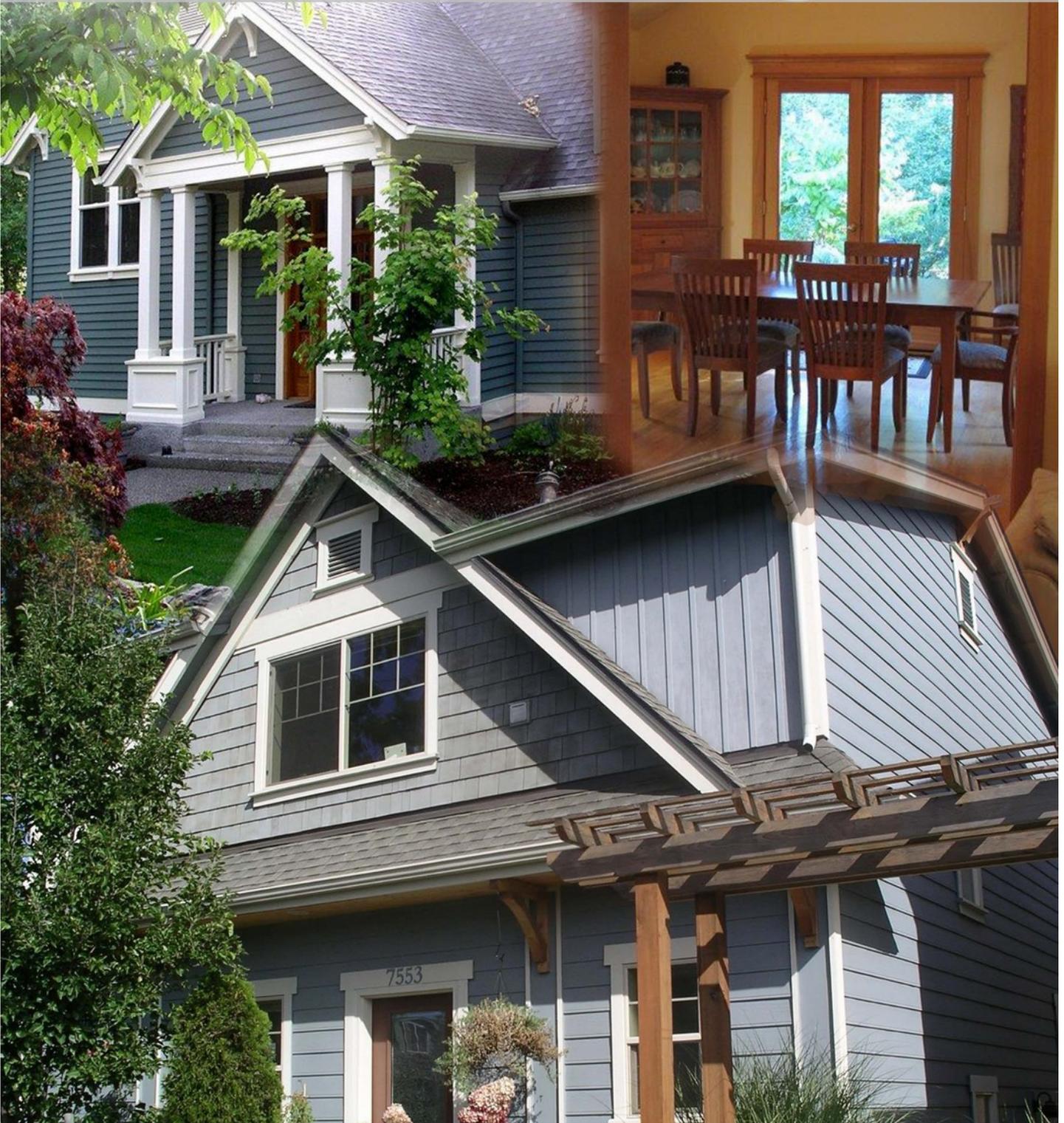


CARL COLSON'S



NEW HOME PLANNING CHECKLIST

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This guide has been prepared by Carl Colson, Architect and is for information purposes only. Every property should be inspected by a qualified designer prior to starting the design process.

Design of Your New Home: It's Time to Think and Consider

All projects, yours included, will have a certain amount of revisions and changes during the design process for your new home. There will be fewer revisions and changes if you can set aside a time to sit down and really think about your wants, needs, and the features of a home that you would really like to include. Don't worry, the decisions you make in these early stages aren't "cast in stone". Please feel free to dream but also try to be realistic in your wants and needs for your home.

Just like you, many homeowners have found this checklist can really help save time, money, and effort by focusing on and completing these questions in this list. This list is extremely helpful to couples to help clarify each of their needs and wants for their new home, especially when each may have different thoughts and opinions. This list can help you communicate your thoughts and wishes to other family members and it will be extremely helpful in communicating with me as we start the design process together.

Please read through the list of questions and think about them a bit before writing your answers. Don't expect to fill out this list at one sitting – most likely, it will take several days of thinking and reflecting upon your wishes.

You might print out this checklist and keep it in a binder or notebook, along with your various snapshots, pictures from magazines, and other things you find appealing in homes. Having all this information in one place is beneficial. As you reflect upon the questions, feel free to browse through the pictures and clippings you've no doubt accumulated. This will really help you collect your thoughts and assist you in writing them down on paper.



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Once you've had a chance to review this list and you're about to begin, you might have questions or may feel overwhelmed in thinking about your needs and requirements. Don't worry, this is to be expected because this list will likely cause you to really focus on your needs and wants in your new home. If you have questions or need assistance, please feel free to contact me at Carl@CarlColsonArchitect.com or by phone at 425-806-3703.

Clients & Lifestyle Requirements

Let's start with identifying information about you, your family, and your lifestyle needs. With regards to lifestyle needs, think a bit into the future – will your needs change as you get older? What about when your kids get older? While you can't plan or foresee everything in life, it is beneficial to consider these types of questions in helping you plan your new home.

- 1) How many members are in your family?
- 2) Do you or any of your family members have any special needs for accessibility requirements and if so, to what level are their needs?
- 3) Will there be several (more than 2) generations of family living together in your proposed home? Will there be a need for separate living areas for elderly parents or grandparents?
- 4) If you wish to remain in your home as you get older ("Aging in place"), a consideration is to create a large closet / storage room (approximately 4'-6" x 4'-6") at the lower and upper level (directly beneath each other). This allows for the installation of a future residential elevator and provides great storage space until the need for an elevator might arise. Consideration might include being able to "divide the living area" in the future to create an Accessory Dwelling Unit apartment which you could rent out or provide a space for future caregivers.
- 5) Where does your family spend the most time together?
- 6) Where does your family eat most meals?

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- 7) Does your family watch TV together, or do you prefer separate TV watching areas for parents and children?
- 8) Do you entertain often and have any special needs or requirements for entertaining?
- 9) Do you have young children for whom you'd like to plan a rec room or indoor play area for them and their friends?
- 10) How important are formal living areas to you?

Your Property



The physical characteristics and zoning restrictions of your lot really influence the design of your home and making the right design decisions can really benefit you by saving money during the site work process.

- 1) What is the size of your lot and what are the dimensions of your lot?
- 2) Is the site level or does it slope? If it slopes, is the high side at the front or rear or side of the lot? Would you consider it a shallow slope or a steep slope?
- 3) Do you have a survey of your lot? Depending on the size, shape, and topography of your lot, a survey may be required. If you don't have one, check with me before ordering a survey – you don't want to pay for surveying things you don't need on the survey, yet you want to make sure the survey includes the information that we need and what is needed for a building permit.
- 4) Is your lot in the city or county? Which municipality has jurisdiction over your property?

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- 5) Is your lot in a rural, urban, or suburban area?
- 6) Are there any easements on your property? Any easements can have an impact on the location of your home on your property. Your title report should contain this information.
- 7) Does your lot contain any wetlands? Do any of the adjacent properties have wetlands? There are a number of restrictions that come into play when building on a lot with wetlands, even when the wetlands may be on the adjacent properties. If your property has wetland areas and depending on how close they are to where you'd like to build, a wetland survey may be required.
- 8) Does your lot have any mountain views, water views, forest views, etc.?
- 9) Are there views you want to orient your home toward or are there views that you'd rather avoid from your home?
- 10) Are there rooms from which you'd like to have access to the outdoors?
- 11) Does your property have areas in which you'd like for outdoor activities or recreation and if so, is it in the front, sides, or rear of the property?
- 12) Covered entry porches are a necessity in our climate – would you like a larger front porch to create a sense of welcome to your family and visitors, as well as a place to sit? Would you like a covered rear porch?

Home Design Requirements

Here's where you can really think and reflect upon what your needs, what styles of home design you find appealing, and what amenities you may want or need in your home.

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- 1) Do you have an idea of a range of square footage size for your home?
- 2) What is your budget range for the construction of your new home (not including lot price)?
- 3) What are your tastes in home design – is there a particular style that has always appealed to you?
- 4) Do you prefer a single story or a two story?
- 5) Think about the way you and your family live and entertain. Do you prefer an open style or traditional style floor plan with a separate room for each main activity?
- 6) If you have a sloping lot, you may have a possibility for a daylight basement – is this something you would want for your home?
- 7) Number and locations of bedrooms.
- 8) Number and locations of bathrooms.
- 9) Mudroom required and location?
- 10) In which rooms, if any, do you want a fireplace?
- 11) What type of exterior materials do you prefer for the siding finishes?
- 12) Is there a type or style of windows that you have always liked and found appealing? What style of windows would you like to see in your home? What types of doors would you like to see in your home?
- 13) Do you want your garage attached to your home or do you want it in a separate structure?

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- 14) Our garages have many uses besides a place to park cars - Do you want extra storage areas or workshop areas in your garage? Any sinks for work areas in garage?
- 15) Storage for lawn tools and equipment in garage (See #17 below)?
- 16) How many cars do you want to park in your garage? Are you interested in a garage that has tandem parking in which one car is parked behind another? (Great for parking 3 cars without the width of a 3 car garage). Do you prefer single wide or double wide garage doors? (The style of home often influences this decision)
- 17) If you like to garden, do you need a garden room that is accessible to the outside and located near the rear or side of the house? (This could be part of the garage or it could be a separate room).
- 18) How high would you like the ceilings? 8' or 9'? The standard for many homes recently constructed has been 9' ceilings at the entry level and 8' at the upper level? Which would you prefer?
- 19) Ceilings— do you want any of the ceilings to be vaulted, cathedral or sloped? Do you want the ceiling design to play an integral part of your main living areas?
- 20) Insulation / Soundproofing - Do you want extra insulation / sound proofing inside your home between bedroom and living rooms, bathrooms, laundry? Many homes are built without interior soundproofing and owners have often regretted not including this relatively low cost item in their homes.

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Room Requirements

Don't let this section scare you! You don't need to know the exact sizes of rooms at this stage but it is helpful if you have an estimate on the size of rooms. As the design develops, it is often possible to combine multiple uses for each space – this alone can really save you quite a bit of money by reducing the size and construction costs of your home. Of course, some rooms would be for a single use but others could be multifunction for different uses. Keep in mind that you may not need or require all of the rooms listed below.



Entry Hall

- 1) Size
- 2) Style
- 3) Ceiling Height
- 4) Coat Closet?

Dining Room

- 1) Location
- 2) Formal or informal?
- 3) Any special features or furniture needs to accommodate?
- 4) Ceiling height and any special millwork (trim) requests?

Living Room

- 1) Location (This decision may evolve as the design progresses)
- 2) Formal or informal?

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- 3) Any special features or pieces of furniture to accommodate?
- 4) Fireplace or area for flat screen TV?
- 5) Ceiling Height?

Family Room

- 1) Should the family room be open to kitchen and/or breakfast room? Will the main television be located in the family room? Is this a flat screen TV and if so, how large?
- 2) What types of furniture do you want to place in the family room?
- 3) Do you want a fireplace or wood stove in this room? Do you have any requests on how it might be located in relation to TV, dining area, or kitchen?

Kitchen

This is one area that really takes a lot of thought and will often evolve during the design process. As the design progresses, we will discuss and review options for the kitchen area, such as how you like to cook in the kitchen, and possible location of kitchen fixtures and appliances.

- 1) Pantry – would you like a cabinet pantry or a walk-in pantry? If you want a walk in pantry, how large?
- 2) Do you want a counter with stools for guests to visit with the cook or a spot for quick breakfasts?
- 3) Do you prefer kitchens with an island or a peninsula?

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- 4) Do you prefer the sink located next to a window to the exterior or do you prefer a sink oriented toward the dining or family room?
- 5) What types of built-in appliances do you want and do you know where you would like them located? This question is often difficult to answer before conceptual design plans have been developed, but if you have strong preferences at this preliminary programming stage, please make them known.
- 6) Would you like a desk in or near kitchen? A desk or space for an I-Pad for looking up recipes can really come in handy.
- 7) Do you have any other special kitchen requirements?
- 8) Do you want a separate breakfast nook? Any special features such as bay windows, built-in table, door to the outside, etc.?

Master Bedroom

- 1) Master suite located on first or second floor?
- 2) Do you want the master suite located away from other bedrooms?
If on the first floor, do you want it located close to or farther away from the kitchen area?
- 3) Do you need outside access from master bedroom?
- 4) Do you want a separate seating area or retreat?
- 5) Describe the pieces of furniture (with dimensions) that you would like to locate in the master bedroom.
- 6) Do you prefer one large closet or two separate closets?

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7) Do you prefer to enter the closet – from the bath area or the bedroom?

Master Bathroom

- 1) Briefly describe the number and type of fixtures you would like in the master bathroom.
- 2) Do you prefer a separate shower and tub?
- 3) Do you prefer a soaking tub and if so, what size?
- 4) Would you like a linen closet in the master bathroom?
- 5) Do you prefer the toilet to be located in its separate room or area of the bathroom?
- 6) Do you want skylights in master bath area? Windows (w/ privacy glass and located for privacy)?

Bathrooms

- 1) Do you need a half-bath/powder room and if so, where do you want it located?
- 2) Is second bath open to hall or bedrooms (or both in a “Jack-n-Jill” arrangement)?
- 3) Skylights and windows in bathrooms?
- 4) Linen closets in bathrooms or adjacent hallway location?

Bedrooms

- 1) Number of bedrooms needed?
- 2) Walk-in closets?
- 3) Preferred sizes of each bedroom?

Home Office

- 1) Do you need a separate room for a home office? Is this a home office for the parent(s) or is it for all family members to use?
- 2) Do you need a computer area for the kids? Do you want it located where an adult can monitor their activities?
- 3) On which level do you prefer the home office to be located and do you need direct outside access for visitors?
- 4) Do you need closet storage space in the home office and if so, how large of storage area needed?

Laundry

- 1) If you want a two story home, do you want the laundry room upstairs or downstairs?
In either location, it really makes sense to provide sound insulation at the laundry room walls and floor.

Attics

Many homes constructed over the past 20 years have roof trusses in which large, open areas of attic space are not possible with most roof truss designs. There are roof “attic trusses” which do allow for a significantly large area in the attic for storage space. These trusses are a bit more expensive; however for storing infrequently used items, they do allow other storage areas in the house to be used for more frequently used items.

- 1) Would you like to consider the use of attic storage trusses for your home?

Home Wiring

The purpose of this checklist isn't to make you come up with all of the answers now, however in constructing a new home; it's definitely worth the time and effort to think about wiring the new home or space to accommodate computers, sound systems, intercoms, and installation for future electronic components. As the home design progresses, the owner can begin to discuss these with the contractor's electrical subcontractor who can advise the homeowner on these items.

Interior Finishes

(These are not required prior to designing the house; however, you should be considering these selections prior to construction. These selections may not be indicated on plans; however they should be given to contractor prior to bidding and construction)

- 1) What type of flooring and where?
- 2) What type of countertops?
- 3) Style, material, and finish of cabinets?
- 4) Cabinet and door hardware?
- 5) Lighting fixtures? Do you prefer recessed or surface mounted?
- 6) Wall finishes?
- 7) Interior and exterior colors?

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It's Time To Work Together

Once you've reviewed and completed the items in this checklist, the first thing to do is to take pride in your accomplishment. The items in this checklist have hopefully ignited a bit of soul searching, deep thinking, and reflection about what you really find important in the home you're about to help create.



Now that you've completed the list, you can contact me and we can meet to discuss your goals, dreams, and ideas for creating your new home. Together, we can review these items to help you determine which of your wants are in the "must have" category and which of your wants are in the "nice to have but not crucial" category. Our goal, in working together, is to create the home of your dreams that will be beautiful, comfortable, very functional, and economically feasible.

Using this checklist with many homeowners has allowed me to participate in the realization of their dreams – it's a starting point for a creative experience that has proven to be extremely rewarding to the homeowner and I'm honored to be part of that journey of creating their dreams. Let's begin the experience – you can contact me at Carl@CarlColsonArchitect.com or by phone at 425-806-3703.