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Tips for Buying or Building a New Construction Home

As the #1 local real estate team, we help dozens of people every year buy or build their perfect new construction home. We also work with the best builders in Iowa City, Cedar Rapids, and everywhere in between. If you're ready for a beautiful new home, here's what you need to know.

1 Always Research the Builder

Your dream home is only as good as the builder's portfolio. How long have they been in business? What is their reputation? Are they easy to work with? They're your direct source should anything go wrong in the future—you want to make sure they will be dependable and responsive.

2 Design with Your Future in Mind

When building a new construction home that you plan to be in for many years, the future is more important than today. Think about how your lifestyle or family may be different down the road and design the home to easily transition for those changes.

3 You'll Pay Later for Cutting Corners

Cheap finishes and materials are tempting, but you may end up with regrets—and costly upgrades—later. You're investing a lot of money in this house, so choose a quality standard that you are comfortable with. Enjoying your home now is more important than resale value down the road—especially if you plan to be there for a long time!

4 Don't Sweat the Delays

Ongoing material and labor shortages are the reality of today's new construction market. Be aware of and understand the delays these issues can cause. The construction schedule is a guideline, not the law. Build in extra time with these delays in mind.

5 Read the Covenants Closely

The covenants contain important details for what you can and cannot do with your new home or the land it sits on. Read the fine print to make sure the things you care about—the color you can paint your house, whether you can add in a fence for your dog—are allowed in the neighborhood.

6 Always Be Accompanied by an Agent When You Visit

Never visit your home's construction site alone. Technically the home is "open" for you to stop in during construction, but an agent is required to be there for liability reasons. Plus, we can answer your questions on the spot as they come up!

7 Don't Skip the Inspection

Yes, everything in the home is new and yes, it may have passed the city's standard checks, but an inspection is still a good idea. Just because your home is new does not mean it is flawless. Even if nothing significant is found, it will give you peace of mind.

8 Double Check the Warranty

Your new home is a big investment. Your warranty protects that investment. Make sure the builder offers at least a 1-year warranty. Read the fine print so you understand what is covered. You may not anticipate anything going wrong with your new home, but you need to know who is responsible if it does.

9 Taxes Take Time

Don't get too excited when you see the taxes on your closing statement. The taxes assessed at closing are still based on the land. The taxes on your new home will take about 2 years to fully assess. Budget accordingly!

10 Trust Your Dream Home to the Experts

Whether you're buying or building custom, your agent is just as important as your builder. Experience matters, and no one in the Iowa City-Cedar Rapids Corridor has more experience with new construction homes than our team.

