



DEMYSTIFYING DESIGN-BUILD

The Simple and Fun Process of
Building a Custom Home



WHAT IF IT *IS* POSSIBLE?

It cannot be denied - building a custom home is fun to think about. With Sterling Homes, you can do more than just think about it; you can make it a reality.

Maybe you have never seriously considered designing and building a home. Perhaps you thought the process would be too stressful and cost too much. After all, the stakes are high. How will you have the time and energy to make all the plans and all the decisions? What if your investment goals get completely out of control?

The truth is that with our Design-Build Process, building a custom home can be simple and fun; and it does not have to be a larger investment than buying a new construction home. Design-Build does not have to be extravagant and expensive; it just needs to be built uniquely for you and your home site.

At Sterling Homes, we have spent well over 40 years fine tuning our Design-Build Process to provide you with the financial roadmap and project details long before we start. We proudly serve as your trusted guide throughout the home building journey.

DEFINING DESIGN-BUILD

YOU HAVE THE VISION; WE HELP YOU BRING IT TO LIFE.

Design-Build is our process to design a home that is thoughtfully integrated with the land it sits on, creating a comfortable, efficient, and functional place to call home. While rooted in a trusted framework, the exact process is unique to everyone. Designing a home that is united with the land could mean starting with a blank piece of paper or it could be putting together parts of many different plans and ideas. Whatever your process looks like, the goal is to capture your overall vision.

Design-Build is focused on creating the most value for you, while keeping the process efficient and fun. Your home is “built” completely on paper on purpose before we start construction. By creating a full set of plans, specifications, and pricing before construction, you can evaluate all the options and make meaningful decisions that are right for you.

IS DESIGN-BUILD RIGHT FOR YOU?

You may still be wondering whether a Design-Build project is right for your situation. Remember, Design-Build means creating your home from scratch—whatever that looks like for you.

Here are a few ways to know that a Design-Build project may be the right fit:

- You have a vision for how you want to live in your home.
- You know what you want but have not found it elsewhere.
- You want the best attributes from several of your previous homes.
- You have unique considerations that need to be planned for such as multi-generational living, working from home, or aging in place.



Design-Build is ideal for people who have an idea of their perfect home. One common misconception is that custom home building is about creating over-the-top houses and is only suitable for people with unlimited money to spend. The fact is, Design-Build is about creating your ideal home: the home you want, in the location you want, at an investment level you are comfortable with.

Whether you own your own land or want to design a home in an existing neighborhood, Sterling Homes is your guide in creating the ideal home for you. We couple our expertise in building homes with your vision to craft a thoughtful, efficient, and long-lasting home.

BUDGET & NEEDS, WANTS, WISHES

UNDERSTANDING INVESTMENT IS KEY

If you have read our Guide to Building a Home with Sterling Homes eBook, you know that during your initial meetings with us, you will share a lot of information as we guide you through productive conversations. We will ask you to provide us with three lists: your Needs, your Wants, and your Wishes. You may Need a first floor Owner's Suite; you may Want a tile shower; you may Wish for a Spa Experience with a large soaking tub, steam shower and massaging jets. These lists help us get a sense of what is most important to you and determine the style of home plan that works best for your goals.

Coupled with these lists, it is important for you to share an investment level with which you are comfortable. Sharing this information at the very start of this process is key as it informs everyone whether the project is financially feasible. Your investment range is the driving force of all that follows and the alignment of what your goals are with what is financially realistic is key to our united success.



THE BALLPARK PROCESS

Your ballpark is reached through our decades of experience building homes, and knowing what it will take to make a certain type of home on a particular piece of land a reality.

The answer to the question “What’s included in the Ballpark?” may not be satisfying, but it is true—we do not know every detail when we figure out your ballpark. That is because, during our initial conversations, we are focused on a high-level review of your new home goals and of your Needs, Wants and Wishes Lists.

Having a ballpark for building your home is a straightforward way to determine if a Design-Build project makes financial sense. It helps your building team align with your vision and ensures that you are completely comfortable with the proposed investment of your new home.

Once we know that the ballpark makes sense financially for both of us, we sign the Design-Build Agreement. Having everyone on the same page as early as possible allows us all to move forward quickly, meaning you are that much closer to living in and loving your new home.

THE DESIGN-BUILD AGREEMENT

The Design-Build Agreement outlines several key pieces of information that will guide the rest of the process.

Design Deposit: You will pay a \$9,500 non-refundable deposit when signing the Design-Build Agreement. This deposit is credited toward the final purchase price of your home at the time of closing or final billing.

Location: The Design-Build Agreement defines your home site, whether in a Sterling Homes neighborhood, or building on your own land.

Investment Level: Showing that we can deliver within the ballpark previously presented.

Timeline: The Design-Build Agreement outlines when Sterling Homes expects to complete the design work for your home. A target closing date will be presented later in the overall process.

Design and Pricing Work: The Design-Build Agreement lists each of the items included in the design process such as sketches, floor plans, drawn details of special items, the pricing of agreed upon options or alternative materials and designs.

Next Steps: The Design-Build Agreement outlines the steps that follow, such as signing the Construction Contract and the Options & Selections Addendum. More on both of those in our Building Your New Home with Sterling Homes eBook.

Once the Design-Build Agreement is signed and the Design-Build deposit has been received, the Design-Build process is officially underway.



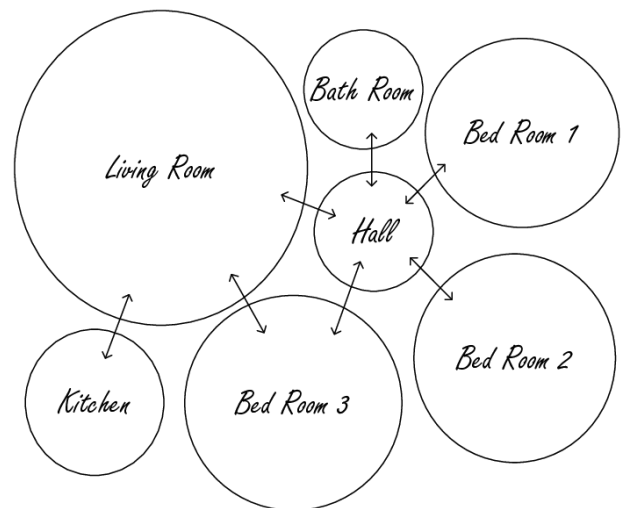
HOME DESIGN BEGINS WITH THE LAND

Designing a beautiful and functional home does not start with the layout of rooms or the features and finishes; it starts with the land. We design your home from big to little; carefully marrying the land with your Needs, Wants and Wishes Lists. We consider how the home wants to sit on the land to get the most natural light, or offer the most level yard, or capture the outstanding view. The land that you build on will affect every aspect of your home, and getting your home to sit comfortably on the land is an important part of loving the result.

It is important that we apply your Needs, Wants, and Wishes lists to the land to deliver a design that complements how you want to live in your home.

Here are some factors we will consider when assessing your land:

- Are there any relaxing views to take advantage of?
- Where will public and private spaces be positioned?
- Where will the sun be at different times of day, and which rooms will it affect?
- Where will the entrances and exits be located?
- What will the yard be like?
- What does the flow between inside and outside look like?



To answer these questions, we sketch a “bubble diagram” with you to arrange spaces. The bubble diagram is a rough drawing that simply helps organize out the flow of your home. Bubble diagrams are a fantastic way to start the process of planning your home on paper. We define North, South, East, and West on paper and think about how the sun and light will interact with your home at various times of the year. Then we draw and label circles that represent the different spaces so that we can be sure we have captured the flow you want before creating a more detailed plan.

REFINE NEEDS, WANTS, AND WISHES

Now it is time to lay all the cards out on the table. Some of your ideas may be easy to include in the design, and others may be more challenging. No matter how “out there” you may think your ideas are, this conversation is not about editing or restraining your vision. Now is the time to talk about all your ideas so we can help you prioritize them and determine what is possible.

NEEDS

These are the features that are essential to your new home, and often address the root of why you are making the decision to build. Common examples of Needs include:

- **Defined Living Space:** Number of Bedrooms and Bathrooms, Garage size, an open floor plan, or a First Floor Owner's Suite are often the top priorities. Other needs might be single story living, additional living space for aging relatives, or more indoor space for kids to play.
- **Maintenance:** A common goal for many people when setting out to build a new home is to decrease the amount of annual maintenance they will have to perform themselves.
- **Efficiency:** Increasing comfort, lower energy bills, and leaving a smaller environmental footprint are all top-of-mind for many people who are designing a new home.

Accessibility: We are staying in our homes longer than ever, which is wonderful. But making sure we plan for the future is a key step, whether it be wider door frames, aging in place considerations in bathrooms, or zero entry options.



WANTS

How do you want your home to feel and function? These are the Wants that will help us design a home that truly feels like yours. Examples of Wants include:

- Renewable Energy
- Large Mudroom with Organization
- Outdoor Deck
- Finished Lower Level
- Laundry on 2nd Floor



Is there something you have always wished your home had or has your lifestyle changed through a growing family or becoming an empty nester? These are all things you will want to put down on your Wants List.

WISHES

Most often, Wishes are features you want to consider and may incorporate after you have accounted for your Needs and Wants. Ideas for Wishes include:

- Home Theatre Room
- Custom Wine Cellar
- Additional Outdoor Living Spaces (Screen Porch, Three Season Porch)
- Smart Home Integration



Adding your Wishes list to this part of the process helps give you a sense of how realistic an idea is and offers you a better understanding of whether you would like to include it. The Wishes list also helps us factor future projects into our plans so that we can help you achieve your ideal home, no matter when that may be.

Unlike builders who rely on allowances, we provide you with real pricing on your home as we work through these lists. Together, we make sure that we have prioritized your Needs and Wants, and included as many Wishes as your investment goal allows.

DESIGN, ADJUST, REPEAT

After our in-depth discussions, we put together your Plans in CAD (computer-aided design) and develop Specifications that capture many of your Needs, Wants, and Wishes. The goal is to present you with a complete package, including Plans, Specifications, and a Purchase Price for your new home.



The very first version of this package takes the most time to produce. Sometimes the creative process is quick, and sometimes it takes a bit longer. The first version of your design package is typically ready for your review in about 2 weeks.

When your First Home Package is ready, we will schedule a meeting to review it together. Before the meeting takes place, we'll send you the package to review so you can consider ideas or questions beforehand.

THE FIRST FEEDBACK MEETING

At this meeting (either in-person or virtual), we will review your feedback together and talk ideas.

This meeting is your opportunity to ask questions. Some we can answer right away, and some may require some more time and thought. If you have questions like, "How much will it cost to finish the bonus room," "How much to add a screened-in porch," or "How much to tile the shower," we will get you those answers in a series of House Package Letters.

Sterling Homes has been designing and building homes for over forty years and we have never perfectly "nailed it" on the first pass of a Design-Build. We have even seen the occasional complete re-do. And that is all part of the process. We work efficiently and thoughtfully together until we get to the home you want.

Part of our Design-Build process is starting smaller and at a lower investment than what you have initially communicated while still satiating your Needs List and many of your Wants List. By starting out this way, we have room to grow and evaluate value along the way. Perhaps the layout is right, but the Great Room wants to get a little bigger, or can we turn the reach in pantry to a walk-in pantry. We want you to have the ability to grow the spaces and your investment thoughtfully and not have the feeling of having to cut things to maintain your investment goals.

DESIGN CYCLES AND ADJUSTMENTS

Together, we complete cycles of designs and iterations, until we are all confident we have captured your vision. The cycle of design, adjust, and repeat typically goes quickly, since we started with a solid base of knowledge about what you want in a home and your priorities become more clear. It typically takes two to three collaborative iterations before we have the Plans, Specs, and Purchase Price ready for the Construction Contract.

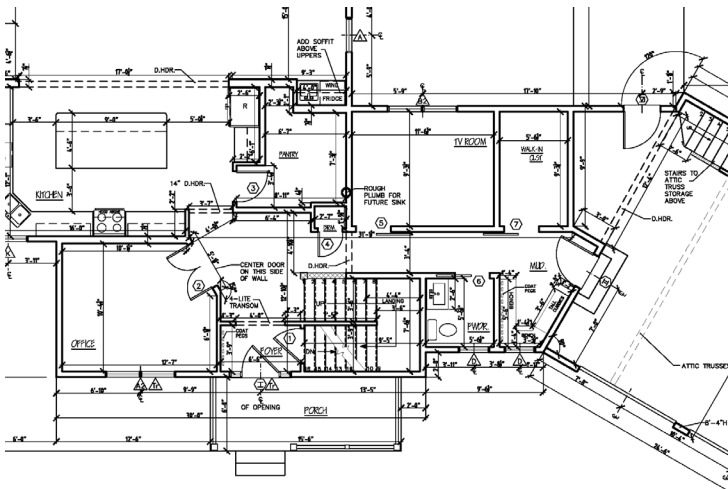
Remember that we are still working from big to little; you will not adjust the final details such as flooring, paint colors, or appliances just yet. For now, we design with those items in mind. It is enough to know that you want a hardwood floor or a tile shower. Our goal throughout the Design-Build Process is to deliver to you a set of Plans, Specification, and a Purchase Price that are suitable for us to sign a Construction Contract.

REVIEW THE FINAL PACKAGE

Final Design and Pricing Package: Included in your Final Design and Pricing Package are a Site Plan, Home Plans, Specifications, and a Purchase Price for the home.

Construction Contract: After the design work is complete, you will sign the Construction Contract and pay the Contract Deposit.

The Design-Build process is complete. It is time for you to resume our standard operations process with Options & Selections.



STERLING HOMES

HOME - CONSTRUCTION SPECIFICATIONS		
Section	Information	Image
Permits	Builder responsible to obtain all necessary permits including: - Soil Erosion and Sediment Control - Zoning	
Surveys	Home is to be staked by builder	
Site Clearing	Builder is responsible for all site clearing, as needed	
Utilities Connections	Builder responsible for all site work and site balance to include Water Connection to Town of Colchester water system Sewer Connection to Community Santee with Leah Field	

Sign the Construction Contract

OPTIONS & SELECTIONS

Throughout the Design-Build Process, we have gotten to know a lot about each other. You have already made most of the big decisions. Now, it is all about the fun details that will make your house your home.

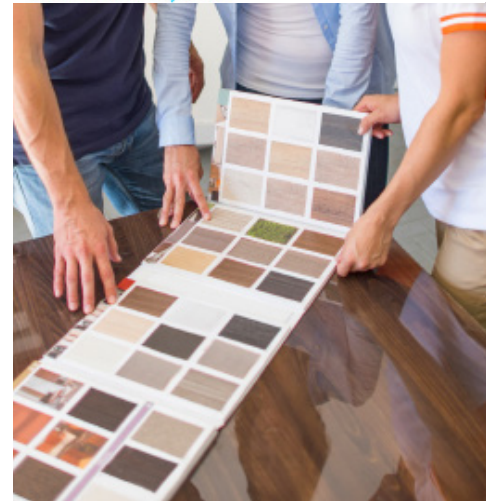
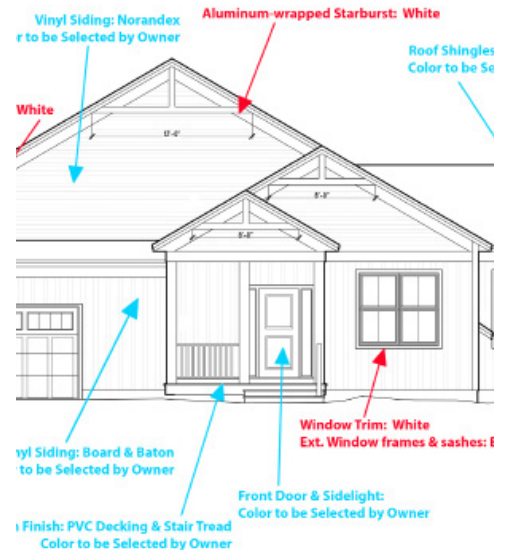
During the Options & Selections Process (O&S), you will receive expert guidance as you make decisions about the finishes of your home in a fun and efficient way. We collaborate closely with you to achieve the look you are after, using what we have learned during Design-Build, to customize your O&S experience. All your selections are documented in the Specifications as we work through O&S.

Here is what the Options and Selections process looks like:

- You will view many different finish options of your new home and make selections.
- Some you will see in person, such as countertops, cabinets, and flooring.
- Others you may review online, such as plumbing fixtures and lighting.
- The final finishes can be reviewed at home with tools we will provide, such as interior paint colors, siding colors, and roof shingle colors.

Together, we will schedule a series of O&S meetings to make your Selections. We get these meetings on the calendar early, planning farther out than we may need. If we finish early, it is easier to cancel a meeting than to try squeezing one in later.

For a more detailed account of the Options & Selections Process and all that follows, please download our Building Your New Home with Sterling Homes eBook.



WATCH YOUR HOME COME TOGETHER

Your Specifications is the documentation of what is included in your new home and will get updated as you make your selections throughout the O&S process. You may want to change, upgrade, or in some cases, choose something less expensive than what is included. Do not worry if you are not an expert on any of this. Your Selections Guide and our trusted partners will be with you every step of the way.

At the end of O&S, you will sign the O&S Addendum. This serves as an Addendum to the Construction Contract and outlines any changes to the Plans, Specs, and Purchase Price that happened during O&S. At this stage, the Selections Deposit is required. All deposits to date are credited toward the final purchase price at closing or final billing.

During construction, you will never wonder about progress on your home, because we keep you updated every step of the way. One aspect of our process that customers and their families enjoy is access to their client portal.

When we begin building your home, we provide you with login information to your own private image gallery that we call the Client Portal. Several times each week we upload captioned pictures taken during construction, so you are always aware of what is happening on the jobsite.

Now it is time to relax as we handle each detail of your home's construction. All the legwork is complete, and all your decisions have been made. Your only job now is to dream about move-in day. We cannot wait to hand you the keys.



START THE
Conversation

Are you ready to share your ideas,
hopes and dreams for your new home?

Let us be your Guide.



(802) 864-0600 | SterlingHomesVT.com