

# My Home Builders

PRIVATE-CLIENT CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

A COMPARISON FOR OWNERS

## How we compare: open book *vs* fixed price.

What the two ways of building a custom home actually cost you — first in construction, then over the years you live in it.

## The cost to build.

A representative \$1.5M custom home. A fixed-price builder gives you one bundled number with the margin inside it; on the open-book model you pay the real cost of the work plus one transparent fee, and you see every invoice.

	Fixed price (with upgrades)	Open book (pure agency)
Trade & material cost	\$1,500,000 — bundled	\$1,500,000 — at cost, itemised
Selections & upgrades	\$200,000 + ~30% margin = \$260,000	\$200,000 — at cost
Builder margin / fee	~18% embedded ≈ \$270,000 (not itemised)	12% management fee ≈ \$204,000 (itemised)
<b>What you pay</b>	<b>≈ \$2,030,000</b>	<b>≈ \$1,904,000</b>
Cost visibility	One price; the breakdown stays with the builder	Every invoice, in full and unmarked

**≈ \$126,000 saved in construction**

plus full visibility of every dollar — and no hidden margin on the upgrades you choose.

## The cost to own.

Built to a high-performance standard — insulated concrete, geothermal and solar — the savings continue for as long as you live there.

Over time	A code-built home	A high-performance home
Annual operating energy	Baseline	50–70% lower
Typical yearly saving	—	≈ \$4,000–6,000 / year
Over 20 years	—	

≈ \$120,000+ (before energy-price inflation)

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Figures are illustrative (Ottawa, 2026) and depend on the scope of your project and the fee agreed. Fixed-price builders also typically earn margin on change orders and carried contingency; the open-book model exposes those costs. We prepare a project-specific comparison on request.

#### VERIFIED 2026 INCENTIVES — INCOME PROPERTY

If you are building rental rather than a private residence, three current programs apply (summarised here for consistency with our Income Returns sheet):

**HST.** On a qualifying purpose-built rental of four or more units, the full 13% HST is rebated — 100% of the federal 5% (the federal PBRH rebate) and 100% of Ontario's 8% portion — roughly \$65,000 back on a \$500,000 unit. Conditions: at least 90% long-term rental, construction begun after September 13, 2023 and before 2031, and substantially complete before 2036.

**Zoning.** Ottawa's new zoning by-law, approved by City Council in January 2026, permits up to four units as-of-right on a serviced urban or suburban lot and removes minimum parking requirements.

**Financing.** CMHC's MLI Select reaches up to 95% of cost and 50-year amortization for energy-efficient rentals of five or more units (best terms at 100 points; minimum 1.10 debt-service coverage).