

Planning Your Build

By Heather Starke

Building your first home or cottage can be compared to the birth of your first child. Nothing can prepare you for the magnitude of what lies before you, for the lack of sleep and, yes, for the emotional highs and lows. And yet, the end result can be more gratifying than ever imagined.



My husband (pictured above) and I are recovering from the process of acting as general contractors on our first custom home build. What saved us was the fact that we had excellent advice, superior building materials and solid trade referrals from an exceptional custom home designer and supplier. We look back now and are dumbfounded by the overall success of the project. Without a strong lead hand, we could have made many costly mistakes. However, good guidance and good grace were on our side.



Below: Linwood-alliance builder Mike Parlevliet.



In the event that you are considering building, I'll reflect on our nine-month "To Do" list:

1. The building lot was surveyed; Linwood Custom Homes conducted a site visit to determine the best style of home for our lot.
2. Otonabee Region Conservation Authority (ORCA) permits and municipal building permits were applied for, and obtained.
3. A realistic budget was established along with our financial commitment to the build.
4. Based on a file of clippings and a floor plan we had walked through many times in our heads, Linwood custom designed our home and worked with us to finalize the details.
5. Linwood supplied our custom home package (framing and building materials, Douglas Fir beams, exterior Western Red Cedar and shakes, exterior door systems, interior cedar liner, window systems, and roofing.)
6. The lot was prepped for the build. Lumber cleared from the lot was milled for furniture for the new house.
7. Linwood's drafting department created working blue prints to be reviewed and approved by municipal engineering staff.
8. A very reputable, Linwood-alliance builder was hired.
9. Detailed surveying was completed to determine placement of the home and related services.
10. Excavation began and footings were installed. The foundation and frost wall were poured and cured. Exterior drainage was also established.
11. Materials for the build were delivered. The builder and his crew worked expertly to build our home's post and beam support structure, do the framing, install windows, doors and roofing systems to get the home to what is known as "lock up stage."
12. A plumbing plan was created and ground level plumbing roughed in. A lighting plan was also established.
13. The HVAC plan was created and roughed in. The fireplace system was ordered.
14. Hydro, gas, electrical, sound, security and communication services were roughed in and inspected.
15. The fireplace system was installed and stonework completed.
16. Kitchen and bathroom designs were finalized and cabinetry ordered by Linwood Interiors (an optional, contracted service).
17. We selected and ordered interior finishes (light fixtures, stair systems, wood trim, doors, flooring, countertops, plumbing fixtures, appliances). We hired subcontractors for these services based on solid referrals.
18. Paint and stain colours were selected.
19. Closet systems and built-in furnishings were designed and ordered.
20. Plumbing, electrical and HVAC were installed.

21. Vapour barrier, insulation and drywall were installed.
22. We rented a very large dumpster and carried out a major interior clean up (also removing all drywall dust).
23. Interior wood doors, cedar ceiling liner, interior timbers and trim were sanded and stained.
24. The builder installed interior cedar ceiling liner and accent timbers.
25. Walls and ceilings were prepped and painted.
26. The builder completed exterior board and batten, shakes, timbers and decking systems.
27. The new well and septic bed were dug, installed and inspected.
28. Interior doors were hung and trim installed.
29. Interior flooring was installed.
30. Plumbing fixtures were installed.
31. Tile and glasswork were completed in the shower areas; vanities, cabinets and countertops were installed.
32. Light fixtures were installed.
33. Closet systems were installed.
34. Final inspections were conducted, and the moving truck arrived.
35. A formal bank appraisal confirmed that the effort was well worthwhile. The last step was to pop the cork on a very big bottle of champagne.



The Linwood team with me on site: In the foreground, Company President William Mascott (left), Vice-President of Retail Sales, Craig McFarlane (right), Builder Mike Parlevliet (far right) and crew.