



## Custom Home Design Guide

Elevated Living, Rooted in Your Values and Place





## WHY CHOOSE A CUSTOM HOME?

Imagine walking into your custom home and knowing it's one-of-a-kind, built to reflect your needs, preferences, and lifestyle. Unlike production or spec homes that follow pre-designed templates, a custom home offers complete control over every detail—from architectural style and layout to materials and the landscape.

Designing a custom home is about more than creating a place to live—it's about crafting a space aligned with your values and aspirations. Achieving this balance involves navigating site constraints and regulatory guidelines, ensuring the result is beautiful, reflects your lifestyle, and aligns with your budget. This guide outlines a holistic approach, blending inspiration with strategy to design a home tailored to you.

## WHY WORK WITH AN ARCHITECT?

Engaging an architect is essential for translating your vision into a functional design that maximizes your site's potential. Architects bring expertise in spatial design, materials, and construction techniques, balancing creativity with technical know-how.

At Red Barn, we focus on optimizing natural light, ventilation, and energy efficiency, enhancing your living experience and minimizing long-term costs. Acting as your advocate and project manager, we coordinate with contractors, engineers, and other professionals to keep the project on track and within budget, while managing permits and zoning requirements.



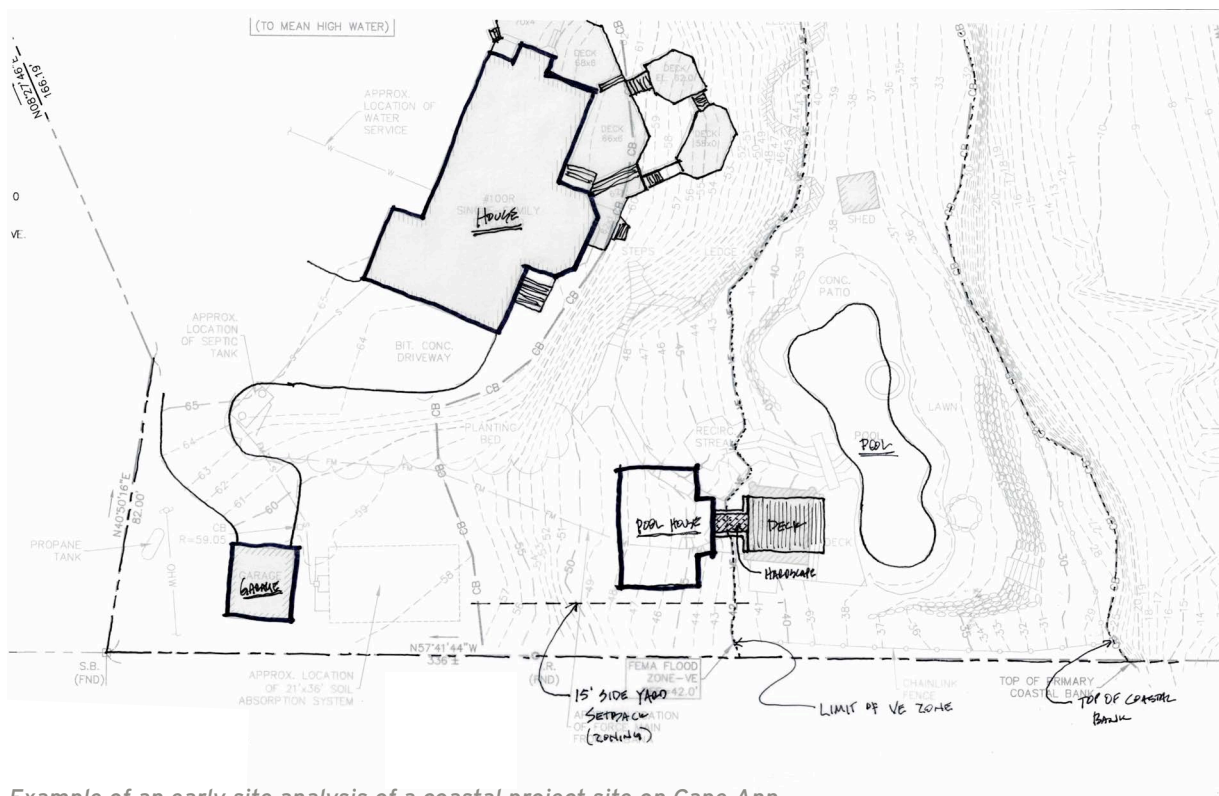
Working with an architect transforms the home-building process into a collaborative experience, ensuring every design element resonates with your lifestyle, aesthetics, and values. We aren't just designers—we're your partners, helping bring your dream home to life while meeting the practical demands of construction.

## GETTING STARTED WITH RED BARN

Building a custom home is an exciting yet complex journey. Partnering with Red Barn from the outset ensures that each step—from site selection to design to construction—is seamless. We identify opportunities to optimize your budget and integrate sustainable solutions, helping you achieve a beautiful, functional, and efficient home.

## EVALUATING THE SITE

Choosing the right piece of land is essential. Each plot offers opportunities and challenges—like environmental regulations or zoning bylaws—that must be understood from the start. Red Barn's **Real Estate Advisory Services** guide you through due diligence, identifying site constraints and opportunities. We also provide market comparables to assess the post-improvement value, ensuring the land aligns with your vision and project goals.



Example of an early site analysis of a coastal project site on Cape Ann.

## PROGRAMMING: DEFINING YOUR HOME'S VISION

Every project begins with programming—a detailed conversation about the spaces you need and how they'll support your lifestyle.

We'll ask the right questions:

- What are your household's core values?
- How do you want to feel in your space?
- Are there any specialty considerations such as single-floor living?
- Do you have any high performance building goals?
- How many bedrooms and bathrooms?
- Do you need a home gym or library?
- Will you require en suite bathrooms for each bedroom?

We'll assign square footage to each space, ensuring the program aligns with your site constraints. Once the program and site fit together, we move to the design phase.

Use the worksheet on the following page to outline the spaces, features, and values that will guide your custom home design.

# PROGRAMMING WORKSHEET

## HOUSEHOLD OVERVIEW

Who will live in the home?

How many adults? \_\_\_\_

How many children? \_\_\_\_

How will the home be used?

- ☐ Full-time residence  
☐ Part-time/vacation home

What are your household's core values (ex: sustainability, privacy, entertaining, wellness)?

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## LIFESTYLE + PERFORMANCE

Are you interested in:

- ☐ Single-floor living  
☐ High-performance/Net-zero design  
☐ Aging in place  
☐ Accessibility considerations  
☐ Outdoor living spaces

OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

## SIZE + BUDGET

Ideal total square footage: \_\_\_\_\_

Target number of floors: \_\_\_\_\_

Desired move-in date (if known): \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a construction budget range in mind?

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## PRIORITIES

What are your top 3 priorities for the design of this home?

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## SPATIAL NEEDS

Bedrooms:

- ☐ Primary Suite  
☐ Guest Bedroom(s)  
☐ Kids' Rooms  
☐ In-Law Suite  
☐ Nanny Suite

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

How many bedrooms total? \_\_\_\_

Bathrooms:

- ☐ En suite for each bedroom  
☐ Shared Jack & Jill  
☐ Powder Room

How bathrooms many total? \_\_\_\_

Living Spaces:

- ☐ Open-plan living/kitchen/dining  
☐ Formal living room  
☐ Family Room  
☐ Media Room  
☐ Library/Den  
☐ Mudroom  
☐ Bonus Room

Specialty Spaces:

- ☐ Home Gym  
☐ Home Office  
☐ Pantry/Scullery  
☐ Laundry Room  
☐ Playroom/Game Room  
☐ Workshop/Studio  
☐ Kitchenette  
☐ Wine Cellar  
☐ Golf Simulator  
☐ Car Loft  
☐ Pool/Poolhouse

OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

## BUDGETING FOR YOUR NEW HOME

Before diving into design, we'll establish a realistic budget. Refer to our **Cost of Construction Guide** for an overview of typical costs.

Key budget components include:

- Land acquisition and development
- Design and engineering fees
- Construction management and legal costs
- Landscaping and soft costs

We revisit the budget throughout the project to ensure the design remains aligned with your investment goals.



## DESIGN PROCESS: FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

Red Barn leads the design process from high-level **Concept Design** through **Construction Documents**. We evaluate site circulation, weather patterns, and views to inform space adjacencies, developing floor plans and elevations. Once **Schematic Design** is complete, we engage contractors for a budget check.

During **Design Development**, we focus on integrating systems like HVAC and structural elements, while refining material selections. We will spend significant time learning how your household uses key spaces such as the kitchen, including any specialty appliance considerations, overall appliance package, storage needs and finally, cabinetry to house it all.



Care is taken to select plumbing and lighting fixtures that reflect your tastes and needs. Interior Design is an integral part of this process and is advanced alongside all of the other demands of the project. We use in-house renderings and mood boards to help you visualize design choices.

**Construction Documents** turn design concepts into detailed technical plans that guide the entire build. Red Barn ensures seamless integration of structural, mechanical, and aesthetic elements by coordinating with engineers, contractors, and consultants. These precise documents minimize delays, reduce errors, and ensure every detail aligns with your vision, providing a smooth path from design to construction. Once the Construction Documents are finalized, the contractor applies for permits, marking the start of the building phase.

## COLLABORATING WITH YOUR TEAM

As your architect, Red Barn coordinates the entire project team—surveyors, engineers, contractors, specialized trades and any outside designers—ensuring everyone is aligned. Our role is to synthesize decisions into clear documentation that guides the construction process. We work closely with your contractor to evaluate alternatives and suggest cost-effective solutions, ensuring your design goals are achieved within budget.



## CONSTRUCTION: ADVOCATING FOR YOUR VISION

Throughout construction, Red Barn acts as your trusted advisor. We:

- Coordinate between the design and construction teams.
- Review submittals to ensure materials align with expectations.
- Monitor progress to confirm adherence to the construction documents.
- Address questions and mitigate risks, ensuring everything proceeds smoothly.

## LET'S START DESIGNING!

Building a home is a team effort, and the architect serves as both captain and coach. At Red Barn, we take pride in leading this collaborative journey, transforming the complex process of custom home-building into a rewarding experience. Trust us to guide you through every step, creating a home that reflects your values, lifestyle, and dreams.

Ready to bring your vision to life? With Red Barn by your side, your dream home is within reach. Let's design something truly exceptional—together.



**Serving New England, From the Coast to the Mountains**

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