



# DREAM HOME STARTER KIT



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Building your own home is a rewarding experience that provides a wonderful sense of ownership. But if you're new to the process, building a home can also be stressful, confusing, and most of all, expensive. That's why we at Whitmore Custom Homes created this Dream Home Starter Kit for 2018. We believe that everyone is entitled to their own dream home, and we'd love to help you achieve it without all of the stress that can go along with the process. Within this Dream Home Starter Kit, we'll break down what you need to know, give you some insight on the most popular building trends of 2018, and then let you know who you need to contact and how to go about it. It's our hope that our 2018 Dream Home Starter Kit gets you one step closer to that modern dream home you've always wanted.

## THE CHECKLIST

- SET GOALS
- SET BUDGET
- FIND SPOT
- CHOOSE TEAM
- PREPARE
- PLAN AHEAD
- BUILD IT

*The Dream Home Starter Kit is an interactive guide to help start your home building process in the right direction. Take your time to walk through the steps, and use the checklist to keep track of where you last left off. When complete, use the guide to keep notes and reflect on as a reference. Happy dream home planning!*



**WHITMORE**  
CUSTOM HOMES

*"Building your forever home today."*

**GET STARTED BUILDING YOUR DREAM HOME!**

## SET GOALS

One of the best ways to make the home building process considerably easier is to set goals. Make sure your goals are measurable and attainable, and then sit down and write them out. Sometimes it's easiest to start by making two lists: one that takes into account all of the things you'd like, and another that addresses all of the things you'll need. Here are a few questions to ask yourself when you're working on your goals:

What do you want? A two bedroom one bath home, or a four bedroom two bath home? The size of your home, more than anything, will determine the cost.

Where do you want it? Would you rather live in the city, or are you looking for a little more space? What are your dream home goals? Start by writing them here:

### SET GOALS

*What are your dream home goals?  
Start by writing them here:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

How much can you spend? Be realistic here—if not conservative. What will you do while your home's being built? Will you stay in your current home? Can you stay with the in-laws? Or will you sell your current home and rent an apartment? Once you've asked yourself as many questions as you can think of, and you've got a list of your goals, objectives, and restrictions, come up with a Plan A and Plan B. The reality is that your optimal situation—Plan A—might not ultimately come to fruition, so it's important to have a backup plan that you're comfortable with.

### PLAN A

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### PLAN B

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**TIP:** Be specific! If you know you want a 4 bedroom house, write down 4, not 3-4. Also, make sure your goals are attainable, you have to believe you can achieve it. If it's unrealistic it could discourage you from taking further action, or even the first step.

## FLOOR PLAN

When you're building a home in 2018, one of the biggest goals to define is the type of floor plan you want. Recently, open floor plans have dominated the building world because of their open, airy feel. When you build a home with an open floor plan, it typically means that most of the rooms on the main floor, like the kitchen, dining room, living room, etc., flow into each other with minimal barriers like walls and doorways. It's an ideal floor plan for those who do a lot of hosting, or if you have young kids you'd like to keep an eye on at all times.

With that being said, just because open floor plans are one of the biggest trends of 2018 doesn't mean it's necessarily right for you. A more traditional floor plan, where each room of the house has its own four walls, is better if you're looking for more privacy or if you have older kids who want to have more of their own space. Regardless of which floor plan seems right for you, you'll have to choose quickly, as the style of floor plan can change how a builder structures your home. Can't decide?

Circle which option applies to you:

### WHICH IS MORE IMPORTANT TO YOU?

PRIVACY \_\_\_\_\_ OPEN

TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE \_\_\_\_\_ MODERN FEEL

SPECIALTY ROOMS \_\_\_\_\_ ENTERTAINING SPACE

DEDICATED GAME ROOM FOR KIDS \_\_\_\_\_ KEEPING AN EYE ON KIDS

CONTAINED MESSSES \_\_\_\_\_ SLEEK STYLE

NOISE CONTROL \_\_\_\_\_ NATURAL LIGHT

Where do you plan on spending the most time in the house? And what will you be using the main floor for primarily? Entertaining friends? Your kids friends? Hanging out with your family?

List those goals here:

### TIME SPENT

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

*If you've circled choices mostly on the left, a more traditional floor plan might be the option for you. If you circled more options on the right, an open floor plan might fit your lifestyle better.*

## STYLE

It's also a lot easier for your builder to get an idea of the sort of home you're looking for if you define your style goals. If you've ever watched an HGTV show, like Property Brothers or Fixer Upper, you're probably already familiar with a number of design styles popular in 2018: rustic, farmhouse, shabby chic, sleek contemporary, modern, and even bohemian. Before you contact a builder, you'll want to know what general style it is that you're looking for in your home. To help you figure out what style it is that you're going for, head to sites like Pinterest or Houzz, where you can see the interior and exterior of thousands of different homes, and then choose for yourself the ones that catch your eye the most.

To help you keep your thoughts in order, list some of the features you like best about the style you're going for. Is it a specific color like bright whites or wood treatments? Or do you prefer a certain type of furniture, like mid-century modern? List your design and style preferences.

### DESIGN & STYLE

*List your design and style preferences:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

## DON'T FORGET TECH

In 2018 it's also important to consider technology before you start building your home. This year, home assistants like Amazon's Alexa and Google Home are becoming more and more popular, and it's important to consider them before you even start building your home. That way, your builder can be sure to configure the electrical wiring to fit your requests. When you're considering your must-haves, don't forget about 2018 tech! Do you want surround sound, smart lights, or a totally configured personal home assistant? Add it to the list on the next page!

## MUST-HAVES

Once you've got your general ideas for floor plan and style together, it's important to put them together in a list of must-haves. This makes it much easier for your builder to understand what you're looking for in a new home. While your builder will certainly help you make choices a little farther down the line, it's difficult to hire someone to build your home if you don't have a clear picture of what you want. So, like you did when you were setting goals, make a list of everything your home needs in

### MUST-HAVES

*Those things you can't live without:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

terms of amenities and details. If you're a fancy chef, you'll want a big kitchen, and you probably have your own ideas on what that looks like. Write those down. If you plan on hosting guests often, you'll likely want an open floor plan. Make sure that's on your list too. The clearer your picture is, the easier the job will be for your builder, and the more likely you are to get exactly the home you imagined.

### WANTS

*Paved walkways or luscious landscaping?*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### IDEAS

*Write possible ideas here and prioritize them later:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**TIP:** Don't get these categories confused! Must-Haves should be the basics like bedrooms, bathrooms, etc. Needs are closely aligned with the musts, but could include a dreamy country vista view because that's what started you on a house building venture anyways, right? Wants are those little items like paved walkways and luscious flower beds. And for those of you who get those genius ideas at 3 AM, write them down and prioritize them later!

# ESTABLISH A BUDGET

Being accurate and realistic with your budget is really important, so we're going to help you establish that here. You might want to start with a conservative budget. We really mean that. The truth of the matter is you're likely to spend more than you initially planned. Whether you find your dream property and it's a little higher than expected, or you find an awesome feature (that Viking oven you've always wanted) that you can't live without, it's smart to give yourself a little cushion in your budget. We'd much rather see to it that your dream home has all of the amenities you listed above, rather than having to compromise on your wants and needs just to avoid breaking the bank.

## ESTABLISH A BUDGET

*Start with your conservative budget of:*

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

## TOTAL FINANCES AVAILABLE

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

## SAMPLE FLOOR PLANS

*Inspired by floor plan images or websites?*

*List the URL here for refrence:*

FLOOR PLAN A: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

FLOOR PLAN B: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

FLOOR PLAN C: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## EXPENSES

*Monthly expenses may be changing, so plan ahead:*

UTILITIES: \_\_\_\_\_

TAXES: \_\_\_\_\_

HOA FEES: \_\_\_\_\_

INSURANCE: \_\_\_\_\_

## MONTHLY INCOME

*Will moving affect your monthly income?*

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

## ADDITIONS

*Maybe you love floor plan A but need an extra bedroom, list those additional items here:*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**TIP:** We build to fit your lifestyle first, but also take into account the investment you're making into this new home. If this is your first home, a word of caution: Be Realistic. Take the time to look at floor plans, get pre-approved, and research the expenses that may surround your new location, like taxes!

## FIND YOUR SPOT

Once you have your goals, “must-haves,” and budget squared away, it’s time to start on the fun part: looking at properties that fit your budget and goals. It’s important to remember that your perfect corner of the world doesn’t have to be completely untouched by mankind. Perhaps your ideal location might already have a home on top of it. If the existing structure is old or outdated, it could be cheaper to buy this already-developed lot and take down the structure, than to buy a completely untouched piece of land. Here are a few things to think about:

### Is the land already developed?

If you’re buying a lot, check to make sure it’s set to build on. There’s a lot of money that can go into excavating a lot to make it suitable for building. If this isn’t something that easily fits within your budget, choosing a lot that’s already developed might be the better option for you. What about hookups? Depending on where your building site is located, you may or may not have sewer, water, and gas hookups immediately available. There are a lot of cost considerations related to services that are available within a development or out in the country. Make sure there’s room in your budget to dig a new well or to pay the gas company to run a line out, as this could be an added expense.

### What’s around and what do you need close?

While this might seem like a given, you’ll really want to check out the neighborhood around your lot. If you have kids, you’ll likely want to know whether you’re close to a good school and near a doctor’s office. Do remember that if you want to live further outside of town, you may be trading off the benefit of convenience for the luxury of your own space and privacy.

## FIND YOUR SPOT

*Describe your perfect spot, is it in town or a little further out? Located by a good school or surrounded by forest?*

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**TIP:** *The location you choose directly impacts your budget! Be sure to take in some of the key points listed above when doing your research. Factor in some of those wants and needs, like a good school for your kids, or maybe it’s acreage for a small farm. Whitmore Custom Homes offers real estate expertise to make sure your dream home starts with a perfect location.*

# CHOOSE YOUR TEAM

Now that you have your setting picked out, know your budget, and have a fairly clear picture of what your dream home should look like, it's time to assemble a team. We strongly discourage you from trying to DIY an entire home. While we're sure you are very handy, it's good to recognize that if you don't have experience building a home, you probably don't want to start with your own dream home. You wouldn't represent yourself in court, would you? You'd probably hire an experienced, reputable attorney. The same goes for your new home. It's better to hire an experienced professional and get exactly what you want than to try to build it yourself and end up with something less than perfect. But who do you need to hire, and how do you know they're good?

## ARCHITECT

Some builders have their own architects, which is great. But if you find a builder you really like that doesn't, go ahead and find an architect you like as well. In many cases, an architect can turn everything you have on your list into a beautiful and well-planned design. This is a really great idea if you want a home that's completely unique to you. It eliminates pre-conceived floor plans and gives you a home that's different from any other.

## BUILDER

Whether you went with an architect or not, you're going to need a builder. If you didn't hire an architect, you'll want to choose a builder with their own floor plans or ideas, or relationships with architects and designers. In most cases, they'll have a large book of existing floor plans for you to choose from, and many custom builders will allow you to change or adjust those to fit your wants and needs.

## CHOOSE AN ACCOMMODATING TEAM

Our last point of choosing a team to build your dream home: make sure you choose someone that encourages your involvement. This is your home, right? So you should be very closely integrated into the building process. A good custom home builder will want you to be as involved as possible because they understand this is your home—not theirs. They'll regularly keep in contact with you and request your approval on all major decisions and design options. While you certainly want a builder that you know can take care of everything, it's important that you're still involved in the planning and building process.

**TIP:** *Whitmore Custom Homes offers electronic software that makes it easy and fun for you to stay involved in your project at any time of the day or night. We pride ourselves on demonstrating the importance of communication to ensure you're able to enjoy the home building process from start to finish.*

# PREPARE FOR POSSIBLE SETBACKS

The unfortunate truth of construction projects is that things don't always go as planned, no matter how thought out they are. Whether you have bad weather and work is delayed, or you have to wait for a permit approval, it's good to plan for a few setbacks. The best advice we can give for these situations is to remain calm. If you have a good builder that you trust, know that they're doing their best to keep your home on schedule. In any situation where there is a problem or setback, your builder should contact you to ensure you're aware of the situation. These sorts of issues are resolved best through open communication between you and the builder, as well as calm, positive attitudes.

## PREPARE FOR SETBACKS

*Plan a small achievable goal to help stop the setback:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## HOW TO MANAGE

*List out some steps you can follow to manage how change might affect your dream home process:*

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**TIP:** To manage any setbacks that may arise during your dream home process, try to keep the challenging situation in perspective. This is sometimes where Plan B comes into play. Reflect and resolve for a smooth building process!

## PLAN AHEAD

The final point in this starter kit is one we mentioned earlier, but it's important enough to talk about again. Many people get so caught up in the designing and planning process that they forget that they'll need somewhere to live in the interim. It's good to think about this ahead of time, as it will save you a lot of worry during the building process. If you plan on selling your existing home before you build, then you might consider living with your in-laws or renting a small apartment during the build. Like we said before, it's important to plan yourself a little cushion in the time you plan to be living somewhere else. Most home construction projects will take anywhere from 6-8 months but can go longer if there are weather delays or other setbacks. As long as you give yourself a little extra time, and plan for the additional living expenses during the build, you'll be fine.

### PLAN FOR THE SMALL STUFF

Once you've got all those big concerns figured out, like the overall style, budget, and timing, let yourself dream a little! It's the small stuff in a house that truly makes it your own, like the types of appliances, fixtures, and colors you choose for paint, so be sure to give yourself time to make those considerations as well. The top trends we're seeing in 2018 include wood accents, stainless steel appliances, and open shelving. Are any of those features something you want to include in your home? Or do you have bigger and better plans for your home? Whatever you're thinking, be sure to write them down.

#### PLAN AHEAD

*List extra expenses you may run into during the build:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

#### PLAN AHEAD

*Draw your floor plan, make notes, list your contacts, whatever you do here, just PLAN:*

**TIP:** When you think you have a plan in place, start sweating the small stuff. These are the details that transform a house into a home, so embrace each decision. Be sure not to settle because it's "easiest that way," explore all your possibilities and write them down in this kit!

