



## TPJ Architecture

~ All Things Residential ~

Welcome,

Thank you for taking action and joining our community. Your decision to receive this PDF is the first step in creating an environment that will bring you the results you've been looking for regarding your current, or upcoming, home remodeling project.

There is so much that I want to share with you, and this is just our first meeting together. In this tip sheet, I will barely scratch the surface of what there is to know before starting your design, but I will answer some very common questions that I get from all my clients. You too will want to consider all these questions, and I believe that when you're done with this first step, you'll be more prepared to take the next one, whether it's with me, with another consultant in your area, or even continuing this journey by yourself.

The questions and answers contained here are a brief outline of the valuable content you will find in my book; CUT THE CHAOS – A Homeowner's Guide to Residential Remodeling. Although brief, the information is current, to the point, and most importantly it is focused on one thing... YOUR SUCCESS!

Have you ever heard of a movie called The Money Pit? It was made a while back and starred a very young Tom Hanks along with Shelly Long. It was an over-exaggeration of a young couple who bought a home together, a real fixer-upper, and displayed the Do's & Don'ts, the Up's & Down's, and the OMG's of what can happen when a home owner decides to run their own remodeling project. In the end, it was just a movie. But after you finish watching it, you may ask yourself, "Was this really an over-exaggeration of what could happen?" Amazingly enough, it's not that far from the truth! In my 35+ years of experience, I've seen a lot of projects where this was much closer to the truth that you would like to imagine. Maybe it didn't all happen on one project, BUT, I've seen every project have at least one happen! So here they are...

### My 5 Best Tips to Avoid Your Home Becoming "The Money Pit"

#### 1. How do I select a designer?

I'm going to give you the absolute best case scenario if you want to ensure a successful outcome for your project. You want to find a designer that knows what to do? Yes! And a designer that knows other people? Yes! But the very best designer for your project is the one who *other people know them!!!* "It's not what you know, or who you know... it's Who Knows YOU!"

That's what can make the biggest difference in getting a project supported and approved when you're brushing the edges of compliance. Or you've got a sensitive issue in a touchy neighborhood. I could say to you, "I know the mayor of so & so city", and that might impress you. But what would it mean to you if I told you that "The mayor of so & so city knows me, personally!"

I can't even begin to tell you how many problems I've solved for clients because I went to see people that knew me. This is where hiring a designer with local knowledge become invaluable, to ensure the successful completion of your project.

## 2. How do I select a contractor?

Now it's time, decision time that is. Do you go with?

- 1) General Contractor,
- 2) Subcontractors, or
- 3) Owner Builder

It's a lot to consider, so let me see if I can add a few points to help you make the decision that will serve you best.

First a question: What could possibly convince you to do all this yourself?

Second a statement: You have to get all you can afford!

I have no idea what could possibly convince you that you could do all this yourself, primarily because even the best General Contractors would not do it by themselves. They would have employees and subcontractors, they would have a Team.

Yet some of you will make the attempt. To you adventurous few I say good luck, Godspeed, and safe travels. You're about to embark on a most wondrous journey! I do not advise you to do this if you are faint at heart, or are subject to fear of the unknown. Your outcome would be uncertain at best and disastrous at worst.

For most of you, I highly recommend connecting with a solid, experienced, reputable General Contractor. You'll enjoy the process and, more often than not, you'll be thrilled with the outcome.

For the rest of you in between, being your own contractor may be the most exhilarating experience of your life. Designing and permitting, bidding and building, inspecting and managing, it's a truly creative & worthy ideal. It's an experience you'll not soon forget and you'll have stories to tell for years to come. It is 'Intentional Creation' at its best.

It may be your budget, it may be your dream, or it may be that you just have to do it, only once, because you know you can! Whatever the reason, always remind yourself that it's YOUR project, it's YOUR dream, it's YOUR vision. Trust your heart, get some help, hire a coach or a coordinator, and watch your reality manifest right inside your own home. Finally, you must answer these 4 questions before proceeding with your project:

- What WILL happen if I do this?
- What WILL happen if I don't do this?
- What WON'T happen if I do this?
- What WON'T happen if I don't do this?

## 3. When do I need permits?

Permits really find their root in safety. Somebody has to know what's going on out there. You really can't let some guy grab a hammer and a saw, then just start hacking away at your house. What would happen if people started doing that?

At the heart of getting a permit is government. And let me say right now, it's not all bad. Yes there are a good many things wrong today, but what's the use in complaining about? That will only get you more frustrated.

A permit is a good thing. Your local municipality is watching out for your best interest. They are helping you! Look at it as a partnership. They want you to build as much as you want to build.

Obtaining your permit may be the most boring, and at the same time the most excruciatingly painful experience you go through on your entire project. That's why you should know about

'permit services', or 'permit runners'. This is their business; it's all they do, all day long, every day. OMG, I can hardly imagine doing that, but it is what *they do*, and it can save you a lot of time and frustration.

You have the skills to process your own permit; you just don't know it... yet. That's why I wrote my book, to help you grow into more than you were before you read it. You can write, yes? You can read, yes? You can walk, yes? Then you can process your own permit.

#### 4. How long will this take?

"You don't have to be great to get started, but you have to get started to be great!" I first heard this quote from my mentor Les Brown. I immediately took it to heart.

To keep your project moving forward, just don't stop! Yes, it sounds too simple, but you've got to realize that momentum is everything. Think about moving a large object, like say pushing a car. At first, from a dead stop, it's going to take a lot of effort, maybe all the energy & strength you can muster. But once you *get* it moving, it takes much less energy to *keep* it moving. So it is with your project. Stay focused on your destination and you'll find it to be a much easier task than you ever thought possible before you got it started. Focus is very important because what you focus on expands.

Another thing you can do to keep things moving forward is to have a clear intention. Many times when I've started new "projects" around my house, I started without a clear intention. I really didn't think about my outcome, I didn't think about what I wanted to accomplish. As a result, I would get half way through and find myself bored. I would 'run out of gas', I would 'lose interest'. When that happens, you'll find all kinds of crazy reasons to quit.

Design drawings, Plan Check, and Construction, all these must be done on your project. But the largest portion of your time frame, more often than not, will be the construction phase of your project. You will be most anxious, and you will experience most of your life disruption during this phase. I suggest you come at it from this direction. Let each person know how important your time frame is to you. Get them enrolled into your vision. Then offer them incentives to reach the desired goal ahead of time. Money can be, and is for most people, a great motivator.

#### 5. Where do I start?

What I did first was to start talking. Since I didn't know where to start, I found some other people who had done it already and I was determined to get myself around them. I asked them how they got started, and then I listened. "You learn more by listening than you ever will by talking". And, "you've got 2 ears and 1 mouth, use them proportionally". That is how I got my creative juices flowing. At first it was uncomfortable. Doing anything for the first time will always be that way. And remodeling your home is no exception.

This may be the single largest undertaking you ever tackle in your life. This is your home. I get it; you don't want to screw it up. You're faced with fear, doubt and worry. I'm with you, it's okay, and we who have done it before understand you. So, I'm going to tell you to write it down. As my publisher told me, "Get it down, and then get it right!"

You may not have heard it said like this, but, you've got to know where you want to be, where you want to end up, BEFORE you leave the starting line. It's time to stand up and look ahead, look down the road and decide for yourself what you want in this project. Heck, this applies as much to your life as it does to your Living Room.

Once you see the end, keep it in your mind at all times and believe! Believe you can, and when you don't believe you can, believe that I believe you can! There is a saying, but it's not "I'll believe it when I see it". No, it's "You'll see it when you believe it!" That is the magic of believing, it just happens. When YOU believe, you will begin to do the things that support your belief. Then by believing, what you want is brought to you, and then by taking action you receive it.

That's it, my 5 Best Tips to Avoid Your Home Becoming "The Money Pit". If you have not seen the movie, look for it on your favorite home streaming service. I know you'll enjoy the movie, and after watching it, read this list again. You may see how knowing the answers to these questions before you start your project will help you get around some of those pit falls.

The most valuable thing we have in life is time. It is truly irreplaceable. I know your time is important to you, and I want to thank you spending some of it with me. If I can be of any further assistance, please comment back to me on my blog, [TPJ Architecture](#). There you will find articles and posts, with associated videos, of projects that I've done and of some that are currently under construction. Visit me periodically to see how other people are doing their projects.

"A wise man learns from his mistakes, and a wiser man learns from the mistakes of others."

Follow me on Facebook at my Fan Page: [CUT THE CHAOS Book](#). And keep an eye on your inbox for future correspondence from me regarding code changes, social design shifts, and other fun topics of discussion that will surely support the successful completion of your remodel project.