

Homeowner's Guide

Home Addition Planning Tips and Design Ideas



McClurg

Forward



Do you need more living space but like your home and neighborhood too much to move? A home addition may provide the solution.

Popular home addition projects include kitchen expansions, master bedroom suites, family rooms, sunrooms, porches and decks.

When planning a home addition, it's important to consider the many details that go into this type of remodeling project including the location, architectural elements, function, exterior design, interior design, local building codes and your budget.

As a [design-build remodeling firm](#) we specialize in working with homeowners who want to add more space to their homes. When we meet with customers we begin by asking questions to help us (and them) understand what they NEED and WANT in an addition. Then we create a design plan to meet their objectives.

We have prepared this homeowner's guide on **"Home Addition Planning Tips and Design Ideas"** to address questions we often hear from customers as they consider building an addition onto their homes. In this guide you will learn about the steps to plan a successful project. You will also find design ideas for several common home addition projects including kitchen additions, master bedroom and bathroom additions, living or family room additions, porch additions, deck additions and sunroom additions.

For more ideas, we invite you to visit the [home additions photo gallery](#) on our website to view additions we have built for Central New York homeowners and peruse our [home additions blog articles](#).

We hope you will find this information helpful. We would welcome your questions and comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Brian Ciota'.

Brian Ciota
Vice President & Co-Owner

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1. Defining Your Project Objectives and Priorities

If you are considering adding more living space to your home, where do you begin? Some of the most popular home addition projects include master bathrooms, master bedroom suites, family rooms, sunrooms, kitchen expansions, two-story additions and second-floor additions.

While each project has its own set of challenges, here are three general steps to follow to **plan for a home addition**:

1. Define the purpose of the project and your objectives.

List your ideas for the project. For example:

- If you are planning to add a room to your home, do you envision it on the first floor or second story?
- Who will be the primary users of the space?
- Do any of the people in your home have special needs?
- What amenities do you plan to add?
- Will one of the objectives be to optimize the view of beautiful surroundings?
- What are your thoughts about the configuration of the space?

Make notes to discuss with a [design-build professional](#).

2. Create a wish list.

List the important items you want to include in your project like appliances, flooring, surfaces, fixtures and specific structures (i.e. islands, fireplaces, walk-in showers, built-in seating)

3. Set priorities.

Prior to getting an estimate for the project, it is important to determine the items that are essential to achieving the outcomes you desire – “the must-haves” – and the items you’d like to include if your budget permits. Underline the essential items on your wish list.

2. Setting a Budget

It is helpful to have an idea about how much an addition will cost. You may be looking through some popular magazines or watching HGTV to gather ideas for your project but don't take those cost quotes to heart. There are many variables involved with construction that include the scope of the project, materials that will be used and labor. Remodeling costs also differ regionally.

One of the best industry sources for remodeling cost information is [Remodeling Magazine's "Cost vs. Value Report"](#). The report surveys remodeling contractors from throughout the country about the cost of 35 specified projects. Data is broken down regionally and Syracuse is one of the cities listed in the report. The information will provide a general estimate of what you might expect to pay for your project if the specifications are similar.

The "unforeseen" must also be considered in budgeting. Your contractor may encounter unexpected problems during the course of construction such as structural issues, rot, asbestos, lead paint or outdated mechanicals that do not meet code. Discuss the possibility of unforeseen costs with your design-build professional to determine a contingency budget to address these problems should they occur.

For the past few years interest rates on home equity loans have been low but also factor the cost of financing into your project budget.



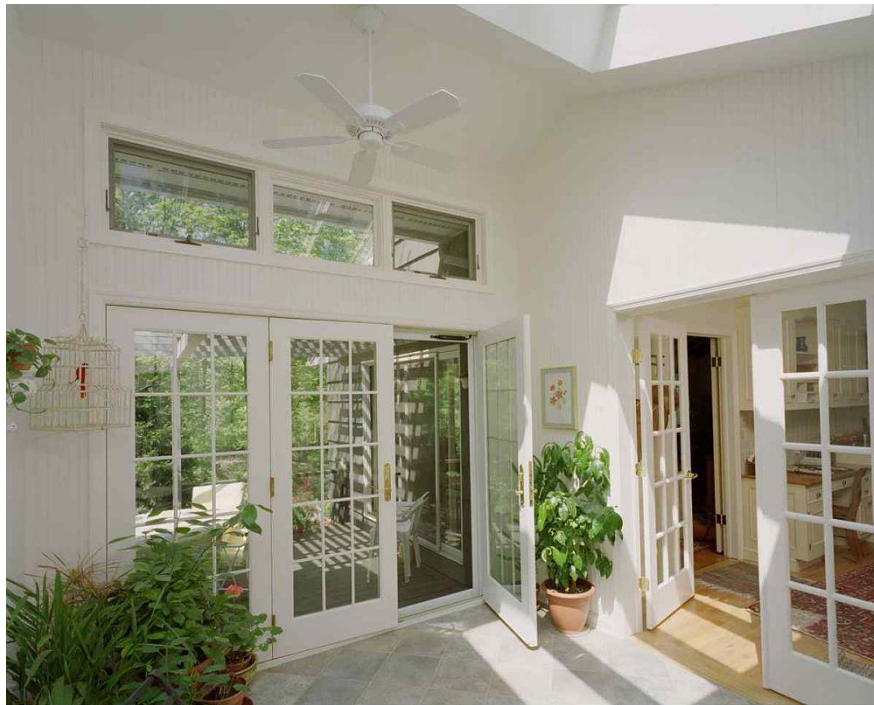
A master suite addition is often high on the wish list of Baby Boomers.

3. Meeting with a Design-Build Contractor

Building an addition will require the skills of many professionals. If you are inclined to manage the project yourself, you could hire an architect to produce the architectural drawings and then hire a general contractor or several contractors to execute the various phases of the architect's plan.

Another option is to hire a [design-build remodeling firm](#) to manage all aspects of your project. "Design-build" combines project design, product selection and construction into a seamless [process](#) through a single company - the design-build remodeler. Many homeowners who are planning an addition prefer this method because it provides them with a single point of contact for all aspects of the project and better control over costs and accountability.

Working with a design-build firm, such as McClurg, eliminates the need for you to hire and manage several contractors independently to work on your project. A design-build remodeler manages everything, including architectural drawings, construction and installations. They also deal with all day-to-day tasks such as ordering, scheduling and addressing any unexpected obstacles that may occur along the way. The design-build remodeler's job is to maintain regular communications with you so that you can make informed decisions and not have to worry about managing your project.



French doors, transom windows and a large skylight were used to create this breezeway sunroom addition.

4. Planning a Kitchen Addition

Planning a kitchen addition and bringing an idea to reality can be an exciting process. It can also be stressful, but less so if you can break the planning process into steps. There are many details involved in designing and building a kitchen addition including determining the size and configuration of the space, blending the addition with the architecture of the home, creating a layout for appliances, adding mechanicals, designing lighting and selecting products for the room. That's why it helps to follow a [planning process](#) that guides you from concept, to meeting with a design professional, to construction.

Here are five tips to follow in planning a kitchen addition.

1. Collect ideas and photos.

Take time to make a file or folder for project [ideas and photos](#). When you are ready to talk to a design-build professional who will draw the plans, it's important to communicate your preferences and requirements as you get started and to keep revisions at a minimum. There are many [online resources and publications](#) from which you can gather ideas, information and pictures. Photos can help both you and the person designing the addition to visualize the features you want.



Buttresses and beams were used for a second story main level kitchen and great room addition that opens onto a raised deck.

4. Planning a Kitchen Addition

2. Make a wish list.

A written [wish list](#) is always helpful to have in hand before [meeting with a kitchen design professional](#). It may include features and products you want to include in your kitchen addition project. For example, identify cabinet style, counter material, flooring, appliances, tile, fixtures and even the type of lighting you would like to use.

This wish list will also be useful as you determine priorities and [establish a budget](#) for the project, but don't get overwhelmed with the details, your design-build professional will be able to help you to choose materials and features.



The posts and beams used for support in this kitchen addition add style and architectural interest to the room.

4. Planning a Kitchen Addition

3. Identify functional elements and architectural features you want to address in your project.

Creating a [floor plan for a kitchen addition](#) involves a number of decisions you will need to make about how the space will be used and structured. When planning to meet with a design-build professional be prepared to discuss:

- Kitchen configuration preferences
- Storage needs
- Traffic flow
- Adjoining spaces
- Entryways
- Integrating the addition with the exterior of the home



An L-shaped kitchen configuration with wide aisles and an island create a space for homeowners who enjoy cooking. A stepped entry and French doors lead to an adjoining room.

4. Planning a Kitchen Addition

4. Consider the special needs of users.

Consider the height, reach and capabilities of the people who will be using the kitchen when planning the project. How tall should upper cabinets be? Will more than one [cook](#) work in the space? Will multiple height counters be needed to accommodate young children or a person who uses a wheelchair? Does anyone in the home have vision problems or limited physical abilities?

You may want to make the space more accessible by incorporating [“Universal Design” features](#) in your project such as wide aisle clearances, wide entryways, level thresholds, lever handle faucets and door handles, C-shaped knobs and pulls, and pullout shelving.



This kitchen has wide aisles and easy access cabinets.

4. Planning a Kitchen Addition

5. Determine the location of the addition, how much space will be needed and if zoning requirements will affect your plans.

Will the addition be on the ground floor or on a second story? An addition on the ground floor will require a foundation and you can expect to lose some of the space in your yard. The size and location of a home addition may be impacted by zoning regulations in your area which specify how close a building can be to property lines or space allowances between structures. It's important to know what codes may restrict your project. Your design-build professional should be able to address these issues.



A large kitchen and great room addition were added to this home. The U-shaped kitchen features a central island. Beams and posts connect the new construction to the existing home.

5. Planning a Master Bedroom and Bath Addition

A master bedroom and bath addition is a popular remodeling project for personal comfort and enjoyment. A term that you may be hearing a lot lately is “en suite.” En suite refers to a bathroom adjoining a bedroom. A master en suite may include a king size bed, multiple dressers, walk-in closets, a bath with spa features, a walk-in shower, a free-standing tub and other amenities. If the space required for a master en suite cannot be attained by making interior changes, many homeowners will opt to build a master en suite addition.

Here are six tips to help you get started in planning a master bedroom and bath addition:

1. Determine whether the addition will be located on the first or second floor of your home.

A **first floor addition** will require either a slab or foundation to support the weight of the structure. You can also expect to lose part of your yard. In terms of construction a first floor addition may be the least disruptive of your day-to-day activities. A **second floor addition** entails strengthening the existing structure of a home to bear the load of new construction and will likely involve removal of the roof system and some of the first floor ceiling and walls to install plumbing, electrical wiring, heating, and air conditioning systems.



A master suite addition is often high on the wish list of Baby Boomers.

5. Planning a Master Bedroom and Bath Addition

2. Discuss your options with a design-build firm.

Even before plans for your project are drawn it's important to discuss your ideas with a [design-build firm](#). There may be zoning considerations to take into account that would influence the project such as space allowances between houses in your neighborhood, height restrictions or if your home is located in a historic preservation area. The present condition and architecture of your home may also impact the plans. A design-build firm will help you to determine the appropriate amount of space needed to meet your objectives and work with you on all aspects of the project from drawings to completion.



Dual vanities and a tub with a deck were selected for this couple's retreat with a woodland view.

5. Planning a Master Bedroom and Bath Addition

3. Identify important elements that should be considered as drawings and plans are made.

Master en suites are personal spaces. Details to consider as you plan your project include:

- **Privacy**

If your home is located in a neighborhood where houses are built close together, you may want to think about the orientation of windows and use of skylights to bring natural light into the rooms. Also, consider personal preferences and needs of you and your spouse. Would you want an enclosed shower or toilet area in the design?

- **Storage**

Take time to assess your storage needs. Closets, walk-in-closets, shelving and cabinet layouts should be determined during the planning phase of the project.

- **Noise abatement**

Talk with your design professional about ways to quiet exterior noise caused by wind, traffic or even neighbors. Interior noise may also be an issue if your plan involves a bedroom with hardwood flooring, especially if the addition is on the second floor. Use of media equipment and fans can also create noise that may affect others in your home.

- **Exits and entries**

Do your plans call for an exit to a deck, patio, pool or hot tub area? On the interior consider wider doorways and level thresholds for safety and accessibility. You will find that door widths will be very important when you move furnishings into the room.

- **Furnishings that will be used**

The dimensions and placement of bedroom furnishings are important in the design of your project. Are you planning to use a king size adjustable bed or a canopy bed with lighting? You may need to plan for electrical outlets in addition to wall space. Dressers, mirrors, lamp tables, chairs, a chaise and other furnishing that occupy floor space should be accounted for in the plans.

5. Planning a Master Bedroom and Bath Addition

- **The setting of your home**

Will your en suite be “a room with a view” overlooking gardens, a wooded area or waterfront? If so, discuss how to optimize the view and manage light exposure with your design professional.

- **Maintenance**

How much time are you willing to devote to cleaning or maintaining features you install in your en suite? Give some thought to this question as you plan. A glass enclosure for a shower or a free-standing tub will require frequent cleaning. A tile pattern with a lot of grout lines may be more susceptible to staining and is more difficult to repair when grout wears down. Stone counters require sealing. Carpeting under a bed is more difficult to clean than a hardwood floor.



This master en suite was designed to address some special needs of the homeowners. There is a storage closet, gas burning fireplace and an exit to a patio.

5. Planning a Master Bedroom and Bath Addition

4. Give special attention to exterior features in planning an addition.

[An addition should blend seamlessly into the architecture of a home](#) and look like it was part of the original plan. Talk with your design-build professional about the roofline, façade options, shingles, siding, exterior trims, doors and windows that will be used.

5. Set priorities for the interior of the master bedroom and bathroom.

In starting a remodeling project we recommend that you make a list of items you would want to include and identify items that are essential to the project and items that are optional. Items for a master en suite addition project might include:

- Flooring for both rooms
- A heated floor for the bathroom
- Closets - walk-in or reach-in
- Built-in shelving
- Cabinetry
- A [walk-in shower](#)
- A built-in shower bench and niches
- Multiple shower heads
- Tile for flooring, surrounds and backsplashes
- A free-standing tub
- A jetted tub
- Dual sinks
- Dual vanities
- Stone surface counters
- An enclosed commode area
- Universal design features for both rooms
- Mirrors and lighting
- Heated towel bars
- [Bathroom ventilation and fan lighting](#)
- French doors
- A counter for beverages
- Built-in media equipment and controls
- Architectural embellishments such as a tray ceiling with uplights in the bedroom, a fireplace, Palladian windows, skylights

5. Planning a Master Bedroom and Bath Addition

6. Consider special needs of users.

The height of users is a very important consideration in planning a remodeling project. Other issues to consider are health conditions and any limitations regarding mobility. [“Universal design”](#) is a trend that has taken hold in the remodeling industry and is especially applicable to bedroom and bath design for both safety and accessibility.



Universal design elements in this master bath include a wall hung sink and grab bars around the toilet.

6. Planning a Living or Family Room Addition

Do you want space for family gatherings and entertaining or for modern amenities such as an area for television viewing, media equipment, a gas fireplace or a wet bar? A family room or living room addition might provide a solution especially if you love the home you own and plan to live there for many more years.

Often the decision to build an addition onto a home is based on intrinsic value. Many older homes in great neighborhoods were built for a life style that did not include the modern technologies that add to the quality of life today. For example, television screens in the 1950s were small and built into a cabinet. Televisions became portable in the 1960s and were placed on moveable carts. Who would have envisioned watching movies at home on a large flat screen television with surround sound or playing video games in that era when homes were built?



This family room addition provides a lake view, sitting area for watching television and a dining area.

6. Planning a Living or Family Room Addition

If removing walls and reconfiguring a floor plan does not provide the extra space you might need, here are **three** important things to consider in designing a living or family room addition.

1. Architectural design.

An addition should be designed to match the architecture of a home and look as though it was part of the original design.

Roofing, siding and trims should match the existing structure. The roofline of the addition should blend seamlessly with the house.



This first floor family room addition blends with the architecture, adds interior space and integrates the home with a cedar deck and yard.

6. Planning a Living or Family Room Addition

2. Windows and doors.

Doors and [windows](#) are a major consideration when planning a family room addition. They are a source of natural light in a room but can also optimize a beautiful view that adds to the aesthetics of a home.

Select [energy efficient windows](#) and doors. Look for the U-factor, which tells you how resistant the window is to heat transfer and the R-factor, which measures the heat flow through the window, or its heat conductivity. The R-factor measures insulation. Choose windows and doors with a **LOW U-factor (.30 or lower)** and a **HIGH R-factor – 3 to 3.7 in double pane windows and up to 5 in triple pane windows**.

Glazing is also important. Windows can have a [Low-E coating](#) or film to enhance the efficiency by blocking heat in the summer and retaining heat in winter months. They can also be filled with inert gases to increase insulation.



The architecture, windows and doors of this family room addition blend perfectly with the home inside and out. The addition was designed to bring more natural light into the home and provide more room for entertaining.

6. Planning a Living or Family Room Addition

3. Activities.

The lifestyle of the homeowner is central to the design of a family room. The space can be configured to accommodate media equipment but also dining and for display of special collections. Take some time to determine seating and which furnishings you plan to use in the room in your building plans.



Multipurpose family room addition. Left: gas fireplace and conversation area. Right: bar, seating and television.

7. Planning a Porch Addition

Our Central New York summers can be short and sizzling. There are also periods of thundershowers and cooler days that limit the time we can spend outdoors. Many homeowners are optimizing the days of summer by adding a porch addition to their houses.

Here are **five** planning tips to help with your porch addition project:

1. Take time to make a list of your ideas for the porch addition.

Begin by listing how you would want to use the porch and all the features you would like to include. Here are some questions to consider:

- Do you plan to use the porch for relaxing, dining, entertaining, shelter from the rain or all of these activities?
- Do you want to screen or enclose the porch?
- Will you need heating?
- How much seating will you need? Consider outdoor furniture and built-in seating that could make the space more functional.
- What type of furnishings would you like to use on the porch? Will you be adding a table for dining or playing cards?
- Do you want to install a television or audio equipment? If so, you will also need to plan for electrical wiring and outlets.
- Will you need shelving or a storage area?
- Do you plan to add a bar? Bars can be designed to include a sink and additional storage and seating.
- What type of lighting will you need?
- Do you want ceiling fans?

After you've compiled your list, set priorities by identifying **"needs"** – the things that are essential to completing the project, and **"wants"** – the optional items that may be nice to have but contingent on your budget. This list will be helpful when you meet with a contractor to discuss your project and set a budget.

7. Planning a Porch Addition

2. Determine the location for the porch and how the porch should look.

Typically, there are three locations for a porch addition: the front of the house, the back and a porch that wraps around a home.

Consider privacy, shade or sun exposure and the view when deciding on where to locate your porch.

If you're planning a front porch, it's important to integrate the addition with the façade and architectural style of your home.

An important factor in designing any porch addition will be the roof of the porch and the way it joins to or complements the existing roofline.



Front porch addition with integrated roofline.

7. Planning a Porch Addition

3. Collect photos of porches to serve as a visual reference for your project.

A porch could be a covered front entryway with a built in bench or a roofed and screened room-sized addition that can be used for dining, watching television and entertaining a dozen or more guests.

Cut pictures out of [magazines](#) or create a digital folder for your project on [Houzz](#) or [Pinterest](#).

[Organize your photos in a binder](#) or online to discuss with your design-build contractor.



Large front porch addition complements the home's original architecture.

7. Planning a Porch Addition

4. Enlist the help of a reputable design-build contractor.

You may have seen home improvement shows that make it seem like building a porch addition is a simple project. The truth is, it's not. There are building specifications and permits to consider.

There are also structural and architectural issues such as building a proper foundation, drainage or integrating rooflines.

You will need to make decisions about products used in your porch addition and an expert's knowledge can help you avoid a lot of anguish and avert [common problems associated with porches](#).



Large back porch addition provides a majestic view and complements the home's original architecture.

7. Planning a Porch Addition

5. Consider product options for your project.

Talk with your contractor about your options for products to use in your project. Planning ahead for your porch addition will help in setting a budget and assuring that your goals are met. Here is a list of some of the items you may need:

- Flooring - Hardwood, deck wood, composite, tile, stone, concrete
- Posts, columns, railings, balusters and stairs
- Ceilings
- Roofing
- Siding
- Trims
- Doors
- Screens
- Windows
- Privacy screens
- Lights and electrical
- Skylights
- Ventilation and fans
- Paints and finishes
- Landscaping



Large, open back porch addition with integrated roofline.

8. Planning a Deck Addition

Decks are a great way to add [outdoor living space](#) to your home. A deck can be as simple as a grade-level platform that stands on its own a few inches above the ground or as intricate as [multi-tiered structures](#) with steps, railings, pergolas, trellises and built-in features such as tables, benches, planters and hot tubs.

If you are planning to add a deck to your home here are **nine** things to consider:

1. Determine your wants and needs.

- Do you plan to use the space for outdoor dining and entertaining or with a pool or hot tub?
- Will you need built-in seating? Consider storage needs too. Benches are great places for built-in hide-away storage.
- Will you add planter boxes?
- Do you plan to place a hot tub in the space?
- Will you include special features like a firepit or an outdoor kitchen?
- How about optimizing a view? There are glass panels that can be used with decking that will give you a clear view of your yard.



This deck over the water includes concealed storage areas, a ramp into the water, an attached dock and a cutout for an existing tree. Benches incorporated into the deck design provide plenty of seating.

8. Planning a Deck Addition

2. Decide where to place the deck.

Outdoor living spaces are often built off of kitchens, living rooms or family rooms to maximize use. You should also consider sun exposure and shade. In Central New York, a deck placed on the south or west side of a home will optimize the warmth of the sun.

If you want to avoid the sun (deck surfaces can become hot and unusable during 90-degree days) build your outdoor space in a north or east facing area. Also consider privacy.



This covered pergola offers an attractive living space on the deck. A small storage building provides storage for outdoor tools and houses the in-ground pool's pump and heater.

8. Planning a Deck Addition

3. Think about size.

What type of outdoor furniture do you plan to use on the deck? Measure the furniture and allow space for pulling out chairs and walking around. Include space for a grill if you plan to use one. If you will be adding a hot tub, fire pit or outdoor kitchen factor the dimensions of those features into your plan.

4. Complement the design of your home.

You may want to consider hiring a designer to help you plan your deck project. A deck that blends with the architecture of your home will add value. The style of your home will dictate the types of materials and accents to use in the project. For example, a contemporary style deck would look odd on a white colonial home. But a deck built with white rails and architectural elements similar to those on the house will add to its appeal. A designer could advise you on product options and how to optimize your outdoor living space.



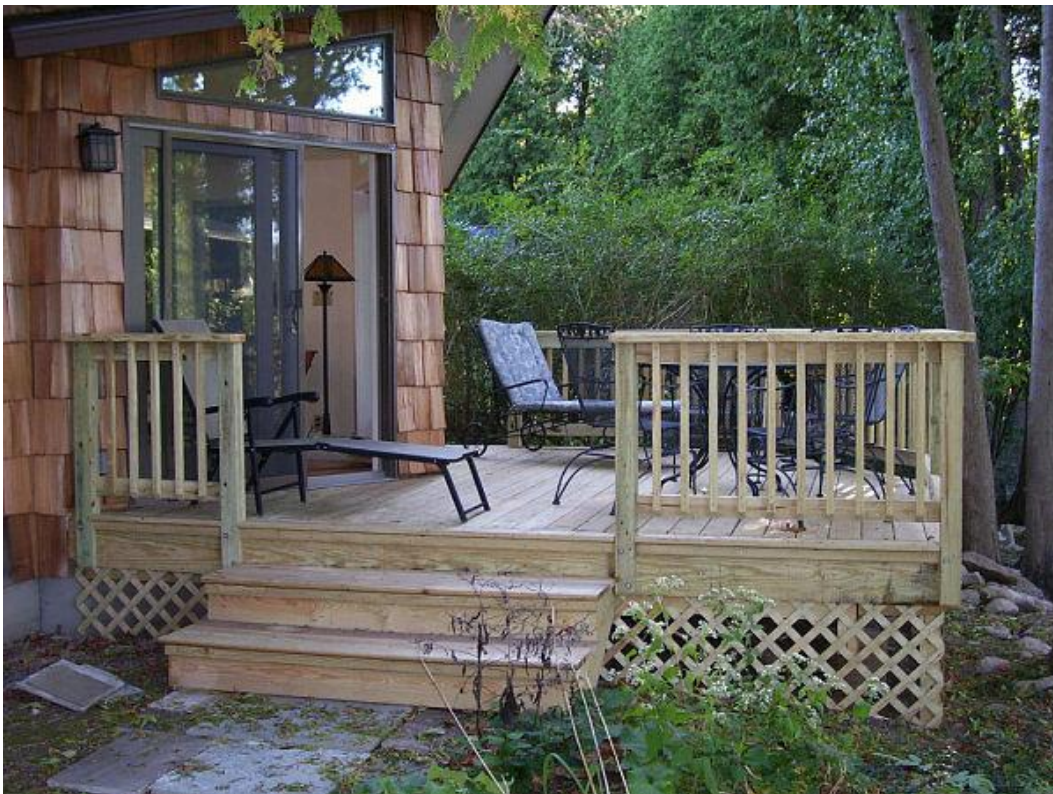
This composite deck addition provides ample space for entertaining. The deck easily accommodates two outdoor dining tables, bench seating and a grill. The deck was designed to blend with two adjacent patio areas.

8. Planning a Deck Addition

5. Choose materials wisely.

Homeowners have a range of options for [decking materials](#). Consider looks, durability, maintenance and finally, cost when selecting decking.

- **Pressure treated wood decking** remains the most popular because it is the most cost-effective and has a life of 10 to 15 years. The downside is that pressure treated wood needs annual cleaning and staining and can cause splinters.
- **Composite decking** is more expensive than wood and holds up for 15 to 25 years. [Composite decking](#) is known for its performance, ease of maintenance and longevity.
- **Vinyl decking** is the most durable product and has a life from 25 to 50 years. Its cost is comparable to composite and it requires the least amount of maintenance, a periodic hosing. One of the advantages of composite and [vinyl decking](#) is that you won't get splinters.



This simple pressure treated deck adds an affordable outdoor living space to this new addition.

8. Planning a Deck Addition

6. Include lighting.

Deck lighting can include wall sconces adhered to an exterior wall, accent lights around the perimeter, post lights, or flood lights affixed to a roof awning or placed near the base of a deck.

Put switches indoors if possible for convenience and consider using dimmers and timers. You may want to include solar lighting and a bug zapper.



Downlights installed on balusters. Glass panels provide a view of the lake.

8. Planning a Deck Addition

7. Plan landscaping.

Spending five percent of the total value of your home on landscaping can add 15 percent or more to the value of your home. If you are landscaping for privacy choose tall, easy to maintain bushes or trees, which can also provide shade. If you add a trellis use climbing plants to enhance the beauty of your deck. The easiest way to add color is to place containers of showy annuals and vegetables on the deck.

8. Plan for maintenance.

Minimally, each spring you will need to clear your deck of debris and dirt. You will need to hose it off or, in the case of wood, use a pressure washer. Dirt can be removed with a stiff scrub brush and commercial cleaners. If there is mold growth, use an oxygen bleach cleaner.

Wood decks will need to be stained annually. After cleaning, let the deck dry out for three days before applying stain.

May is Deck Safety Month[®]. This is the ideal time to inspect your deck. Learn how by downloading our free [7-Point Deck Safety Inspection Checklist](#).

9. Budgeting for your project.

Deck pricing will be impacted by the deck size, materials used, deck design, labor required for the job and any unusual conditions. For example, according to the [Remodeling 2015 Cost vs. Value Report for Syracuse, NY¹](#), the cost for an upscale composite deck addition consisting of a 16-by-20 foot deck which steps down to a 10-foot diameter six-sided platform and includes a bench, planter and railing system is \$35,948.

Talk with your contractor about the best way to achieve the results you desire. Keep in mind that many outdoor living projects can be completed in phases when planning a budget and your project.

Deck Safety Month[®] is a registered trademark of the North American Deck and Railing Association.

¹ © 2015 Hanley Wood, LLC. Complete data from the “Remodeling 2015 Cost vs. Value Report” can be downloaded free at www.costvsvalue.com.

9. Planning a Sunroom Addition

Have you been dreaming about adding a sunroom to your home? A **three-season sunroom** can help extend the summer season and provide a bright retreat for relaxing or entertaining. If your home needs more space, a **year-round sunroom** can be the perfect solution.

Planning a sunroom addition takes some time. We recommend working with a [design-build firm](#). When meeting with your design professional it's important to discuss options for the location and size of the room; the architectural design; number of glass windows, doors and skylights you might want to use; heating and cooling; features and decorative details; and your budget.

Here are **five** tips for creating a list of specifications to discuss with a design professional during your initial planning meeting:

1. Determine the location and size.

Many sunrooms are located on the first floor of a home off of a kitchen or a family room. The roofline of a sunroom and its slope will be important in determining the size and shape of the room and how the addition will connect with the house.

Here are some questions to think about as you consider the location and size of the addition:

- Is the area where you plan to build facing north or south?
- Is there a view from your yard that you want to take advantage of such as a garden or lake view?
- Will the room be built off an area of the home where there is a doorway? It may save on cost if the sunroom is built onto an area of your home where there is already a door opening.
- Where will you exit from the room to the outdoors?
- Will the exit be onto a deck or patio?
- How do you plan to use the room?
- Will you use it primarily for reading and relaxation or do you plan to use the room for dining and entertaining?
- Will it be a multi-purpose room?

9. Planning a Sunroom Addition

2. Design to complement your home's architecture.

The design of a sunroom addition should take into account the architectural style of a home and blend into the existing structure.

It should also be designed for function and to meet your needs.



French doors, transom windows and a large skylight were used to create this breezeway sunroom addition. It provides a place for growing plants year-round and is an elegant transition from the main part of the home to the patio. A fan circulates air and two of the transom windows can be opened to cool the space.

9. Planning a Sunroom Addition

3. Three-season or year-round?

Do you plan to use the sunroom year-round or as a three-season room that you will use from April to November in our climate? A sunroom intended for year-round use will require insulation, heating, and thermal paned doors, windows and [skylights](#). Three-season rooms typically don't require all of these features and therefore tend to be less costly. Address the room's solar exposure when discussing the project with a design professional.



This year-round sunroom features oversized windows that provide a gorgeous view of Skaneateles Lake.

9. Planning a Sunroom Addition

4. Choosing windows, doors and skylights.

The number of [windows](#) and doors used on the perimeter of a sunroom and skylights on the roof distinguish it from other rooms in a house. Glass will allow natural light to stream into the room, help to heat the room on cold days and optimize a view of the outdoors. Windows should be screened and operable to help cool the room on warm days. Consider ENERGY STAR labeled products when selecting windows and doors for your project. [ENERGY STAR labeled windows](#) will feature either double or triple glass panes.



This multipurpose sunroom addition is unique in that it features many different angles. Natural light floods the room through all of the windows and doors, including the skylights in the cathedral ceiling. The end wall is angled out and includes two trapezoid windows above.

9. Planning a Sunroom Addition

5. Plan project features and details.

In planning your sunroom project it's helpful to consider the features and details that will help define the interior and exterior of the space. Among these are:

- Flooring
- Moldings and trims
- Lighting
- Outlets
- Decorative windows
- Roofing
- Siding
- Decking
- Patio stone
- Landscaping



This sunroom addition was built onto the back of a ranch-style home and opens to a deck with a lit gazebo.



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