

# Introduction

**I**t is not uncommon for homeowners to feel fearful, uncertain, and overwhelmed when they begin a homebuilding or remodeling project. The goal of this book is to ease those feelings by giving you an understanding of the process. *Designing Your Dream Home* takes a commonsense approach to helping you organize your project, avoid mistakes, and attain your desired end result: a functional and aesthetically beautiful home. I want to prevent you from saying, “I wish I had thought of that!” after your home is built.

This book is also about raising questions to discuss with your architect, interior designer, and builder. Sometimes getting the right answer involves asking the right question. That’s why *Designing Your Dream Home* focuses on helping you formulate the right questions to ask. It encourages dialogue between you and your architect, interior designer, and builder. And it will arm you with critical points to discuss with your team to keep everyone on track. Using detailed and easy-to-use forms and checklists, you’ll inventory and analyze each room and area to be included in your new or remodeled home. These detailed forms will help you design the home that fits your family and your lifestyle.

You’ll learn how to get organized; select your architect, interior designer, and builder; prepare for meetings with your architect; and much more. You’ll also learn how to avoid many common mistakes and what to look for when reviewing architectural plans. At the end of the book, you’ll find a glossary of terms, abbreviations, architectural symbols, and helpful standard measurements.

As the homeowner, you play an important role in the design process. The more forethought and preparation you dedicate to this, the more satisfied you will be with the finished product. Ultimately, it is your level of satisfaction that determines whether you have the home of your dreams.

Of course, money and time are important as well. If you invest your own time and effort by completing the checklists and forms in this book, you will need fewer design and building revisions, which means saving money and time.

No matter how much planning you do, when you build a home, you have an edge if you have an insider's view of the design process. The good news is that you don't have to go to "the school of hard knocks" to obtain this knowledge, because I already have! I've spent the last 20-plus years developing plans, working with builders, and compiling notes on what works (and what doesn't) in the real world of homebuilding and remodeling.

Numerous times I have shared various lists from this book with family and friends who were either remodeling or building their dream home. One in particular was about to place an order for kitchen cabinets in her newly remodeled kitchen. When she compared the size of her plates to the size of the cabinet shelf, she realized the plates would prevent the cabinet doors from closing. Fortunately, she was able to adjust her cabinet order. She called me with heartfelt gratitude that I had raised the question about the size of her dinner plates.

This book will have fulfilled its goal when you have your own "thank goodness I read this book" moment.