

COST GUIDE

for Mountain Homes

Contact Architect:
click logo to have a
discussion about
your project & how
we can help you
control your project
costs.



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1 THE BIG QUESTION

“How much is my mountain home going to cost to build?”

That's the \$64,000 question. But it's almost always going to cost a lot more than that. HOME ARCHITECTS® has included a variable cost matrix in this booklet that gives you some idea of possible ranges of costs. But even that could vary, depending on the particulars of your specific project: your site location, length of driveway, slope of land, septic-sewer situation, well-water, materials, features, square footage & many other factors. Asking “How much is a house?” can be sort of like asking: “How much is a car?” The only correct answer is: “That depends.”

However, there is one thing that is always true: your house is going to cost more than you are thinking and the project will take longer than you imagine. That is guaranteed. Not what people want to hear, but that is the truth. And we're going to tell you the truth.

2 WHY

Building in mountain regions is more difficult than building on flat land. If you're from a more level state like Florida, Texas, New York, or most of the Midwest, you may not understand just how demanding it is to build on sloping, rugged terrain. Try walking up & down the steepest part of your mountain site. Winded? Heart pounding? Now imagine doing that with a 16' long 2x12 over one shoulder and a heavy concrete block in your other hand. Now you might have some idea of how hard it is to build on your land. Imagine doing that 8 to 10 hours every day. Not fun. Grueling, hard work. And you have to be able to think. Builders have to be smart to understand how to put together a complicated thing like a house, on that rugged land. So they charge more than it costs to build on flat land. Skill + muscle = \$\$\$\$. Also, mountain land can be 3,000 to 6,000 to 12,000 feet high, up into the sky, where winds are faster, requiring homes to be built with costlier structure & better energy features. And the slope of your land can require costlier foundations. Renovations are often costlier because builders have to carefully undo and then redo. Twice the work.

3 COST RANGE MATRIX

These costs will NOT be correct for your house. Why: because there are variables that this simple table cannot include.

COST PER HSF (Heated Square Foot) ROUGH RANGES			
(which can and will vary significantly, including being more than figures shown, from project to project and location to location, and number of exterior SF in porches, garages & other outdoor built areas, & project requirements which vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction) Note: large price increase in latter 2020.			
Type of Construction	Lower End	Mid-Range	Higher End
New Custom Home	\$250 - \$300	\$325 - \$400	\$405 - \$550+ (could be much more)
Residential Renovation	\$275 - \$325	\$350 - \$425	\$425 - \$600+ (could be much more)
Additions	\$260 - \$315	\$235 - \$415	\$415 - \$575+ (could be much more)

LOWER END: primer painted finger jointed 1x4 wall base, drywall window casings, carpet & sheet vinyl floors, plastic laminate counters, melamine cabinets, drywall ceilings & walls, minimum insulation, vinyl exterior siding, no stone, lower end HVAC, 30" wide white appliances, low end asphaltic roof shingles, metal soffits.

MID-RANGE: softwood stained 1x6 wood wall base & window casings, door trim, engineered wood & tile floors, lower end some wood ceilings, drywall knock-down walls, better insulation, mid-range stained wood cabinetry & simple lower-end granite counters, stainless mid-range appliances, mid-range HVAC, Hardie/ wood siding, some stone, vinyl colored soffits.

HIGHER END: Taller hardwood fancy wall bases, window & door trims, some wood wall treatments (some drywall), upper end wide plank hardwood flooring, slate tile, all wood ceilings, custom cabinetry, granite/marble counters, upgrade insulation, upper end appliances, high efficiency HVAC, cedar siding, more stone, wood soffits. NOTE: Architects do NOT charge for these costs. We are reporting the facts. This is what Contractors charge to build. Architects design your house.

4 FREE BASEMENT MYTH

Many people have the irrational idea that a Builder is going to build a basement for nothing. Contractors see this approach coming a mile away. They have a name for it: "The Basement Profit Center", because no matter how tough you act, no one is going to provide a basement for next to nothing. Why: because it is actually MORE expensive to build a steel reinforced concrete wall underground, with more framing (or slab) then waterproof it & drain it, than building a stud wall above ground. And if you think you're going to coerce your Contractor to give you a finished basement for much less than the SF cost of the rest of the house, think again! This isn't their first rodeo. Being not forthright with your Contractor can backfire on you, and result in you not having sufficient funds to complete your house.

5 WHAT TO DO NOW

Concerned about your construction costs? You should be.

CONTACT HOME ARCHITECTS @ for a discussion about your project needs & the proper sequence of steps to create your mountain dream home. 828-269-9046. **We provide a method to help control costs**, built into our documents. Learn how.