

My Own Little Slice of Heaven...

The Perfect Building Lot

You know you want to build someday and you want to find the perfect place for your new home. Yet, finding the right spot for your dream home is only half the battle. If you're lucky there are a number of choices in your area. If not, you may have to expand your search to give yourself some choices. Very often in bigger cities, the choices are slim. You'll have to go to the suburbs and even further out. But, you can sometimes find some really attractive options within your parameters.

The facts are simple: land is becoming scarce. Developers have bought up a lot of prime locations. Sometimes, they divide up these parcels into smaller parcels to sell to individual builders. More often, though, they end up building the land themselves.

Your choices will range from a smaller city lot, between existing homes in an established neighborhood, to more rural areas where there are homes on acreage ranging from one to 10 or more acres. Depending on where you live and where you're looking, these building sites may be flat, sloped, gently rolling, steep, offer panoramic views, or could be nice, quiet, out-of-the-way settings.

Only you can determine what works for you and the best way to know this is to go to wherever there is available land and check these places out! Spend some time there. If you can, visit some people who live there and ask them what they think. Ask: what are the pros and cons of living here? Then, decide if they are important to you. A real estate agent will be able to help you.

You should ask yourself how important the location of your building lot is to you. Is WHERE you live more important than the house itself? For some, it most definitely is. Be honest with yourself; trust your feelings.

The choice of a building parcel can dictate what you can afford to build, what you are allowed to build, and what makes sense to build. There could be restrictions imposed by the building authorities and/or the home owners' association. You need to know these restrictions before you decide to buy.

It may be more helpful to list the common questions that I've received over my years in the home building business. However, I still highly recommend you utilize the services of a good real estate agent to help you find and purchase a piece of land.

Q: What's the most important consideration when I'm looking for land?

A: First, you must determine your primary goal. Is it to live there and enjoy it? Then, the first thing is to determine if you like the area. Price and property values are very important but if you don't enjoy the area, the views, the neighborhood, and the accessibility to the services you need most, you'll be unhappy there.

Q: How much should I pay for my building lot and still leave me able to build?

A: If you're on a budget, and most of us are to some degree or another, you'll have to find out what the going rate is for building. With a few well-directed questions you can determine the cost per square foot to construct the homes in the area and by deciding on the size of home you want to build vs. your overall budget, you can figure on the maximum you should spend on the land.

Q: What "improvements" or utilities should be available to the building lot?

A: This depends on the development and the practices common to your area. The number one consideration is power. This supersedes gas, sewer and water in most cases. You can drill a well; you can sink a septic system; and you can get propane tanks. However, if power lines are not available you'll be forced to use generators, solar power, wind power or other alternatives that may not be attractive or work for you at all.

Q: How do I finance the purchase of land if I don't have the cash?

A: It is possible for you to work out an arrangement with the owner or seller of the parcel. They may "carry" the balance owed to them with a small dollar amount down. A few banks will lend the money on land if you put a minimum of 20% down. Sometimes much more is required. You should be aware, when the time comes to build, the new lender will usually want the other "lender" to be paid off. **Don't make a deal where they can't be paid off early.** Also, ask about a "Contract of Sale."

For more information concerning the purchase of your own little "slice of heaven," I encourage you to do some research. Like all other actions associated with home building there are a lot of things to know. Please check www.DreamHomeCreation.com for other places you can check to broaden your knowledge base. I wish you all the best in your search. Finding the ideal spot will benefit you for years to come. Further, it could be very lucrative for you if it turns out to be a very desirable area.

Happy hunting!