



# Pre-construction Buying Tips

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**B**efore you even think about buying a pre-construction home or one that's already under construction, you need to be meticulously prepared. It's very common to fall in love with a home that's not even finished yet.

You're driving by and you see a frame on a piece of land that looks just perfect. You begin to wonder, "Could this be my dream home?" But before you start to see stars in your eyes, be warned that it's very common to be promised the moon by the builder or construction company building it. To ensure your potential "Dream Home" doesn't become your "Nightmare Home", here are some tips if you find yourself in this situation:

- Find out the budget for the finishes. This could spell the difference between high and low quality countertops, flooring, and tile. For example, let's say the builder is installing granite countertops. What does he mean by that? Is it a remnant piece of granite? What type of granite? Black granite? St. Cecilia granite? Is it granite slab or granite tile, there is a huge difference. And if this difference is not clearly spelled out you could end up with granite tile and not the granite slab you dreamed of.
- Find out the tax. Make sure the budget for the finishes includes the tax separately from the allowance amount. You don't want to end up with an extra bill after the builder says, "Well, that was a pre-tax estimate." You also don't want to be told you have \$5.00 per square foot for tile and then when you go out and choose the tile you are stunned to find out you really can only buy \$4.50 per square foot tile because you have to account for tax, this is not the way to do your finishing shopping.
- Find out what's included. Sure, \$30/yd for carpet may fit your budget. But does it include the pad and the installation? Get clear.

- Ask to see the finishes. Crown molding sounds great, but ask for a sample. Don't agree to it until you're holding it in your hands. Photograph samples and include them into your agreement.
- Be very specific about what you want. The builder may tell you he's planning wood floors. You tell him you want Travertine. He says "that should not be a problem, you think this means that he will just give you travertine instead of wood, which is what you really want. Then, you're surprised because you get a bill for the extra cost of Travertine, he says, I told you I could do it but I never said I was going to pay for it. It is an extra feature above what I had planned on doing therefore you will have to pay for that.
- Make sure you get a credit for the original material. Using the same example, a builder agrees to use Travertine and bills you accordingly. But don't let him "forget" the credit for the original material he was going to use.
- Make sure you have a "What if?" clause in your purchase agreement. This is very important. A builder may promise to have your home completed by July 30, and what happens if it isn't? You and the builder need to be clear on the details in case of unforeseen incidents.

Now that I've scared you to death about buying a pre-construction home, let me tell you that investing in such a property can be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life. You get to witness your home from its birth and have a say in its development.

But you just have to be prepared. Knowledge is power. And knowledge can save you a lot of money, time, and frustration. Call me and I can help make sure all of your interests are protected.

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