



FOOTHILLS HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE

Planning a Whole- Home *Renovation* or Custom Build

An honest guide to budgeting, timing, and choosing the right builder for a major project in the Colorado foothills — from a builder with 30+ years in these mountains.

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Before You Begin

A whole-home renovation or custom build is one of the biggest projects you'll ever take on — emotionally and financially. This guide is here to help you plan it well: to understand the real costs, the timeline, what's unique about building in the mountains, and how to choose a builder you can trust for the long haul.

WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR

This is written for homeowners planning a **full-home renovation or a custom build** in the Evergreen Foothills, west of Denver — significant, high-quality projects, typically in the \$500,000-plus range. If you're planning a single-room update, some of this will still help, but a specialist remodeler may be the better fit.

What's inside

- 01 **Five questions to answer before you start**
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Photography of Crafted Space Co. projects by Timothy Gormley.

Five Questions to Answer First

The homeowners who have the best build or renovation experience are the ones who get clear on these early. You don't need every answer nailed down — but thinking them through makes every conversation more productive.

1 • What's driving the project?

Are you reworking how the home functions for your life, updating a dated space, adding room, or building something entirely new? Knowing the "why" keeps decisions anchored when the details pile up.

2 • What's your honest budget range?

Not to the dollar — but a real range you're comfortable investing. It's the single most useful thing to bring to a first conversation, and it lets a good builder tell you honestly what's achievable.

3 • What's your timeline?

When would you love to be finished, and is there a hard date? Mountain projects take time — knowing your timeline shapes what's realistic.

4 • Renovating, building new — or open to either?

Sometimes the smartest path only becomes clear once a builder sees the home and the goals together. Being open early can save money later (more on this in Section 4).

5 • How involved do you want to be?

Some homeowners want to choose every finish; others want to hand it off and trust the team. There's no wrong answer — but knowing yours helps you pick the right builder and process.



Custom cabinetry & stone — Snowy Ridge

What It Costs — 2026 Numbers



A custom kitchen at the heart of a whole-home renovation

Renovation pricing is usually measured per square foot, because it scales with the size of your home. Here's how the tiers break down in today's Colorado foothills market.

Renovation level	Per square foot	What it includes
Cosmetic refresh	\$100–\$200	Paint, flooring, fixtures — no layout changes
Comprehensive renovation	\$200–\$400	New kitchens/baths, some layout changes, updated systems
Luxury gut renovation	\$400–\$700+	Down-to-studs, structural changes, custom millwork, high-end finishes

Most true whole-home renovations land in the comprehensive-to-luxury range. In real totals, that's roughly **\$700,000 to \$3 million+** for a 3,000–4,500 sq ft mountain home, depending on scope and finish.

What moves the budget most

- **How much is structural** — moving walls, changing rooflines, adding square footage.
- **Finish level** — custom cabinetry, stone, and specialty millwork can double a room's cost.
- **The home's age and condition** — older mountain homes often hide surprises once walls open.
- **Kitchens and baths** — the most expensive rooms per square foot.

A NOTE ON HONESTY

These are planning ranges, not quotes. Every home is different, and the only way to a real number is a scoped estimate — but these give you a grounded place to start, and a way to sanity-check any bid that comes in far below them.

Figures based on 2026 Colorado and Denver-foothills market data. Mountain factors (Section 5) push projects toward the higher end.

The Process & Timeline



Open-concept living in a completed foothills home — Rainbow Trail

A whole-home renovation moves through seven phases. Most of the risk is managed in the early ones — so the time you invest up front pays off later.

- 1 **Intro conversation** — a short call to share goals and see if it's a fit (no site visit yet).
- 2 **Design & planning** — layout, how you live, materials, the details that make it yours.
- 3 **Budgeting & scope** — detailed pricing, priorities, contract.
- 4 **Permitting** — often across Jefferson, Clear Creek, or Idaho Springs jurisdictions.
- 5 **Demolition & structural work** — framing, walls, rooflines, plus excavation and sitework on additions; where surprises surface.
- 6 **Build-out & finishes** — systems, then the craftsmanship that defines the home.
- 7 **Final walkthrough** — punch list, and the start of a long relationship.

How long it takes

Phase	Typical duration
Design & planning	2–6 months
Budgeting & scope	3–6 weeks
Permitting	1–6 months (overlaps design)
Demolition, sitework & structural	1–4 months
Build-out & finishes	4–12 months
Walkthrough & punch list	2–4 weeks

Most whole-home mountain renovations run **9 to 24 months** from first call to move-in. Starting early is the single best way to hit your timeline.

SECTION 04 · RENOVATION VS. CUSTOM BUILD

"A complex whole-home renovation is often harder to execute than a new build — and that's exactly why the right builder matters."

OUR TAKE, AFTER 30+ YEARS IN THE FOOTHILLS

Renovation vs. Custom Build

For many foothills homeowners, renovating is the smarter path — you keep an irreplaceable lot, the established views, the neighbors you know, and the memories the home already holds, and you avoid the cost and timeline of building from the ground up. A well-executed whole-home renovation can deliver essentially a new home inside the shell you love.

But it isn't the only way to stay. If the location inspires you and the house never will, we may consider taking the existing home down and building new — a new home on the same amazing location.

A simple way to decide

- **Lean renovation** if you love the location and the home's bones are good.
- **Lean custom build** if the existing home fights your goals at every turn, or the lot and location don't inspire you.
- **Stay open** if you're unsure — the right answer often becomes obvious once a builder walks the property with you, and sometimes that answer is a brand-new home on a location you already love.

Building in the Mountains



A spa bath framed to capture the mountain view — Snowy Ridge

Foothills projects carry real premiums and considerations that flatland projects don't. Knowing them up front prevents surprises.

Factor	What it means for your project
Site access & slope	Steep lots and narrow roads make deliveries and staging harder — and pricier.
Structural demands	Higher snow loads and wind exposure require heavier framing and engineering.
Wildfire-resistant materials	Homes in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) often need fire-rated roofing, siding, and detailing.
Well & septic	Many foothills properties aren't on city utilities — added cost and coordination.
Shorter build season	Snow and weather compress the working calendar and affect scheduling.
Permitting jurisdictions	Even a basic renovation needs a permit up here — and Jefferson County, Clear Creek County, and Idaho Springs each have their own requirements.

None of these should discourage you — they're simply why local experience matters so much up here. A builder who works in these mountains every day plans around them instead of being surprised by them.

Choosing the Right Builder

For a project this size, who you choose matters more than any other decision you'll make.

What to look for

- **Experience with complex renovations**, not just new builds.
- **Strong project management and communication** — you should always know what's happening and why.
- **Local knowledge** of foothills permitting, site conditions, and mountain building.
- **References who'll vouch for how the project *felt***, not just how it looked.



Craftsmanship in the details

Questions worth asking any builder

- Who runs my project day to day, and how will I hear from them?
- How do you handle the surprises that come up mid-renovation?
- How do you structure the budget, and what happens if scope changes?
- Can I speak with a past client who had a project like mine?

ONE GREEN FLAG TO WATCH FOR

The best builders are honest about cost and timeline even when it's not what you want to hear. If a bid sounds too good or a timeline too fast, ask more questions — a realistic partner will save you far more than an optimistic one.

Your Next Step



Crafted Space Co. — Snowy Ridge kitchen

Whenever you're ready — even if you're still in the dreaming stage — the best next step is a simple conversation. No pressure, no site visit required to start.

Let's talk about your project

At Crafted Space Co., we start with a short intro call by phone or video, to learn about your project and give you honest guidance. Phillip brings 30+ years as a builder and craftsman, carrying on four generations of family craft that began in New York State, and we specialize in complex, high-end mountain renovations and custom builds across Evergreen, Genesee, Golden, and Clear Creek County.

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Owner Phillip Vaccarella sets the standard on every Crafted Space Co. project, backed by a dedicated project manager and trusted trade partners who keep the day-to-day running smoothly. This guide is for planning purposes; costs and timelines vary by project.