

FLORIDA-SMART Home Design is achieved using a dynamic blend of Client Desires, Budget, and Existing Site Conditions. Before you set your mind on one building strategy, please consider some...

TIPS FOR FLORIDA-SMART HOMES

1. **QUALITY-OF-SPACE** - It is the unique relationship that exists between the occupants, the home and the natural surroundings. After all is said and done, it's what you will be living with forever. You are simply a Living Organism striving to create the best environment to enjoy a sane life in. HPD thinks 8' high ceilings & beige paint were dreamed up by Accountants, and not by Human Ecologists!
2. **COST** - Asking what "a house" will cost is the same as asking what "a car" will cost. There is no answer until you choose the model, pick the options, and do the deal. Even with our excellent Planwork clarifying most details, it's only a Good Builder's Estimated Bid that can offer the Real Cost of constructing your home, and only at that point-in-time. HPD's Design Ethic is **More with Less**, within a Client's desires, and thus trying to minimize Costs overall.
3. **WALL MATERIALS:** There are several structural wall materials available. All are equal in resisting hurricanes if built to recent Building Codes¹. Know there's no guarantee when resisting Nature.
 - 8" standard cement block.
 - 6" wood walls.
 - 6" steel walls.
 - 6" precast concrete panelized walls.
 - 8" concrete-filled foam block walls.
 - machine-built metal-framed package homes (you be the judge of these).
 - ¹HPD's self-built homes are always built "as if our Mamma was to live there". No better!
4. **OUTSIDE, INSIDE and BACK AGAIN:** The relationship of interior-to-exterior space is of utmost importance! Use porches, decks, patios, paths, driveways and gardens as transitions from interior-to-exterior. They expand the built-space at very little extra cost, but add enormously to Value.
5. **SCREENED PORCHES:** There is a sense of nostalgia and sanctuary about them. On Elevated Homes, as HPD suggests, even screens are not needed on most near-urban/country sites. However, a "just-for-show" porch (too-small, or too-public) ruins their Value, only existing as "eyewash".
6. **QUALITY:** Your home is your refuge...build in Quality and enjoy it! Size and volume, on their own, DO NOT add Quality. You afford Quality by eliminating unessential space. 150 square feet of "saved space" can become a breakfast nook! Don't build "McMansions", "cookie cutters", or "soul-less boxes" (shipping containers, mobile homes). Human Beings need BETTER to thrive, not merely exist!
7. **FIREPLACES:** In "upNorth" homes, real fireplaces² maybe are great options, but in Florida-SMART homes there should be no actual reason for one. Their built-costs can add \$1000s for what may never get used. Similar to skylights-in-bedrooms, one will often regret them. ²with wood bin & ash dump.
8. **GARAGES:** Designed well, they protect your vehicles and provide storage. Allow space for vehicle door swing **and** walking room. Make their dimensions FIT your vehicles (ie: big-ass trucks or RVs) or you will always wish you had! If they won't keep your vehicles, why call them...GARAGES??
9. **CARRIAGE HOUSES** (aka: Small-Size Homes): A place for a caregiver, guests or a returning son/daughter. One might consider building the carriage house first, later followed by the main home. Something this Writer now wishes he'd taken his own advice for on his latest! NO...not the glorified, too-small, hyped-up "sheds" called "tiny homes", or shipping containers. Right-sized Homes!!
10. **HOME OFFICE:** Planning for a home office space is a good hedge against job loss. That space should be readily-accessible to Clients without imposing on the rest of the home. Wire now for small

office equipment, computers and communications. If office space is not required at present, it can be used as a den, crafts room or guest bedroom. Creativity IS messy, and guest's require privacy.

11. **STORM PROOF:** Florida is a hurricane-prone State. Consider adding a separate electrical panel and disconnect, for a QUIET generator or a Solar Array. A 3600-watt generator will keep key circuits operational. HPD considers side-hinged old-fashioned shutters just-fine, as the other shutter-types, instead of "impact-rated" windows, from *this Writer's direct-experience in 6+ of them! Good God!!* Hip roofs with short overhangs divert high winds best, but...vaulted interiors are limited by hip truss framing. HPD self-builds strong Gables, considering vaulted and 8'+ ceilings as Spirit-enhancing.
12. **ENERGY COSTS:** Energy costs must continue to increase. Modern vinyl windows with double-glazing and argon gas are terrific. As are Code-Prescribed Insulation R-Values. Radiant-barrier film applied to roof truss framing is encouraged, as HPD has always used. Any initial costs can be recovered in energy savings within a few years. Afterwards the savings are yours to enjoy!
13. **HOME AUTOMATION:** Plan communications, computer, alarm, video and sound systems in advance of building - don't make it an after thought. At the very least, you should run structured cabling or wiring during construction so that it is available for future use. Wi-Fi might make this a mute point.
14. **LIGHTING:** Creative lighting makes a home much more enjoyable, revealing color and objects truly. Dimmers are great for general interior lighting and, with modern LEDs, can be effective for both task or ambient lighting. Light should be seen, but its source should not, to avoid glare/shadows.
15. **LANDSCAPING:** A home's surroundings are vital to quality-of-space. Wooded lots may require little money. A cleared lot demands appropriately-zoned and spaced Flora. Have Bahia grass ONLY over the septic system. Landscaping can be done slowly yourself. That will require doing research, which now there's lots-of & specific to Florida. Understand PERMACULTURE, befriend the local U. of F. AG-Extension's Gardening Folks/Experts, and do plant raised veggie beds, fruit trees/shrubs, and herbs!
16. **EVOLUTION:** Everything gets older, and unforeseen events arise. One's SMART home should provide "Universal Accessibility" now, or for the future. Universal Accessibility describes the ADA requirements for wheelchairs, handrails, counters,.... Install strong wall blocking when framing. The worst situation is: one can't use one's own home should an injury occur (to young & old), or that such future additions cannot be built or will always look "tacked on". They can be built beautifully!

Remember...

The first pains of Cost will dull in time, while the Quality-of-Space endures and remains evidence of your Good Sense and will effect you lifelong. Make it a FL-SMART Home, and you WILL BE HAPPY ever-after!

When self-building with Friends, as most healthy regular folks can and should, the Cost is much-reduced.

**Wish you many such Good Friends, and many more new ones
who will be inspired with your building efforts,
and a long healthy life enjoying what you will have created.**

***"there are endless Tales one can boast of one's
Ethics , Morals and Achievements,
but its one's Home that reveals
the complete Truth
of a Life"***

Rudyard Kipling, THEY (paraphrased by me)