidence.



COASTAL • COUNTRY • CUSTOM

Start with the right questions:

Building a custom home is a major investment. Use this guide when meeting prospective builders, comparing proposals, and planning your project. There are no universal “right” answers to every question—the goal is to understand each builder’s approach and determine what works for you.

Bring this checklist to meetings, take notes, and ask for important commitments in writing.

Coastal properties and individual lots may require additional professional evaluations.

Choosing the Right Builder

1. How long have you been building custom homes, and how many have you completed?

Ask for relevant examples, not just years in business.

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2. Can I see homes similar in size, location, and complexity to mine?

Request completed project photos and, if possible, a visit.

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3. Can you provide recent homeowner references?

Ask about communication, changes, costs, and warranty follow-through.

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4. Who will supervise my project day to day?

Clarify who makes decisions and how often they visit the site.

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5. Are you properly insured for this project, and can you provide evidence?

Discuss general liability, workers' compensation arrangements, and builder's risk.

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6. How do you choose and manage subcontractors?

Find out whether trade relationships are established and how quality is checked.

Plans, Design & Selections

7. Can I bring my own plans or architect?

Learn whether the builder works with outside designers.

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8. When should I involve the builder in the design process?

Early construction input can reduce costly redesigns.

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9. Who checks whether the design fits my budget?

Ask how budget feedback is delivered as plans evolve.

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10. What help do you provide with finishes and selections?

Clarify showroom visits, design guidance, and decision deadlines.

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11. Which selections must be made before construction begins?

Late selections can delay ordering and scheduling.

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12. How are upgrades and custom details documented?

Make sure scope and price changes are recorded.

Budget, Estimates & Contracts

13. Is your contract fixed-price, cost-plus, or another arrangement?

Ask how the contract structure affects costs and risks.

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14. What exactly is included in the estimate?

Review site work, utilities, permits, landscaping, and allowances.

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15. What is excluded from the price?

An exclusions list is just as important as inclusions.

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16. What allowances are included, and what happens if I exceed them?

Compare realistic allowances across builders.

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17. How are builder fees, overhead, and contingencies calculated?

Ask for a plain-language explanation.

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18. How will I see actual costs, invoices, or payment documentation?

Understand transparency and accounting practices.

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19. What is the payment schedule, and what triggers each payment?

Match payment obligations to contract terms and progress.

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20. How are change orders priced and approved?

Insist on written authorization and schedule implications.

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21. How do you handle unexpected site conditions or price increases?

Ask who bears which risks under the contract.

Your Lot & Coastal Considerations

22. What evaluations should be done before I purchase or build on a lot?

Consider surveys, geotechnical work, access, drainage, and utilities.

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23. Are there deed restrictions, setbacks, or architectural review rules?

Confirm requirements with the appropriate authorities.

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24. Does this property have floodplain or elevation requirements?

Review current maps and local permitting requirements.

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25. What windstorm, corrosion, or coastal construction details apply?

Ask about applicable codes, materials, and inspections.

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26. What site costs could surprise me?

Discuss fill, foundations, driveways, utilities, drainage, and clearing.

Construction & Communication

27. What is a realistic schedule, and what can cause delays?

Ask about permitting, weather, labor, materials, and changes.

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28. How will I receive progress updates?

Clarify calls, meetings, emails, photos, or client portals.

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29. Can I visit the jobsite, and what safety rules apply?

Agree on access and site safety expectations.

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30. Who handles permits, inspections, and approvals?

Know who is responsible for each requirement.

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31. How are quality issues or disagreements resolved?

Understand escalation and documentation procedures.

Completion & Aftercare

32. What happens during the final walkthrough?

Ask about punch lists and completion standards.

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33. What warranties are provided, and what do they cover?

Review written terms, exclusions, and claim procedures.

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34. What documents and manuals will I receive at closing?

Ask about plans, warranties, equipment information, and lien releases.

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35. Who do I call if something needs attention after move-in?

Get a clear post-completion contact process.

Builder Comparison Notes

Use this page to record the differences that matter most to you.

Builder / contact:

Relevant experience and references:

Contract type and pricing clarity:

What is included / excluded:

Design and selection support:

Communication and schedule:

Warranty and follow-through:

Questions to revisit:

Additional Notes

Your Home. Your Way.

At PROKOP Custom Homes, we believe a custom home should reflect the people who live in it.

With over 30 years of experience building in South Texas, we help homeowners navigate planning, construction, and personal design selections—including accompanying clients to showrooms and suppliers.

Whether you are considering a coastal retreat, country home, or family residence, we welcome the opportunity to hear about your plans.

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