



DDC DESIGN IDEAS

Patio Construction



Recently we worked with a client who wished to expand their outdoor entertainment area by installing a multi use raised patio and a grade level barbeque. When we built this home for them several years ago it had a traditional raised wood deck off the rear of the house.

During the design phase we discussed with the entire family how they actually live and entertain, how they want to decorate and furnish this area and also how their Latin culture influences their ideas of home and family. We were able to design and build their outdoor space incorporating all of the desired features.

We suggested using the same location as the existing raised wooden deck, but instead, tear it down and build a larger raised bluestone patio.

The Goal is Superior After-Construction Customer Service

How a homebuilder manages after-sale service, also called warranty service or call-backs, is a key indicator of the company's overall professionalism and ability to meet (and ideally exceed) a homebuyer's expectations.

The goal of the professional builder is to quickly and completely respond to and resolve issues that come up during the time a home is under warranty. As a critical part of providing great housing value and achieving customer satisfaction, professional builders encourage questions from homebuyers and respond to their concerns in a timely and respectful manner.

A standard builder's warranty addresses specific issues with a home related to its structural components (such as the foundation and frame), basic electrical and other mechanical systems, and the quality of workmanship for a set time period. Today Dickson Development Corporation not only offers the New Jersey required warranty for new home construction but also provides a written warranty "Residential Construction Performance Guidelines" for all renovation and addition contracts.

Specific warranty language and procedures benefit both the builder and the homeowner. Simply, a well-defined and properly communicated warranty service policy helps eliminate confusion about who is responsible for issues, concerns, and other call-back items that may occur in the first year or so of occupancy.

A superior warranty service program includes:

Documentation. A documented process for responding to call-backs and customer service inquiries creates a "paper trail" that ensures that questions and concerns are properly communicated, managed, and resolved. A professional builder will document the details of the warranty policy and keep track of inquiries, response time, and specific types of service calls from the first call to follow-up to ensure the homeowner's ultimate satisfaction.

Response time. Responding to a service call is more an issue of timing than time; the key is to understand which calls will be addressed immediately, and which may require or allow more time. No one likes to wonder if or when a call or email will be answered; if homeowners can depend on getting a reply from their builder within a reasonable (or better still, stated) time frame, chances are better that they'll be satisfied with how the issue is resolved.

Collective calls. Even if a builder responds to a warranty service call within a day or so, making a visit to the house to resolve a non-emergency situation may be timed to coincide with other scheduled work at the house. This "collective call" minimizes the number of times an

Half of the patio would be covered by a roof creating a cozy area for couches and hanging candelabras. The other half would be covered with a pergola with round Tuscan columns and an ample lattice work above which would allow scattered sun to warm the bluestone.

Our client wanted a separate barbeque area on grade level convenient for cooking but unseen. A beautiful Spanish fountain was purchased by them and the perfect location was the front side of the wall hiding the barbeque. We designed the barbeque area with a six foot high stucco wall with bluestone wall caps and accented Spanish tiles. In front of the fountain and at the base of the steps to the raised patio a tall columned arbor over a bluestone patio was designed to tie the two areas together. This is the ideal place to sit and read the paper while smelling the fragrant flowers growing up and over the arbor.

Needless to say our clients love their indoor/outdoor space and everyone in the family has their own little favorite areas to hang out and yet they can still all be together.

owner needs to be at home to make the house available to the builder's warranty service team. Of course, emergency calls demand immediate attention, but collective calls can be a more convenient and reliable way to address a variety of concerns or maintenance issues at the same time.

Scheduled visits. Professional builders are becoming more proactive in how they address scheduled service and other routine maintenance work while a house is still under warranty. In many cases, a builder will schedule a visit and "walk through" (or tour) a new home within a month after occupancy. These visits are opportunities for homeowners to ask questions and for the builder to document or schedule service work covered by the warranty. Such visits also help builders refine their warranty service processes based on a homeowner's feedback.

We at Dickson Development are working to improve our warranty service. Communication with our clients concerning what needs to be done and scheduling the work as quickly and efficiently as possible is our goal.

Warm regards,

Richard

Richard Dickson
Dickson Development Corporation
666 Plainsboro Road, Suite 1300
Plainsboro, NJ 08536
(609) 799 0220 - phone



info@dicksondevelopment.com
www.dicksondevelopment.com

c. 2006 All rights reserved.

[Click here to subscribe](#) to this newsletter.
[Click here to unsubscribe](#) from this newsletter.

