GATHERING ESTIMATES

# Comparing estimates: questions to ask

Ask each builder the same questions and write down what you hear. The answers often explain why the numbers differ. If your plans aren't finished yet, expect a budget range rather than a fixed price, and ask how it will be refined as the design comes together.

| Question | Builder name | Builder name | Builder name |
|---|---|---|---|
| 01 Was this estimate built from finished plans or an early design, and how will it be refined? | | | |
| 02 What assumptions are included in this estimate? | | | |
| 03 What isn't included that could affect the final cost later? | | | |
| 04 How do you handle unforeseen conditions if they're uncovered during construction? | | | |
| 05 What did you see at the site visit, and what can't be known until things are opened up? | | | |
| 06 What would trigger a change order? | | | |
| 07 How are allowances determined? | | | |
| 08 If something changes, how and when will additional costs be communicated? | | | |

> **The number is important. But so is understanding how the builder arrived at it, and how they'll work with your design team to get there.**

# A few more questions to ask

You don't need to ask every one of these. Start with what matters most for your project.

| Question | Builder name | Builder name | Builder name |
|---|---|---|---|
| **WORKING WITH YOUR DESIGN TEAM** | | | |
| How early do you get involved with the architect or designer, and how do you work together? | | | |
| If we don't have a design team yet, can you help us find the right fit? | | | |
| **WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE PRICE** | | | |
| Who is responsible for permits, and is that cost included? | | | |
| Which products and materials are priced, and which are placeholders until selections are made? | | | |
| Who handles cleanup, debris removal and protecting the rest of the home? | | | |
| Are there markups or fees on changes, and how are they calculated? | | | |
| **SCHEDULE AND PAYMENT** | | | |
| When could work start, and how long is the project expected to take? | | | |
| What could affect that timeline, such as permits, material lead times or weather? | | | |
| What is the payment schedule, and what is each payment tied to? | | | |
| How much is due before work begins? | | | |
| **EXPERIENCE AND PROTECTION** | | | |
| Can you show proof of license and insurance? | | | |
| What warranty covers the work, and how do I request service? | | | |
| Can I speak with past clients who had projects similar to mine? | | | |

**Still early in the process?** We'd be glad to talk through your ideas and help bring the right people to the table. hello@cheramybuilders.com