



NewHomes.House

HOME PLANS & DESIGN

2020 Categories: Home Plans & Design

BLOG



Home Plans & Design

The right home plan coupled with great design allows you to build the home you always wanted while helping you control costs.

- Home plan designers – The Good and The Bad
- Different costs for different types of home plans
- Cost-effective home plans

Home Plan Designers

With financing and a budget, it's time to talk about who designs homes and how they are designed. There are five main categories of home plan designers.

Architects

When people think of custom homes, often the first thing they think of is residential architects who design home plans for their clients. Leading residential architects design and draft beautiful home designs. In producing these stunning designs, working with an architect can present several challenges. First, an architect is hired by and works for the home buyer. The architect's only priority is (or should be) to satisfy the desires and dreams of their client. The challenge is that their work product is not tied directly to the project budget. This often creates a final project cost (as bid on by a homebuilder) that exceeds the client's budget — often by tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars. Another challenge is that the design often uses expensive and non-production construction methodologies that can drive up the home price even more. Finally, architects are not cheap. Typically, fees range from 8% to 15% of the project cost. For a \$500,000 home, for example, architecture costs could run from \$40,000 to \$75,000. (This is part of the reason custom homes tend to be 20% to 30% more expensive than comparable spec homes.)

Online Home Plans

The second category of home designers is the online home plans sold just about everywhere. There are numerous issues with these plans. The primary issue is that online home plans are designed for a general audience and any changes and modifications can be costly. Every region has different building codes, and online plans do not address this. Most online home plans will need to be redrafted by a local draftsman to adhere to local building codes and requirements. Any money you might have saved by buying a plan online will be spent to redraft the plan for your specific location. Save your money: Do not buy online home plans.



Local Drafters

The third category of home designers is the local draftsman. Often, they will have a plan book of stock home plans that have been designed for the local market. The good news is that a local draftsman knows the local codes, is available, and is often cost-effective. The challenge can be the design element (stock plans that may be years old), and there is no direct relationship to final pricing. As with architects and online home plans, pricing is handled by the homebuilder, and budgets can be overwhelmed quickly.

Homebuilder Home Plans

Local homebuilders will often provide their standard home plans to clients in return for the construction of the home. This fourth category can be effective because the homebuilder provides a fixed price. The downside is that any kind of customization is difficult and expensive to make, if allowed at all. Often, these home plans have been built many times in the region, so your new home would not be unique.

Design/Build Home Plans

The last category of home designers is the true design/build homebuilder. While fairly rare in new construction due to the experience, design staff, and technology required, the design/build process can be very rewarding. The key element is that the design is directly linked to the final cost. Directly linking design and cost is the responsibility of the design/build homebuilder, which produces a project that is within budget. If the budget is not met, the homebuilder doesn't build the home. One thing to keep in mind is that the design / build homebuilder will control project square footage and construction products to meet the budget. Good communication between the home buyer and the builder is essential for a successful design/build program.

NewHomes.House is a true design/build firm. With hundreds of homes designed and built for clients over the last 30 years, we know how to design beautiful homes and keep costs low.

Types of Home Plans and Their Costs

Home buyers often ask about square-footage cost to understand total project cost. Unfortunately, you can only compare the same **type** of home with similar home types and products to make an accurate determination of value.

Types of home plans are categorized as follows (no basements):

- **Single-story homes** (often called "ranchers")
- **Two-story homes**
- **Two-story homes with a main-floor master bedroom**

The best way to understand this is with an example. Consider a 2,000 square-foot home.

The most expensive part of a home is the foundation. In our example, a **single-story** home would have a 2,000 square-foot foundation. A 2,000 square-foot **two-story** home would have a 1,000 square-foot foundation (assuming 1,000 square feet per floor). The same would be true for the roof



system. The single-story foundation and roof would cost twice as much as the foundation and roof for the two-story.

A **two-story home with a main-floor master bedroom** is the most expensive type of home plan. Why? Because a main-floor master bedroom requires a main floor that is the same size as a single-story (for the master bedroom and any secondary bedrooms), and you are adding a second floor. With proper design, there are ways to minimize costs by utilizing certain elements of a plan for additional finished square footage. For example, smaller single-story home plans with a lower-level walkout basement are a popular design to maximize square footage and minimize costs. For two-story homes, utilizing space over the garage is a great way to add additional space inexpensively. And both designs increase resale value if you ever decide to sell.

Cost-Effective Home Plans

Cost-effective home plans efficiently utilize all available space and minimize the foundation and roof systems. While your budget might be more flexible, it's helpful to understand the costs associated with different types of floor plans.

The main design criteria for cost-effective plans include:

- A small foundation
- Living space above all the foundation components (including garage space)
- Building up or down (basements and/or walkout basements) to minimize the size of the foundation
- Minimizing interior space where you don't spend much time, such as grand foyers, dining rooms, and long hallways
- Utilizing great design by bringing the exterior view inside to provide a larger living experience

The following types of home plans are ranked lowest-cost to highest-cost:

- California split-level
- Three-story (or four-story)
- Two-story
- Single-story
- Two-story with a main-floor master bedroom

Great home design does not have to be expensive. The best way to stay within budget is for one firm — a design/build homebuilder — to design and build your custom home. Otherwise, the home design can quickly exceed the budget because our dreams and desires are limitless, but our budget is not.

We Are Here To Help

At NewHomes.House, we believe in providing our home buyers with as much information as possible so they can make the right decisions for their custom home.



Please contact us to schedule a call so we can answer all your questions — it's free, and there is no obligation. We love to talk construction!

Call or text us at **(509) 370-8868**.