



HOME
DESIGN AND
REMODELING
PLANNING
GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Remodeling can entirely transform your Main Line or Philadelphia home both visually and functionally. You may decide to remodel for any number of reasons. Maybe the family has grown since you first moved in. Perhaps illness or advanced age requires a space for the in-laws. Or maybe you just moved and want to make your new home reflect your own style.

Some people want to create a special room to retreat to, such as a master suite with spa-like bath, a man cave with a wet bar and state of the art entertainment system, or a game room for the kids as so they no longer take over your living room with their friends. Sometimes, you just want a new layout that will make your home flow better so your family is more connected. Maybe you've been planning the change for a long time and now you have the resources to do it right.

The Main Line is filled with beautiful older homes that, while well-built, may have seen better days. Kitchens and bathrooms are often dated, if not dilapidated. The curb appeal is lacking, and the windows need upgrading to improve energy efficiency. Today's homeowners want to open up their kitchen floor plans and add value to their homes by making them more beautiful as well as functional.

Whether you just purchased your home and want to make it your own, or you're deciding whether it's time to modernize and expand the old homestead, we can help you get there. We've created this planning guide to help you both understand the design/build process and plan your own renovation, addition, or restoration. We hope it will inspire you to take the first steps towards transforming your house into the home you really want it to be!



WHAT IS DESIGN/ BUILD AND WHY IS IT DIFFERENT?

The design/build approach breaks away from the old-fashioned oppositional model and approaches remodeling projects with synergy and teamwork:

- » **The Teamwork Analogy** is more than a catchy phrase. The old way of hiring an architect then bidding out the plans sets up the design and construction in opposing camps, and can serve the customer poorly. As the contractor may find ways to cheapen the work to “win” the bid, the architect may make him redo things, setting the scene for conflict where the homeowner is the victim. Design/build, when done properly, takes the wishes of the homeowner, the experience of the builder, the vision of the architect, the restrictions of the budget, and the requirements of township regulations all in one place and then creates a unified design that results in beautiful, functional, and affordable living spaces. The design/build team is unified in its approach and aligned with the goals of the client.
- » **Communication improves** if the processes of design and construction are housed together under one “roof”. This allows all team members to work together through every phase of a project, avoiding miscommunication that can often arise under traditionally run projects where architects are isolated from the builder. Good communication avoids mistakes, reduces expenses, and circumvents frustration and delays. Who wouldn't want good communication?

- » **Improved Project Quality** is a direct result of the design/build approach. When you have several sets of experienced eyes on the design during its development, waste is eliminated. The reduction of waste allows money to be spent on quality instead. When design and build team members work together, constructability is built-in to your project right from the start of the design process. The end result? A plan that is better suited to your needs, more affordable, and higher quality. Now that's a winning combination!
- » **Cost and Time Savings.** At the risk of sounding redundant, you'll save time and money with a proper design/build process in place. Because many important construction decisions can be made during the design phase with the builder's input, homeowners enjoy a more efficient focused process which will result in reduced costs. Other benefits include a shortened schedule and higher quality end-product. Now redundancy is sounding pretty good!

Design/build focuses on results and gets there with a teamwork approach. When everyone is on the same team, there is one shared goal – to deliver a successful remodeling project that gives the customers the home they've dreamed of while staying on budget.





THE VARIOUS ROLES OF A DESIGN/ BUILD TEAM

The design/build team is made up of a diverse group of talented people who work as one. Your project may require the combined expertise of a designer, an architect, an engineer, as well as a builder. The builder is obviously required to make the design a reality. In fact, in design/build, the builder is the one best-suited to manage the entire design/build process because the builder is the most focused on getting the construction completed. Lastly, let's not forget the most important member of the team: you, the homeowner. The input you provide is crucial for the success of the project. To get the results you want requires effort on your part. The more you are willing to put in, the better the results will be. We also think you'll enjoy the experience!




A DESIGNER'S ROLE


Different designers bring their own distinct strengths to a remodeling project. A single designer may be able to give you everything you need to accomplish your goals, but you might also need one or two specialists to help your remodeling project come to fruition. Here's a breakdown of the major types of design specialists.


- »  **Interior Designers** combine aesthetic vision with practical skills and knowledge of available products to develop design solutions that bring visual appeal as well as good function. They're not only responsible for giving your home its "look", their scope of expertise may involve simple wall changes, cabinet layouts, or fixture arrangements. More typically, they are there to help select style and color, even art and furniture to make a cohesive finished product.
- »  **Kitchen and Bathroom Designers** have an expertise in layout and cabinet function. Getting the best kitchen layout requires someone who does it all the time. That person should also have a thorough knowledge of cabinet styles and accessories, as well as knowledge of the latest appliances and fixtures. A good kitchen and bath designer will not design in a vacuum, but will know what questions to ask you to create the best solutions for your individual needs. Questions like these will help your designer create the kitchen you've always wanted; do you prefer cooking with gas or electric? Is one dishwasher enough? Is baking important to you? Do you entertain a lot? Bathrooms are a bit different, of course, but your answers to those questions will be just as important to creating the best bathroom space as they would be for any other part of the project.



»  **Simple Architectural Design**, including layout and wall changes, as well as simple additions, can often be performed by a designer. When coupled with a structural engineer, a good designer can be less costly than hiring an architect. This is a decision best determined by your design/build team to make sure your project is handled by the most appropriate people possible.

»  **Lighting Design** is an important part of both the function and the beauty of your home. From task lighting to ceiling and wall fixtures, good lighting can create different moods and create a sense of harmony by tying together all the elements of a space. While recessed lighting is great for adding extra light throughout a room, a lighting designer will show you how to use wall wash lights for artwork, soffit lighting for drama, and LEDs for task lighting. Just keeping up with the latest products and technology is a full-time job. You may not feel the need for a lighting designer on your project, but if you do use one, you will not regret it.


»  **Landscape Designers** create outdoor living spaces that are beautiful, functional, and inviting. Whether it's laying out a pathway or patio, or designing landscape lighting and selecting shrubs, they are skilled practitioners of fundamental outdoor design concepts – unity, balance, proportion, perspective, color, and texture – and know how to beautifully and seamlessly tie your interior and exterior spaces together. A keen knowledge of plant types and care is essential, along with a good grasp of outdoor entertainment flow and materials available for construction of those areas.

»  **Audio/Visual Design.** Depending on your lifestyle, background music can get the backyard party going or provide a relaxing atmosphere inside on quieter nights. The A/V designer can design a whole house audio system that you control from a remote keypad or your mobile device. They can create a custom home theater experience with incredible sound and visual installations. They can simply determine the best equipment and speaker placement for your own personal space. These are just a few of the solutions a good audio/visual designer can bring to the table.




AN ARCHITECT'S ROLE

Many smaller jobs, like adding closets or removing one wall to create an open floor plan, don't require a licensed architect. But if your Main Line or Philadelphia remodel involves adding on significant living space, moving structural walls, changing roof lines, or reconfiguring how certain spaces function, an architect will be an essential member of your design/build team. Some architects may specialize in certain styles of homes, or prefer only larger projects, but your design/build team will determine the qualities of the architect needed on your team and will choose the one best suited for your needs.



AN ENGINEER'S ROLE

Engineers play a crucial role in many remodeling jobs. Depending on the scope of your project, there are several types of engineers you may need to work with. But don't worry about deciding for yourself who is needed... that's what your design/build team is here to do.

- »  **Civil Engineer.** If your remodel includes a large addition, or calls for moving a lot of dirt, you might be required to install a storm water management solution or grading plan. Long gone are the days when homeowners could spread a pile of dirt around the property and throw grass seed on it. Today, the permit process calls for a plan approved by the township. Grading plans and storm water management systems can get complex and expensive so it's important to understand the requirements of your municipality and design your project with that in mind from the start to avoid unnecessary expenses.
- »  **Structural Engineers** are trained to analyze factors that exert force on your home's roof, walls, and foundation. They will size beams, specify needed bracing, determine connectors, and select material needed to accomplish their design. If your project includes significant alteration, constructing a large addition, or relocating interior structural walls, it's a good idea to have a structural engineer available to your team.
- »  **Mechanical Engineers** do the heating and cooling design work for your remodel, and will tell you whether your existing system is adequate for your reconfigured home. Not every remodeling job requires a mechanical engineer, but they can save you substantial time and money by designing a proper system from the start, especially if your project is large or complex.



A BUILDER'S ROLE

A builder not only manages your construction project from start to finish, but in the world of design/build, is essential in the design part of the design/build process as well. The following list explains the tasks the builder must take on in the design/build process.

- » Selection of the design team members best suited for your project.
- » Drive the initial design meetings to guide the homeowner and architect on solutions that are in keeping with a pre-determined budget.
- » Review on-going designs to identify efficiencies that impact the budget and other goals of the project.
- » Consult with the subcontractors about costs and ideas on improving the design from the perspective of the individual construction trades.
- » Gather information and bids from the designers and subcontractors to use in creating a detailed construction proposal.
- » Handle municipality requirements like building permits, inspections, historical review boards, and zoning variances when needed.
- » Coordinate and manage scheduling and quality control.
- » Be the point person for communications with the customers, the designers, architects, and engineers, providing answers and resolving issues as they arise during construction.
- » Ensure that the subcontractors – including plumbers, electricians, tilers, roofers, drywallers, and foundation crew – do their jobs on schedule and in strict accordance with the plans.
- » Communicate issues as they arise to solve problems before they become more expensive.
- » Provide accountability and detailed financial tracking.



CHOOSING THE DESIGN SERVICES YOU'LL NEED

A good design/build firm provides an all-inclusive service that takes the burden off you for making decisions in areas you're not familiar with or knowledgeable about. You know what you want to accomplish and you know how much you have to spend. Our team will determine if what you want is feasible, what the best path is to achieving your goals, and what team members are best suited to meeting those goals efficiently.

While you, the homeowner, are always at the center of every decision, the various roles provided by your design/build team are derived from the needs of your individual project and are never overdone. Our firm has years of experience in determining what services are needed and which are optional. To find out what your project will need, please take some time and put your thoughts into this workbook. Then schedule an appointment to discuss them!



Faced with all the planning and decisions required by a remodeling job, it's understandable to feel overwhelmed. You want a way to define your needs and goals, all while meeting a budget you can afford. Unfortunately, there can be competing agendas at play:

- » Spouses may have distinctly different ideas of what is needed.
- » The realization that money only buys so much, and that the scope of the work must be tailored to meet a realistic budget.
- » The house itself has an agenda. Zoning regulations and township codes need to be factored in, existing structural conditions may need to be remedied as part of the project, and repairs and upgrades that make much more sense to be accomplished during the project may move planned future expenses into the present.
- » You may want things to move quickly to a particular deadline, but it takes more time to meet a challenging budget.

This guide and the workbook below are designed to help you define those needs and goals in an easy, yet well-thought-out way. Use it to spark creative ideas and solutions. Many homeowners have a tough time envisioning what changes need to be made – and what those changes will look like if adopted. Looking at your home through a fresh set of eyes by answering questions and writing down thoughts as they occur will go a long way towards helping you see things much more clearly.

THE TIMELINE

Start with the date you want the job to be completed and then discuss it with your design/build team so they can plot out a realistic schedule. Barring any surprises along the way, this should give you a timeframe for the start and completion of the job. Remember, you are a big part of meeting any deadlines. To be honest and assess your ability to make decisions quickly will help determine the length of time things will take. Some people are decisive,

and others need to ask people around them for their opinions. Some people need one or 2 options, while others will do endless research. The type of decision maker you are can greatly affect the schedule.

THE BUDGET: SETTING PRIORITIES AND LIMITS

All remodeling projects should begin with a realistic budget. Decide what you can comfortably spend knowing there may be things you want to add along the way. Trying to design without a budget or with an unrealistic one is a recipe for stress and failure. Many homeowners find it convenient to guess the cost of a project based on square foot pricing, but this method typically gets in the way of reality. There are far too many mitigating factors that affect your total cost:

The budget you have should be independent of what you expect the work should cost. It should be solely based on what you can spend, worst case. You don't need to show your hand first, or tell anyone that you have unlimited funds! But if you don't have enough to cover the cost of what you want to do, this needs to be discovered right in the beginning.

Setting priorities is one way to prevent overspending. Make a list of everything you want and need. Once your list of wants and needs are fully developed, separate the two. Then list them in order of importance. If your budget cannot cover the whole job, there might be a good way to do things a little differently than you had thought, or do the project in phases.

Keep in mind that your budget is not only about the "shiny things." Also, there may be work required in an area that's indirectly related to the renovation area – for example, an upgraded electrical panel. It's not uncommon for homeowners to forget about the basic items that need to be included in their budget. Here are some of the elements you need to consider.



ELECTRICAL

Many homes along the Main Line have older wiring. Knob and tube may not be a problem unless you intend to sell, but if an inspector calls it out as a hazard, it will most likely have to be fixed. Maybe you have modern wiring, but no grounded outlets. A new HVAC system may require an upgrade from 100 to 200 amps. Have the electrical system looked at during the design phase to see if it needs to be included in the bottom line.

WINDOWS

Do you need to replace unsightly, drafty, or painted shut windows? Depending on your budget, you might want to install replacement windows. Keep in mind that replacing windows now will make your home more energy efficient, beautify it, and probably add to its value.

INSULATION

Older homes often lack adequate insulation and addressing it during a remodel is a great idea. You may only require an attic blanket or some blown-in insulation. Any insulation improvement will save you money over the long term.

HVAC

Even if your renovation doesn't require new heating and cooling, think about whether you want to make changes to the existing system. Consider upgrades like individually controlled zones, switching from oil to gas, or even a good duct cleaning.

LEVEL OF SERVICE

All builders are not created equal. It takes more than construction knowledge and years of experience to deal with issues of design/build. There is the need for good systems for scheduling, communications, cleaning, dust protection, planning, management, and warranties. There is also a great need for patience, good communications skills, organizational skills, and above all the builder must be motivated by making the customers happy and completing the work!

Any home renovation project is a complex job with



hundreds of details that need to be considered and planned out. We hope this home design and remodeling planning guide will help make your next home improvement project a little easier and a much more enjoyable experience.

Once you've decided to greenlight your remodeling project, it's time to get down to the nitty-gritty details. Use this workbook to jot down whatever ideas come to you as you walk through the space to be remodeled.



WORKBOOK



LIKES AND DISLIKES

NOTES

What do you like about your home and what do you love about it? Conversely, what do you dislike or even hate? Knowing these things can help us meet your goals. Write them down in the notes and be honest. If they differ from one spouse to the other, write both opinions!



SQUARE FOOTAGE

NOTES

Do you need to add space? Will you need first floor space, second floor space, or both? What are the uses of the new square footage? Jot them down in order of priority. Adding square footage to your home can be the most expensive option and there may be a way to utilise existing space in new ways to accomplish the same goals and meet your budget. If you will be adding any first floor space, you will need a plot plan. If you have one already, it will be a big help in determining what your options are in adding on. Have it available for your first meeting!



KITCHENS

NOTES

Think about how you will use the kitchen and what layout will best serve your family’s needs. Will your new kitchen be a separate room, or connected to other living areas? Kitchens are a great place to showcase your personal style.

CABINETS:

Do you have a particular style in mind? The right kitchen cabinetry can make or break your kitchen’s style, functionality and budget. Unlike furnishings or décor, cabinetry is a lasting, permanent part of your home. Whatever you choose, keep in mind that cabinets are the beautiful foundation off of which the rest of your kitchen’s style is built.

- » How much storage space is needed? Roughly calculate what you have in cubic feet and then decide how much extra you need.
- » Do you want or need a custom piece, like a countertop hutch or something to fit in an unusual spot?
- » List the features you want, such as spice racks, appliance garages, Lazy Susan inserts, etc.

COUNTERTOPS:

After cabinets, countertops are a central part of your kitchen’s final look. You want them to be beautiful, but also resistant to scratches and stains. Just be sure to choose the highest quality surfaces your budget allows. Easy to care for materials that look great include granite, marble, quartz, or manufactured solid surface. For something a little different, you might consider butcher block, concrete, or even glass. For the budget-conscious, there are a variety of laminates, but they don’t hold up as well as the more expensive choices. You can even mix materials by having an island top that’s different from the other work surfaces.

NOTES

APPLIANCES:

Kitchen appliances alone do not make the kitchen, but they play an important role. Depending on your must haves – double ovens, a warming drawer, etc. – appliances can also have an impact on your kitchen layout design. If you don't know the appliances you want, write down how you like to cook. Do you like to bake? Do you do a lot of entertaining? Do you cook for a large family, or just a few? How many cooks will share the space? Think about universal design, or aging-in-place options as well if you plan on staying your home for the rest of your life.

FLOORING:

High-quality hardwood, natural stone, and engineered floors are all great choices that will stand up to the heavy traffic today's kitchens experience. Think about your family's lifestyle when choosing the right surface for you. The emphasis should be on beauty, durability, and ease of cleaning. Floors should complement the rest of your kitchen design choices.

- » Will the floors need to match or tie into existing floors?
- » If you are thinking about tile, have you thought about cleaning it (grout lines can be tough to get grape jelly out of. It can also be hard on the feet if standing on it for extended periods.
- » Hardwood is a great choice, but will not tolerate leaks and spills that are not cleaned up quickly. Dogs and lots of foot traffic can wear the finish off easily.
- » Engineered products can be very durable and beautiful, but may not match the look of the rest of the house.





NOTES

OTHER FINISHES TO THINK ABOUT:

- » Backsplashes - will you want something subtle, artistic, or a statement?
- » Lighting - think about area lighting, task lighting, as well as accent lighting (soffits, inside cabinets, even toe kick lighting)
- » Colors
- » Window treatments
- » TV & Music
- » New windows, larger windows, skylights

BATHROOMS



NOTES

Sumptuous and comfortable is what today's master bathrooms are becoming. No longer a purely functional room, master bathrooms play roles from waking up with an invigorating shower in the morning to a peaceful escape at the end of a long day is a soaking tub. The trend for master baths is towards larger, more spa-like spaces that encompass the best in design, technology, and décor. Hall bathrooms and powder rooms should be highly functional as well as beautiful; but efficiency is key. It's much more expensive when expanding a bathroom's footprint, so clever storage solutions and layouts can make all the difference in a hall bath remodel. Powder rooms are often where the guests will go so they should be inviting and beautiful as well as functional. Make notes for each bath you will be remodeling, i.e., Master, Bath 1, Bath 2, etc.

- » Will you need to expand the space beyond existing?
- » Are you adding a bath where one does not exist?
- » Sinks/Vanities - one or two?
- » Bidet
- » Privy or private room for toilet
- » Tub and/or Shower
- » Whirlpool, or soaker tub.
- » Steam unit
- » Sauna
- » Lighting
- » Wall treatments like wainscoting or tile
- » Floor and shower tile
- » Mirrors
- » Towel warmer
- » Floor warmers
- » Linen storage
- » Window treatments
- » Windows and skylights



LIVING ROOM

NOTES

It's the place you relax with family, celebrate with friends, or just hang out in at the end of a long day. Living rooms wear many faces and are a pivotal part of every family's life. Today's modern living rooms are combination of sitting rooms, playrooms, and dens. They've become bigger over the years, which makes them ideal for a multitude of configurations. Whether you're remodeling a living room, dining room, or family room, think about the items that will make up the focal points of the room.

- » Fireplace
- » Flooring
- » Walls
- » Ceiling
- » Light Fixtures
- » Flat-screen televisions, monitors or screens
- » Music
- » Windows



BEDROOMS

NOTES

While the rest of your home is shared with family and friends, a bedroom is the place to retreat to for some quiet time. Many of today's homeowners are creating master suites that let them take a break from the world, enjoy solitude, and regroup. Kids, too, use bedrooms as personal spaces for doing homework and hanging out with friends. Structural elements are important for long-term functionality, but after that is done, you can have a lot of fun with décor elements and colors.

- » Flooring
- » Walls
- » Ceiling
- » Light Fixtures
- » Flat Screens
- » Speakers
- » Closets
- » Reading/sitting/study areas



NOTES

Is your garage so cluttered you park your cars on the street? Garages are high-functioning spaces that offer additional square footage, either for storage or conversion to a game room, den, or home theater. Consider both durability and style when choosing your garage floor, wall, and ceiling materials.

- » Ceiling
- » Flooring
- » Cabinets
- » Shelving
- » Overhead Door styles
- » Heated garage?
- » Hydraulic Lift
- » Access to storage above the garage?
- » Lighting



BASEMENT

NOTES

A basement makeover is a fantastic way to add livable square footage to your home. You can create a new guest suite, home theater or bar, home gym, game room, or playroom for the kids and their friends. With large basements you can even combine two or more of these ideas.

- » Fireplace
- » Flooring
- » Lighting
- » Plumbing & Electrical
- » Ceiling
- » Insulation & Drywall
- » Radon mitigation
- » Sump pumps and drainage
- » Humidity reduction
- » Egress (2nd escape route) required by code



EXTERIOR

NOTES

You can maximize your home's curb appeal with an exterior makeover.

- » Roof
- » Stucco/Siding
- » Trim
- » Decks and Porches
- » Sheds
- » Patios and Walks
- » Fencing
- » Landscaping
- » Driveway changes
- » Exterior lighting

We hope you find the information in the guide useful, and that it helps you understand that any remodeling project is manageable when you're armed with the right information. Remember, there are no wrong answers! The goal is to get a clear idea of your family's needs and wants so that your builder can help you move ahead with your remodeling dream. If you have any questions along the way, let us know. We're here to help!

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About Cottage Industries, Inc.

Cottage Industries, Inc. is an award-winning, design-build firm specializing in home remodeling and historic renovations in the Main Line and Philadelphia. From beginning to end, we provide beautiful design, conscientious construction, and caring management that makes your project an investment in excellence.

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