

SHEEPDOG CONSTRUCTION

Build Standards & Full-Service Capabilities

A print-ready client guide to how we recommend building, where we do not cut corners, and the full start-to-finish services we can provide.

We can work with different budgets and finish levels, but we do not recommend compromising the bones of the home.

This packet is intended for early project meetings. Final specifications, selections, pricing, engineering, permits, allowances, and contract details are established in the written proposal and construction agreement.

How to Use This Packet

This guide explains the Sheepdog Construction approach to home building, remodeling, site work, and farm-related construction. It is meant to help clients understand what we recommend, what we consider essential, and how our full-service model can simplify a project from the first site visit to the final walk-through.

Our central belief is simple: finishes can be changed later, but the bones of a home are much harder to fix after the house is built.

In other words, a client may choose a simpler countertop, a practical light fixture, or a modest flooring package to control cost. But the wall system, roof, framing, moisture protection, subfloor, crawl space, waterproofing, grading, and drainage should be done correctly from the beginning.

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1. Our Build Philosophy

We build from the bones out. The goal is not to make every project the most expensive version possible. The goal is to build a home that is structurally sound, moisture-conscious, durable, comfortable, and appropriate for the climate and the client's budget.

A good home starts before the pretty finishes. It starts with the lot, water movement, foundation, framing, roof system, subfloor, wall assembly, insulation, air sealing, waterproofing, and long-term maintenance plan.

The finish level can vary. A client may choose simple cabinets and practical flooring. A client may also choose custom tile, custom cabinetry, and high-end doors and windows. But our recommended approach is to protect the structure first.

The simplest way to say it:

Do not put A-grade finishes on D-grade bones.

A beautiful kitchen over a weak subfloor, poor drainage, bad waterproofing, or inadequate moisture protection is not a good investment. Our recommendations are designed to protect the home before the cosmetic layers are added.

What We Are Protecting Against

- Moisture intrusion and humidity problems in hot, humid climates.
- Soft, squeaky, or failing subfloors.
- Poorly planned crawl spaces that create mold, odor, pests, or air-quality issues.
- Water damage behind tile, showers, tubs, and wet walls.
- Premature roof or flashing failures.
- Lot drainage problems that send water toward the house instead of away from it.
- Cosmetic upgrades that look good at move-in but do not hold up over time.

2. Our Non-Negotiable Bones Standards

These are the standards we strongly recommend for new home builds and major remodels. Some items may vary based on engineering, code, budget, existing conditions, or project type, but this is the general baseline we believe protects the home best.

Standard	Recommended Baseline	Why It Matters
Exterior walls	2x6 exterior walls	More depth for insulation, strength, comfort, and a better wall assembly.
Wall sheathing / moisture protection	ZIP System or comparable advanced sheathing and flashing system	Improves moisture protection and air sealing when installed correctly.
Subfloor	AdvanTech or comparable high-performance subflooring	Reduces swelling, squeaks, and long-term flooring problems.
Structural components	Engineered structural components where appropriate	Improves consistency, span capability, and structural performance when designed properly.
Crawl space	Encapsulated crawl space with dehumidification	Helps manage humidity, mold risk, pests, and indoor air quality.
Roofing	Quality roofing installed with a written warranty	Protects the entire investment from the top down.
Tile waterproofing	Schluter or comparable waterproofing system for tile installations	Protects showers, tubs, floors, and wet areas from hidden water damage.
Insulation	R-30 exterior wall insulation or high-performance wall assembly where specified	Improves comfort, efficiency, and sound control. Final assembly depends on design and code.
Drywall finish	Level 4 or Level 5 drywall finish based on finish expectations	Creates a cleaner, more refined wall finish, especially in visible spaces and under critical lighting.
Doors and windows	Andersen or comparable quality doors and windows	Improves durability, comfort, weather resistance, and daily function.
Grading	Laser grading for lots, driveways, lawns, and pastures where needed	Moves water where it belongs and creates a better site from the beginning.
Erosion control	Hydroseeding or erosion-control seeding after dirt work/site prep	Protects exposed soil after grading and helps stabilize the site.

Note: Specific products may be substituted with equivalent or better systems when appropriate. Final selections depend on plan design, engineering requirements, availability, budget, and written contract scope.

3. Why These Standards Matter

2x6 Exterior Walls

We recommend 2x6 exterior walls because they provide a deeper cavity for insulation and a stronger, more substantial wall assembly than basic 2x4 exterior framing. In a Southern climate, comfort and moisture control matter. A better wall assembly can support better energy performance, better sound control, and a more durable home.

ZIP System or Comparable Moisture Protection

The exterior sheathing and flashing system is one of the home's first lines of defense against water intrusion. A high-quality wall system helps protect the structure before siding is ever installed. We recommend an integrated moisture and air-management system installed with careful attention to seams, openings, penetrations, and flashing details.

AdvanTech or Comparable Subflooring

Subflooring is one of those details clients may not notice at first, but they will feel it for years. A better subfloor helps reduce swelling, squeaks, movement, and finish-floor problems. It is part of the home that should be chosen for durability, not just lowest cost.

Engineered Structural Components

Engineered components can improve consistency and structural performance when used correctly. Floor systems, beams, headers, and trusses should be designed for the actual loads and spans of the home, not guessed in the field.

Encapsulated Crawl Space with Dehumidification

In a humid climate, the crawl space can affect the entire home. Encapsulation and dehumidification help control moisture, odor, pests, and indoor air quality. We consider this especially important for long-term comfort and durability.

3. Why These Standards Matter

Roofing with a Written Warranty

The roof protects everything below it. We recommend quality roofing materials, proper flashing, proper underlayment, good ventilation planning, and a written warranty on roofing work so expectations are clear.

Schluter Waterproofing for Tile

Tile is not waterproof by itself. Showers, tubs, wet rooms, and bathroom floors need a properly designed waterproofing system behind the finished tile. We recommend Schluter or comparable waterproofing methods to reduce the risk of hidden water damage.

R-30 Exterior Wall Insulation or High-Performance Wall Assembly

Insulation is not just about utility bills. It affects comfort, sound, humidity, and how the house feels every day. The final assembly should be matched to the design, local code, and building science requirements.

Level 4 or Level 5 Drywall Finish

The drywall finish level should match the expectations for the home. Level 4 is a strong standard for many spaces. Level 5 may be recommended where there is critical lighting, smooth walls, large open areas, or a higher-end finish expectation.

Quality Doors and Windows

Doors and windows are used every day and are major points of weather exposure. Better units generally improve comfort, durability, security, appearance, and long-term satisfaction.

4. Site Work, Drainage & Erosion Control

A home is only as good as the land preparation under and around it. Poor site work can create problems that are expensive and frustrating long after the house is complete. We pay close attention to how water moves across the property, how the driveway functions, where the home sits, and how soil is stabilized after dirt work.

Recommended Site Standards

- Evaluate site drainage before construction begins.
- Plan grading so water moves away from the home, foundation, driveway, and high-use areas.
- Use laser grading where accuracy matters for lots, driveways, lawns, and pastures.
- Stabilize exposed soil after dirt work with hydroseeding or appropriate erosion-control seeding.
- Consider driveway placement, equipment access, drainage ditches, culverts, and future maintenance before finalizing the site plan.
- For rural properties, consider livestock flow, fencing, pasture access, barns, arenas, water lines, irrigation, and service roads early in the planning phase.

Site Work We Can Provide

Service Area	Examples
Land prep	Land clearing, selective clearing, old structure demolition, brush removal, rough grading
Precision grading	House pads, lots, driveways, lawns, pasture grading, drainage correction
Driveways	Driveway construction, gravel driveways, driveway grading, culverts, farm access roads
Outdoor surfaces	Pavers, patios, walkways, hardscape prep
Soil stabilization	Hydroseeding, pasture seeding, erosion-control seeding after dirt work
Drainage	Swales, grading adjustments, water movement planning, site drainage improvements

5. Finish Standards Can Vary

We separate the bones of the home from the finishes. The bones are where we strongly recommend not cutting corners. The finishes are where clients have more room to adjust the budget.

A client can choose a modest finish package and still have a strong, well-built home. A client can also choose custom tile, custom cabinetry, higher-end fixtures, and upgraded interior design. Both can be good projects if the budget and expectations are aligned.

Budget-Smart Approach

- Protect the structure first.
- Put money into waterproofing, moisture management, subfloor, roof, windows, and site drainage before luxury finishes.
- Use higher finishes in the spaces that matter most: kitchen, primary bathroom, main living spaces, entry, porch, mudroom, and exterior curb appeal.
- Use simpler finishes in secondary bedrooms, guest spaces, closets, laundry areas, and garages if the budget needs relief.
- Consider building slightly smaller if the client wants a higher-quality home within a fixed budget.

Common Finish Choices We Can Help With

- Interior design direction and finish planning
- Kitchen layout and cabinetry planning
- Custom cabinetry and built-ins
- Custom tile work
- Bathroom design and waterproofing strategy
- Flooring selections
- Lighting placement and fixture coordination
- Trim, millwork, interior doors, and hardware
- Paint finish level and drywall finish expectations
- Exterior details, porch design, patios, and outdoor living spaces

6. Full-Service Construction Capabilities

If you need a one-stop-shop full-service contracting service, Sheepdog Construction can offer start-to-finish design, build, remodeling, site work, and farm-related services. We can help with the house, the lot, the driveway, the grading, the interior finishes, and the rural infrastructure around the home.

Home Construction & Remodeling

- Full custom home builds
- Full house and lot build - start to finish
- Major remodels and renovations
- Additions and expansions
- Kitchen remodels
- Bathroom remodels
- Interior renovations
- Exterior renovations
- Porches, patios, and outdoor living areas
- Project management from planning through completion

Site, Foundation & Exterior Work

- Land clearing and lot preparation
- Precision grading and drainage planning
- Old structure demolition
- Foundation and masonry work
- Driveway construction
- Paver installation for driveways, patios, and walkways
- Landscaping and design services
- Hydroseeding and erosion prevention after dirt work or site prep

Interior Finish Services

- In-house design services for interior design
- Custom tile
- Custom cabinetry
- Built-ins and functional storage planning
- Finish coordination for kitchens, bathrooms, mudrooms, and living spaces

7. Farm & Rural Property Services

Because many properties are more than just a house, we can also help plan and build practical farm and rural infrastructure. This is especially useful for clients who need the land, driveway, barns, fencing, water access, pasture, and home site to work together.

Farm Design & Build Services

Category	Services
Farm design	Layout planning for barns, arenas, driveways, fencing, pastures, access, and water flow
Irrigation	Irrigation planning and irrigation systems
Arenas	Arena building and site prep
Barns	Barn building, site prep, and access planning
Driveways	Driveway construction for homes, barns, equipment, and service access
Pastures	Pasture seeding, grading, water movement, and erosion control
Fencing	Fence construction and layout planning

Why This Matters

A rural property works best when the home site, driveway, barns, fencing, pastures, drainage, and service access are planned together. A beautiful home can become frustrating if the driveway floods, the barn access is poorly located, the pastures wash out, or the fencing layout does not support daily use.

Our goal is to help clients build the property as a functioning whole, not as a collection of disconnected projects.

8. How a Full-Service Project Typically Works

Phase	What Happens
1. Initial conversation	We discuss the project goals, budget, location, timeline, property needs, and whether the project is a new build, remodel, farm build, or combination.
2. Site review	We review access, drainage, grading, existing structures, utilities, land conditions, and general feasibility.
3. Scope planning	We define what is included: house, site work, demolition, driveway, foundation, finishes, farm infrastructure, design services, and allowances.
4. Build standards review	We review our recommended bones standards and decide where the client wants to invest or simplify.
5. Design and selections	We help coordinate layouts, finishes, cabinetry, tile, doors, windows, flooring, fixtures, and exterior details.
6. Proposal and contract	We prepare a written scope, pricing structure, allowances, exclusions, timeline assumptions, and contractor fee/management structure.
7. Construction	We manage the work, coordinate trades, communicate progress, and protect the build quality from site work through finish work.
8. Final walk-through	We review the completed work, punch list items, warranties, and maintenance expectations.

Important Planning Note

A full-service build can save clients time and confusion because one team understands the whole property. But the more complete the scope, the more important it is to define the work clearly in writing before construction begins.

9. Client Decision Worksheet

Use this page during the first meeting to clarify priorities. The goal is to understand where the client wants to invest, where the client is comfortable simplifying, and which services are needed.

Project Type

- New custom home
- Full house and lot build - start to finish
- Major remodel
- Addition
- Kitchen or bathroom remodel
- Site work / grading / driveway
- Farm build or rural infrastructure
- Combination project

Top Priorities

- Strong bones and long-term durability
- Moisture protection and crawl space quality
- Kitchen design and cabinetry
- Primary bathroom quality
- Outdoor living / porch / patio
- Driveway, grading, and drainage
- Farm infrastructure and access
- Custom tile or custom cabinetry
- Lower total cost with simpler finishes
- Smaller footprint with better quality

Areas Where the Client May Be Willing to Simplify

- Secondary bedrooms
- Secondary bathrooms
- Garage or utility spaces
- Decorative lighting
- Specialty tile outside primary areas
- Built-ins that could be added later
- Landscaping that can be phased
- Luxury technology or smart home features

Meeting Notes

Next Steps

- Schedule site visit
- Collect plans / drawings / inspiration photos
- Clarify budget range
- Define must-have scope
- Identify possible phases
- Prepare preliminary proposal

Disclaimer: This document is a planning and communication guide. It is not a final construction contract, engineering document, permit set, code analysis, or product warranty. Final scope, specifications, pricing, allowances, exclusions, code requirements, engineering, permits, timelines, and warranties must be confirmed in writing.