Winthorpe | Email Marketing

Client Name: Winthorpe Design and Build

Client Website: https://www.winthorpe.com/

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[Full name], meet Jeff
Your satisfaction is our #1 priority
Why are you priced higher than others?
Dear %FULLNAME%,
Oftentimes potential clients ask me, "Why is there such a price difference between you and your competitors?"
Budget is a big issue for many people, but lower prices can sometimes signal lower value.
People feel a lot of pressure to find the perfect contractor.
They worry that they'll be cheated out of their money.
But if the contractor is trustworthy and does quality work, you should expect the budget to be a little higher.
Mike and Ann's Problem
A little while ago, long-time clients of mine, Mike and Ann, went to an architect about expanding their master bathroom.

The previous winter had been cold.

The bathroom had been built over their garage, and that meant that it, too, was cold. It was also ugly and unappealing. Every day before work, they had to use that bathroom to get ready, and they couldn't take it any longer. They wanted it fixed by the time next winter rolled around. They decided to go to an architect to draw up a few blueprints. The architect recommended two other contractors. Still, since Mike and Ann had worked with me before, they came to me for an estimate. One of the other contractors offered a much lower price than mine. They confronted me about my rates being higher than others. They were concerned I had been cheating them out of their money with previous projects. I showed them the plans we had worked out together, and they compared them to that of the other contractors. Mike and Ann's Solution

Mike and Ann realized that, while the other contractors had given them a rough estimate, I'd included every detail they specified.

Other contractors were vaguer with their plans and didn't look at material prices in real-time.

Another reason my competitors' prices were lower was a failure to budget for things like plumbing and wiring.

In reality, my plans were the most cost-effective.

They hired me, and when we finished, the expenses were almost exactly as I predicted.

Had they gone to someone else expecting a lower price, they'd have been blindsided with hidden fees and ended up with an over-the-budget job.

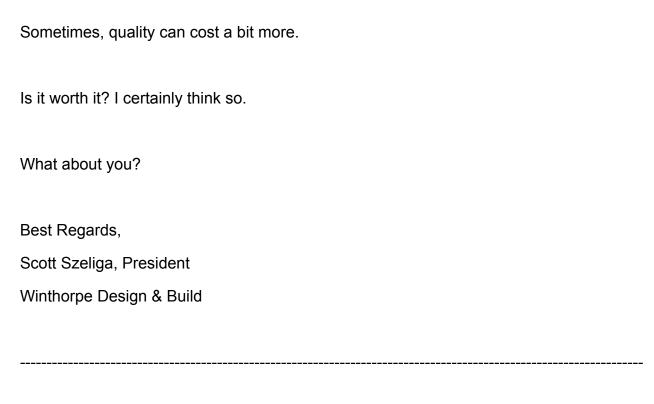
Once they understood why I'd given them the price that I did, they felt relieved.

Because of the trust and honesty between us, we're now good friends.

My contracting services may seem overpriced at first glance, but I budget everything as accurately as possible according to your specifications.

My number one priority is making sure that you, my customer, are fully satisfied with your outcome.

Doing so may look pricey, but your project will turn out closer to how you want if you plan it properly.



What is the average timeline of a custom home or remodel?

Dear %FULLNAME%,

One common question I get is, "What is the average timeline for a project?"

The reality is, there's no way to know for sure.

This makes it challenging to give our clients a hard date for when we'll finish.

A few things influence the estimate we give, but each timeline depends on the factors in each design.

The bigger and more complex the project, the longer it will take.

There are too many unpredictable variables for any timeline to be absolute. Dana and Stan's Problem This couple came to me before the Coronavirus outbreak and wanted to get their basement finished. Stan worked as a principal, which is why they'd recently moved to a new area. Their son was away at college but wanted to come home to stay with them. Dana and Stan had a big family, and the house they purchased didn't have enough room for everyone. They decided to get the basement refinished so their son would have somewhere to stay. We began the necessary demolitions pretty quickly, and that was all going according to schedule. Until the lockdowns hit. We were immediately concerned because we had another project going in another county.

The inspectors there informed us that they would not visit homes that were occupied

because of lockdown procedures.

This meant the projects would have to stop.

Since we'd already demolished their basement, I didn't want this to happen to Dana and Stan, too.

Dana and Stan's Solution

I spoke with Dana and Stan and walked them through their options.

As we worked through them, we checked with the inspectors in their county.

I asked if we could work in the basement if we closed off the upstairs, and if we could videotape our work for them to inspect remotely.

We also had to reach out to the electrical, plumbing, and framing contractors so this project wouldn't get postponed as long as others had been.

Dana and Stan were relieved to have a solution.

But because there was so much back-and-forth, it took about a month to work out.

When we finally got back on track, Dana was so happy that her son would have a place to stay.

If we'd had more than a week's notice that everything would shut down, we could have planned accordingly.

Unfortunately, obstacles like these rarely come with advance notice.

While we can give a rough estimate for project completion, there's no way to kn

Every timeline differs, because each project is unique, and no one knows what the future holds.

So even when a contractor provides an estimate, it's important to remember that anything can happen.

Best Regards,

Scott Szeliga, President

Winthorpe Design & Build

How do I know the design process won't take forever?

Hi %FULLNAME%,

One of the most common questions I hear from clients is, "Why is the design process taking so long?"

A frequent issue in remodeling and construction is figuring out precisely what you need the contractor to do.

Deciding what you want can take some time.

There can be a lot of pressure when communicating your vision for the final result.

It's understandably difficult.

Remodeling is an important decision, but there are ways to make it less stressful.

Kathy's Problem

One of my recent customers, Kathy, came to me wanting her master bathroom remodeled.

At the time, she had only a vague idea of what she envisioned and struggled to come up with the details.

She managed a chain of privately-owned gas stations and didn't have the time to look through home decor magazines for inspiration.

Imagine my surprise when she told me how the last contractor she'd hired had asked her to fetch materials for him!

How was she supposed to oversee the project and ask for adjustments with even more burdens placed on her schedule?

Immediately, I set about making sure that she didn't have to worry about rearranging her life to have her bathroom redone the way she wanted it.

I talked with her, and we tossed around a few ways that we might be able to work together.

I needed to find a way that worked better for her.

Kathy's Solution

Kathy was already an avid Pinterest user.

She had a board where she'd pinned some ideas for her dream bathroom.

She created a shared Pinterest board with our team, and we were able to see the direction she wanted to take the remodel.

Before, Kathy had been afraid that the redesign could take months.

Instead, she had all the inspiration she needed from her nightly chill time browsing Pinterest.

Kathy had already put in the work for us without realizing it.

When we arrived to evaluate her bathroom, I told her that we had limited options for the fixtures she wanted installed, based on the layout of her space.

She immediately knew what she wanted us to do and already had a pin that matched it almost perfectly.

We were able to go straight to drawing up the blueprints, and the project proceeded smoothly from there.

Because we're so committed to making sure our clients are happy with our work, we think outside the box and use methods that other contractors might not.

My number one priority is making sure our clients are 100% satisfied with the outcome of our work—without losing sleep over the tough calls.

Best Regards,

Scott Szeliga, President

Winthorpe Design & Build

I don't want to be upfront about my budget or you'll take advantage of me

Hi %FULLNAME%,

Working as a contractor, people ask me, "Why should I give you my real budget? Won't you just spend it all?"

A common misconception about construction companies is that they want to spend your entire budget.

Discussing money can be stressful for some people, but giving a false answer when we discuss a budget will never help.

Many people seem to believe that offering a lower number means that they can get the same changes for less.

However, contractors create building plans based on the budget you give us. Lowballing just interferes with this process.

Dana's Problem

I once had a client named Dana who bought a house.

She wanted it completely renovated before she moved in. Dana had a big family, and they enjoyed having frequent get-togethers. Dana's kitchen was too small to fit all of her friends and relatives. She had a separate breakfast room, as well as a family room, but Dana didn't want her family to be separated when they came together. Combining the kitchen and breakfast room would be the most extensive part of the project. There was one glaring issue, though. A support beam separated the kitchen from the breakfast room, and it would cost a lot of money to move it. According to Dana's strict budget, we couldn't afford to move it.

After speaking with Dana, we changed the plans and extended the breakfast room over the porch, making it much larger.

When we finished, however, it wasn't what she really wanted.

The support beam still separated the kitchen and breakfast room, and you couldn't see clearly from one to the other.

Dana's Solution

When we explained the cost of moving the beam, she said it was within her price range.

We then had to work around and even undo some of the changes we'd already made to move the beam.

Although we never went over her actual budget, it would have saved time and money if she'd given us an accurate price range from the beginning.

We told her that by giving us an inaccurate price range, she'd limited our options, making it impossible for us to do what she wanted until we discussed it all again.

Dana explained that the number she'd chosen had been the cost of a previous kitchen renovation on a different, smaller house.

She thought this project would cost about the same amount and gave us that number instead of the amount she was willing to put into it.

As a contractor, my priority is to make sure my clients are 100% satisfied with their project, including the money that goes into it.

But, if a client fails to provide an accurate budget, we may not be able to accomplish the project as desired and will end up making unnecessary compromises.

So, instead of fudging your budget, we suggest working with a contractor you can trust, such as McDermott Remodeling!

Best Regards,

What are the benefits of choosing a design/build firm? (feat. Dana and Tom)

Dear %FULLNAME%.

People have asked me, "What are the benefits of choosing a design and build firm over another contractor?"

The answer is simple.

Designing renovations and remodeling your home can be tough, especially if you have to repeat what you want to several different people before you can see it come to life.

Going to one person for designing, building, and engineering can be much more efficient.

It can also alleviate some of the stress associated with building or renovating a home.

Dana and Tom's Problem.

When my clients Dana and Tom moved into their new home, they were in love with it.

The new property, the community, and the pond in the backyard were all perfect.

The only thing they didn't like was the house itself.

Before they came to me they had just finished doing a huge renovation through an architecture firm.
The firm had put them way over their budget.
Tom was very technical and requested a few specifications about the engineering, but Dana only asked for one thing.
She wanted a big kitchen that opened into an equally large breakfast room.
They frequently had family over for dinner and gatherings, so a big eating area was important to her.
She wanted everyone to be able to sit together while they ate.
On a more day to day basis, she wanted the ability to keep an eye on her kids while she was busy in the kitchen.
The kitchen the architects designed failed to fit Dana's needs, and had left the family with no gathering area.
Whenever they went to the architect with their concerns, they directed Dana and Tom to the builders, who showed them the blueprints and blamed the architect.
The whole thing was a nightmare.
Dana and Tom's Solution

When Dana and Tom came to me and explained their situation, I knew I had to fix the architect's mistakes.

I helped Dana and Tom expand their kitchen and built their breakfast room over their porch, giving it plenty of space.

I even managed to keep the counters that Dana loved and move the support beam blocking her view.

I didn't just keep the counters, I incorporated them into the final product, and found a matching island and additional cabinets to put on the new wall.

While architects may be well trained in design, they have no hands-on experience.

Because I am both a designer and a construction firm, I understand the inner workings of a renovation, and can design the layout you want in the most affordable and productive way possible.

Best Regards,

Scott Szeliga, President

Winthorpe Design & Build

What is design/build, and how can it benefit me? (feat. Mika and Brian)

Hi %FULLNAME%,

Clients tend to wonder, "What is a design/build firm? Is that something that could help me?"

Many clients misunderstand what it means to hire a design/build firm and miss out on some of the benefits.

They tend to think that only an architect can design.

They might believe that only an engineer can only do engineering.

And they assume that a construction worker is only qualified to put those plans into action.

Going to different people for design, engineering, and construction is expensive and time-consuming.

That's why I offer more than just construction.

I can help you design your building and complete all of your engineering and construction needs.

From the beginning of your project to the very end, I'll be there to save you time, money, and effort.

Mika and Brian's Problem

Two of my past clients, Mika and Brian, came to me because they needed more space.

They had two sons, one of whom was new to the family.

Their family was growing, but it had no room to expand.

Their house was cramped, and they felt cluttered and uncomfortable.

I talked with them and we walked through everything to come up with a rough estimation of how much everything would cost.

We went through drawing up a more specific and detailed layout of what we intended to build.

When we finished that process, they started discussing taking the plans to an architect, which is expensive — and unnecessary.

Mika and Brian's Solution

What they didn't realize was that I could help from the moment a project begins to the very last coat of paint.

They were surprised and told me they thought we were just making a more detailed investment range.

They thought they would have to bring the plans we drew up to someone else to finish and make them official.

I explained that I ran a design/build firm, and what that meant.

When they learned that I would be taking them through the design process, all the way to getting the permit, they were relieved and grateful.

What is the benefit of choosing a design-build firm?

Dear [Name],

Sometimes, my clients don't realize that I do design work in addition to building and renovating houses.

You may ask, "Why does that matter? Aren't there other people I should go to for that?"

While having several people involved to compare ideas and concepts can be beneficial, that's not always the case.

The expression "too many cooks will spoil the stew" sums up how too much input can ruin the cohesion of a project.

Having too many people with fields of knowledge that don't overlap can lead to miscommunication.

When it comes to a big project, it's best to keep the number of people involved to the essentials.

Mike and Ann's Problem

Long-term customers of mine, Mike and Ann, came to me wanting a new master bathroom.

The one they had was uninviting due to its poor decor and lack of natural lighting.

Its position over their garage was making it unbearably cold in the winter.

They'd had enough and decided it was time for something new.

When they spoke to me, they'd already hired an architect to make renovation plans.

After viewing the plans and listening to the design points Ann wanted, I was astonished at how many of these features the architect had left out.

Their architect had failed to address their lighting preferences, didn't create space for a tub and standing shower, or incorporate a dressing space.

The architect had also failed to factor in our construction needs, and their plans would require additional costly changes.

Mike and Ann's Solution

When Ann told me about all of the specifications she wanted, I worked with them to redesign the bathroom.

I also repurposed the space where the bathroom had been to build them a walk-in closet.

Mike and Ann were astonished that all of their preferences could indeed become a reality, and frustrated that the architect they hired had ignored their ideas.

While going to a separate architect or design firm may seem like a good idea, it may also be a complete waste of time.

Architects may be trained to design buildings, but they're often idealists.

They're better suited for designing things from the ground up, with no prior construction to work around or consider.

The majority of them lack experience in construction or remodeling.

Because of this, they can fail to factor in the practical aspects of remodeling and rebuilding your home.

When you consult someone who can do both, like me, you won't have to worry about spending time and money to redesign your construction plans.

How do I know I can trust you on the extra construction that you're recommending? (Nitin)

Subject: How do I know you're telling the truth?

It's a common concern: a contractor tells you that something needs to be replaced, and you find out later that it was perfectly fine.

There are always shady people in any industry.

But worry not — we don't do things like that. We only recommend extra work if it's absolutely necessary.

If there are other options, we tell you about them.

Nitin's Story

While doing some previous work on Nitin's home, a construction worker accidentally set the outside wall corner on fire.

This did some severe damage to the interior, which we came in to fix.

We had to work within the insurance payout, so we tried to stay on a budget while being as thorough as possible.

Still, as we evaluated the necessary repairs, we noticed some other things that weren't strictly part of what the insurance was covering.

Some stucco was cracked on the second floor, and there was an issue with the window, so we offered to investigate further, and Nitin agreed.

As we pulled back the stucco to start on the repairs, we also found an issue with one of the main beams that held up the second story.

It appeared that it had suffered some water damage due to improper flashing on the roof.

Of course, Nitin wasn't happy at the idea of the additional expense fixing these issues would cost him.

He questioned us a little, making sure we weren't just hunting for problems to fix.

We reassured him that any repair choices were fully up to him.

On top of that, we invited him to look at the water damage for himself.

If the damage had been mild, we could have left it for another day.

But water damage can compromise the integrity of a structure and usually needs to be fixed as soon as possible.

Plus, fixing it all right now while we had things torn apart would be way cheaper than starting all over again later.

Nitin understood this and agreed to the additional repairs.

In the end, Nitin was grateful that we looked into the cracked stucco and found the cause.

Fixing the problem simultaneously with the fire damage was more efficient, and we were able to roll it into the other repairs.

When Extra is Necessary

We get it. No one likes being taken by surprise.

You had a plan for the project and then discovered hidden problems.

Suddenly, everything turns upside down.

The budget may fly right out the window, leaving you wondering if you can even afford to fix your home.

We understand how hard it can be to weigh your finances against the needs of a project.

We always talk to you before doing anything extra, and we provide professional advice about whether or not repairs are truly needed.

We're not out to milk the project, but to get it done as efficiently and promptly as possible.

Winthorpe is a design-build firm, so you don't need to hire an additional architect to draw up plans.

Our designers know all about construction and how to make your design practical, efficient, and stay within your budget.

For a design-build firm you can trust, hire Winthorpe. We can handle your next remodel or renovation.

We provide a more accurate price estimate than other firms, because we gather more details before we begin.

We keep the lines of communication open every step of the way to avoid unpleasant surprises.

Still, we can't control work done in the past, and we can't guarantee that we won't stumble into hidden damage.

All we promise is to get the job done right to the best of our ability.

Winthorpe Design and Build has been serving the Maryland and D.C. area for over 30 years, so we've seen almost every problem and have developed a solution for it.
Contact us for more information or to schedule a virtual consultation.
We look forward to doing business with you.

How do I know I can trust you on the extra construction that you're recommending? (Shens)

Subject: Do I Really Need This Extra Construction?

We understand that tensions run high during a home remodeling or renovation.

It's hard to keep track of everything going on, and you're just praying that everything stays on schedule.

But sometimes, unexpected issues arrive.

And because of some sketchy contractors in the industry, you might wonder if the issue is real and the proposed solution legitimate.

Some builders recommend unnecessary construction in the hopes of making more money, but not Winthorpe.

If we come to you and say that the project needs more work, it's because of a real issue.

Though Winthorpe values integrity and customer happiness far too much to suggest unnecessary work, we still get clients that don't trust our recommendations.

We always do our best to stick to the plan and be as cost-efficient as possible.

But sometimes, things don't go as planned.

We come across some homes with previous work done by other companies.

We've noticed that they tend to take the route best for them, even if it causes you issues in the future.

When we come across projects like this, we make sure to warn you that there could be issues.

Cathy's Renovation Problem

When we showed up to start work expanding Cathy's kitchen area into a larger breakfast/family room, we discovered a problem.

We started to map out the new contribution and where it would tie into the existing roof.

That's when we realized the roof had been compromised.

A bit of water damage was visible from inside the house, but that was just the tip of the iceberg.

This was a flat portion of roof, so water tended to pool, giving it plenty of time to work its way down.

There was extensive water damage, and it needed to be addressed in order to finish the expansion.

Of course, we offered to repair and replace the damaged portions of the roof, which added a significant cost to the project.

No one is happy to hear that most of their roof needs replaced.

But the final effect was worth it.

Because we had to remove more of the roof than originally planned, we were able to join everything together seamlessly.

No more flat roof pieces worked into the main roof, but a single, unified cathedral ceiling with a fantastic roofline from the street.

This is a perfect example of how more work may need to be added in the middle of a project.

In this case, the water damage was obvious as we pulled back the roofing.

But sometimes, the issues are more subtle, and the client may hesitate.

They're thinking, is this extra work really necessary, or is it just to make more money?

How Do I Know You're Going to Make the Best Selections for Me?
For a design-build firm you can trust, hire Winthorpe Design and Build.
Rest assured that when you work with us, you're working with the best design-build firm available.
Our skilled designer, Craig, is famous for inventing innovative solutions to design and construction problems.
Problems can happen, but we're prepared for it.
That's why it's so important to trust your contractor.

Subject: How Do I Know You'll Make the Best Selections for Me?

The summer and fall are the ideal times for home improvement projects.

Whether it's a complete renovation or new decor, change can be just what you need to spruce things up.

But there's also stress that accompanies the joy.

How do you know what items are best for the project?

Not only must everything be sized to fit, but you must also choose colors, designs, and sometimes the materials for your remodel.

Cathy's Dilemma

Our client, Cathy, is a busy working mom who manages several gas stations.

She didn't have time to leisurely look at carpet, fixtures, and paint swatches in multiple stores.

Cathy wanted to be sure that everything would look good once installed.

She'd gone through decor disappointment once before, with a bathroom redesign.

She took cellphone photos of things she liked in the store, checked them while in the room, and made her choice.

Yet once it was finished, the colors didn't look like the pictures.

The lighting in the bathroom changed everything, even though the photos were pretty accurate.

She wanted to avoid making that mistake this time.

But how would she give the decision the time it deserved with her busy schedule?

Winthorpe's Solution

During the planning phase, we send our fabricator to you with hundreds of samples.

We show you tile, countertop, cabinet, flooring, and granite samples, as well as fixture styles and finishes.

To make the right decision, you have to see the items in their final environment.

You may love that tile, but how does it look with your countertops?

At Winthorpe, we do everything we can to help.

We explained all of this to Cathy, and she was thrilled.

Consolidate Your Choices

Instead of visiting multiple stores to look at their samples, we bring all of them directly to you.

Most clients don't realize that lighting affects the way samples look in the store, so it's essential to view them in your home.

Chances are, your house won't have the same alighting as the store.

You may like something there, then take it home to realize it looks way different.

By viewing our samples in your home, you can see how they look *before* we begin your project.

change your mind after more consideration.
Don't choose something you won't like after it's installed.
Hire Winthorpe Design & Build, and we'll help you make all the right selections.
Our number one priority is customer satisfaction, and we go to great lengths to prove it.

How Do You Complete a Project from Start to Finish?

Subject: [What Steps are Involved in a Home Remodel Project?]

Clients of construction firms often feel the need to oversee every step of the project themselves.

They often ask, "How do you complete a project, from start to finish?"

This is a valid question.

We understand that you want things done right.

It's your home, after all.

Lucy & Peter's Story

Lucy is a nurse, and Peter is an administrative doctor.

With a blended family, they had six kids in and out of the house.

They needed more space because the house was feeling too small.

And with that much going on, they also had pretty busy schedules.

After watching their neighbors remodel their house, Lucy and Peter were under the impression that they'd have to personally manage the construction process to make sure it went right.

Their neighbor had needed to direct the plumbers and electricians on what to do, because the remodeling firm hadn't provided a project manager.

Peter and Lucy knew it would be tough to work that into their busy lives.

Still, they thought it was time to remodel and decided to dive in.

So when they contacted us, Lucy and Peter asked up front about what kind of time commitment we'd need from them.

It pains us to hear clients expect that they'll have to do our jobs for us.

Sure, we need some time and attention from our clients in the design and planning phase.

We bring samples to our clients so that they can choose fixtures, colors, and patterns.

But it's NOT your job to direct the electricians or fetch supplies.

That's what you're hiring US to do, and we won't let you down.

Winthorpe places a project manager on every site until the project is done.

Winthorpe is Here to Make it Easy

A project manager's job is to oversee all the workers.

They communicate with you to discuss what you want, then carry it out.

We never waste time going over every detail or potential issue unless it's necessary.

Other firms have made their *customers* run errands for them (like picking up materials).

With Winthorpe, you'll *never* get stuck doing our work for us.

We factor time and supplies into our price estimates, which is why they're more accurate.

Efficiency is vital when it comes to doing a project right.

We discuss your budget and factor that into the planning and design phases.

Contact us today to learn more!
It's our mission to get every detail of your project flawless, so that you can live happily.
We value you at Winthorpe Design & Build.
This information goes into designing and building your project.
Some of the questions may seem strange, but they all have a purpose.
We ask you to fill out a questionnaire so we can get to know you better.
Winthorpe takes time to learn about <i>you</i> .
Most companies only talk about themselves and their portfolio.
Accuracy is a priority, so we make sure to know about everyone who will live there.
That's not always possible, but we'll always be honest about what we can and can't do.
We do everything we can to get you what you want and stay under cost.

What if Things Go Wrong During Construction?

[Subject:] If things go wrong during construction, how will you make it right?

As your home redesign project gets underway, you're sure to be excited.

You may also feel a bit of apprehension, too, which is only to be expected.

Construction doesn't always go off without a hitch.

Sometimes, people make mistakes. But it's what happens afterward that really counts.

Nitin's Misfortune

While doing work for one of our clients, Nitin, we needed to install a set of custom-ordered windows.

These windows had been ordered months prior and made to fit the dimensions provided.

However, when we received them and double-checked the measurements, we noticed a huge problem.

Two of the windows — and large ones, at that — were incorrectly built.

We worked on some interior and exterior drawings and brainstormed some possible solutions.

Then we called the client to inform him of what had gone wrong.

Needless to say, Nitin wasn't happy.

He wasn't angry with us, because we weren't the ones who built the windows incorrectly.

Still, it's very frustrating when renovation problems hit you out of nowhere.

Nitin had solid plans for how he wanted his new dining room area to look, and the botched window sizes changed everything.

A Creative Solution

Before we called Nitin to tell him the bad news, we were already working on possible solutions.

We sent him drawings and pictures, then met him at the house we were remodeling.

After we explained our design plans, Nitin agreed to the new construction plan.

We were able to pivot so quickly because we'd already built trust with our client.

Early on in the project, our demolition efforts revealed extensive water damage to a main support beam.

We recommended fixing it while we worked on the rest of the house.

So when we offered an alternative plan for the windows, he trusted us to get it done right.

The Winthorpe Way

Some construction companies recommend extra work that isn't strictly necessary, just to make more money.

Other contractors may hide issues if they're trying too hard to stay under budget and get the job done quickly.
We don't do either of those things.
If we find an issue, we bring it to your attention.
We're honest about how serious the issue is and what it will take to fix it.
Some problems don't <i>need</i> to be fixed.
But when it comes to water damage, it's best not to fool around.
It was obvious that the support beam needed replaced, and our willingness to finish the project no matter where it led helped Nitin trust our recommendations about the missized windows.
Any project can hit snags.
How you deal with them is what sets you apart from the crowd.
You can throw up your hands and quit, or you can buckle down and find a way to fix it.
It may not always be easy to deal with problems.
But the end result is so much better when you take it seriously and try your best.

We can't promise that our projects will run smoothly and avoid all problems.

All we can promise is that we'll make it right for you in any way that we can.

That's why Winthorpe Design & Build has been around for over 30 years.

We serve the Maryland and D.C. area with some of the region's finest remodeling and renovation work.

Contact Winthorpe today for a design consultation, available over video from the comfort of your home.

How Do You Maintain Quality Control?

[Subject] How do I know you'll maintain adequate quality control?

When you entrust your home to someone else's care, it's easy to worry.

After all, the contractors' standards may not match yours,

What if something is a little crooked? How good is good enough?

A lot goes into making the finished product not only look good, but also last a lifetime.

If your builder doesn't ensure quality every step of the way, your renovations could fail prematurely.

A reputable contractor may cost you more up front, but it's always worth it in the end.

Dana & Tom

We did some work for a couple awhile back,

Dana is in the IT realm, and Tom is a retired police officer.

After retiring from the force, Tom took up a second career as a general contractor, or "handyman."

That meant he was very interested in the "bones" of the remodeling project Winthorpe was completing for him.

He knew how building works, and he was interested in the nitty-gritty details that most people don't care about or understand.

Of course, a client like Tom would realize right away if we were pulling one over on him.

But since we don't operate that way, we had nothing to worry about.

Attention to Detail

Tom was the perfect client to appreciate the effort we put into doing all of our jobs with the utmost focus on quality.

We seal test all of our ductwork, use constant pressure flow for all of our plumbing, and use quality waterproof materials beneath all tile that we lay.

We also use dual-fuel heating systems to give our clients more options when it comes to heating their homes each winter.

All of these fine details contribute to a better remodeling outcome.

These are the boring details that rarely interest our average client.

They're more concerned with choosing colors, patterns, and fixtures.

What most clients *don't* realize is that the background details heavily affect their design options.

Using a constant pressure system like we do allows better water pressure and enables clients to use multi-flow shower fixtures that otherwise wouldn't work.

Laying the correct base material beneath our tile means that it won't crack, shift, or let water reach the subfloor.

All of these things are important to the quality of the finished product.

Since Tom was himself knowledgeable in the ways of construction, he loved diving into these details.

We enjoyed having a client who understood every aspect of the project and was able to appreciate the care we put into choosing our materials.

The Importance of Trust at Winthorpe

Tom trusted us to do the project right because he could see that everything we told him was true.

For clients who are less knowledgeable about construction, it may feel like they're taking our word on faith.

That's why we worked so hard to build a solid reputation as an honest and straightforward company.

Winthorpse Design and Build has been in business for over 30 years, serving the Maryland and D.C. area with top-notch design and build services.

At Winthorpe, our number one concern is getting the job done right and making sure you are happy with the results.

Contact us today for a remote consultation to see what Winthorpe Design and Build can do to upgrade your home.

We have a project manager on the project at all times and that's your go-to person and we're able to direct the subs.

Every project I've ever done I've started with an architect.

Subject: Should I hire an architect and a builder?

Dear [Name]:

imate, and they asked me if they should go to an architect to draw it all up.

I told them that that wasn't necessary and that I could provide the same services.

They decided they would be more comfortable with an architect doing the designs anyway.

The Problem

Blake and Cindy had the architect come over to the house.

He and his team measured everything and drew up the designs.

They came back to show me the plans, and I saw exactly what I had expected: the architect had drafted an impractical and unworkable design.

Blake and Cindy were confused by my reaction.

"The architect had a team come out and measure everything," they said. "There's no way they got it wrong."

I had Craig, my own company's designer, come out and show them what was wrong with it.

Not only had the architect ignored the necessary half wall that would allow them to see from the kitchen to the family room, but there was also an even more critical mistake.

The planned addition would be five feet out from the rest of the house, and almost twelve feet higher than their backyard.

The architect hadn't included any stairs in his design!

They had paid this architect almost \$8,000, and he had failed to include design elements that would be critical for it to succeed.

Blake and Cindy's Solution

When Blake and Cindy explained their situation, I made it my mission to fix the mistakes caused by this careless architect.

Cindy, Craig, and I sat down and worked out some changes that wouldn't stray too far from their ideal home.

We designed the screened-in porch they wanted.

We also gave them the second story Blake dreamed of, complete with the perfect master bedroom and bathroom.

They couldn't understand why the architect they'd used was so expensive if he didn't even know how to design a livable home.

By the time we brought our construction plans to life, they had everything they needed and more.

Blake and Cindy couldn't have been happier.

While hiring an architect may seem like the best idea, they are often overpriced and under-deliver.

If you're determined to hire an architect, make sure to at least have your lead builder there to keep him grounded in reality.

Otherwise, you may lose valuable time and money that you could have put towards your construction.

Contact form submitted

Thank you email Should I hire an architect and a builder? What is the average timeline of a custom home or remodel? How do you complete a project from start to finish?

What are the benefits of choosing a design/build firm? (feat. Dana and Tom)

What is design/build, and how can it benefit me? (feat. Mika and Brian)

What is the benefit of choosing a design-build firm?

Preliminary design stage

Why are you priced higher than others?
I don't want to be upfront about my budget or you'll take advantage of me How do you maintain quality control?
How do you complete a project from start to finish?
What is the benefit of choosing a design-build firm?

AWARENESS

What is the average timeline of a custom home or remodel? (can we change to just new construction)

Every project I've ever done I've started with an architect. Should I hire a local architect to get drawings before hiring a builder?

What are the benefits of choosing a design/build firm? (feat. Dana and Tom)

How Do I Know You're Going to Make the Best Selections for Me?

How do you maintain quality control?

How do I know I can trust you on the extra construction that you're recommending? (Nitin)

What if things go wrong during construction?

Why are you priced higher than others?

I don't want to be upfront about my budget or you'll take advantage of me

DESIGN

Should I hire an architect and a builder?

How do I know the design process won't take forever?

What is design/build, and how can it benefit me? (feat. Mika and Brian)

How do I know I can trust you on the extra construction that you're recommending? (Shens)

How Many Projects Have you Designed that Never Get Built?

A lot of people get seemingly endless ideas when they're considering designing a new space.

Not all of these designs can be put into place. But why do designs fail?

Kush's Budget Concerns

We'd drawn up a preliminary custom home plan for one of our clients. He emailed us

back saying he had concerns about the project staying within his budget.

I suggested a phone call, and he agreed. I wanted the chance to discuss the details with

him in a more intimate and connected setting.

As we got further into the discussion, it became clear that his main concern was that the

project would spiral out of budget -- by a margin of \$2,000-300,000.

This worry came from what his friends had experienced with custom homes and his

encounters with smaller projects.

I learned the root of the problem often came back to the use of an architect. They'd

hired an architect to create a design, then allowed contractors to bid on the project.

The problem was, the bids came back way higher than their total budget. Having seen

this play out among his friends and their custom homes, Kush was understandably

apprehensive.

Worse yet, he'd experienced an abandoned project of his own -- one that went so far

over the budget that it no longer made sense to undertake.

Kush's Fears Put to Rest

Wary of projects that shattered a budget and then got abandoned, Kush asked us how

many projects we'd designed in the past three years that we never built.

We answered: zero.

I explained to Kush that part of the problem with his past projects was splitting the

designing and build aspects between two parties.

The architect has his own incentives, disconnected from the concerns of the final builders. An architect is concerned solely with the aesthetics of a design, not the practicality of it.

But Winthorpe is different. Our ultimate goal is always to see the project built.

When we create a design, we take practicality into account from the very beginning.

Architects have a MUCH higher rate of designs that never get built.

Architects often get paid by commission. This means there's a built-in incentive for more hours spent on more extravagant drawings.

But we're more interested in seeing our clients' projects all the way through.

Unlike architects, we don't make money on a design that never gets completed. We focus on building -- design is just how we find the best means to get there.

Our complex assessment process is something most architects don't implement because they lack first-hand experience in bringing a project to completion.

Our goal throughout the design process is to make sure our clients are happy with the final project.

That's why we only had two or three scrapped projects in the last ten years.

Winthorpe Design and Build has decades of experience in the industry. We've seen and overcome just about every challenge, and we'd be more than happy to help you, too.

Why are Permitting Fees so High?

So many people in the industry aren't addressing this issue, so let's talk about the recent changes in permitting fees and how they're different from before. I will explain why the costs have changed, their impact, and recent code changes enacted in certain Maryland counties.

A Little Bit of Backstory

Winthorpe Design and Build recently had a client concerned about these fees. One of the first topics they brought up when we sat down was whether we had included all the costs for their project in the total. They explained that they had talked to a few other builders who had excluded certain expenses and fees from the price estimate, only to let them hit the client later.

We went over the different expenses with them, covering everything. We explained that permitting fees increased this past year and would likely continue doing so well into the following year. So far, the average fee has gone up from \$125 to an average of \$725 -- a 580% increase.

These fees significantly affected the total cost of their build, as it did every other homeowner. As they began to understand that, we thought it might be pertinent to re-evaluate the square footage of the projects they intended to add to their home. They concluded that, while it would impact their budget, they didn't think it was enough to downsize the scale of the project.

Why the Change?

This county justified the increase in building fees by saying they needed more money for their school system. People typically agree that funding schools is a worthy endeavor. Still, the county never addressed whether *all* the money from this fee

increase would go to the schools, or only part of it. If some or most of the money went to something *other* than the school district (which has happened in the past), people wouldn't feel as generous about it.

How Does this Impact Homeowners?

Other than the evident financial impact, other things will change t in the process of building, updating, renovating, and adding to a home. One thing that's important for homeowners to keep in mind when looking for a builder is the amount of effort they put into staying up-to-date.

People don't generally realize that a good builder should take classes and gather the most relevant information on recent events whenever they can. If a builder fails to participate in ongoing training and stay up-to-date on what's going on in the construction world, they won't be aware of fee increases or code changes. This ignorance can lead to complications with your build and unexpected fees down the line.

Ongoing Training is Vital to Winthorpe Design and Build

At Winthorpe Design and Build, our team of builders is constantly receiving and implementing much-needed training. They're also meticulous about staying updated on any new codes implemented in Maryland and D.C. Most of our builds don't just meet these codes -- they *exceed* them.

We frequently discuss recent and upcoming code changes, allowing us to calculate their impact on our current and future builds. We analyze the situation and devise a plan to ensure that all our structures comply with the codes and do far more than strictly necessary.

We Don't Settle for the Bare Minimum -- and Neither Should You

If you sat down to read the codes for yourself, you wouldn't settle for a build that did the bare minimum to comply with building regulations. In contrast, most builders do just enough to make your build scrape by without violating codes but rarely sit down with you to go over *all* the things you need to know.

Our builders have the knowledge, insight, and planning skills they need to sit down with you and go over permitting fees, your building costs, and any relevant codes in as much detail as necessary. They take the time to discuss what you had in mind for the build and what it would entail. Once we establish your wants and needs, our builders

compare them to local codes and regulations, working with you to develop a successful build that fits your dream.

If you want to hire a design and build team that works *with* you, visit our website and experience our new process, including virtual consultation and design services.

You can also contact us via:

Office Phone: 301-854-2092

Metro Phone: 202-600-2515

Our Virtual Contact Form

You're Not Trying to Convince Me to Use a Drawing You Already Have... Are You?

When it comes to remodeling, designing, renovating, or building your home, it's important to know what you're getting into ahead of time.

Unfortunately, one of our clients had to learn that the hard way.

(Fortunately, it all worked out in the end, thanks to the skilled team at Winthorpe Design and Build.)

So what happened?

This client and his wife came to us expressing interest in a custom home build.

We happily agreed to help them -- that's our specialty, after all.

We set an appointment to sit down, work out the details, and make sure everyone was on the same page.

Throughout the meeting, I could tell something was bothering the husband.

I asked him what was the matter, and eventually, he broke down and told me.

This wasn't the first time they'd gone to a custom home designer, and their last experience wasn't too great.

When pressed, the couple explained their poor experience:

Despite advertising himself as a custom builder, and having "custom home builder" in his title, the person they'd worked with was *not*, in fact, a custom home builder.

These clients proceeded to express their concerns about building the specialized home they wanted and were skeptical about whether we'd be able to deliver.

So what happened last time?

As it turned out, the last guy they had worked with had sold them the lot for the home.

Then, after around ¾ of the planning had been completed, they realized he was just drawing a variation of a plan he'd already done and posted on his website.

They could customize the inside, but their options were extremely limited.

When it came to making choices about things like floor plans, roofing, and so on, they didn't seem to get a choice.

That's not a custom build. That's someone using a limited template for their own convenience.

The concerns these clients had were well-founded, based on this poor experience with another builder.

Winthorpe Design and Build proved a much better custom design and build team for this couple, and they ended up quite satisfied with our work.

Sure, there are a lot of good designers and builders out there. They may even be top-notch, highly skilled workers.

But following a set of pre-designed blueprints is different from adapting on the fly.

If you're a builder who doesn't remodel, you're not used to making changes as you go -- and you're less aligned with the client's needs

That's why Winthorpe Design and Build is different.

We started out as a remodeling company over 25 years ago.

It wasn't long until a client came to us and said that they'd done all the possible renovations on their house, and it still wasn't enough.

They said they wanted a custom build, and that we were the men for the job.

Since then, Winthorpe Design and Build has been dedicated to delivering people the best custom home designs and construction possible.

But we never forget our roots, and still do the occasional remodel or renovation if that's what our client needs.

Surprise!

Alternate subject line: Do you love surprises?

Hi [First Name],

I love surprises!

It's nice to get an unexpected gift or to unknowingly walk into your own birthday party where people suddenly break into cheers as you enter the room. Such things never fail to make me smile.

But not all surprises are pleasant...especially when it involves unforeseen expenses and you're caught unprepared.

Which reminds me of my clients who were a little worried when they hired us.

They're a couple from DC who wanted to add a third story to their home. One of their biggest concerns was that they might go over budget. This was a big project for them and they just got approved for a loan by their bank.

Their worry stemmed from an experience that their friends had with their own home improvement project...

Initially, their friends received a preliminary estimate with a basic floor plan. Then, they went to the bank and were approved for the amount of money that their contractor and architect agreed upon.

While the construction was going on, their friends were told that the project price increased by a little over 30%. The problem was they didn't have the money to pay for the sudden and unforeseen price increase.

The drawings had to change and they had to go back to the bank to get re-approved for the new drawings. Ultimately, the project took much longer to finish because of all the hassle that was due to the unforeseen changes.

My clients told me that they couldn't wait a year for the project to get done. They were expecting a child and they both needed to know what the costs were going to be.

As I listened to them closely, I felt their concern. To ease their worry, I explained that my team and I do things differently than most architects and builders in the area. They were both happy to hear what I had to say.

Well, this is how we do things:

As we start to design, we determine the costs involved on each phase of the preliminary design and working drawings so that we know exactly where we are. We also estimate the costs that may be incurred if changes need to be made.

We constantly think about how it's going to go together and fine-tune the budget along the way. Our experience and expertise enable us to find ways to deliver the results you want while staying on budget.

There won't be any surprises like, "We spent a month on these drawings and I just paid you for them. And now you're telling me the project is outside my budget?!?"

When you hire us to remodel or renovate, the only surprise we want you to have is the delight you'll feel when you see the transformation in your living space.

It would be a privilege to give you that pleasant surprise.;)

Are they telling the truth?

Alternate subject line: Are they really...?

Hi [First Name],

Are your contractors really what they say they are?

You see, a lot of them call themselves custom builders.

First, they'll ask you what you want. They'll even say to assure you, "We're custom builders. We can do all these things."

But somewhere down the line, your wants get cut down to "This is what we can do."

One of my clients knows how frustrating this can be.

He and his wife wanted an office and a play area for their kids. Their contractors left these two rooms out of the design. Later, when these rooms were incorporated into the design, the contractors just took parts from other areas of the house. The end result wasn't anything our clients wanted.

They just had their builder finish the project and waited six months before they moved in. Worst of all, they hired another contractor to renovate the house just so it would be close to what they wanted their home to be. The builder couldn't even change the footprint much, but at least the house was a bit more like what they had envisioned.

My clients were referred to us by their realtor who heard good things about us. They needed a contractor for a house they just bought. Someone told the realtor that we really listen to our clients and then actually deliver what they want.

And so she recommended us to the clients.

When they met us, they were initially skeptical. I couldn't blame them because they've been burned before. The husband even asked, "Are you going to do what I want or are you going to do what you want?"

I assured him, "We're going to do what you want. We are going to make some suggestions or maybe explain why we might design a room a little bit differently. But at the end of the day, we're going to build your house as you like it."

That was all my client needed to hear.

Things have worked out really well since we sat down and talked. His realtor told me that he even went out of his way to say that he appreciated the recommendation.

Like I said, many contractors claim that they are custom builders, but only a handful of them truly are.

Winthorpe Design and Build is an honest-to-goodness custom builder. We actually listen and we care about what you want. Our previous clients can attest to that.

So if you're looking for a true-blue custom builder, look no further. We're here to bring your dream home to life.

"That's final!"

Alternate subject line: "That's all, folks!"

Hi [First name],

Have you had your home remodeled or renovated?

If so, chances are, after you signed off on the drawings and the contract, everything was already final. You didn't hear from the contractor again until the project was finished.

Well, that's what happens with other contractors.

One of my clients told us that when she recently had her basement finished by another builder, everything was done according to what was on the plan. The contractor told them, "This is what we agreed on. This is what we're building. This is what we're doing."

Now that the project has ended, her husband often tells her, "Boy, I wish this room was just a hair bigger." She realized that they were never consulted after the construction began, so now they were stuck with the outcome that they weren't satisfied with.

That's why, for her next remodeling project, she contacted Winthorpe. She had heard that we're true custom builders, so she decided to take a chance on us.

I think she's glad she did because she now says this about us: "Since the job started, you've always wanted to make it the best. You and your team didn't seem like you're just trying to get the job done."

My team and I understand that some things are hard to visualize at the beginning of the project. Sometimes, our clients think they already have a good idea of what they'd like to be done in their homes. But a lot of things come together during the construction itself, and that's when they get a clearer picture of what they really want.

That's why we make design changes, offer suggestions to make the project better, and get inputs from our clients *all throughout the project* – not just at the beginning. We constantly think of what's important to our clients.

Our top priority is making sure that you're going to live in a house you love. So nothing is ever final until we deliver exactly what you want.

So if you're thinking of remodeling or renovating your home, give me a call. I'll listen carefully and make sure that you'll love the final outcome.

Don't talk to a civil engineer without reading this

Alternate subject line: Before you talk to a civil engineer...

Hi [First Name],

Whether you're having a new house built or renovating your home, there's something you need to know before you contact a survey company and talk to a civil engineer.

A civil engineer's job is to design structures in your lot, determine where the septic field or sewer line goes on your property, and make sure that everything meets the code.

That's all good.

But experience has taught us that, oftentimes, if someone's not overseeing what an engineer does on your property, you'll have a hard time getting your house on the best part of the lot. That's because they often pick areas in the lot and work on them...when they should start with the house on the site and then work around it.

What ends up happening is you'll have to adapt to whatever the engineer did. It would be such a waste (no pun intended) if he puts the septic field in the best location to build a house or a pool.

So you really need to have a builder who understands your vision for the property, including where you want your house to be built and how you intend to use the yard.

You must develop a master plan with your builder before you hire a civil engineer.

With a master plan in place, you can tell the engineer what structures you want to put in different parts of your property. For instance, you can specify the location of the house, the pool, and the parking area. That way, the engineer will have to adapt to what you want instead of the other way around.

Need a master plan for your lot? We're here to help. Get in touch with me and together we'll figure out the best way to build your dream house as well as the surrounding structures on your property.

._____

"I know you guys are looking out for me..."

Alternate subject line: Trouble behind the walls...

Hi [First name],

Imagine this...

Your house is being renovated and you have the peace of mind that comes from the certainty that the project will turn out well. You don't have the urge to check your house every so often because you know that your contractor and his team have your best interests at heart.

Well, that's exactly what one of my clients said about our team:

"You know, Scott, I don't feel like I have to go by and check this house every day to see what you guys are doing, because I know you guys are looking out for me."

It felt nice to hear her say that. I could sense that she actually meant it.

Now, what made her say that? Here's the back story...

She once had her master bathroom renovated. There were a number of issues behind the walls, including water leaks. She wasn't aware of the issues because the contractor didn't bring them up. Since fixing those problems wasn't part of the contract, the renovation team simply closed up the wall and kept going until they finished the project.

So you can just imagine how disappointed my client was when she discovered that her brand-new master bathroom had water leaks behind the walls.

When we renovated her house a few months back, we found some problems with the plumbing. Like her previous contractor, we could've just covered up the issues to keep our schedule. Anyway, there's no way to see everything behind the walls.

But that's not how we do things. We don't take the easy way out. Also, client satisfaction is extremely important to us. As we always say, we want our clients to love where they live.

So we told her, "This might be a time to switch out the plumbing because it looks like it has been leaking at some point."

We also made several suggestions and recommendations to ensure that she got the best possible outcome.

When she saw her newly-renovated house, she was over the moon!

It was heartwarming to hear that she knew we were looking out for her. My team and I were also happy to realize that we have gained her trust.

At Winthorpe, we are committed to helping you create a living space that you and your family will love for years to come. So if we find issues in your home or there are things we can improve, we'll tell you upfront.

We don't do cover-ups because we truly care about our clients and want the best for them.

So if you're looking for a contractor you can trust, you can be sure that we fit the bill.

[Full name], meet Jeff...

Hi [Full Name],

Let me introduce you to Jeff, our lead carpenter.



(He's the guy in black, shown here with Jerry, our project manager.)

He's been with us for quite some time now. He started working here right after he graduated from high school. I'd say he's one of the most valuable assets in our team.

Recently, he worked on a project with us. Our clients were so happy with everything he did for them that the lady *gave him a hug* on our last day in the project.

What makes Jeff valuable to our team?

Well, aside from his formidable carpentry skills and likable personality, he has that special ability to help people make good decisions and feel good about them.

He knows his stuff so well that he can clearly explain why one thing would work better than another when he presents options to our clients.

Jeff's ability is remarkable, but I think it all boils down to the fact that he cares a lot about people. Like the rest of us in our team, he wants only the best for our clients.

He takes our slogan seriously: "We want to love where you live." So he makes sure that he steers our clients in the right direction when they make decisions. Then he makes them feel confident about their choices.

They love him for it!

We're really fortunate and privileged to have people like Jeff in our team – people who are exceptionally good at what they do and who truly care about our clients. You don't find them just anywhere.

They make us proud to work with them.

So the next time you need some work done in your home, give us a call. You can be sure that your home improvement project will be handled by able, reliable, and caring hands.

Your satisfaction is our #1 priority

Hi [First Name],

Have you ever said something like this about your home?

"I wish we would have centered the fireplace..."

"I wish we would have done this with the floor..."

"The architect said...but what we really wanted..."

These are but a few of the unfortunate things we've heard from our clients over the years.

They all had one thing in common—they weren't happy with the outcome of their building or remodeling projects.

They had a vision of their dream home, but their architect had different ideas.

Speaking of architects, let me share what I gleaned from my conversations with clients...

Some architects don't give their clients a lot of freedom to co-design their own homes. Worse, they make their clients feel bad about their decisions. The clients would then second-guess their choices and feel uncomfortable about moving forward with them.

Now, I don't mean to vilify architects. I'm just letting you know what some architects do, according to our clients.

They're likely to impose their design ideas on you.

Why?

Because they're afraid of ruining their reputation. They're like, "I'm not having somebody see this house and say who designed this?"

I even know one who said, "I'm not putting my name on something this plain."

But we are different.

Now, I'll be honest—we do care about our reputation.

But we aim to build our reputation around happy clients. That's why our slogan is "We want you to love where you live."

In other words, client satisfaction is our #1 priority because our reputation hinges on it.

And yes, like the architects I mentioned, we do have our own ideas about how our clients' homes should be designed and built. We do let our clients know what we think, especially when what they want might be costly, impractical, or disadvantageous to them in the long run.

But at the end of the day, we always build or remodel homes according to how they're envisioned by our clients.

After all, they're the ones who will live in those homes in the years to come, so they should have the last say when it comes to how their living spaces are designed and built.

With Winthorpe, your satisfaction comes first.

P.S. Are you ready to bring your dream home to life? Contact us today!