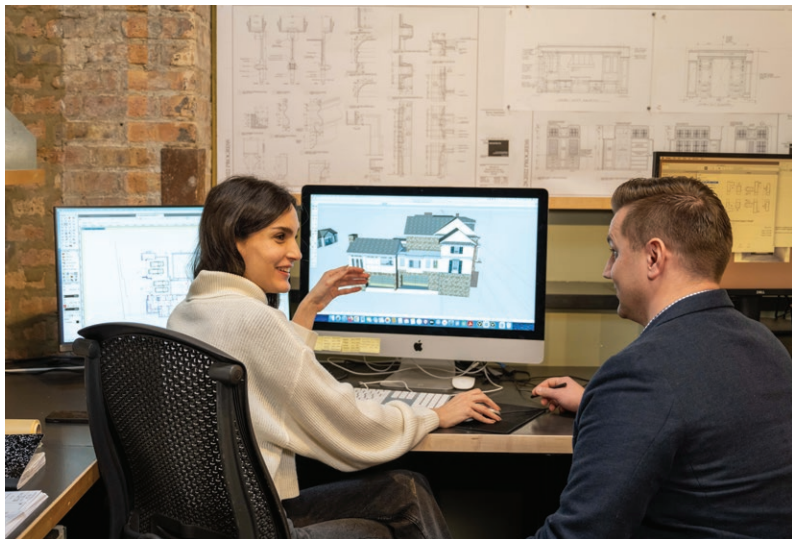


bba | ARCHITECTS



Pre-Design Home Planning Guide

FOR RENOVATIONS



PHOTOGRAPHY: Aaron Gang

PRE-DESIGN HOME PLANNING GUIDE

For Renovations

At BBA Architects, a well prepared client is one of our best assets. The sooner that we understand your aesthetic, functional, and financial goals, the sooner we can produce great solutions. Many of our clients have never before engaged an architect or taken part in a residential design and construction project. As a result, we have found a great deal of our time in the initial stages of the project is spent gathering information that is essential to begin the design process.

Whether you engage us as your architect or select one of our well-qualified peers, organizing the following information will help you get into your dream home in a shorter time period with a thoughtful and effective process. Gathering and management of this information is sometimes referred to as “pre-design”, and while we do offer this step as a paid service, it is possible for you to begin this yourself, at your own pace, before you hire a building professional. This will help you to be well informed and prepared for your home design project.

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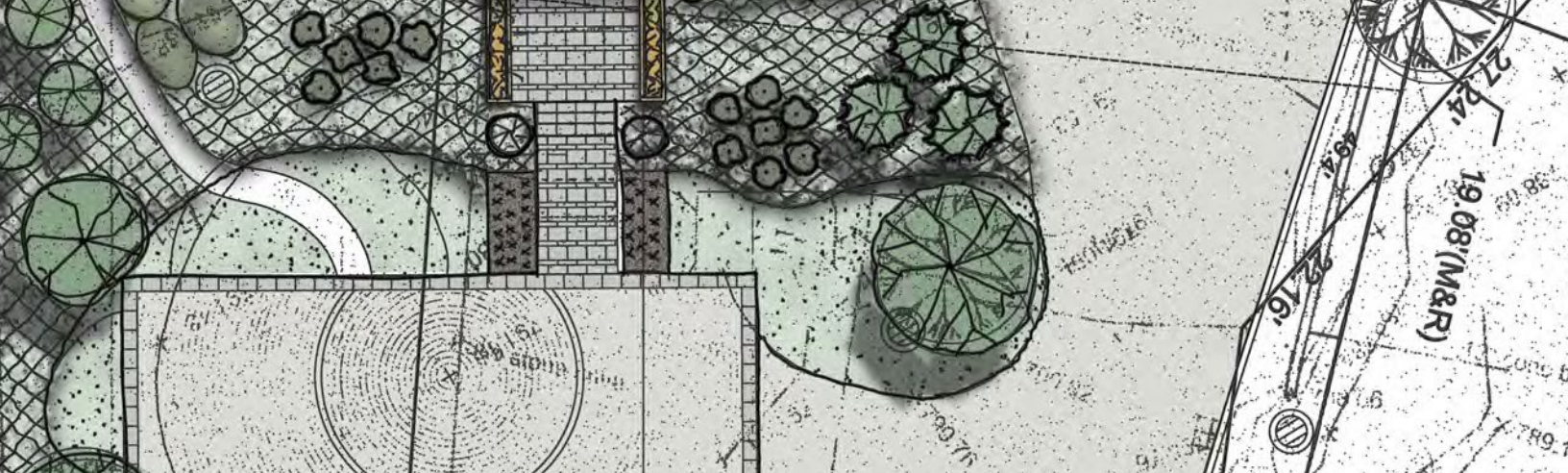
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Existing Building and Site Considerations

Do you live in the home you are renovating or are you buying a new property with the intent of renovating it? If you already live in the home, you have had a chance to understand how your family occupies the property, discover its shortcomings, and may have even outlined a few solutions. If that's the case, your observations are the best place to start, as your insight and experience will be among the best design tools. Before beginning design work, however, we need to step back and check a few boxes to ensure that we have the necessary data to make the best decisions. As with a new home, the first step in planning a renovation or addition is to gather as much information about the site as possible. For a renovation project, add assessing the existing structure condition to the list. The following documentation will help establish the existing conditions (both restrictions and opportunities) for your new home design.

1. Existing drawings or documentation

a. Most buildings required some type of drawing for original construction, so they often exist, but may require some effort to obtain. Drawings of any sort, including real estate plans, can save you some time and money. A full set of architectural documents that can be scanned, if available, will save you significant expense. If the previous owners do not know of drawings, here are some places to look:

- i. Search the attic or any open rafter spaces of the basement, mechanical rooms, hobby or work areas. Homeowners often rolled up a set to store someplace. We have found them in odd places on many occasions.
- ii. Check with your local municipality to see if they have any previous building permits on file for the property. These files will often contain drawings, and other useful information. In some locations, this requires filing a Freedom of Information Request (FOIA).
- iii. Look for stickers or phone numbers of service providers on the HVAC or plumbing equipment in the basement. These vendors may have information on your house.



b. We can often assess initial financial viability of a project with only a building footprint and basic sketch description, but any serious investigation requires better data. The more complete information you have to work with, the better answers we can provide. In the absence of original house plans and/or in addition to referencing these documents, we offer complete field measure and drafting of existing plans as part of our services as required.

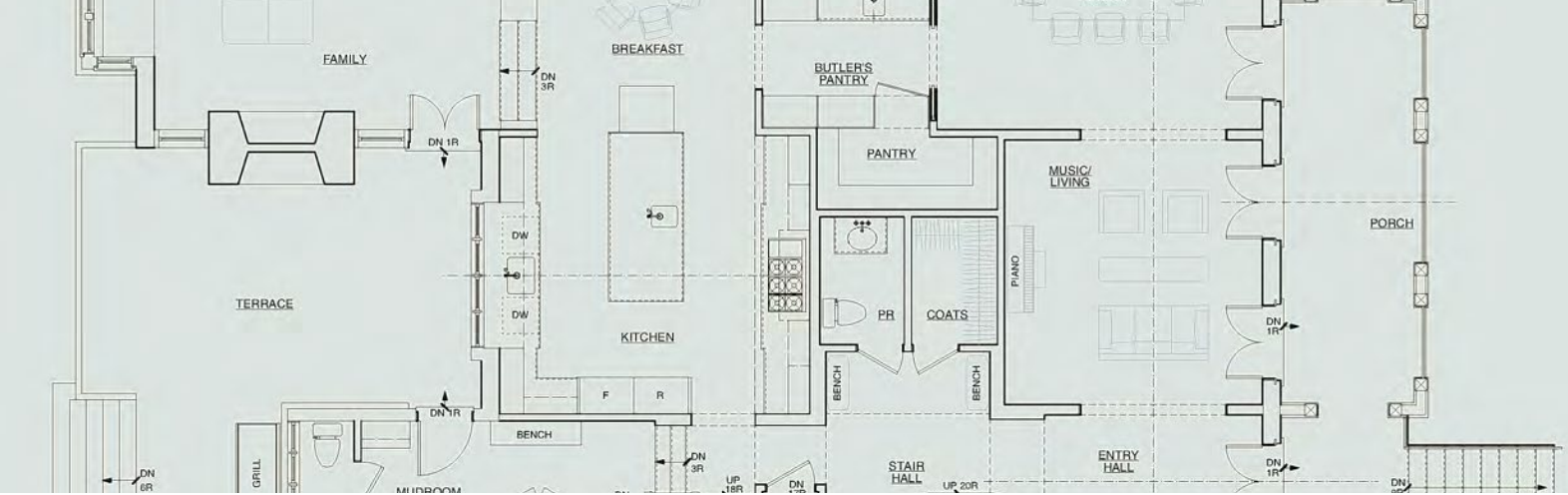
2. Building Inspection Report: The kind of top to bottom report that is often produced by members of the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI) is a valuable resource and worth the cost to produce. These reports not only identify a host of maintenance issues, they also find hidden structural deficiencies, find potentially dangerous conditions in HVAC or electrical work, and thoroughly document all of the home's systems and expected service life.

3. A professional survey. This will be required for most projects regardless if you are building an addition or not. In many cases it will be a requirement of the sale. It should contain a legal description; show all boundaries and significant features, easements, rights of way, etc. A survey should contain the footprint of the buildings on the site and helps establish the parameters of any modifications. If the site has a steep slope, hills or large trees, a topographic survey includes another layer of more detailed information and will locate and document these features.

4. Photographs of the existing house, site and immediate surroundings are helpful to record significant features and views.

5. Contact your local municipality and inquire about any special rules or concerns with building an addition to this home. BBA Architects will offer a free zoning analysis at our first interview, but you can also make inquiries on your own. Particular areas of interest should be:

- a. Is there a local map of zoning districts and regulations for your district?
- b. Does the municipality offer homeowners assistance in interpreting the zoning code?
- c. Are there any local design review covenants for the site?
- d. Is municipal water and sewer available, or does the site require a well and septic system?
- e. Is the site in a floodplain or does it include a wetland area?
- f. Does the municipality require a civil engineer to design the site drainage and storm retention?



6. Google Maps or Google Earth can be used to generate a satellite plan. This is a helpful tool to understand the surrounding context, vegetation density and other existing features.

7. Consider gathering all of your site data and putting it on a cloud server that can be shared with consultants as required. Dropbox or Google Drive are great options.

Functional Requirements

How do you want to live in your new or renovated home? Do you want your experience to be similar or different from where you live now? Giving some thought to the following questions (and any other questions or comments that these may inspire) will help you create a Wish List for your new home design.

1. Describe your existing home.
 - a. How many square feet?
 - b. How many bedrooms and bathrooms?
 - c. Does your home have any spaces or features that you can't live without?
 - d. Does your home lack any spaces or features that you need?
2. How long do you intend to live in your new home?
 - a. 2-5 years
 - b. 5-10 years
 - c. Forever House
3. Are there specific requirements or preferences that would make your new home best serve your family's lifestyle and everyday needs?
4. Fill out the Pre-Design Guide Functional Requirements Survey at the end of this booklet to outline and define the functional requirements of your new home.



Renovate or Detonate

When contemplating the cost a renovation, you need to know that there is a basic loss of efficiency compared to building new. Not only are critical conditions like structural connections and service routing not visible before you begin, you are likely to get a high factor of safety built into most estimates. Certainly, if you are only renovating a portion of the structure, it is likely still the best decision, but if you end up renovating the entire home, you could end up paying much more. Once work begins, any partial renovation project becomes a candidate for much more extensive renovation work throughout the home. The trigger for this event are the three words often heard by owners standing in a partially demolished room: “might as well....” Here are some questions to ask yourself as you decide to fix it or to start over:

1. Does the home have any significance in the area. Is it protected by local ordinance? Any building that represents a desired feature of the neighborhood, is one of a group of significant homes, or has any significant architectural features, could be popular with local residents and cause challenges to eliminate even if legal.
2. Is the home non-conforming with the zoning laws that would yield less if rebuilt? Older buildings often pre-date zoning laws, so setbacks from the property lines, driveway locations, and other bulk, height, and density rules may apply differently to a new structure. You may end up with a smaller home or one with very different yards.
3. Do you like the orientation of the existing home or is it unworkable?
 - a. Do you like how the driveway or front entrance works? Is it on a corner that has a confusing orientation?
 - b. Are there challenging issues with the incoming electric service or other utility issues that can be resolved with renovation?
4. Do you like old or slightly quirky features or prefer all like-new amenities?
5. Are you proposing major structural changes?
 - a. lowering a basement
 - b. removing ceilings
 - c. making attic floors into floor structure
 - d. removing columns, bearing walls, low beams
6. Are you proposing exterior material changes that modify the wall depth?
 - a. adding brick or stone to the exterior
 - b. modifying wall depth at window openings



CLASSIC

TRANSITIONAL

CONTEMPORARY

INDUSTRIAL

MODERN

Design Style 101

Do you appreciate the style of the home you are renovating or do you wish it was different? Are there prominent features you love and would like to enhance? Features to erase? Make a list and take photographs to document these items.

When determining the style of your reimagined home, consider the current architectural style as well as your design lifestyle. By understanding and defining the terms described here, you can better communicate your preferences.

Architectural Style

What style is your current home? In looking at an existing building with a strong identity, broad category terms like “Victorian” or “bungalow” are often thrown around without clear definition. If the current style is something you admire, and would like to learn more about it, we recommend referencing the book : “A Field Guide to American Houses”, by Virginia McAlestar. This is an easy to use guide to identify and appreciate the various forms of vernacular houses in the United States.

Your style does not need to match the description in any book, it simply needs to be what you enjoy. A new addition or a building interior can also have a unique identity from the rest of the home even if it has a significant historic feature. The different historical styles such as Tudor, Georgian and Craftsman, as well as trending styles such as the Modern Farmhouse can be overwhelming to absorb. In order to speak the same language, we like to start with a few primary categories:

Classic/Traditional: Historic styles featuring an emphasis on decoration and symmetry

Transitional: Classic architectural basis with a contemporary twist for today’s lifestyle and preferences

Contemporary: Current design, (and hence always changing), that utilizes current trends and features

Industrial/Rustic: Generally a more open or contemporary layout, but utilizing texture, materials, and exposed elements

Modern: Minimal decoration, clean lin



Defining Your Design Lifestyle

Consider not only the visual appearance of your home, but how you will live within it. If you have already established a routine in your home, it can be difficult to imagine a radical change which may create enormous design opportunities. Be open to mixing it up: moving a fireplace, turning a stair, taking out a bathroom. All have major implications, but could also add value. Here are a few items to evaluate in defining your “design lifestyle” preferences:

- formal vs. casual
- decorative vs. minimal
- a traditional floor plan vs. an open concept plan
- private vs. open (both interior layout and views to the exterior/street/yard)

Combining Architectural Style and Lifestyle:

As you begin the pre-design process, you may already have a specific style preference as you envision your future home or you may find aspects of various design approaches appealing based on your “design lifestyle.” To refine or combine design styles, consider how your home preferences may influence the overall design.

Features that contribute to a thoughtful, functional and aesthetically pleasing home design include:

- Attention to scale, proportion, and form
- Creating connections between interior spaces, both visual and functional, that improve circulation through the home as well as enhance the quality of the interior spaces themselves.
- Establishing a connection to the outdoors through views and expanding livable spaces.
- Developing a well-structured plan that includes the spaces and rooms that you both want and that you will use, while arranging spaces to best reflect how you move through and occupy your home.
- Incorporating specific architectural styles and thoughtful details to build the character of the design and enhance both curb appeal and the quality of interior spaces.

Collecting (and Sharing) Ideas and Precedents:

To fully explore and define both your architectural and lifestyle design preferences, viewing and collecting home design imagery is a valuable resource, both for clarifying your own style and sharing with others. Using online imagery resources such as Houzz or Pinterest can provide a wealth of inspiration imagery. As you search and browse through images, you can select those that appeal to you and save to “idea books,” collecting photographs of exteriors, interiors, and specific room designs. As you build an inspiration library, these images may help refine your design goals in various spaces as well as the overall house design. You can also add specific notes and invite “collaborators,” such as your architect, to share ideas and compare images.



Budget Considerations

When you are considering a new custom home or a major renovation of an existing one, you will get many opinions about the potential construction cost. These opinions will be based on varying assumptions of your desired quality level and features, the size of the home, and the cost of labor and materials. Typically, construction costs are described in terms of a cost per square foot multiplier. These multipliers, and your overall cost expectation, can only be accurate if they take into account three primary factors:

- Accurately estimating the size of your project.
- Assessing the typical cost of recently constructed homes in your area that are of similar quality.
- Project delivery methods and how it influences cost, quality, and schedule.

Estimating the Size of Your Project

Calculating the Desired Size of Your Home:

How big of a home are you building? These items are simply average rules of thumb, and you are likely not average, so use them as a measuring stick against your ideal home size and program. Here are a few basic tools to help you begin your estimate:

- The average single-family American house with 3 bedrooms and 2.5 baths is about 2,500 square feet (above ground). This varies widely by region and economic power.
- An average 2-car garage with some storage space is about 500 square feet.
- A standard bedroom (with closet) may require between 125 to 250 square feet.
- A master suite with walk-in closet, double vanity and separate tub & shower may require between 350 and 450+ square feet.
- A typical two sided kitchen with an island, open at one end, may require between 250 to 450+ square feet.
- A stand alone dining room to seat 12 can range from 210-250 sq ft.
- A powder room can range from 12-60 square feet.
- A typical bathroom can range from 50-75 square feet.
- 25% of most homes are devoted to circulation space, including the foyer, hallways, and stairs.
- 5% of most homes are devoted to some type of utility/mechanical space.
- For a more comprehensive floor plan area estimate, refer to the **Area Estimator Worksheet** available as a separate interactive download from our website at www.bbaworld.com



Size Restrictions and Comparable Properties:

Keep in mind that the size of your home may be restricted by your lot and the zoning regulations of your community. Overall square footage, lot coverage and building height may all impose design limitations based on the local community regulations. Real estate considerations may also mandate that your home needs to be within a certain range to be competitively priced against the neighbors, especially if you plan to be in the home less than 10 years. If you intend to live in this home for more than 10 years, we recommend putting your own needs ahead of the investment decisions, as the market over that time is simply unknown. The best thing to do is to make an educated guess and compare against other homes in your area.

When you inquire about the size of similar homes, it is helpful to clarify exactly what total area you are describing. Developers, builders, real estate professionals, and tax assessors may define space differently. Typically, the builder's number includes only interior spaces (measured to exterior wall surface) that are heated and cooled, and above the basement. Finished basements, exterior porches, balconies, and garage spaces are often not included, yet these elements have a real cost. A real estate listing will typically include finished basement space, but may leave out garages or porches; this is why you need to ask what exactly is included in the square footage estimate. When you see a home with oversized, highly detailed exterior porches or a 4 car garage, the cost per square foot may be significantly misstated unless these elements are listed separately with assigned values.

While these preliminary calculations are helpful, it is common for the estimated area at the front end of a project to be more than what is actually needed, unless additional rooms or uses are added along the way. During the design process, we work to make your use of space more efficient throughout, and by result less expensive.



Assessing the Cost of Comparable Homes in Your Area

When you are consulting a builder, neighbor, or realtor regarding the cost of a similar project, check the date it was completed. Cost estimates are highly perishable. Costs have essentially two components: materials and labor. Both are subject to the forces of supply and demand. Lumber, steel, concrete, brick and stone are all commodities that can vary widely depending on when it is purchased. Material costs can also be highly localized. The labor required to construct your home has varied skill levels, depending on the trade. For example, high skill steel welding or experienced carpenters may be in short supply relative to excavation labor. In recent years, a nationwide shortage of skilled construction labor has driven costs upward at a higher than normal pace. If the home you are looking at was constructed between 2 and 4 years ago, the same home would easily cost between 15% to 20% more in today's dollars.

If possible, research multiple recent projects. Take notice of the overall type and quality of the materials employed. Brick or limestone, for example, is a significant premium over painted wood siding. Remember, you don't need to like the homes you are using to estimate costs, only to compare the material and labor to create them. Some things to look for that have a large influence over construction cost, especially in renovated homes.

- Are there site issues that make the work more difficult, such as a significant hill or utility access?
- Did the project involve major structural work, removing walls and floors?
- Were the exterior doors and windows changed or moved?
- Were major systems such as HVAC, plumbing and electric fully replaced or modified?
- What are the primary exterior building materials? Wood siding, stucco, masonry?
- What type of roof does the home have? Asphalt shingles, metal, clay tile, slate?
- Does the cost estimate include landscape costs? Is the landscape extensive?
- What type of flooring materials are used? Wood, wide plank, stone tile?
- Does the home feature built-in cabinetry, benches, or window seats?
- What kind of built-in cabinetry and kitchen cabinets were in the home? Paint finish vs. stained wood, standard vs. premium finishes, simple profiles vs. highly detailed?
- Do the interiors include wood trim around the doors and windows, or a simple drywall opening?
- What kind of appliances and fixtures were in the home?
- Do all the bedrooms have en-suite bathrooms or shared bathrooms?



Project Delivery Methods

A huge influence in your cost will be the contract delivery method employed for construction of your custom home. There are many shades of gray when using the word “custom” so we thought you should have a basic explanation how projects can be delivered and at what level of design. Your neighbor’s house that you referred to in terms of area and contract cost may have been delivered in a different way than you intend with a different set of goals and parameters. You need to understand the trade-offs between these methods. We have done them all:

1. **Traditional Track - Design, Bid, Build**

- You hold separate design and construction contracts.
- Highest quality control.

2. **Developer Negotiated Contract**

- You typically don’t meet the architect.
- Best negotiated price, cost conscious choices.

3. **Design / Build, Builder Lead**

- The Architect works for the Builder.

4. **Design / Build, Designer Lead**

- The Builder works for the Architect.



Traditional Track, Design, Bid, Build Separate Design and Construction Contracts

This is the method preferred by clients who seek a customized home and is used in the majority of our work. The same process is followed if you have pre-selected a contractor, or if you are competitively bidding to three. In this scenario, we essentially follow the building design process as described in the Services section of our website and we design the spaces you request. You will only be limited by your imagination and your budget. We then work to assemble a group of qualified contractors and other vendors to bid the work. When bidding, you can take advantage of any competitive market that may exist, as well as get a wider number of opinions as to the most efficient means and methods of construction.

When the bids come back, it is often typical that they are not yet entirely aligned with your budget. We have a bit more work to do to get the costs in line at this stage, and we invite a larger group to help. This process is often called Value Engineering and is best performed by entering into a preliminary agreement with one of the bidders. We then partner with the builder, the sub contractors, vendors, and others to find value in design modifications that reduce the cost, but maintain the design intent and construction quality. The owner partners with us in the process and is asked to prioritize certain features in order to meet the stated budget goal. We encourage the contractor to have an open-book approach, including fees, so that the owners and design team all understand the real cost drivers. In this collective environment, the owners can verify all the modifications and reach an agreement with the contractor to build the home. In most cases, we also perform Construction Administration services. In this environment, we are able to be a pro-active advocate to protect your investment in the design by ensuring that the intent of the drawings is being built and to negotiate any coordination issues to the best visual result.

A traditional track process will provide the highest quality at a negotiated cost you control.



Developer Negotiated Contract

You typically don't meet the architect.

The majority of new homes in this country are designed, constructed, and sold by developers. Development projects, like other products, can come in a range of economy to luxury models, but they have one thing in common: a limited set of choices, thereby keeping the cost structure more predictable. This is manifest in a choice of a handful of “customizable” floor plans and color/material options. Most developers will make a number of modifications to suit the buyer, or even outsource items such as kitchen and bath design to an independent consultant who can work separately with the owner. Buying from a developer keeps the design costs low and has the most predictable outcome. You are typically purchasing a version of another recently constructed home that you can tour and review a curated selection of choices in a showroom environment. We have produced many residential projects for high quality development companies. When we do so, the process is streamlined, as the developer knows the target buyer and current trends that will sell the home, so there is less exploration, allowing lower fees. These typically proceed at a fast pace with only a few design meetings. The developer often has a pre-determined package of appliances and fixtures. Developers choose us for these projects because they are trying to attract a client with a high level of design awareness and specific to a niche market. In a development scenario, we have a limited presence during the construction process, as the developer will often provide these services.

Development projects are often under pressure to deliver a finished product at a pre-determined price up to a year prior to delivery. As the developer's costs change through the construction process, they have broad license to modify specifications and continually bid to subcontractors to meet cost obligations. This can mean using lower cost components or providing a lower level of fit and finish that may not be immediately evident. In many cases, this method provides the most value if the client has flexibility. If the client is looking to explore multiple design options, this may not be a good fit.

A developer track process will provide the best negotiated price by controlling options.



Design/Build Builder Lead

We work for the builder.

We have also worked in a hybrid environment, when a client first approaches a builder about a new custom home and the builder hires us to design the custom home for the owner. This is a common approach in many markets and can have many variations. In this scenario, you get the benefit of our building design process to highly customize your design, or come up with a unique solution for a particular site. In this arrangement, we are not typically involved in the cost estimating process and have a limited role in construction, unless a larger role is requested by the owners, with a more proactive than reactive role during construction. As in the developer scenario, the builder will have broad latitude to adjust the specifications to deliver the project at the promised cost. With our involvement however, we advocate for the integrity of the design and to protect your investment in it.

A builder-lead design process can provide advantages in guaranteed cost and access to vendors in the design process, while providing a fully custom home. As the builder holds the contract, economy is typically weighted more heavily than design nuance and requires advocacy to be successful.

Design/Build Designer Lead

The builder works for us.

The Architect can also take the lead in a Design/Build process. In this scenario, the chief benefit is the client has one stop shopping and one main point of contact for the entire design and construction process. We can also negotiate a fixed, not to exceed project cost based on the completed Schematic Design Documents. You pay the normal design fees through the Schematic Design phase, until we achieve a price offer.

We hire a General Contractor as our Prime Subcontractor and the home is built as typical. We only use Prime Subcontractors with whom we have a great depth of experience, and will offer us a favorable rate based on our ability to deliver a complete design and specification with prompt decision making. All communication is funneled through our office for efficiency, and we charge a fee on the construction as any other general contractor service.

A designer lead design-build process will emphasize design excellence over cost, but the architect will still have a broad license to seek economy in means and methods to achieve financial goals.

Pre-Design Guide Checklist

Site Considerations

Project Address:

Lot size (sq ft):

Site Checklist:

- Survey
- Photographs

Special Considerations:

- View
- Topography / Steep slope
- Landmark Status / District
- Corner Lot
- Lake Frontage
- Flood Plain
- Unusual Neighboring Lots / Adjacent Properties

Functional Requirements

- Complete the Pre-Design Guide Survey
- Download Area Estimator Worksheet
from www.bbaworld.com/areaworksheet

Determine Your Design Style

Home Design Resources - Create Your Personal Ideabook at:

- Houzz.com
- Pinterest.com

Be sure to add notes and captions to highlight your favorite features and materials
Gathering images will help you establish your style and material preferences:

How would you describe your general lifestyle? (0 = casual to 10 = formal)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Decorative preference (0=minimalist, 10=highly decorative):

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Private vs. Open (0=let it all hang out, 10=everything tucked away):

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Pre-Design Guide Survey

ARRIVE

1 level (ranch style) / 2 levels / 2+ levels (3-story, finished attic, loft)

Attached / Detached Garage (Number of Vehicles / Additional Storage)

GATHER

How long do you plan to live in this home?

How many people will live here? _____ adults

_____ kids (current and/or future)

_____ pets

_____ permanent and/or temporary guest space

Formal Living Room / Open Concept Family Room / Other

Separate Formal Dining Room / Eat-in Kitchen / Open Concept

Special Features & Accommodations (check preferences):

- Grand Entry, Large Foyer, Open Stair
- Fireplace (note rooms, gas/wood burning preference?)
- TV watching area(s) (note rooms)
- Furniture / Heirlooms / Misc Accommodations (ie - piano, artwork, etc.)

EAT

Separate Kitchen & Dining Areas / One open Concept Space

Formal Dining Room / Separate eat-in Kitchen / Open Concept Space

How much do you cook? (0 = mostly takeout, 10 = home cooked meals every day)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Special Features & Accommodations (check preferences):

- Kitchen Island (number of seats:_____)
- Kitchen banquette/bench seating (number of seats:_____)
- Open Shelves / All Storage Concealed in Cabinets / Combination
- Walk-in Pantry / Pantry Cabinet(s) / Combination
- Butler's Pantry / Wet or Dry Bar

Appliance Preferences:

- Refrigerator size/configuration (if known)_____
- Oven/range preferences (if known)_____

Integrated-built-in appliances / Stainless steel / Combination / Other

Resources:

<https://www.abt.com/learn/kitchen-range-buying-guide>

<https://www.abt.com/learn/refrigerator-sizing-buying-guide>

Pre-Design Guide Survey

CLEAN

Mudroom (circle preferences):

- Closed Lockers / Open Hooks / Bench / Pet Area / Sports Supplies

Laundry (circle preferences):

Basement / 1st Floor / 2nd Floor

- Stackable units / Side by Side / Front Load / Utility Sink / Folding / Hanging Space / Hampers

Resources:

<https://www.bobvila.com/articles/planning-guide-laundry-room-ideas>

SLEEP

How many bedrooms?

@ 2nd Floor _____ ensuite bath(s)? _____

@ Basement _____ ensuite bath(s)? _____

@ 1st Floor _____ ensuite bath(s)? _____

RELAX

Would you like to allocate space(s) for special activities? (circle):

- Study / Library / Home Office
- Recreation Room / Play Room / Game Room / Home Theater
- Art Studio / Craft Space / Music Room
- Study / Library / Home Office
- Home Gym / Wood Shop
- Finished Basement / Unfinished Basement / Walk-out Basement

OUTDOORS

Would you like to include special features at your front or back yard? (circle):

- Screen Porch / Enclosed 3-Season Room / Covered Porch / Pergola
- Privacy Screen
- Outdoor Kitchen / Simple Grill
- Stone Patio / Wood Deck / Other
- Outdoor Fireplace / Fire Pit
- Swimming Pool / Spa
- Decorative Garden / Vegetable Garden / Decorative Water Features / Other



GARY BEYERL, AIA

Gary co-founded Burns + Beyerl Architects in 1993, now BBA Architects. He continues to lead the firm with partners Ed Twohey and Jennifer Hense with an unbridled passion for creativity, and a desire for excellence.

Gary has enjoyed designing and renovating several homes with his wife. Each has involved hands on construction experience and experimentation. In 2007, Gary completed a weekend home at Tryon Farm, a conservation development in Michigan City, Indiana. He has also designed a fresh water swimming pond for the Farm. In 2022, he and his wife assumed stewardship of community and will continue to develop the legacy of the project.



ED TWOHEY, AIA

Ed joined BBA in 1994 as the first employee and was named Principal in 1999. He received a Bachelor of Architecture from Miami University in Ohio in 1989 and a Masters of Architecture from Washington University in St. Louis in 1991.

Born and raised in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Ed assisted his mother in her estate sales business growing up. As Principal, the experience of working with vintage and historic homes still guides and inspires him as he designs renovation, restoration and new custom residential projects. Ed enjoys finding new opportunities during the design process that greatly enrich the clients lifestyle, whether it be a home or a restaurant.



JENNIFER HENSE, AIA

Jen began her architectural career at BBA Architects in 1999 after graduating from Ball State University. In 2021, she joined Gary Beyerl and Ed Twohey in partnership to lead the firm. She has worked on an expansive range of projects from new construction to historic renovations during her tenure.

Growing up in Northern Indiana, Chicago was a promising destination for this aspiring architect from a young age. Her university internship program led Jen to the city and ultimately to BBA. She and her husband Kevin, also an architect, have lived across the city and suburbs and have recently returned to their alma mater to live and work remotely in Muncie, Indiana. Jen makes frequent visits to Chicago to meet at the firm's studio and project sites.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Aaron Gang

Our Story

BBA Architects is focused on providing exceptional client service and outstanding design in the Great Lakes region and beyond.

BBA was built on listening to our clients with open minds, offering an interactive design experience and delivering a thoroughly considered product. Gary Beyerl founded the studio in 1993 and is now joined by Ed Twohey and Jen Hense at the helm.

Our portfolio of work does not reflect a specific style. At BBA, we strive to create beautiful custom designs by paying careful attention to our individual client's stylistic preferences, functional requests, and budget requirements. We draw inspiration from both historical and modern sources while translating our client's vision into thoughtful, innovative and timeless designs.

After over 30 years in business, we have completed over 1,500 projects, each as unique as the people for which we created them. We work collaboratively, allowing discussion, debate and continued education to elevate our process as both individual architects and a design team. Our firm has been an important incubator for young architects, who have been trained in our process of providing clients with well studied design, tracking budgets, and providing pro-active service during the construction phase.

Our team is ready to continue this tradition, as we incorporate evolving building technology, contemporary lifestyle trends, and more sustainable methods into our practice.

PROJECT INQUIRIES

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