

# The Design-Build Advantage

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*The Design-Build approach to building brings together professional design and construction expertise. One company handles both design and construction, which means you enjoy greater continuity of service. This joining of the design and construction functions also can save you time and money, and help you- the customer- more of a partner in the construction or remodeling of your home.*

## Who buys Design-Build Services?

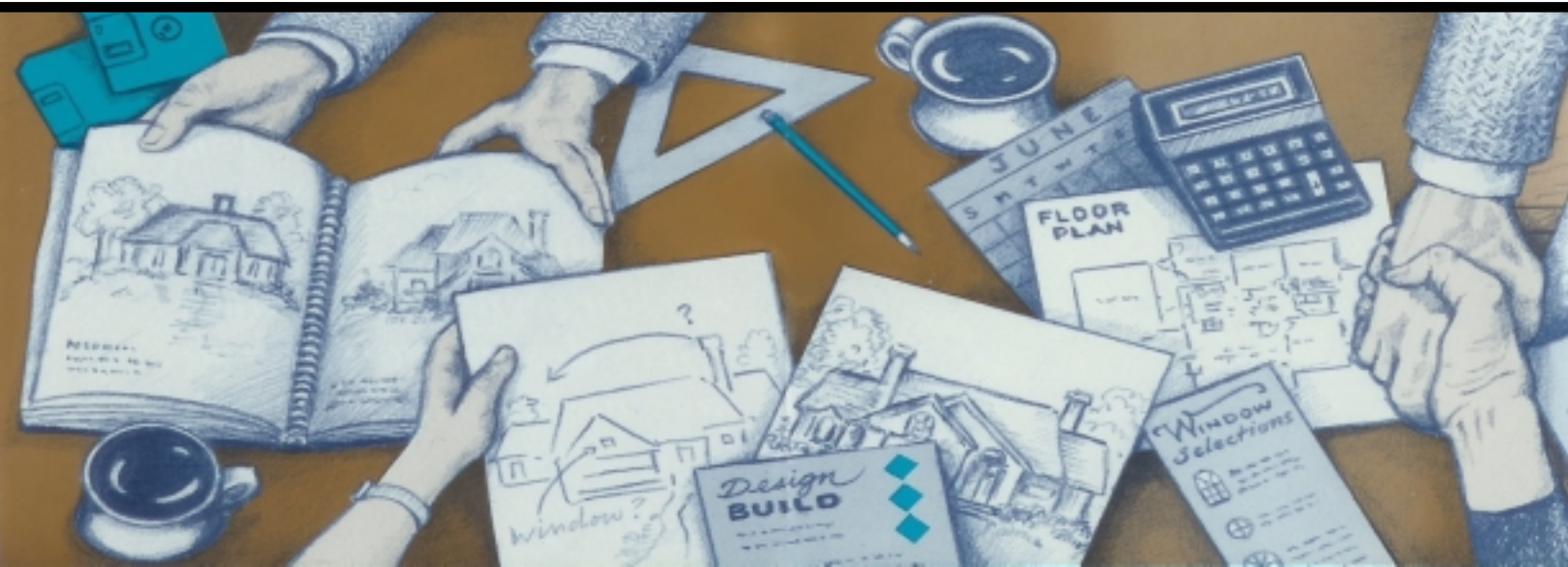
Many homeowners value a home not only for the roof it places over their heads, but as a haven from the outside world and as an expression of personality and style. Design-Build is for people who want a more active role in planning the remodeling or construction of their homes and who appreciate the convenience and consistency of working with one firm from start to finish. If you want to build your dream home, a design-build firm can work with you at each stage of design and construction to create the home that best matches your desires and your budget. If you are contemplating a makeover of your present home, a design-build firm can help ensure that your specific concerns- from the preservation of the existing landscaping and views to the safety of children or pets during construction- are factored into the design of your project right from the start. The efficiencies of the design-build process help ensure that your time and money are well spent. This is one-stop shopping at its best.

## You are a part of the design-build team.

The specific titles, roles, and responsibilities of the people on your design-build team will vary from company to company. In many design-build firms, one person acts as the customer's primary contact throughout the design-build process. As the customer, however, you are the most important member of the design-build team. Your wishes and ideas drive design, materials selection, and budget. You bring to the table your specific design concerns and desires. The design-build firm provides the building and design experience, knowledge, and skills that turn your ideas into reality. Often, your builder or remodeler can show you examples of similar projects and present a menu of economical, practical, and aesthetic solutions to frequently encountered design problems. Your design-build team can counsel you in choosing materials and finishes for your home that represent good values within your budget and that complete the vision of your new or remodeled home.

## Your priorities drive the project.

In addition to your tastes, your design-build team will consider your space needs, building code requirements, and any other applicable factors, and combine these elements to create a pleasing, structurally sound design. At or shortly after your initial meeting, the design-build firm will generate a ballpark estimate for your new project. Based on this initial estimate- and with your "okay" to proceed- the firm will then produce a preliminary design, including the first set of preliminary sketches and a more detailed estimate. The decisions and selections you make guide the design-build team in refining those sketches into a final design, accompanied by a more polished estimate. When all design decisions have been made, a set of complete construction drawings can be created and a final contract price established.



## The same team handles design and construction.

During construction you have the reassurance of knowing that the team in charge of remodeling your home is completely familiar with the design. You run less risk that the design elements will be misinterpreted or that the necessary materials will not be available and cause delays or changes. You can help by following your builder's established procedures for site visits and project changes. Scheduled visits provide important opportunities for you to discuss the progress of work on your home. Changes often require additional materials and labor and may disrupt planned work, so keeping changes to a minimum helps keep the project on track and within budget. Following the established procedure allows your builder to accommodate necessary changes more efficiently. If you will be living in your home during an extensive remodeling project, be sure to discuss any special concerns with your design-builder, if possible during the planning stage. Maintaining clear, two-way communication throughout the process helps keep your remodeling project a positive, rewarding experience.

## How are fees charged for design-build services?

The fee structure for design and construction services varies from firm to firm and sometimes from job to job, depending on the scope of work involved. Many design-build firms separate the charges for the design and the construction phases of the project. Generally the design fees covers the company's time and costs for developing your ideas into a buildable plan. Design charges may be based on an hourly rate or a fixed fee (for the entire design, or each stage). During the design phase, fees may include a non-refundable **administration fee**; costs for **design time** (client meetings, preliminary sketches, design development, and specification development); and **research and drafting time** (measurement and drafting of existing site or home conditions, material research, construction cost estimating, drafting, and blueprinting). Construction fees are often charged on a **cost-plus** (time and materials) or **fixed-fee basis**. Cost-plus contracts may be used when the scope of work is uncertain- for example, if the exact location of utility lines is uncertain. A fixed fee arrangement may be used if the scope of work can be more precisely determined. If some cost items cannot be determined before the construction contract is signed, **cost allowances** may be used. For example, a cost allowance of \$1,000 might be included to cover a specific amount of carpeting when the pattern, type, and manufacturer have yet to be selected. The contract may also specify fees for **change orders** such as client requested additions or subtractions to the construction contract. A remodeling contract may also contain a **hidden conditions** clause to cover as-yet undetected defects in the existing structure that could affect the work.

## Not just a pretty house, but a well tailored home.

A design-build firm offers you more than just a pretty house. From the start, design solutions are strongly rooted in practical application and experience. Project planning takes into account the realities of the construction process and the budget you have established. Because the work is centralized in one firm, the design build process greatly reduces the chances of costly or time-consuming surprises once the project is under construction. The result is a new or remodeled home that suits your special needs and preferences. When you work with a design-build firm, you enter into a solid partnership with experienced professionals whose skills and knowledge can help you realize your dreams for a new or improved home.

