

LET'S REMODEL

Design is just a part of building project

Q: I would like to use my home planning computer software to produce a kitchen design for a contractor to use. Do contractors accept these for estimating materials and labor? Will this save me money with an architect?

A: General contractors and architects appreciate clients who have a good idea of the design of the project and the scope of work to be performed. A hand-drawn sketch or a computer-generated drawing may save days or weeks normally spent on design meetings with your architect or design/build contractor. But design is just one component of the project. A budget needs to be established, and all materials need to be specified for an accurate proposal to be generated. Your contractor will guide your decisions on everything from flooring to plumbing fixtures, cabinets to counter tops, based on your budget.

Your kitchen design will not save you a significant amount of money as most architects base their fees on a percentage of the total project budget. As mentioned previously, your preliminary design will get your project off to a quick start as opposed to one starting from scratch. However, your design will prob-



ably not satisfy plan review requirements for a building permit at your local building department. Your architect or design/build contractor will need to generate a set of working drawings. These drawings, based on the complexity of your project, may contain information regarding site plan, foundation plan, floor plan with existing walls, walls to be removed and new walls. They also may include exterior elevations, section(s), interior elevations, an electrical plan, as well as material specifications and general notes. If possible, have a preliminary design of your project, either hand sketched or computer generated. Magazine pictures and

other ideas that you would like to incorporate are also very helpful. Take advantage of your design/build contractor or architect's years of experience. They will save you time and money, but more important, they will help make your project a success.

Brad Hinkson, C.R., Hinkson Construction Inc., Bloomfield Hills, 810-851-0591.

Q: What are some of the factors to consider when adding a deck to my house?

A: The key to success in obtaining a great deck is in the design process. Too often this process is minimized or even skipped altogether. Designs can be performed by a variety of professionals (for example, Architect, Landscape Designer, Contractor, etc.) or by yourself. Very often, the adage "you get what you pay for" applies; although your own design will be the least expensive, it potentially could be the most deficient in critical areas.

Good deck design should be as thorough as new house design. Site planning, actively planning, traffic pattern, landscaping, construction materials,

lighting, noise, privacy, artistic interest and architectural harmony with your house are a few of the key design issues. All of these areas require familiarity with options and tradeoffs in order to properly arrive at an optimal design for your particular situation.

By spending the proper time making professional, knowledgeable design decisions at the beginning, a carefully planned deck will more than repay the effort for many years to come.
Barry Green, C.R., Kittyhawk Construction Co., Beverly Hills, 810-647-6166.

If you have home improvement questions, call Gayle Walters at the Michigan Remodeling Association (MRA) at 810-335-3232, or send questions to "Let's Remodel," 2187 Orchard Lake Road, Suite 103, Sylvan Lake, MI 48320. Answers are provided by members of the MRA, the local chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI). Members include professional contractors, manufacturers, wholesalers and lenders representing all facets of residential and light commercial remodeling. For more information or a free copy of our membership roster, call 810-335-3232.

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