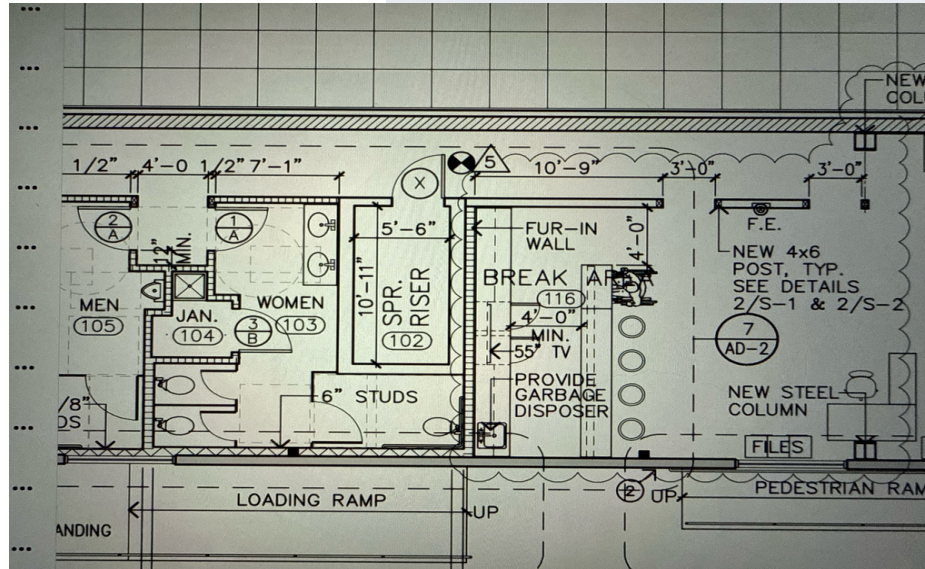


PRE-CONSTRUCTION

A Step By Step Guide

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Ready to build? Plan It!

Readiness and preparedness don't always go hand in hand. It's pre-meditated. It's thought over, it's spun around, set on it's head, analyzed and turned back over again. Ideas are vetted through discussion and real thought, and those ideas that pass muster are the decisions we make. Those decisions are put to paper with intention; they're finalized and done. In construction, we simply refer to this as plans.

Plans can sometimes get complicated and look a lot like the photo above. It takes training to be able to read plans and not get lost in them, and all plans have intentions because of the thought and time put into them. Plans become a benchmark for expectations, and those expectations put to paper tend to eliminate a lot of risk associated with construction. At least, quality plans do. A good set of plans can also effectively shift remaining liability issues away from you. This is part of why I'm such an advocate for professional architectural designs and collaboration. Plans can be a life saver and reference a point in time long after we've forgotten verbal discussions. We're going to be talking a lot about planning in this article, so buckle up, and let's get started.

CHECKLIST

WHAT DO I WANT?

It may sound simple, but just knowing what you want saves you time and money. Window shopping, photos, and social media are great ways to explain what you like and set expectations early.

DO I NEED A PERMIT?

Find out if the work you want to do requires permits or specific approvals. These processes not only take time but often come with costly fees that should be budgeted.

WHAT IS MY BUDGET?

How much are you looking to spend? Have you gotten pre-qualified for a loan? Have you factored for any contingency in your budget? These are all important questions that should be asked before you start construction.

Step-By-Step

The very first step is to make a preliminary checklist. Some examples are:

- Create a short list of what you want to build or change.
- Identify whether these are interior or exterior changes to the property. Exterior changes usually need approval.
- Check with your community, City or County to see if these changes are generally allowed in your area.
- Find out if any of these changes are going to require permitting or community approval.

Now that you have these answers, the next step is:

- If my concept does require community/City/County approval, I'm most likely going to need plans.
- If my concept is generally allowed in my area and no permits are required, I'll move straight to budgeting and finishes.



Colors and Styles



Many different color schemes, styles, designs, textures, palettes and expressions are available to you in today's age, whether that's done in the home or your place of business.

What's important is that anything worth doing is worth doing well. And to do something well, we're going to need to make some decisions when it comes to what we like and how to apply it. Money doesn't grow on trees, so it's important to spend time deciding these things early, and in small doses, before applying the idea to a larger area such as a room or entire home or office building.

So take the time and buy those furniture swatches, purchase those sample-size cans of your favorite paint colors and put them together in a trial run. Knowing is half of the battle in construction, so know what you like early on, and it'll save you time and money in the long run.

Fork In The Road

When it comes to plans, there are two paths to proceed from this point:

1. Consult with an Architect to generate plans for my project.
2. Consult with a General Contractor on a Design & Build basis.

You can hire an Architect if your intention is to seek multiple competitive bids for construction services. Or, if your favorite Contractor offers Design & Build services in addition to construction, that is a valid way to save you money on plans. The difference between the two lies in the trust you have with your builder and knowing what their capabilities are.

Permitting

The process of permitting can be broken down into three phases; initial submittal, comments and revisions, and permit issuance.

SUBMITTAL

The plans are completed, the permit submittal application is filled out, and the plans are either uploaded to the approving authority's web portal or submitted in person. Knowing which depends on the municipality and it's best to ask & verify.

Once the plans are processed, you'll receive an invoice for the initial plan check. Now we wait.

CORRECTIONS & REVISIONS

After a few weeks, you should receive correspondence from the permitting party that your permit is either ready to issue or you have a correction notice.

Correction notices are most common, and it's rare to receive a permit after the first review. So don't worry if you do receive a notice at this time. Sometimes, depending on the nature of the issue, it's common to receive multiple correction notices, one submittal after another. This usually signals that there's a communication breakdown or an issue that was left unresolved. This is when it's best to contact your plan checker directly.

PERMIT ISSUANCE

At this time, your review is completed. Hoorah! You'll usually receive a list of items that the permitting authority has requested, along with an invoice for permit fees, along with some conditions of approval, if any.

Now it's time to schedule commencement of construction.

Relax

Rome wasn't built in a day.

The permitting process can take a long time and it's best to use this time wisely and prepare. Once your plans are submitted, you and your Contractor should be working together to iron out any remaining details and put together a quotation for the project. If any changes are made to your plans during plan check, it's simple enough to make adjustments to the price quote at the time the permit is ready to issue.

