

Mistakes That Can Turn Your Custom Dream House into a nightmare.

“The whole joy of buying new is that you can actually customize it. So come with inspiration. What homes—or unusual home features—have you seen that you really liked?” Find photos of homes in magazines that make you swoon, then show them to your builder to give them an idea of your needs and desires.

Mistake No. 1: Expecting your developer to give you all the ideas

Homebuilders follow your lead—not the other way around. So, if you're not exactly sure what you want your home to look like, they may steer you toward the usual tried-and-true stuff, whether that's a formal dining room or a standard-size upstairs master bedroom

Mistake No. 2: Getting lost in the details

The nitty-gritty of building a house can be intimidating. There are numerous decisions to make, from massive (deciding where to erect walls) to minuscule (picking light fixtures). This overload of choices can short-circuit some buyers' brains so they become paralyzed, unable to make any decision at all.

Mistake No. 3: Forgetting to request built-in furniture

One of the major perks of building a home is that your contractor can, well, *build* things into it—everything from shelves to entertainment centers—that will blend in seamlessly with the walls and floor. But since many homeowners are accustomed to buying this kind of furniture when they move into a used home, this option often gets overlooked. And that's a crying shame.

Mistake No. 4: Not maxing out your mortgage

Think about it: You can't get a loan for a home that doesn't exist—which is why you will most likely be getting a construction-to-permanent loan, which covers construction then converts to a regular mortgage once the home building is complete. And here's the cool thing about these loans that buyers

often miss: You can pile everything into it—the water heater, Viking stove, utility bill-slashing solar unit, high-end rain showerhead, *everything!* So don't make the mistake, as many do, of buying these additions later with your credit card, which means you'll be paying it off at 18% interest. Instead, lump them into your mortgage and you'll pay a mere 4%.

Mistake No. 5: Adding but not subtracting

No matter how carefully you plan your home, what's seemingly set in stone is bound to change: You decide at the last minute you must have the latest double door Sub-Zero fridge that just hit the market, Projects “always go over. Most people plan with a budget in mind. But they build with their heart.

So, to keep your construction costs from spiraling out of control, make sure to balance out any cost-adding changes with some budget cutting elsewhere.

Mistake No. 6: Not planning for delays

Construction delays are unavoidable, and sometimes it kicks in the domino effect of anything that causes a hiccup.” For example, indecision about the washer/dryer placement postpones the plumber, which in turn delays the electrician and, well, you get the picture. Weather, labor, and material shortages are also commonplace.