

When considering building a new home, there are so many aspects to consider, it can feel overwhelming at times! Our goal here at Lord & Lady is to make that process as smooth as possible, while outlining as many of the choices and decisions for your project as much ahead of time as possible.

Through this process we work to reduce the stress for both the homeowners, and ourselves, to create as accurate as a bid as possible; therefore during the build having fewer changes, budget issues, and unexpected decisions. This list of considerations walks through many aspects of the building process, with questions ranging from the land selection to final finishing of your home.

Depending on your situation and stage of the building process, some of the questions may not be applicable to you, but most are likely a good idea to start pondering. While reviewing perhaps even start a notebook, or online gallery (*on Houzz or Pinterest*), with pictures, papers, permits, notes, etc. And if any of these thoughts lead you to further questions, please don't hesitate to ask!

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### **Land Selection**

1. Have you already purchased your land? Where is it located? Do you have the parcel number?
2. Do you have a location on the land where you envision the home being built?
3. Have you had a topographic map of the land created? If the site has a grade of 10% or more, Soil & Erosion will likely require a topographic map of the site be created, to approve a permit.
4. Has a civil engineer evaluated the property and created a proposed site map?
5. Is it on a body of water? Land on bodies of water typically require additional permits before building permits will be approved.
6. Is it within dunes or endangered lands? Either of these scenarios will require additional permits and steps to be taken.
7. Does the land have electric, sewer, water, gas access, cable?
8. Will it require a septic system, or pump and haul system? Have you had the land PERK tested to determine possible locations for these systems if required?
9. Do you have any deed restrictions or additional setbacks for your property?
10. Will your site require extensive excavation to build on; does it require a long driveway?

11. Is your site heavily wooded?
12. Is your site hilly or flat?
13. Can we visit the site? Do you have pictures for us to review?

## Home Plans

### Drawings:

1. Do you have home plans already? Have they been reviewed and modified for Michigan, Leelanau, and/or Grand Traverse County Codes? Are they drawn to scale and ready to use?
2. Do they have an engineered stamp of approval? Unusual homes that don't fit the standard guidelines for a home (*a round home*), or homes over 3500 square feet, require an engineers stamp of approval. Also keep in mind, that beams within a home, do require engineer approval, so even if the home does not require a stamped plan, it may require an engineer to review the beams.
3. If you don't have home plans already, do you have an architect or engineer that you are planning to work with? If you do, we have no problem working with them. If not, we have a draftsman, Robert McKenzie, that we often work with, who will take our plans that we've developed with you, and draw them up, correcting and reviewing any structural issues or requirements.
4. If you don't have home plans already, and would like help developing the plans, do you know what style of home you would like? Do you know how many rooms you would like in your home? Bedrooms, offices, kitchen, bathrooms, mudroom, laundry, dining, family, etc. We are happy to help you develop and put these thoughts down onto paper, in preparation for plan creation, just let us know your thoughts and we can go from there!
5. Do you prefer a basement, crawlspace, or slab?
6. Would you prefer one story or more?
7. Are you imagining vaulted ceilings, high ceilings, or standard height?
8. Do you want an attached garage, detached garage?
9. Do you want enclosed or attached porches?

### Fireplace:

1. Are you considering a fireplace in the home? How many? Gas, wood burning, wood stove, or electric? For wood stove and gas fireplace installs, we typically work with Source Julien.
2. If you are considering a wood burning fireplace, are you thinking a standard style, or Rumford style? A Rumford style fireplace is less common in the USA, however, it is a much more efficient design for spreading the heat throughout the home, naturally, without the use of adjoining fans, etc. Ask Thomas for more details if you are interested!
3. Do you envision a full fireplace with stone, or other material, and a mantle, or just the fireplace and hearth?
4. Do you want the fireplace raised with a ledge hearth, or flush with the floor?
5. Do you have a material in mind for the hearth?

## Financing

1. Do you have a budget, and if so, what is it? Letting us know this information, helps us to guide you to decisions that will help you stay within your budget. Most home builds will start around \$125 square foot, for the finished space, \$41 square foot for unfinished garage spaces, and \$30 square foot for covered porches. This price point is typically for the economy selections; moderate to high end material selections, will increase the price per square. Additionally, if your site requires a septic system, large amounts of excavation, driveway work, etc, the overall price will increase beyond that basic price-point.
2. Are you planning to build with a loan or with cash?
3. If you're working with a loan, is your bank loan already set, or in process? Is there additional paperwork or information you will need from us for your loan to be approved?
4. To guarantee your time frame and build, we ask that you sign a Contract with us for the build and put down a deposit. Here at Lord & Lady we work to only take one home build at a time, ensuring that our head contractor, Thomas, will be on-site every day, maintaining and completing the project with the level of quality we expect. Most home builds take us 7-9 months to complete (*the physical construction phase, not including permit times*). With that in mind, our home build schedule can fill in fairly far ahead of time.

Therefore, we recommend signing and placing a deposit as soon as you are comfortable, as it ensures your slot is dedicated to your build, and no one else can grab it. Your deposit will be applied to permits and labor, once the project starts, but ensures your space in our schedule in the meantime. Further details about payments and our contracts can be found on our web site.

## Permits

1. Have you started any of the permits?

Building inspections and code are very strict in Leelanau County. Depending on the project, you may require some or all of the following permits: Driveway, Address, Health Department, Soil and Erosion, DEQ, Land Use, Energy Compliance, and a Building permit. If the site has more than a 10% grade change where you are building, Soil and Erosion will require a topographic map of the site that outlines the elevations.

Energy Packet/Compliance: Since you are building a brand new structure on the property, we will need to meet the new 2015 Michigan building code that took effect in February of 2016. The new code includes an energy packet/compliance that has to be met. The major factor in this is that when the house is completed, we have to complete a blower test, and need to pass. That blower test involves them closing and locking all windows/doors. Closing any fireplaces. They then place air meters in the house and put a big plastic zippered seal over the front door and suck out all the air. They then monitor the home for one hour. You are only allowed to have an air change of 4, in that hour, to pass inspection.

This means that we have to be sure the house is extremely well sealed, because that is a very small amount of air changes available, and if air is leaking from the windows, fireplace, between panels, etc, then it is definitely going to exceed that amount. With that in mind, there are a number of other aspects we want to think through when designing the project, to ensure we are constructing the home in a way that prepares us for passing that blower test.

2. Do you have an official address?

## **Subcontractors**

### **Excavation:**

1. Do you have an excavator you would prefer to use? If you have no preference, we often work with Popp Excavating.
2. Do you prefer a paved driveway or gravel?

### **Plumbing:**

1. Do you have a plumber you would prefer to use?
2. Do you prefer plumbing your home with copper lines, cast iron, or PEX?
3. Do you want a tank-less water heater, or standard water heater? If standard, do you have a size you would prefer?
4. Are you interested in solar panels to heat your water heater?

### **Sound:**

1. Do you want sound wired throughout the home?
2. If yes, do you have a preference for speaker types and location of the amplifier?
3. Do you want to have remote access control to any of the sound devices?

### **Cable/Internet:**

1. We typically have cable lines wired throughout the home. Do you prefer to have both Internet and cable wired throughout?
2. Do you want to have remote access control to any of the cable devices?

### **Electric:**

1. Do you have an electrician you would prefer to use? If you have no preference, we prefer to work with Top Line Electric.
2. Do you have a specific electrical box size in mind?
3. Do you want a whole home generator installed?
4. Do you want to have any solar panels or wind power installed?
5. Do you want to have remote access control to any of the electrical devices?

### **Gas:**

1. Does your site have natural gas access?
2. Do you want gas appliances?
3. Do you want to have remote access control to any of the gas devices?

**HVAC:**

1. Code requires a heat source in your home, even if you are only intending it to be for summer use. Do you have a preference for heat? Traditional furnace, baseboard heaters, in-floor heating, ductless units?
2. Do you want air conditioning? If you do want air conditioning, that does typically mean that it will be most economical to utilize a furnace or ductless unit for the heating, so you can use the same ducts, rather than install them, just for the a/c.
3. Do you want to have remote access control to any of the HVAC?

**Insulation:**

1. We want to ensure that we are selecting the appropriate types of insulation, and don't run into issues once in the project, both with the inspector and the blower door test (*this tests the air flow in/out of the home when it is closed up and is required to pass inspection*). In Michigan code, for most locations in Northern Michigan, you need a minimum of R21 in the exterior walls, and a minimum of R49 (*R60 in most of Leelanau County*) in the ceiling.
2. Do you have a specific type of insulation in mind? Standard, blown in, spray foam, denim?

## **Interior Materials and Finishing Styles**

**Foundation:**

1. Do you have a preference for foundation types? If you don't have a preference, we recommend block foundations. Our head contractor, Thomas, is a Master Mason trained and from England. He therefore excels at block foundations. In addition to this, block foundations are easier to repair, if there are any future issues, and tend to have less issues anyway, because it is less likely that they will crack.
2. Do you have any pictures or images of exteriors of the foundations that you like?

**Staircases:**

1. Does your home have staircases in the plan?
2. What type of staircase are you envisioning? Enclosed, open, spiral, carpeted, finished wood, what type of railings?
3. Do you have any images of what you were thinking?

**Bathrooms:**

1. How many baths are you hoping to have? Full, half, shower only, master, guest, kids?
2. Do you have any images of bathrooms you like?
3. Do you have bathroom vanity styles in mind?
4. Do you have any sink vessels in mind? Under-mount, raised, one piece?
5. Do you have specific showers or tubs in mind? Tiled showers, prebuilt units, soaking tub, jacuzzi, freestanding, what sizes are you thinking? Do you want glass surrounds? We typically work with Twin Bay Glass for cut glass projects.

6. Do you have specific toilets that you were thinking on using throughout?
7. Are you envisioning tiled walls, drywall, wainscoting?

**Kitchen:**

1. Do you want an island in the kitchen?
2. What are your thoughts on the material for the counters? Granite, marble, concrete, quartz, laminate, butcher block, stainless? We typically work with Nature's Edge for granite, marble, quartz installations, they are located in Traverse City, south of Chums Corner, and will make weekend viewing appointments if scheduled ahead.
3. What type of sink and faucet are you picturing? Under-mount, farmer?
4. Do you have specific cabinets for the kitchen or bathrooms in mind? We often work with Ikea cabinets, they have a ton of features, work great and are very moderately and competitively priced. However, if you have specific cabinets in mind, we have no problem exploring those with you.
5. Do you have any images of kitchens you like?

**Appliances:**

1. Do you have specific appliances in mind? Specific brand?
2. Do you want a built-in fridge or free-standing?
3. Do you want an ice-maker in the fridge?
4. Do you want a garbage disposal?
5. Are you considering an RO filter on the home? A small RO filtration system can be installed at the kitchen tap to provide top-quality drinking water and is a good idea if you are building with a well. This is called a "point of use" (POU) water filtration system and can also connect to your fridge and ice machine. Water pressure is a consideration with some refrigerators, so in many situations we will want to add a pump to the fridge line if a RO is installed.

We often work with Owens Soft Water for water treatment in the home. They can come and do a free water test, to see what will work best for your location, if you are unsure.

6. Are you thinking a gas range, electric, or gas/electric combo?
7. Are you thinking gas dryer or electric?
8. Do you have any images of the appliances you like?

**Interior Doors:**

1. Do you have a specific style of interior doors that you are planning on? Basic six panel, flat panels, farmer style, Victorian, Colonial, etc?
2. Are you envisioning painted doors, or stained wood?
3. Do you prefer solid core (*more expensive but quieter*) or hollow core (*lower cost but little sound barrier*)?
4. Do you want to use standard doors, pocket doors, or barn doors?
5. Do you have any images of the door styles you like?

**Walls & Trim:**

1. How were you imagining the walls would be finished? Drywall, ship-lap, paneling?
2. What trim style were you thinking you wanted throughout the homes? Are you envisioning painted or stained trim?
3. Do you have any pictures of how you were hoping it could be finished?

**Lighting:**

1. Do you have any lighting styles in mind for the home?
2. Will you want chandeliers? Pendants? Recessed Lighting?
3. Do you have any pictures of lighting that you like?

**Exterior Materials and Finishing Styles**

**Siding:**

1. What siding are you thinking about using? Vinyl, board and batton, LP Smart Siding, metal siding, Hardiplank, cedar?
2. What do you envision the trim looking like?
3. Do you have a color scheme for the completed look?
4. Are there any areas of the home that you'd like finished in brick, cast stone, stone, etc? The chimney, foundation, front entry, etc?
5. Do you have any images of other homes from the exterior, that you like?

**Roofing:**

1. Do you have a roofing material in mind? Asphalt, metal, solar, rubber, terracotta, slate, shake?
2. Do you have any images of the roofing look or style that you prefer?

**Windows and Exterior Doors:**

1. Do you have a specific brand of windows and doors you prefer are used? If you do not have a specific preference, we recommend using Pella brand. We have a local Pella dealer in Traverse City (*in the Home Depot plaza, by the Burger King*) which you could stop in and look at options. Our representative there is Brian Zarczny. Pella has a solid warranty, and will come to your home for issues, without a charge. They also supply us directly, which reduces the cost, because we don't have to use another supplier to purchase the windows or doors for us.
2. What type of window do you prefer? Casement, single hung, double hung, awning?
3. What material are you envisioning for the windows? Vinyl, wood, fiberglass?
4. Do you prefer grilles or no grilles in the windows? If you do want grilles, what pattern, and do you want them on the interior or exterior of the glass?
5. Do you want blinds inside the windows or doors?

6. Do you have a preference for the exterior doors? Wood, steel, fiberglass?
7. Do you have a color for your exterior doors in mind? Different colors will range in price (*red is the most expensive option*), and we recommend a pre-painted door from the supplier whenever possible, for a smoother and nicer finish.
8. Do you want to have remote access control to the door locks?
9. Do you have any images of exterior doors that you prefer?

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Thank you for reviewing these questions - we appreciate the opportunity to work with you! You are well on your way to the home of your dreams! Let us know what thoughts, further questions or information you have and we will get you further information and details.

If you have a Houzz or Pinterest ideabook with images, feel free to send us the link, it can really help us to have a more complete picture of what you see the finished space looking like. And feel free to check out our Houzz, [www.Houzz.com/pro/LordandLadyConstruction](http://www.Houzz.com/pro/LordandLadyConstruction), for lots of ideas and examples of our work.

Warm Regards.