

Santa Fe REAL ESTATE Guide

Artisan/craftsman/**builder**

JULY 2004 VOLUME 8, ISSUE 4

A few ideas about site selection

by Kurt Faust

Careful site selection is extremely important for anyone in the process of choosing a piece of property for a new home. As my colleague, Nate Downey, said in his column in last month's (June 2004) issue of the *Real Estate Guide*, "Careful consideration of the location of ... potential structures...can save time and money...or prevent a design flaw that proves fatal and irrevocable." Words to the wise by anybody's measure.

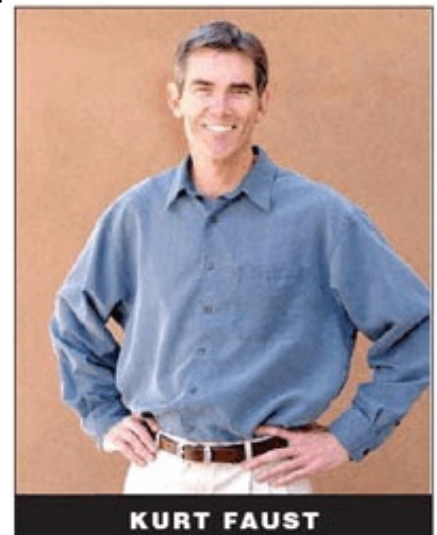
Let's elaborate on some of the considerations that top the list. I am often asked to evaluate the suitability of homesites for the construction of a new home. Frequently I am comparing many different elements between the various homesites someone is trying to choose between. The first element to consider is the view, whether it is a view of the distant mountains, a view of the city lights, or one that you create for yourself in the landscape outside your window.

The old real-estate formula "Location, location, location" is as meaningful as ever, and in Santa Fe that often means view. Determine if the view will be obstructed, especially by a future building on a neighboring lot. If there are building envelopes established, how do they effect the positions of any future houses?

Next, look at the proximity of existing and future houses to discover if there are any unresolvable problems with privacy. Many times privacy can be maintained by the proper placement, sizing, and orientation of the windows. Sometimes the nearest road or a driveway can impose upon a home with noise or with headlights flashing through the windows at night. I am always amazed at how one well-placed tree can screen out an objectionable feature.

Don't forget to factor in the cost of a steep or rocky site. Some locations can add as much as \$20 to \$50 per square foot to the cost of construction due to complex foundations and difficult excavation. The city, county, and subdivision requirements can also result in limitations to what can be designed and constructed. The city has ridge top ordinances. The county has limitations regarding site steepness. Subdivisions often have height restrictions. Be sure to find out if the property has special restrictions placed upon it.

Check to see what, if any, utilities are in place. Is there a transformer for the electrical service? Is the house less than



Kurt Faust is an artist, blacksmith, cabinetmaker, and homebuilder. He owns Tierra Concepts, Inc. And Taos Furniture with his two partners Eric Faust & Keith Gorges.

400 feet from the transformer. If not, you may be in for an added expense to get the service to the home. Is there an existing water meter? Does the property need a well drilled or can a well be shared with a neighboring home? What kind of cable television and phone line access is available? Is natural gas available or will you need to use propane? Is there a community sewer system or will you have a septic system?

Don't forget that a number of our local builders and architects are willing to look at a homesite and give their opinions on the pros and cons connected with that site. Once you've narrowed it down to a few choices, give us a call.

Contact Kurt Faust:

Cell: 505.780.1157

www.tierraconceptssantafe.com