

At Home with QMA

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More Than Meets the Eye

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Remodel or Build New: *What's the Best Bargain?*

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While the decline in home values has been disappointing for sellers, today's lower prices can be great news if you're looking for an affordable property you can transform into a dream home. Here along the Jersey Shore, for example, you can find homes that are reasonably priced *and* that also have great potential. Renovate the property and you can enjoy a "like new" luxury beach home that fits your needs and lifestyle to perfection.

There's no question that it makes good sense to start with one of these high-potential bargains. But once you have your property, does it make more sense to remodel the existing house or tear it down and start fresh? Companies that only do remodeling will tell you it's better to remodel, and companies that only do new construction will tell you it's better to tear down and start fresh. At **QMA Design+Build**, we do both remodeling and new construction, and our advice is that it depends on three factors:

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More Than *Meets the Eye*

Do you enjoy the community where you live and never would consider moving? Perhaps you have developed close friendships with your neighbors, or you simply appreciate all the amenities available close by, such as your favorite restaurant or your family physician. If you plan to be in the neighborhood for the long haul, but you also feel your home needs to be updated—then it is time to remodel.

The kitchen is typically one of the first areas homeowners wish to update, since it usually becomes the main gathering area for friends and family. You want the kitchen to be a welcoming place that is not only pleasing to the eye, but also functions well for everyone who uses it.

It is not always necessary to change the existing footprint of your kitchen to get the gorgeous and efficient new space you want. If you are happy with its basic layout, your kitchen can be greatly enhanced by simply installing new countertops, cabinetry, appliances, plumbing fixtures and flooring in the same location as the original. If you need more storage space, keep in mind that purchasing new cabinetry with built-in storage solutions actually helps your kitchen items take up less space since they are better organized. Items that were once difficult to reach become accessible. When you don't move any walls, plumbing or windows, the makeover can be very cost effective!

This kitchen was dramatically transformed with beautiful new materials, yet the layout remained basically the same. Less obvious: the project made use of Universal Design (UD) principles. UD principles may be used as a guideline for creating living spaces flexible enough to provide comfort for people of all ages and abilities, whether older adults with limited mobility, or little children. Some homeowners who would prefer to remain in their homes as they get older (i.e. age-in-place) continue to shy away from incorporating UD guidelines in their remodeling projects because they equate UD with an institutional appearance. If this is how you have felt in the past, this kitchen should help dispel your concerns.



Before



Photos: Courtesy of Great Grabz, LLC (www.greatgrabz.com)

Universal Design features:

1. Cabinets 15" off the counter, rather than the standard 18"
2. Pull-down shelving units in upper cabinets
3. Pull-out drawer storage in lower cabinets
4. Large cabinet door and drawer pulls, rather than knobs
5. Under cabinet lighting and plentiful ceiling cans
6. Smooth countertop surface
7. Single lever control on faucet
8. Built-in drawer microwave oven
9. Elevated dishwasher
10. Higher toe-kick to accommodate a wheelchair
11. Toggle light switches

EVERYTHING *and the* KITCHEN SINK

Have you always wanted to cook like a pro? A highly-functional, multi-tasking kitchen sink helps keep you organized—just like your favorite culinary artist on television. Chef-inspired stainless-steel sinks like these are equipped with integral accessories that turn your kitchen sink into an all-in-one prep and clean-up center.



Photo: Courtesy of Kalista (www.kalista.com)

As You Like It

Set the table with a fine tablecloth and your best china. Heighten the mood with 10-inch tapered candles and selections by your favorite classical artists streaming in the background. Settle back for a romantic evening—in your outdoor living space.

Homeowners today are moving outside to live, play and be refreshed by their outdoor environment. The same kinds of activities you enjoy indoors can take place outside—from a gourmet dinner served in elegant style to a laid-back cookout, from relaxing in front of the fireplace to watching the game on TV. Your outdoor living space can be whatever and wherever you'd like it to be. Just be sure everything you plan to leave exposed to the elements—refrigerator, TV, audio equipment, lighting fixtures and furniture—is suitable for outdoor use.

There are advantages to having your outdoor living space close to your house, such as a patio that shares the exterior

wall of your home. If you bridge the style between the two spaces, the inside and outside can flow seamlessly one into the other. In this location it is simpler and less expensive to make the necessary plumbing, gas and electrical connections for your outdoor kitchen. You have less distance to walk back and forth to your main kitchen, if you forget a food or prep item. This arrangement offers some protection from the wind and rain, while also providing support for an awning, if desired. A large screened porch or 3-season room serves a similar function, while offering additional shelter from extreme weather and protection from insects. Keep in mind that a grill installed in a partially enclosed area requires a ventilation hood.



Trex has launched a line of outdoor furniture designed for extreme outdoor environments. The furniture is manufactured from high-density polyethylene with more than 90% recycled content. The marine-grade cushions are covered in all-weather Sunbrella fabrics.

You may prefer to locate your outdoor living room at a distance from your home to take advantage of an extraordinary vista. This can be a calm place to read or simply spend a few moments in restful solitude. A wide, smooth, lighted walkway helps you and your guests navigate easily and safely to that location. Put in gas, electric or water lines if you plan to include an outdoor kitchen, gas fireplace or water feature. A pergola provides some shade from the sun, while a rain shelter allows you to continue to enjoy the space even during a sudden shower. Include storage bins for items, such as cushions and firewood, you do not wish to continually transport back and forth from the house.



The new Vivex outdoor lighting fixtures from Maxim withstand moist climates and harsh weather conditions—perfect for water front homes. They are made from a hard, dense synthetic material that is twice as strong as polyurethane resin, non-corrosive and UV resistant.

The Entertainer sink by Lenova features drain boards, a wine cooler and three condiment trays. When not in use, the sink may be covered with the two-piece cutting board to maximize counter space.

The Multiere sink by Mick De Giulio from Kallista offers a colander bolder, a flatware tray for rinsing cutlery and a removable plantation teak cutting board which nestles securely to the basin on a glide.



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More Than Meets the Eye

Everything and the
Kitchen Sink

As You Like It

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1. What zoning and permit requirements apply?

At the Jersey Shore, we deal with some very strict requirements that apply to building on a barrier island. While the permits required for renovations and

new homes are basically the same, different issues need to be addressed. For example, sometimes existing homes have been built to an earlier, less restrictive set of zoning rules. If the house is torn down, new rules apply. This can mean that a new construction would have to have a smaller footprint, lower ceiling heights, or even fewer floors—and views can be lost. In cases like this, remodeling keeps the existing zoning rules. Over the years, we've developed a lot of experience with local zoning. It is possible to create a virtually new home while staying within the bounds of what New Jersey technically considers remodeling.

2. What is the pricing picture? Surprisingly, the cost of a major gut remodeling project and building a new home can be very similar. But if the existing house is in good condition and has "good bones," remodeling can cost significantly less than new construction. On the other hand, remodeling a home that needs extensive repairs and room reconfigurations can be more expensive than building a new home. The size of the home is important, too: if the existing property is an older, larger home it's likely to cost more to remodel than tearing it down and



building a smaller new home. It's also important to look at what you get for the price of a remodel vs. a new home—the prices may be similar, but one option may give you more of what you're looking for in terms of features and living spaces.

3. Which option offers greater simplicity? For some people, tearing down and starting fresh is just simpler and less stressful than a partial demolition. Other homeowners prefer to keep what still works and preserve some architectural features. A careful look at your unique property will reveal how simple it would be to remodel compared to building a new home.

The bottom line is that choosing the right approach will reward you with a better experience and, possibly, more value.

If you've bought—or are thinking of buying—a property with potential, let **QMA Design+Build** use our experience with both remodeling and new construction to give you an unbiased recommendation about which is the best decision for turning your bargain into your dream. Just give us a call at **609-822-4949** or email: info@QMAdesignbuild.com.

