

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO
REMODELING

HOW TO STAY ON BUDGET, ON TIME & LOVE THE EXPERIENCE

By Chris Parker
with Suzanne Ratti



DESIGN IS NOT JUST WHAT IT
LOOKS LIKE AND FEELS LIKE.
DESIGN IS HOW IT WORKS.

- Steve Jobs, Co-founder of Apple, Inc.



ON THE COVER: This whole house renovation in Caves Valley was a blend of old and required rethinking the floor plan for the way the new family intended to use their home.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris began his career as a carpenter's helper and was consistently promoted and given more responsibility serving as a Master Carpenter and Project Manager. Despite his success, Chris saw that one of the biggest flaws in the remodeling industry was the contractor/client relationship and the overall remodeling experience. So, when Chris began his company in 2004, his primary mission was to provide a better client experience by enhancing communication, utilization of technology and project management tools to create efficiencies.

Today, Chris personally manages each project and works directly with the homeowner from concept to completion. He takes pride in providing each client with a remodeling experience that is truly unique and rewarding.



ABOUT THE CO-AUTHOR & PUBLISHER

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Introduction

When you make the decision to remodel your home, you are likely making a substantial investment in the design and construction of a new space with the goal of enhancing your lifestyle and potentially increasing the value of your home.

Once you begin the remodeling process, you may start to feel a little overwhelmed. After all, you are likely making a substantial investment in your home and will want to avoid some of the common pitfalls. The process itself can also be quite a disruption to you and your daily routine. So, we have developed this guide, incorporating hundreds of projects and over 15 years of experience to educate you on the process and help you make the best decisions for your remodeling project.

We believe one of the most important decisions will be the selection of the contractor. You'll want someone you can trust and rely on, for the foreseeable future, to guide you through this process. Although many homeowners may be tempted to go with the lowest bid, we'll discuss why that can be a big mistake, and cost you more in the long run. We'll try to help answer common questions like:

- How do I select a contractor?
- How do I know which features and finishes will work with my budget?
- How can I compare (contractors and pricing) apples to apples?
- Can the project be value-engineered to reach my desired goals?
- What are the financing options for home improvements?
- How can I ensure the project stays on-time and on-budget?

This guide will answer all of those questions and many more! We have met far too many homeowners who had bad experiences, projects that went way over budget, or unfortunately, projects that were never completed. At the end of the day, that is a situation that we want to help you avoid, no matter which contractor you choose.

So, if you are contemplating a home improvement or remodeling project, here is what we believe you should know to save yourself time, money and headaches. Most importantly, we want you to have the best remodeling experience possible!

Selecting A Contractor

When you choose to remodel your home, you want to make sure you ask the right questions before you choose a remodeler or contractor to make your renovations.

When you choose a contractor, you're committing to live and work with them for the foreseeable future. Begin the conversation with a contractor by discussing these questions.

WHAT ARE YOUR CREDENTIALS & RATINGS?

The construction industry is one of the highest complaint industries so this is a very important step. You can usually find a contractor's industry certifications and credentials by visiting their website or the Maryland Home Improvement Contractor's Licensing website. Any reputable contractor should have federal, state, and community licenses in good standing. Ask what industry associations they belong to? Contractors who are part of industry associations agree to abide by best practices and a code of ethics. The Better Business Bureau (BBB) tracks consumer complaints and rates businesses accordingly. Make sure you check the BBB rating for each contractor you interview.

HOW MANY REMODELS HAVE YOU COMPLETED?

You may find a perfectly reputable contractor, but they may not have experience with the type of remodeling project you're planning. For example, if you're knocking down or moving walls, you'll want to make sure your contractor has structural and mechanical experience.

HOW MANY TESTIMONIALS DO YOU HAVE?

Ideally, you want your contractor to have a diverse client base with lots of testimonials and references for projects like yours. Make sure they provide email and phone numbers for references so you can communicate directly and ask appropriate questions.

DO YOU SUPPORT MY PROJECT?

One of the best things a contractor can do is listen to his or her clients – and one of the worst things a contractor can do is try to convince you to change your vision or offer unsolicited advice. Make sure the contractor you choose is willing to listen to your plans and implement them as well as provide sound guidance..

TELL ME ABOUT YOUR COMPANY PHILOSOPHY.

When searching for contractors, you will need to ask about company philosophies, policies, processes, and other factors to ensure you're choosing someone that is aligned with your core values.

HOW ARE YOU INSURED?

Accidents can and do happen on the job, so ask about insurance coverage and get a certificate of insurance before any work commences.

MAY I SEE YOUR CONTRACT?

Ask to see the contract before signing it. A well written contract will protect both parties in the event of a disagreement and provide fair resolutions, in the state where the work is being done, through arbitration or other means.

CAN YOU WORK WITHIN MY BUDGET?

Be sure the contractor understands your budget constraints. Be prepared to have a 5-10% contingency for any unforeseen issues that typically arise, behind the walls, during a remodel.

YOUR RELATIONSHIP IS JUST BEGINNING

Choose a contractor who will respect your home and with whom you can build a good rapport. You will

be working with this company for weeks or months, so a good relationship, built on trust and integrity, is crucial.

WHAT BUSINESS MODEL DOES YOUR CONTRACTOR USE?

This is the million dollar question and unfortunately one that many homeowners fail to consider! First, you want to understand how long the contractor has been in business and how they run their business - the contractor's process for estimating your project, quality of construction materials used, and how they will manage the project. Next, you want to understand how they are going to keep your project on-time and on-budget. Far too many contractors bid low, to get the job, with the anticipation that vague specifications or 'unknowns' will allow them to 'make up the difference' along the way. The homeowner often ends up with a project that falls way behind schedule and may cost significantly more. We believe this is an area where many homeowners are taken advantage of.

We devote significant discussion to the two main business models (Bid-Build & Design-Build) in our next chapter, so that you can understand how your

contractor operates their business and the pros/cons of each model.

IS YOUR CONTRACTOR A 'CLEAN' REMODELER?

Dust in the home can subject you and your family to irritants that can trigger allergies, asthma or other issues. Remodeling your home will definitely stir up these irritants. So, be sure that your contractor will take extra steps to minimize the disruption and the associated dust. New innovative equipment can dramatically reduce the dust in your home, during your remodeling project. Be sure the contractor you select has invested in such equipment and can provide you the cleanest experience possible.

WILL YOUR CONTRACTOR TAKE FULL ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE PROJECT BEING ON-TIME AND ON-BUDGET?

Finger pointing and lack of accountability is one of the biggest complaints about remodeling. We believe this issue can be easily resolved with the Design-Bid business model approach we discuss later. Ultimately, you want to make sure your contractor is willing to take on this responsibility and be sure their past clients attest to this fact too!



Your Contractor's Business Model Matters

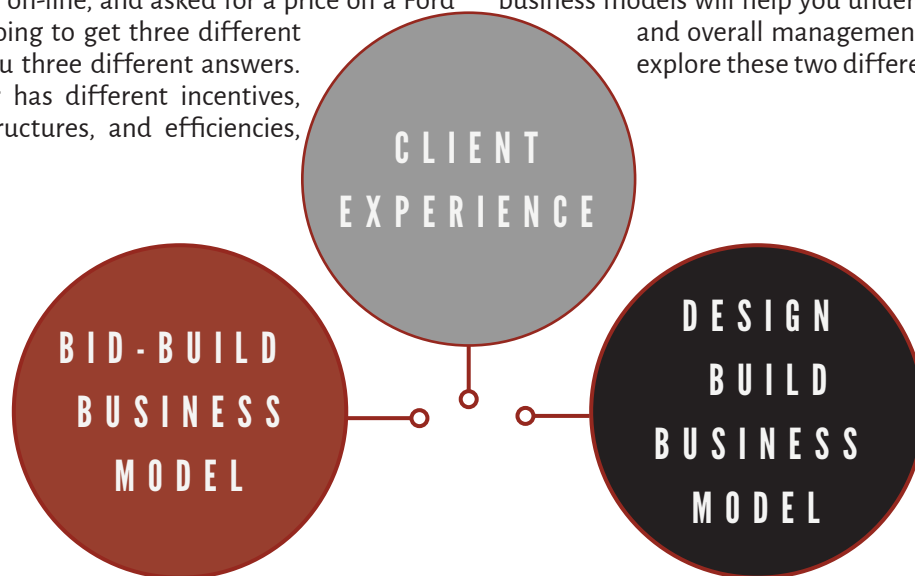
What You Need to Know About Bid Build vs. Design Build.

Every homeowner wants to get the best value for their remodeling dollars. Very few people start the remodeling process by saying, "I don't care what it costs." However, almost every homeowner has their own ideas about what the finished project will look like and a rough budget to achieve their vision. Unfortunately, one of the biggest misconceptions about remodeling is that you must bid the project out. Let's examine why this logic is flawed, as it relates to the type of process used by the contractor. There are two main types of business models used in the remodeling industry: Bid Build and Design Build.

Let's use an analogy to help you understand why the business model matters. If you walked into three different car dealers, or shopped on-line, and asked for a price on a Ford Explorer, you are going to get three different salespeople give you three different answers. Why? Each dealer has different incentives, processes, price structures, and efficiencies,

right? One dealer may explain the benefits of adding better tires and wheels (for an additional cost), another may ask if you'd like a sunroof, so you add that on. The third dealer may offer you no suggestions, but present the final invoice, where you realize that a dealer fee, taxes and tags are additional and have to be added to every price you received. Three different contractors will almost certainly provide three different answers because the "options" on a remodeling project are far more complex than a car. This complexity makes it even harder to compare apples to apples.

This is why the business model can help even the playing field and provide you the best remodeling experience possible. Understanding the difference between these business models will help you understand the scope, costs, and overall management of the project. Let's explore these two different business models:



Bid Build Model (BB)

Also Sometimes Referred to as **Design-Bid-Build**



The Bid Build model (sometimes referred to as Design-Bid-Build DBB) has been used for years. As a matter of fact, it is the most common process used by remodelers in the industry. Why? Quite honestly, we believe this model is still used because there is less accountability.

This process often begins when the homeowner decides to remodel and asks several contractors to give them a bid on the project. This approach has some serious drawbacks. Let's evaluate the process.

Perhaps your remodeling project begins at Home Depot or with an architect and/or designer. The architect and/or designer is responsible for putting ideas and visions on paper. The first set of drawings are created and the homeowner begins to visualize their project coming to life! Design elements are evaluated and perhaps an investment is made in plans or designs. Sometimes, the architect or designer tries to estimate the cost of construction, but this is very dangerous since they are **not responsible** for those costs. This often ends up frustrating the homeowner when actual costs provided by the contractor are much different.

The next part of this process is to find and provide three or more contractors with the drawings so that they can

provide bids on the project. In most cases, each contractor has questions, suggestions, or alternative recommendations. In many cases, bids are provided with vague allowances or "to be determined" specifications. This can leave a big gap when trying to compare apples to apples.

Unfortunately, in many cases, the contractors may also explain reasons why the design may or may not be feasible for budget or construction reasons. Several common examples are:

- **Structural or Permitting Issues:** Perhaps a second floor is being added to an existing home. A structural engineer would need to certify that the existing structure can support the new design. Depending upon the engineers' opinion, the drawings may need to be re-done to accommodate a different type of truss, flooring or beams. Permitting issues are also critical. The new design may violate zoning or setback requirements. If the property is located on the water, it may violate critical area mandates or regulations regarding impervious surface. Any of these issues would require the homeowner to 'go back to the drawing board' and pay the architect for a new set of drawings.
- **Budgeting:** When an architect or designer puts the home owners vision to paper, they are focused on the design aspects of the project, not the final or actual cost of the project. So, when the homeowner wants granite counter tops and high end finishes, but the construction costs are higher than anticipated, they may have to settle for lower quality selections. The biggest challenge is that they don't find this out until the contractor bids the project and/or once the project is under way. Additional costs may also be incurred to try and value-engineer the project at this point to fit the home owner's budget. This may require further compromise on other design elements. If another set of drawings is required, there will be additional costs.

The Bid-Build process has some serious flaws that are directly tied to myths or misconceptions many homeowners have about the process. Here are some examples of common Myths and Misconceptions:

Myth #1. Bids Produce Better Pricing: When contractors are

In the Bid-Build process, you are rarely comparing apples to apples and each bid is often different due to vague specifications or areas that are left "to be determined".

bidding a project, trying to be the lowest bid, they will cut costs wherever possible to 'get the job.' This process often leads to cutting corners. Contractors who operate under this model often provide lower quality products in their bids to reduce costs and often utilize low-bid, low-quality trade contractors. The results can be less than desirable. Sometimes, these contractors rely on costly change orders, later in the process, which end up costing the homeowner more, in the long run.

Myth #2. Failed Concepts: Many remodeling projects never make it past the planning stage because of poor planning, erroneous information, sub-standard quality or inaccurate cost assessments. Although the homeowner has plans in their hands relatively quickly, the costs of the project are not thoroughly evaluated until the selection process. This means that a lot of money may be invested in design concepts before anyone responsible for the overall project is involved. In this process, there is a much higher percentage of failed concepts. A failed concept happens when the homeowner spends time and money on the design of a remodeling project that never occurs, usually due to feasibility or budget issues. Failed concepts are costly and frustrating.

Myth #3. Costs: Although many people mistakenly think the Bid-Build process will save money, it is actually the process that can cost the most! The homeowner is focused on saving money by bidding the project. The contractor is often incented to cut costs to win the bid, sometimes sacrificing quality or omitting specifications.

Another way costs can be compromised is when a contractor gives a vague estimate or without consideration for market and supply conditions. Keep in mind the time, effort and level of detail required to effectively estimate a project. Be wary of an estimate that is vague, contains general allowances without detail, or is overly simplistic. Ultimately, you want your contractor to be fully accountable and responsible for the project being on-time and on-budget.

Myth #4. Feasibility: Is the construction of the project feasible? Has a structural engineer been involved in the design process and able to confirm that the existing structure will handle the proposed design changes? Is the design going to present any challenges with permitting? Are the costs for permitting (which vary greatly by county) and any impact fees included?

Myth #5. Value Engineering: This part of the process should occur during the design phase by someone who is proficient in estimating costs and responsible for adhering to the budget. In the Build-Bid model, the design phase is often complete before the contractor is involved. This prevents

the contractor from value-engineering the project, without going back to the design phase. Many contractors make assumptions and provide bids that are little more than rough estimates with loopholes, often based on TBD final selections. We believe value engineering should occur as part of the design process, not as part of the construction process.

Myth #6: Who Is The Point of Contact?

In the Bid-Build process, the homeowner potentially has multiple contracts with the architect, designer, structural engineer, surveyor, contractor and sometimes even sub-contractors. Accountability is spread across multiple provider and finger pointing can be a real problem for budget and time constraints. More importantly, no one has clear responsibility for overall project management, reining in costs, and keeping the project on track. This type of project often experiences far more delays, unexpected costs, and a poor remodeling experience.

So, as you can see, the **Bid-Build** process leaves much to be desired and we believe, largely contributes to an industry known for low customer satisfaction and complaints. Some contractors like the old model because it has less accountability. So what options does a homeowner have? Fortunately, the processes and expectations of contractors and homeowners have evolved into a more collaborative environment. This evolution has caused a slow revolution in the industry. While many contractors and homeowners continue to use the old 'Bid-Build' process, we find that many educated homeowners prefer the new methodology... the **Design-Build Model**, which we discuss in detail next.

Extensive research and case studies have been conducted around the costs and efficiencies of **Design-Build** vs. **Design-Bid-Build** or **Bid-Build** for residential and commercial projects. The **Design-Build-Model** provides consistently lower costs, increased efficiencies and a better overall process.

Design-Build Model (DB)

The Design Build Model is a more modern, collaborative process where the homeowner typically hires a Design Build firm to oversee the entire remodeling project, from concept to completion. This is a turn-key process and sometimes perceived to be “more expensive,” but the facts prove otherwise. Chris Parker, owner of Parker Design Build Remodel believes, “Once our clients truly understand the Design-Build process, the benefits are indisputable, from a cost, time, and client experience perspective.” Here are some reasons why:

1. Complete Accountability & Cost Efficiency: In the Design Build model, the contractor or remodeling company firm, takes full responsibility for the entire project. Typically, the firm quarterback the entire project team from concept to completion. The Design Build firm will generally provide, or work collaboratively with, an architect or designer to oversee and ensure that all drawings are feasible from a construction and cost view. It also means that the Design Build firm has complete involvement in the design phase, the budgeting phase, the scheduling phase, the entire construction phase, and the completion phase. The homeowner has one primary point of contact and assurance that one firm has complete accountability for the project’s success.

Finger pointing is eliminated. “This one element makes the entire remodeling process a much smoother experience for our clients. It is a dramatic contrast from the old Bid-Build model,” says Parker. There are cost-efficiencies too! Instead of spending time and money on designs that are not feasible, the homeowner can invest those funds in the project itself.

2. Feasibility & Value Engineering: Since the Design-Build firm is involved in the design process from the beginning, they are often able to point out areas that need to be considered or evaluated further, which saves time and money. The firm often makes recommendations to keep the project in line with the customer’s budget before the drawings are finalized. Since the firm is involved at the very onset of the project, permitting and other related factors can be planned and prepared for, to keep the project on-budget and on-schedule. Special order items that can have extended lead times can be ordered as soon as the project is approved, which reduces project delays. All of these factors save the homeowner time and money.

3. Costs: Since the Design Build Firm is responsible for providing the customer a complete project cost based on



clear specifications, there are fewer surprises. Change orders are reduced, unless the homeowner actually changes something along the way, and the overall remodeling experience is more transparent. Since the contractor is involved from the beginning of the design process, there are many efficiencies gained. There is no back and forth between design and estimating, as it is done collaboratively, and there is no need to pay for re-designs when the estimates exceed the budget because these items can be value-engineered during the design phase.

4. Trade Relationships: Often, the Design Build firm works with specialty trade contractors who are true craftsmen and who support best practices. By establishing long-term relationships with these contractors, rather than choosing low-ball bids, they create a steady stream of business and incent the contractors to provide consistent high quality service to maintain that relationship. These contractors are specialists in their field and can also ensure the most advanced and efficient products are incorporated into the design. They also work hard to ensure the project stays on-time and on-budget.

So, as you can see, your contractor's business model is a critical part of the overall success of your remodeling project. But, let's take this one step further...another big misconception is that the Design Build process costs more. But the facts point out just the opposite. There are a multitude of case studies on the advantages of the Design Build vs.

Build Build (or in some cases referred to as Design-Bid-Build or DBB) process. According to the CII, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), and independent research conducted at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Texas A&M University, the University of North Carolina, the University of Texas and other institutions showed that "Design Build projects took less time, had less cost growth, and were less expensive to build in comparison to Bid Build or DBB projects."

The Design Build firm holds the homeowner's hand and takes ultimate responsibility for every aspect of the project. The project is run smoothly and efficiently with high levels of collaboration and communication. It's easy to see why this process can provide a much better experience than the older Bid Build model.

Parker Design Build Remodel has utilized both methods and now *exclusively* utilizes the Design Build approach. Why? Chris Parker, Owner of Parker Design Build Remodel explains, "We know how disrupting the home remodeling process can be. We do everything we can to minimize the impact to your family. We have seen, firsthand, dramatically different results in costs, efficiencies, and our ability to keep the project on-time by using the Design Build approach. We promise to provide our customers an empathetic approach to this process and a pleasant remodeling experience so we will never go back to the old way."



Financing Options

Many homeowners delay making improvements because of the costs associated with a large remodel. Financing options offer you the opportunity to build equity while enjoying our lifestyle in your updated home now!

Many homeowners dream of remodeling their existing home, but find that the costs can be a huge barrier to overcome. Some clients may abandon the idea of remodeling and consider selling, buying and moving, which often costs significantly more. Many clients like their neighborhood or location and don't want to have to worry about moving. Besides, even if you sell, some home improvements may be required just to make your house sell-able. In other cases, a client will find a 'fixer-upper' but needs cash to make the necessary improvements.

Our go-to loan specialist, David Ratti of Ratti Lending says, "Often, the home improvements you are considering will increase your resale value and provide you a more rewarding living experience for years to come! We offer access to special financing programs that provide cash for remodeling costs and make your home improvement dreams possible today! In most cases, you can remodel with no cash out of pocket!"

Financing your home renovations has never been easier! Special financing programs are now available for renovations, remodeling, and home improvement projects! These programs provide several important benefits:

- Financing for larger home improvement projects at a low fixed interest rate.
- Financing, bundled in with your mortgage, so there is only one payment.
- Unlike the old HELOCs, these programs offer FIXED rates, so that your payment doesn't change as interest rates rise.
- No current equity needed! The loan can be based on the value of the home, after improvements are made!

Why not enjoy living in an updated home now? Get pre-approved and find out how much you can get for your renovation project!



David Ratti

Mortgage Lender
NMLS# 532652

David Ratti works with Parker to provide financing

options for many of the renovations we perform. David has over 30 years of experience in lending and serves as a valuable resource to our clients.

Phone: 410-707-5825

Email: DRatti@EnvoyMortgage.com

www.RattiLending.com

Payment Chart Example

If you're thinking about home renovations and need cash to make those improvements, financing may be a great option! **For less than most car payments**, you could be living in a home that better suits your lifestyle and potentially increases your resale value!

Renovation Amount	Payment
\$25,000	\$162.15
\$50,000	\$324.30
\$75,000	\$486.45
\$100,000	\$648.60

Assumptions based on current rate at time of publishing of 6.75% Fixed Rate loan, 30year term, 6.932 APR, ltv 60%. Representative monthly cost based on the cost of the renovation only utilizing a conventional renovation 1st mortgage which would require inclusion of current liens on property. Max loan permitted \$700,000. Terms may vary depending on qualifications. Subject to change without notice. Parker Design Build makes no representations regarding financing. Financing info provided by and available through the RattiLendingTeam of Envoy Mortgage, David Ratti NMLS #532652. Since rates fluctuate daily, get a current rate estimate by visiting RattiLending.com

Home Addition Ideas

1st Floor

Master Suites

(Pg 16) Adding a master suite to your first floor is the pinnacle of today's one-level living concepts. These additions often add resale value too!

Sunrooms & Living Spaces

(Pg. 18) Are you considering adding a sunroom with lots of windows? Do you need more living space to accommodate the growing needs of your family? We can give you some great ideas to consider!

Two Story Additions

(Pg. 17) If you're expanding your footprint, why not go out **and up**? Two story additions give you double the square footage and greatly expand the possibilities!

Garage Additions

(Pg. 19) If you're looking for more room for your cars, you'll have a plethora of options. Add living space above the garage for even more bang for the buck!

Is your home ready for an upgrade? Are you outgrowing your space? Do you want to add a luxurious addition where you can retreat and relax? Perhaps you need additional space to work virtually? Or maybe just a space to work-out?

Here are some ideas to inspire you!

There are a variety of home addition ideas that can add instant equity to the value of your home, while providing a creative space that is uniquely catered to your needs.

In this section, we provide the four most popular home addition projects, for your consideration. Each type of home addition has different benefits and considerations, based on the design and layout of your existing home and the community in which you live. Again, having a trusted, experienced contractor to help you navigate the process is key.

Don't begin a project like this with a contractor who only does kitchen remodeling. Site work, variance requirements, impervious surface areas, and community standards must all be evaluated during the design process, and long before the work begins. In this chapter, we provide an overview of the four basic types of home additions.





Add a First Floor Master Suite

Adding a first floor master suite can be a good investment and potentially add resale value to your home. How much value it adds will depend on the demographics and homes in your neighborhood. But, the real payback is all about lifestyle. What are the reasons you are considering adding a first floor master?

- Are you approaching those golden years and want a home you can live in for many years to come?
- Are you potentially going to need to care for an aging loved one?
- Are you looking to add a first floor to provide a private space for guests?
- Do other homes in the neighborhood have a first floor master?

The answers to these questions will help you begin the design process and determine the amount of square footage you need.

Other considerations may include:

- Does the new space need to be wheelchair accessible?
- Do you want a separate entrance like a mother-in-law suite?
- Do you want extra soundproofing to create a quiet oasis?
- Do you want to create a private outdoor seating area such as a porch or veranda, or should it flow to an existing outdoor space?

The answers to these questions will help you design space for your lifestyle needs and potentially help you stay in your home for a longer period of time too! Most of these additions can add instant equity to the value of your home!

Your contractor and designer should work together to create a space that is suited to your lifestyle needs and budget parameters.

Two Story Additions

When you're considering an addition, you may want to think about taking it UP a notch. A two story addition maximizes your investment. If you're already investing in a foundation and footers, you may as well double the square footage, right?

When many homeowners think about a home addition, they often think of one level, but if you're already investing in the site work and foundation, it's extremely cost-effective to take it UP a level - literally!

Two story additions give you a lot of bang for the buck and can double the amount of living space you're adding. So, why not think outside the box? Here are some ideas to get you started!

For example, let's say you're considering an addition to add more living area and/or expand your kitchen on the first level. Why not expand your master suite, at the same time, on the second level?

Perhaps you've always envisioned a luxurious home entertainment room for a large theatre? Maybe you want the kids to have an expanded playroom with high ceilings ideal for ball playing in every season?

In today's culture, many homeowners incorporate a secret room. This is typically a smaller room that can be used as a safe-haven in the event of storms, a home invasion or other catastrophic event. It's a great idea to add this concept to any home addition!

Make the most of your investment and think big! Two stories is always better than one!



Garage Additions



LEFT

The completed 2 story garage not only provides room for the cars, but the suite above is a perfect guest retreat!

BELOW

The original structure was torn down to accommodate the new design.



Are you tired of clearing snow off the car or warming it up ahead of time during winter months? Want to protect your car from the hot summer heat? Or, perhaps you've always wanted a garage and are considering a two-level addition that can add a guest suite or Air BNB rental space? A garage addition may be the answer! Here are a few questions to get you started:

- How will the design of the garage integrate with the overall architecture of the home?
- Your contractor should have extensive experience with all of these issues, because at the end of the day, a garage addition is much like building a new home and all of these factors must be considered.
- The design of the garage, in relation to the house and surrounding neighborhood will also be very important for resale purposes. There are also a number of ways to minimize the visual impact of a large garage addition to a modest sized home, such as using a side entrance if the lot allows or using two doors vs. one large oversized door. Your contractor, in collaboration with your architect or designer should have suggestions to help you make the most of your investment while considering your lifestyle needs.
- What size are the vehicles that you plan to keep in the garage? Will they require oversized spaces?
- How will the garage be integrated with the driveway and the home?
- Is a turn-around area required?
- What are the zoning and set-back requirements?
- Does your neighborhood have guidelines?
- Do you live near a critical waterway? Are impervious surface areas something that must be considered?

Sunrooms & Living Spaces

A sunroom can add hours of enjoyment, a bug-free environment, and a great view of the outdoors year round!

A sunroom can be a quiet space to read a book, enjoy a morning breakfast or an extra space to entertain friends. Ensuring that your sunroom can be used in all four seasons requires thoughtful consideration to energy savings and temperature control. Too often, a project like this is not properly designed and therefore, does not provide the homeowner the creature comforts they desire.

Although your budget drives the design of any project, it's important that you and your contractor choose quality, energy efficient materials and design elements that won't break the bank with your energy bill.

In addition to the design elements, the sunroom is an area where higher quality windows and doors are a must. In addition, mechanical systems must be upgraded or reconfigured so that the temperature in the rest of your home is

still maintained too. Do not add square footage to your home and expect your existing mechanicals to accommodate the extra space. Be sure to discuss the following with your contractor:

- How will the existing mechanical systems be expanded to supply air and heat to the new structure?
- What types of windows and doors should be used to prevent heat and air loss?
- Can heated flooring be used to ensure warm floors during the winter months?

With these careful considerations, your sunroom can be a beautiful space to enjoy year round. Make sure that you and your contractor work collaboratively to create a space that is suited to your needs while ensuring year round comfort and enjoyment.



Aging in Place with Universal Design

Thinking about retirement? Caring for an aging loved one?

By incorporating Aging-In-Place and Universal Design concepts, many homeowners find comfort knowing they can remodel their homes to be more accommodating.

With today's baby boomer population retiring and planning for their lives as 'seniors', there are more and more considerations being given to remodeling existing homes with Aging-in-Place and Universal Design concepts. After all, many seniors prefer to live in their own home for as long as possible. If you are a senior or acting as a caregiver, perhaps you've considered renovations to make your home more accommodating? These accommodations can save you in the run. Be sure you select a contractor that is well-versed in these concepts. Here are few things to consider!



Getting Around

It's important to have a floor plan that will accommodate canes, walkers, and wheelchairs. The ADA recommends entrance doors and hallways be a minimum of 44" although some can get by with 36". Ramps are easier to navigate than stairs and reduce the chances of falling. Consider converting some space into a first-floor master suite.

Bending & Reaching

Ensuring you have things within easy reach reduces the risk of falling, particularly in the kitchen, bedroom, and bathrooms. Raising counter-top heights in the kitchen and bath areas will help too! Adding grab bars and using lever handles is also key. Consider adding chairs, benches, and grab bars in areas that may require standing.

Lighting

As we age, our vision declines. Be sure to have proper lighting in all areas of the home with hallways and high traffic areas lit especially well. Add smart home features like motion lighting and automatic night lights to ensure the path is clear at any time. Consider adding additional lighting outside the home to ensure entrances and exits are clearly lit.

Kitchen Updates

The heart of your home is also the one that is likely to give you the most resale value!

Your kitchen is the showroom of your home! Many remodeling projects begin with the kitchen and then evolve into a more open space plan, incorporating the living area, porch/patio/deck and more! Your imagination (and maybe your budget) are the only limitations you'll have when it comes to remodeling your kitchen and... this is the best time to incorporate all of the features you've dreamed of because it's easily the most used room in the home!

You'll want to make sure your contractor provides design services so that you understand the pros/cons of each selection and how it integrates with or complements other selections.

Your contractor will need to have a refined process in place to handle all of the moving pieces in a kitchen remodel. They will need to coordinate plumbing, mechanicals, electric, lighting requirements, stone fabrication, cabinet installation, carpentry, and flooring details. If you're expanding your kitchen, they will need structural and mechanical expertise too!

Will you set up a temporary kitchen to use during the renovation process? What good is a kitchen upgrade if the lighting is poor, or the circuit breakers blow when you turn on the microwave? Will the design accommodate a full size refrigerator, or will you need a counter-depth refrigerator? Having an expert to guide you through the process is key, so that you don't have to make sacrifices along the way.

On the following pages, we provide a few resources and a checklist to help you think about the details and design. Make no mistake - your overall remodeling experience will depend on your contractor.





5 Ways to Get Started

- Start a Pinterest idea board to capture design concepts and ideas
- Determine a budget ballpark
- If you need financing, meet with a loan professional (we use RattiLending.com). Renovation loans can be complicated, so make sure you're working with an experienced financing professional.
- Make a list of your wants vs. needs
- Interview and determine which contractors have the business model and design capabilities you are seeking.

Latest Trends to Consider

Some of the latest trends in kitchens include:

- Clever, concealed and clean design storage solutions
- Pewter & gunmetal hardware
- Open shelving
- Vintage styles incorporated into fixtures and lighting, natural stone, and rattan furniture.
- Colored cabinetry
- Colored upholstery
- Wood & nature elements
- Leather & wood accents
- Unique lighting and accents to compliment your overall kitchen design

For The Little Ones

Kids are always in the kitchen so make it easy for them to get what they need:

- Door in a door fridge
- Self-serving drink stations
- Add a mini-fridge in the island that's stocked with kids snacks and drinks.
- Add a second, lower height for a breakfast bar, counters & stools or an additional kid-friendly sink
- Add a desk in a kitchen corner or butler pantry, perfect for homework (or bill paying)

KITCHEN CHECKLIST

SPECIFICS

BUDGET

DESIGN PREFERENCES & SPECS

REFRIGERATOR(s)

Counter depth or full size?

Brand/color/style/features?

\$ _____

DISHWASHER(s)

Brand/color/style/features?

\$ _____

STOVE OR OVEN(s) & COOK TOP

Gas/Electric or Propane?

Slide in? Depth & Width?

Brand/color/style/features?

\$ _____

MICROWAVE

Location/Measurements/Features

\$ _____

WINE COOLER

\$ _____

CABINETS

Finish? Color? Door Styles?

Features/Functionality Needed?

Hardware? Style? Finishes?

\$ _____

COUNTER-TOPS

Type/Color?

Accent or Multiple Surfaces?

\$ _____

BACKSPLASH

Type/Color? Accent?

Accent or Multiple Surfaces?

\$ _____

PLUMBING?

Sinks? How many? Style? Width?

Pot Filler? Garbage Disposal?

\$ _____

FIXTURES

Type/Color? Accent?

Fixtures? Finishes?

Accent or Multiple Surfaces?

\$ _____

LIGHTING

Type? Style? Finish?

Under-counter or Other Requirements?

\$ _____

FLOORING

Type/Color?

\$ _____

Increase Your Home's Resale Value

The real estate market is cyclical. A seller's market can quickly turn into a buyer's market and vice versa. So, it's important to consider how the home improvements you make **today** will help you sell your home **later**. At the same time, you want your home renovations to enhance your lifestyle. Our design/build process helps you consider all of the factors to help you make informed decisions that will add value and convenience to your home and life.

Over time, consistently we've seen great return on investment for:

1. Home Additions - can add more space, flexibility, and value.
2. Kitchens & Baths - be careful of anything too trendy, as trends change over time. White is always in!
3. Opening up the floor plan - fragmented living spaces make the home feel small while open spaces create a brighter, lighter atmosphere.
4. Home office/home learning spaces - The pandemic taught us the value of having flexible space that can allow a retreat from the rest of the home.
5. Curb Appeal - Updating your home's exterior will have a major impact on first impressions.
6. Finished Basements - This is an easy way to get more out of the space you have and a great way to separate the noisemakers in your home from the ones who seek solace.
7. 1st Floor Bedrooms - Many people are staying in their homes longer or accommodating senior family members. First floor bedrooms add tremendous value for you, your family, and future buyers.

Are you ready to get started? Contact Parker today and we'll help you create the home you've always dreamed of.



Why risk such a big investment?

When you make the decision to remodel your home, you are making a substantial investment in the design and construction of a new space with the goal of enhancing your lifestyle and potentially increasing the value of your home.

What kind of remodeling experience do you want?

Once you begin the remodeling process, you may start to feel a little overwhelmed, especially when it comes to choosing a contractor to entrust with your money and your vision. The process itself can also be quite a disruption to you and your daily routine. So, we have developed this guide, incorporating hundreds of projects and over 15 years of experience to educate you on the process and help you make the best decisions for your remodeling project.

- How do I select a contractor?
- How can I compare apples to apples?
- Can the project be value-engineered to reach my desired goals?
- What are the financing options for home improvements?
- How can I ensure the project stays on-time and on-budget?

This guide will answer all of those questions and many more! If you are contemplating a home improvement or remodeling project, this guide can help you save time, money and headaches. Most importantly, we want you to have the *best experience possible!*



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