



Construction & Remodel 101

It always pains me to hear about families Interview the candidates for your team selecting every permanent item/material remodels gone bad, it's hard to hear. If your family is planning on doing a remodel, an they keep to addition, or new construction, there are their word. Ask definite must-dos and don'ts to know about if they will be before breaking ground. For nearly 20 years, overseeing the I've performed and rescued every level of project or if it new construction and remodel project, and will be a proj-I've seen them all: the good, the bad, and ect manager. unfortunately, the ugly.

THE PREP

While it may be fun to surf Houzz, Pinterest, and Angie's list, a personal referral is always the best way to find quality builders, architects, and designers. Luckily, referrals are easy to come by in Southern California. So, interview those friends and contacts who have gone through the process to learn firsthand how their remodel process went. Find out what they liked and didn't like and who they liked and didn't like working For designers, you'll want to make sure they your proposals and contracts carefully. Or with. Check out portfolios and comb websites and social media to find the style you connect with, and be sure to meet with as remodels, a designer's duties are elevated payments, and warranty information are all many talented people as you can.

having a stressful or failed experience when thoroughly. Make sure you understand the for your project and how it will be installed. remodeling their homes. It's supposed to process and their processes from beginning So, you need someone very well-versed. be such a well-earned and well-deserved to end. For contractors, ask how often they Your designer must not only be an expert treat. So, when I hear the horror stories of will be at your job site and reiterate that you in picking aesthetically proper and visually

Interview thoroughly. Often, it's very telling how they answer the more trivial questions.

Will permits be needed, and if so, will they work in the style you are going for? How pull them or will that be the architect's re- does the designer educate her or himself sponsibility? And get an idea of how much on the newest products? Top design pros the permits will be as they can add thou- are treated to factory headquarters and sands to your budget. Ask about the time- manufacturer events to see all the latest line and the daily work hours their crew will products. And keep in mind, every designer keep. In addition to a current license, ask if bills differently so have a clear understandthey have workmen's comp. And be sure ing of his or her fees during construction and to ask if their team cleans up at the end of furnishing phases; it may vary. each workday. Often, it's very telling how they answer the more trivial questions.

because he or she will be responsible for noted appropriately.

appealing materials, but she or he must also be knowledgeable about installation, costs, and quality of the materials. Ask what the designer's collaborative process is like? Has he or she done

ESTIMATES AND CONTRACTS

If you are starting a large build project, read have extensive construction experience better yet, have an attorney look them over since some focus on furnishings only. On before signing to make sure scope of work,



For each hire, narrow it down to three A great designer will go choices and get three estimates. Once you've received the estimates, carefully make sure they all include the same scope of work. Often, homeowners make the mis- to save and where it makes take of going with the lowest bid for the sole reason that it's the lowest, only to find out later, when it's too late, that items were left off the original estimate to keep the bid low. in your budget. And that's

Finally, when making your selection, keep in also make sure everything mind that you really do get what you pay for. is selected on a planned Going with the lowest bid often gets you the schedule and that deliveries lowest-quality work and materials and the arrive on time so the remodlongest timeline. You'll end up spending the money you "saved" when fixing all the avoidable mistakes. And you'll be left with an inferior final result. That stress and headache, not to mention disappointment, just isn't worth it.

PRECONSTRUCTION

Hiring an interior design expert early is the secret to success. She or he will know appropriate contractors, architects, landscapers, and subs for your scope of work. And these will be people he or she has worked with previously and can vouch for.

Honestly, the most disciplined projects are the ones where I'm brought on at inception. So, I feel strongly about hiring a design professional first. Big emphasis on professional. This will not cost you more; it will save you money. I can't tell you how often I get calls for remodels after the construction has are completed to the highbeen completed. At that point, the budget is almost depleted and there's very little patience left. An awful combo. Further, the materials have already been selected and purchased by the contractor or architect. furniture arrives and is installed. Viola! A big no-no. A reputable contractor or architect will have zero desire to select your HOMEWORK materials. If this happens, it's a red alert. The best ones will want to bring on a designer ASAP so the project moves along swiftly.

At the earliest stage, the designer will create the style concept and overall look of your project, keeping the entire team in sync with the vision. She or he will be able to implement your specific needs for your furniture, storage needs, and lighting plan while collaborating with you and your architect. A design pro will make sure your space is fully customized and functional for you.

well beyond the selection of materials and fixtures. He or she will advise you where sense to splurge. She or he will know the cost of all items and help you keep withpriceless! Your designer will el is never held up.

CONSTRUCTION

Once work has begun, your design pro will be the coordinator on the project, communicating directly with the contractor and trades so you won't have to worry about the 200 inevitable questions that come up every day. You can imagine how invaluable this is. He or she will keep you stress-free, keeping the project moving in a timely manner. I like to meet at least once a week onsite during construction to meet with the subs and make certain installations est level. A design expert also knows when to start the furniture selection phase. So

the day after construction is done, all your

If you've done all your planning and team selection well, your project will be a breeze and a really exciting and worthwhile adventure. Trust your instincts and don't second-guess everything. Take a few leaps and have fun. If it's not fun, then something's wrong.

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