

# PLANNING GUIDE

## The Barndominium Process

Section 1:  
Is a Barndominium  
Right for Me?

[www.mrpostframe.com](http://www.mrpostframe.com)

# IS A BARNDOMINIUM Right for Me?

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In this section we will cover:

- Benefits of a Barndominium
- Barndominiums by Construction Type
- Choosing a Builder
- Is a Barndominium More Affordable?
- DIY + Self-Contracting

Since starting our self-build in 2019 you've seen the barndominium home trend grow exponentially. More and more people are interested in a barndominium build, and knowing if it's the right path for you is essential to your build success.

Typically someone finds themselves in the market for a barndominium because of the lifestyle associated with it. You dream of having space for a homestead, animals, a garden, and a space for your work or hobbies. The style of the barndominium home with its simplistic exterior, large shop space, and open concept design caters to all of that and more.

## BENEFITS OF A BARNDOMINIUM

What Benefits am I looking for in a Barndominium?

- Acreage Lifestyle
- DIY Friendly
- Zero Entry Design
- Open Concept
- Longevity + Low Maintenance
- Energy Efficiency
- Shop/Hobby Space
- Simple Exterior Design
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What questions would I like to have answered before committing to this type of build?

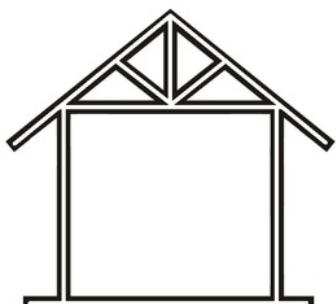
What am I looking forward to most as I start this journey?

# BARNDOMINIUMS

## By Construction Type

The barndominium home can be defined by its construction type. This will be incredibly important when it comes time to finance, permit, and build.

### POST FRAME



THE COLUMNS AROUND THE PERIMETER CARRY THE WEIGHT OF THE TRUSS

INTERIOR IS OPEN, GIVING LAYOUT FLEXIBILITY AND DIY FRIENDLY

SEEK A BUILDER THAT SPECIALIZES IN THIS TYPE OF BUILD, ALSO REFERRED TO AS A POLE BARN

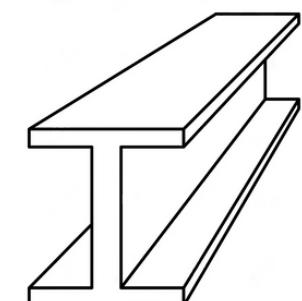
EXAMPLE: OUR VERY OWN MAD COUNTY BUILD!

### STEEL FRAME

COMMON IN COMMERCIAL BUILDING

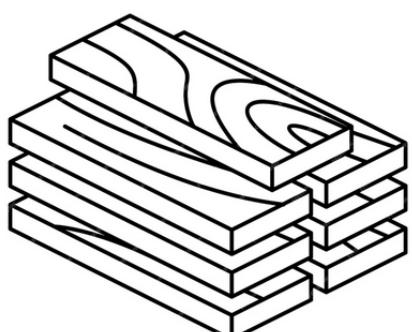
USED AS RESIDENTIAL MORE OFTEN IN THE SOUTHERN STATES

KNOWN FOR HIGH COLUMNS AND TRUSSES GIVING A HIGH OPEN CONCEPT



NOT AS DIY FRIENDLY, AND WILL REQUIRE A BUILDER FAMILIAR WITH STEEL FRAMING

### STICK FRAME



A MORE TRADITIONALLY BUILT HOME WITH SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF A BARNDOMINIUM

MOST CONTRACTORS ARE FAMILIAR WITH THIS TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION, MAKING EASIER TO LOCATE A BUILDER

OFTEN REFERRED TO AS “BARNDOMINIUM INSPIRED” HOMES



# IS A BARNDOMINIUM

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## Cheaper to Build?

Barndominiums are often associated with significant cost savings.

Two of the most common reason for this conception are:

**Farm families with large barns began very simply finishing small sections for living quarters.**

**The social media sensation of DIY building has advertised low cost associated with this type of build due to ‘sweat equity.’**

Today, the market has grown to now include move-in ready, luxury barndominiums and leaving many confused on what cost to expect.

At the end of the day, any portion of your barndominium dedicated to living space will carry the same price tag as a home with the same finish level. It still requires plumbing, electrical, cabinetry, etc. Your route to making it more affordable is through being more involved in the build, through self-contracting and/or DIY.

100%

75-90%

50-75%

DIY + SELF CONTRACTING

HIRING A BUILDER

SELF CONTRACTING

Barndominiums are often a custom home, not a production build. Any time you are customizing preferences or building just one of that plan you will spend more than if you were buying in a neighborhood with limited plan and finish choices.

Because post and steel frame barndominiums lend themselves to a high level of DIY people choose this option and see tremendous cost savings. You'll see more on this in the Budget section, but know that the more you plan on hiring out, the closer your build will be to that of any other custom home.

Check out our Patreon group here!



**COST TO BUILD**



# Should I Consider DIY + SELF CONTRACTING?

## Self-Contracting

Choosing this path can be very rewarding as well as challenging. It takes plenty of research, some organizational talent, and solid communication skills. You would be the lead on your project- applying for permits, requesting draws from your lender, as well as locating and communicating with any subcontractors on your build.

*Go to the General Contracting section for further details and a list of steps and phases.*

## Hiring Subcontractors

This is where clear and concise communication comes into play. Expectations should be set from both parties and followed through on, though you will need to understand there are portions of a build that require flexibility.

Finding quality subcontractors will require research, requesting referrals, and even seeing work on a similar project.

Keep in mind that some of the best subcontractors have what they call primary builders they work for. These builders provide a steady stream of work (income) which is why they will often prioritize them over your project. If a subcontractor has the skills you want and takes pride in their work, be patient and willing to work with their schedule.

## DIY Skills + Timeline

Not everyone has the time available to complete significant portions of their build themselves. Those larger, labor-intensive jobs are typically where the most budget can be saved by DIYing. Having honest conversations with your decision makers at this point of the process is essential. Talk about what you realistically will handle.

If you're committing to being the general contractor or self-building you'll need to prioritize the project over other things. You need to be able to work with the timelines provided by your other contractors and have availability during normal business hours to do site visits, answer questions, and more.

*See the General Contracting section to help you decide if being your own GC or self building is right for you.*



# LOCATING A BUILDER

*Below are some ideas to begin searching for various types of builders.*

## POST FRAME

- 1 [NFBA](#) - The National Frame Builders Association is a dedicated post frame construction organization. You can search by state to see what companies serve your area. 
- 2 [Local Lumber Yards](#)- A local lumber supplier may serve its local post frame builders.
- 3 [Local Post Frame Building Suppliers](#)- These are different from your big name post frame suppliers/builders. They only supply materials and local builders come to them.
- 4 [Back Forty Buildings Contractor Locator](#) - We have contractors for all types of construction based on our network + client referrals 

## STEEL FRAME

Our team at Back Forty Buildings has a handful of companies they recommend and some crew referrals for putting the structure up.

Steel building companies like post frame supply companies often know contractors that work with them that specialize in barndominium building.

Please Note: it is not advisable to hire a contractor who does not have an experienced crew to put up the type of steel building you want to use. This can lead to poor installs and ongoing issues even after your project is complete

## STICK FRAME

Stick frame construction is the most common type of home building. Some custom home builders are familiar with the style of barndominium homes.

The construction will be the same, but the builder should have a crew that is skilled in installing steel panels on the exterior or whatever type of cladding you are interested in having on your barndominium.



# CHOOSING A BUILDER

*You need to verify yourself that a builder's quality and practices are best suited for your project*

When choosing a builder it is important that they are skilled in the type of construction you want for your barndominium build. Discussing your project with a builder that does not build in your desired construction type will lead to frustration and usually pressure to convert your project to what that builder is familiar with.

It's common to hire a crew for the structure when building post or steel frame and use a custom stick builder for the remainder of the project.

We cover interviewing your builder in the General Contracting section, but the Contractor Notes page at the end of this section is helpful if you're just starting the process and gathering general information and options, but not ready to sign a contract.

## **THREE options, but no more than TWO are available (Usually)**

CHEAP: Low price could mean a lower quality build. Dig into the why. Don't just get excited that it's less than other bids.

FAST: Large crews can get a job done quickly, but you still need them to be highly skilled. True craftsmanship often takes time.

QUALITY: This should always be your top priority. Being willing to take extra time for better work always pays off in the long run.

## THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Home building and shop builds do have some differences. A post or steel frame builder does need to be aware that you intend to design and build a residence even when there is a large attached shop.

The main purpose is to improve the longevity of the structure as well as make it easier to finance and permit. If you are AG exempt and paying with cash you won't find as many requirements.



# CONTRACTOR NOTES

## Builders + Contractors Contact Info/Notes



**Company:** \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Email/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Construction Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Company:** \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Email/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Construction Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Company:** \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Email/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Construction Type: \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# ADDITIONAL NOTES

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| <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ |

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