

Chapter ONE



PRE-CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

BACKGROUND

To ensure a successful project, one of the most crucial elements is how the project is structured. You want to choose a project structure that facilitates the highest quality of workmanship, guarantees efficient cost and gets the project accomplished in the shortest amount of time. The structure outlined in this book is a proven methodology that effectively and efficiently meets all the above criteria.

Before any work is done or any money is spent, the first contact should always be with a professional project manager-builder. The main reason is that there needs to be a person in authority over the entire project who is responsible to the client for everything that happens, from start to finish.

Problems quickly arise when an architect begins to direct the project. An architect is only responsible. It is important to note that most architects are paid based on the time spent doing architectural drawings. This means that every time a variance or adjustment has to be made to the design, the cost goes up! Situations like this are all too common in the industry and result in clients at times being taken advantage of due to the client's lack of understanding about the process.

It should be the professional project manager who hires the right architect to make all the final designs, and who requires the architect to do everything according to the client's desires and exact zoning specifications. This ensures that everything is done only once, and no additional costs are incurred.

BOTTOM LINE

If a client goes directly to an architect they will often spend more time and money than if they go through a professional project manager – builder, who employs value engineering methodologies.

A professional project manager - builder will spend time gaining an understanding of the client's vision for their new home, including the style, layout, size, budget, colours, materials, stairways, interior concept, and kitchen design and landscaping. Once the client's requirements are generally understood, PCM employs a "value-engineering" strategy to confirm that the vision is correct. We do this by having an accredited architect do a preliminary scale-hand-design of the home

HINT:

Value Engineering (VE) is a simultaneous review and refinement process of design and specification, which augments the design efforts from initial concept up to the

issuance of the last construction variation. Utilizing a systematic approach, the required functions of a project are identified and brought together at inception so that the lowest possible cost can be attained, keeping the design intent unchanged.

It is normal that the integration of a Value Engineering program will result in project savings of 5% to 15%, and a functional design constructable within budget. VE is a concept that has hardly ever been used in the process of custom home design, but it is well ingrained in the PCM Way.



When the client is satisfied, time is spent identifying an acceptable property and examining zoning requirements for the home to be built.

A critical mistake often already made at this point, is that a property has already been purchased. Unfortunately, the home that the client wants designed, may not fall within zoning requirements for that particular location. If this happens an application to the committee of adjustments has to be made. When this is the case, and minor variances are required, there is no need to carry-on with working drawings or permit applications because non acceptance by the municipality will result in wasted effort, time and money. Once a variance is accepted, only then should the balance of the work be initiated and completed.

On turnkey projects, PCM always tries to do as much research as possible, prior to the actual property or lot being purchased. PCM takes into account details that

the client may not think about such as zoning by-laws, arborist reports and sun exposure.

Clients need to be aware that not every property is equal and it is essential to find one that fits your needs. Municipalities create zoning by-laws in order to protect the environment, amenity value of the surroundings and property values for the residents. Municipalities are very open to minor variances that make sense. However, for anything more than a minor variance, it is often better to walk away and buy a different property, rather than face the frustration of trying to get your variance approved.



HINT:

For this reason, PCM has a vast network of real estate agents that are extremely skilled and well equipped to source the right lot, for the right budget, in the right location.

Once consensus is reached on zoning, the home layout, exterior design including any auxiliary structures, interior design, cost, material lead-times and timing, PCM finalizes and handles all of the details from that point onwards. We obtain the working architectural drawings, which may or may not be done by the same architect that initially designed the home. We also handle the complete permit process and we look after every facet of the project to completion, including the landscaping.

During the time that the working drawings are being finalized other activities typically take place.



DURING DESIGN:

- Finalize a colour rendering with as much detail as possible and with actual colours and materials picked by the client;
- Pre-order windows and front door as early as possible;
- Window supplier to formally acknowledge delivery date of windows, to required schedule date;
- Window supplier to be aware that PCM typically brings forward delivery by about two weeks as at the framing stage PCM is usually two weeks ahead of schedule;
- Any long lead-time item that is required has to be identified and pre-ordered at this time; supplier is to formally acknowledge delivery and a follow-up routine has to be implemented.

TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION START-UP:

- Complete cabinetry design with measurements drywall to drywall;
- Complete ordering of cabinetry package;
- Complete window schedule with rough opening sizes;
- All plumbing fixtures that require rough-in have to be picked and delivery confirmed;
- Sound system rough-in requirements have to be decided and specified;
- Specification of passage doors including rough-openings.





ONE WEEK PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION START-UP:

- Complete design review meeting with all critical trades and the client;
- Complete review includes both technical and esthetical/interior design.

Unless specifically instructed by the client, it is PCM's policy to not start construction until all the above criteria are complete.

With the pre-construction activities finalized and a complete understanding of the lead-times of materials, the project is finally arranged, planned and scheduled in the following steps:

BASIC CONSTRUCTION:

this typically includes the site preparation, demolition, excavation, foundations, framing and roof of the home;

ROUGH-IN:

typically involves electrical, plumbing, sound, vacuum;

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FINISH:

exterior cladding and all interior finish including trim and cabinetry;

LANDSCAPING:

all landscaping including the swimming pool and auxiliary structures.

All of these steps will be discussed in the next chapters of this book, to illustrate the ease with which you too can build your dream home

