



REMODELING GLOSSARY & TERMINOLOGY

A

A/C Condenser - The outside fan unit of the air conditioning system. It removes the heat from the freon gas, 'turns' the gas back into a liquid, and pumps the liquid back to the coil in the furnace.

A/C Disconnect - The main electrical ON-OFF switch near the A/C condenser.

ABS - A type of black plastic pipe commonly used for waste water lines.

Aerator - The round screened screw-on tip of a sink spout. It mixes water and air for a smooth flow.

Aggregate - A mixture of sand and stone and a major component of concrete.

Air Space - The area between insulation facing and interior of exterior wall coverings. Normally a 1' air gap.

Allowance - A sum of money set aside in the construction contract for items which have not been selected and specified in the construction contract. For example, selection of tile as a flooring may require an allowance for an underlayment material, or an electrical a

Amortization - A payment plan by which a loan is reduced through monthly payments of principal and interest.

Ampere - A unit of electrical current or volume--see 'Voltage.' Most homes have an electrical service 'entrance' package of 125 or 200 amps. Some older homes have 60 or 100 amp 'entrances'.

Amps - See Ampere

Anchor Bolt - Bolt to secure a wooden sill plate to concrete, masonry floor or wall.

Antique brass - Finish on hardware that has a dark brown color, also denoted by industry as US5.

Appraisal - An expert valuation of property.

Apron - A trim board that is installed beneath a window sill.

Architect - One who has completed a course of study in building and design, and is licensed by the state as an architect. One who draws up plans and sometimes supervises the construction of homes.

Area Walls - Corrugated metal or concrete barrier walls installed around a basement window to hold back the earth.

Asbestos - A common form of magnesium silicate used in various construction products due to its stability and resistance to fire. Asbestos exposure, by inhaling loose asbestos fibers, is associated with various forms of lung disease.

Assessment - A tax levied on a property, or a value placed on the worth of a property.

Assumption - Allows a buyer to assume responsibility for an existing loan instead of getting a new loan. The assumption may have to be approved by the lender.

Astragal - A molding, attached to one of a pair of swinging double doors, against which the other door strikes.

Attic Ventilators - Screened openings in houses to allow for ventilation of an attic space.

Awning window - A window unit in which the bottom of the sash swings outward.

B

Back Charge - Billings for work performed or costs incurred by one party that, in accordance with the agreement, should have been performed or incurred by the party to whom billed. Owners bill back charges to general contractors, and general contractors bill back charge

Backfill - The replacement of excavated earth into a trench around or against a basement or crawlspace foundation wall.

Backing - Frame lumber installed between the wall studs to give additional support for drywall or an interior trim related item, such as handrail brackets, cabinets, and towel bars. In this way, items are screwed and mounted into solid wood rather than weak drywall

Backout - Work the framing contractor does after the mechanical (heating, plumbing & electrical) subcontractors finish their phase of work at the rough stage prior to insulating to get the home ready for a municipal frame inspection. Generally, the framing contract

Backset - The term backset is used to explain the distance from the edge of the door to the center of the hole drilled for your knob, lever or deadbolt.

Baffles - Device to help achieve a ventilation space between insulation and roof sheathing. It helps assure air flow from the eave vents in attics and cathedral ceilings.

Ballast - A transformer that steps up the voltage in a florescent lamp.

Ballcatches - Item of hardware inserted into hole drilled into top of door and used where only pulling or pushing opens the door. In double doors, they are used with dummy pairs of levers or knobs. They also can be used in the top of a small closet where pull may be us

Balloon Framed Wall - Framed walls (generally over 10' tall) that run the entire vertical length from the floor sill plate to the roof. This is done to eliminate the need for a gable end truss.

Balusters - Vertical members in a railing used between a top rail and bottom rail or the stair treads. Sometimes referred to as 'pickets' or 'spindles.'

Balustrade - The rail, posts and vertical balusters along the edge of a stairway or elevated walkway.

Band Joist - Vertical member that forms the perimeter of a floor system in which the floor joists tie in. Also known as the rim joist.

Barge - A horizontal beam rafter that supports shorter rafters.

Barge Board - A decorative board covering the projecting rafter (fly rafter) of the gable end. At the cornice, this member is a fascia board.

Barrel Vault - A vaulted ceiling of semi-circular shape, creating a dome-like appearance.

Baseboard - Any board or molding found at the bottom of an interior wall.

Basement Foundation - A basement is a usable foundation that typically has ceiling heights of 8' and is often finished off as living or storage space.

Bay window - A composite of three windows, usually made up of a large center unit and two flanking units at 30- or 45-degree angles to the wall.

Beam - A horizontal framing member designed to carry a load from a set of joists or a roof and spanning an open space. Beams are typically 6 inches by 6 inches or 4 inches by 10 inches or larger.

Bi-Level - A home that has two levels which are split to two half levels.

Blue Print(s) - A type of copying method often used for architectural drawings. Usually used to describe the drawing of a structure that is prepared by an architect or designer for the purpose of design and planning, estimating, securing permits and actual construction.

Board Foot - Measurement of lumber that is the equivalent of 144 cubic inches.

Bond or Bonding - An amount of money that must be on deposit with a governmental agency in order to secure a contractor's license. If, at the conclusion of a project, there is dispute about the work of the contractor or unpaid bills, the bond may be used for payment.

Bonded - An amount of money deposited with a Government Agency which greatly exceeds the minimum requirement.

Bonus Room - A room with no specifically designated function, unlike a living room, bedroom, or kitchen. Is not included in the initial square footage.

Bore - Bore is the diameter of the hole drilled.

Bottom Plate - The lowest horizontal member of a wall which rests on the rough floor, to which the studding is nailed.

Bow window - A composite of four or more window units in a radial or bow formation.

Braced Framing - A construction method in two-story homes in which the frame is reinforced with posts and braces.

Brick Veneer - A vertical facing of brick laid against and fastened to sheathing of a framed wall or tile wall construction.

Brickmold - A type of external casing that frames windows and doors.

Builder's Risk Insurance - Insurance coverage on a construction project during construction, including extended coverage that may be added for the contract for the customer's protections.

Building Code - A comprehensive set of laws that controls the construction or remodeling of a home or other structure.

Built-Up Roof - A roofing composed of three to five layers of asphalt felt laminated with coal tar, pitch, or asphalt. The top is finished with crushed slag or gravel. Generally used on flat or low-pitched roofs.

Bull Nose Drywall - Rounded drywall corners.

Bundle - A package of shingles. Normally, there are 3 bundles per square and 27 shingles per bundle.

C

Calcium Carbonate - A white chalky material, which is very often found on concrete basement walls and other concrete surfaces where water has leached some of the chemicals out of the concrete. The appearance of the material is typically a sign of past or present moisture pen

Cantilever - A projecting structure supported on one end, such as a balcony.

Carbond Monoxide - A toxic colorless and odorless gas that is the by-product of combustion from fireplaces, furnaces, grills, generators, and hot water heaters. These require proper installation and service in order to prevent CO exposure.

Casement window - A window unit in which the single sash cranks outward, to the right or left.

Casing - Molding of various widths, thickness and shapes applied to the framework of window and door units.

Caulking - A flexible material used to seal a gap between two surfaces e.g. between pieces of siding or the corners in tub walls.

Cavity - The empty space between studs or joists to place insulation batts.

Central Air Conditioning - A system which uses ducts to distribute cooled and/or dehumidified air to more than one room or uses pipes to distribute chilled water to heat exchangers in more than one room, and is not plugged into an electrical convenience outlet.

Change Order - A written construction document which modifies the plans and specifications and/or the price of the construction contract.

Check rail - On a double-hung window, the bottom rail of the upper sash and the upper rail of the lower sash, where the lock is mounted.

Chip board - A manufactured wood panel composed of 1- and 2-inch wood chips and glue. It is often incorrectly used as a substitute for plywood.

Circuit Breaker - A device that looks like a switch and is located inside the electrical panel or circuit breaker box in a home or building. A regular circuit breaker switch is designed to shut off the power to the portion of the home it controls and also limits the amount of current to the circuit that is connected to it.

Cladding - An aluminum or vinyl material locked to the outside faces of many Pella products to provide a durable, low-maintenance exterior surface.

Clerestory - An outside wall of a room or building that rises above an adjoining roof and contains windows.

Clerestory window - A venting or fixed window above other windows or doors on an upper outside wall of a room.

Closed Loop - A system in which each component is connected to the next component with the last component being connected to the original device, forming a complete circle.

Coffered Ceiling - A ceiling with recessed square panels, bordered with trim for ornamental purposes.

Collar Beam - A horizontal tie beam in a roof truss that connects two opposite rafters at a level considerably above the wall plate.

Concrete - A construction material used for foundations, ground level floors and sidewalks. Most concrete is made out of Portland cement, sand, and gravel or aggregate. Concrete is commonly reinforced with steel rods, known as rebar or wire screening, called mesh.

Concrete Block - Often used in low rise commercial and some residential construction, a hollow concrete 'brick' most commonly 8 inches x 8 inches x 16 inches in size. The original design and use is attributed to the architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

Concrete Board - A panel composed of concrete and fiberglass usually used as a tile backing material.

Conduit - A tube or duct for enclosing electric wires or other cables.

Construction Contract - A legal document that includes the specifics of what-when-where-how-how much and by whom of a construction project. It usually includes the contractors registration number, a statement of work quality such as 'Standard Practices of the Trades.'

Construction Documents - All drawings, specifications and addenda associated with a specific construction project.

Contractor - One who is licensed to perform construction activities.

Cornice - Overhang of a pitched roof, usually consisting of a fascia board, a soffit and appropriate trim moldings.

Cost Plus Contract - A construction contract specifying a price for different elements of the work such as, cost per hour of labor, overhead, profit, etc.

Cottage double-hung - A double-hung window in which the upper sash is shorter than the lower sash.

CPVC - A type of white plastic pipe sometimes used for water supply lines.

Crawlspace Foundation - The space between the ground and the first floor of a home, usually no higher than four feet.

Crawlspace Vent - An opening to allow the passage of air through the unexcavated area under a first floor. Ideally there should be at least two vents per crawlspace.

Cross Bracing - A system of bracing by the use of ties. Typically used between floor joists to prevent them from twisting.

Crown Molding - A molding used on cornice or wherever an interior angle is to be covered, especially at the ceiling to wall corner.

Curtain Drain - A ditch sometimes filled with gravel and a drain tile that diverts storm and drain water away from a structure.

D

Daisy Chain - A wiring scheme in which device A is wired to device B, device B is wired to device C, etc. The last device is normally wired to a switch or circuit breaker.

De-humidistat - A control mechanism used to operate a mechanical ventilation system based upon the relative humidity in the home.

Deadbolt - Locking mechanism for an entrance door or other door, in which a bolt moves with a turn of a key into a jamb. Deadbolts can be a single cylinder or double cylinder. With a single cylinder deadbolt, a key is used on one side, and is turned by hand on the other side.

Deeds - A document used to transfer title to real estate.

Dentil - One of a series of small projecting rectangular blocks forming a molding under an overhang, most common in colonial-style homes.

Designer - One who designs houses, interiors, landscaping or other objects. When utilized in the context of residential construction, it usually suggests that a designer is not a licensed architect.

Door stop - A door stop is the small piece of wood, usually 1 3/8' - 1 1/2' wide, that is attached to the door jambs on both sides and on top of the door. This strip of wood is where the door comes to rest when it is closed. It stops the door from moving any further,

Door viewer - Item that is inserted into a hole drilled into the face of a door. Viewer has a curved lens in it to magnify an image on the other side of the door. Viewers are made with various degrees of field of vision.

Dormer - A space protruding from the roof of a house, usually including one or more windows.

Double glazing - Use of two panes of glass in a window to increase energy efficiency and provide other performance benefits.

Double-hung window - A window unit that has two operable sashes which move vertically in the frame.

Draw - The amount of progress billings on a contract that is currently available to a contractor under a contract with a fixed payment schedule.

Drip cap - A molding placed on the top of the head brickmold or casing of a window frame.

Dry Rot - A common wood-destroying organism that develops when wood-containing material is exposed to moisture and poor air circulation for at least 6 months. Often and incorrectly referred to as dry rot.

Drywall - A wall finish consisting of a manufactured panel made out of gypsum plaster and encased in a thin cardboard. The panels are nailed or screwed onto the framing and the joints are taped and covered with a 'joint compound'.

Dual durometer - A material that has two or more levels of flexibility.

Duct - A rigid metal or flexible insulated tube, designed to deliver air to and from a furnace or other air-handling unit.

Ductwork - A system of large tubes, pipes or channels (ducts) designed to deliver air to and from a furnace or other air-handling unit.

Dummy pairs - Dummy pairs are for doors where no latches are needed. These knobs or levers do not turn. They can be split up for bi-fold door set, since no hardware is needed on back of the bi-folds. Dummy pairs can also be used on double french door units.

Durock - A panel composed of concrete and fiberglass usually used as a tile backing material.

E

Earnest Money Agreement - An earnest money agreement is a contract between a buyer and a seller of real estate. It is also called a real estate purchase and sale agreement.

Earthquake Strap - A metal strap used to secure gas hot water heaters to the framing or foundation of a house. It is intended to reduce the chances of having the water heater fall over in an earthquake, causing a gas leak.

Easement - A formal contract that allows a party to use another party's property for a specific purpose. For instance, a sewer easement might allow one party to run a sewer line through a neighbor's property.

Eave Vent - Vent opening located in the soffit under the eaves of a house to allow the passage of air through the attic and out the roof vents.

Eaves - The projecting overhang at the lower edge of a roof.

Efflorescence - A white chalky material, which is very often found on concrete basement walls and other concrete surfaces where water has leached some of the chemicals out of the concrete. The appearance of the material is typically a sign of past or present moisture pen.

Egress - A means of exiting the home. An egress window is required in every bedroom and basement. Normally a 4' X 4' window is the minimum size required.

Electrical Rough - Work performed by the Electrical Contractor to the point where all outlet, switch, and fixture boxes are installed, and all electrical wires are run (before insulation and drywall).

Electrical Service Panel - Refers to the high-voltage electrical system's first point of entry into a home beyond the meter.

Electricity - Provides power for lighting, appliances, and heating & cooling in a home. A meter records usage for billing by your local utility.

Elevations - The exterior view of a home design that shows the position of the house relative to the grade of the land.

Energy Dissipation Basin - A pit or ditch sometimes filled with gravel that is used to collect storm water. Water in the ditch soaks into the ground slowly which prevents soil erosion and flooding.

Estimating - The process of calculating the cost of a project. This can be either a formal or a quick and imprecise process.

Exposed Aggregate - A method of finishing concrete which washes the cement/sand mixture of the top layer of the aggregate - usually gravel. Often used in driveways, patios and other exterior surfaces.

Exterior Envelope - The part of the building that consists of all of the elements protecting it from the elements including roofing, siding, windows, exterior doors, porches, flashing trim, caulking, waterproof decking, venting systems, and chimneys

Extrusion - A form produced by forcing material through a dye.

F

Face Staple - Stapling facing flange to the front side of a stud or rafter, along the 1_' dimension.

Faced Insulation - Insulation with an attached vapor retarder (kraft paper or foil-backed paper).

Fascia - Horizontal boards attached to rafter/truss ends at the eaves and along gables. Roof drain gutters are attached to the fascia.

Fenestration - Any opening in a building or home including doors or windows.

Fiber Glass Insulation - An energy-efficient glass fiber product used to ensure thermal and noise control performance.

Finger-jointing - A means of joining individual pieces of wood together to form longer lengths. The ends of the pieces are machined to form a set of interlocking fingers, which are then coated with adhesive and meshed together under pressure.

Finials - Also called decorative tips, these may come in different shapes, such as balls or pointed steeples, which attach to the top and bottom of a hinge for decoration. Only some hinges will accept these finials.

Fixed (window) - Non-venting or non-operable.

Fixed Price Contract - A contract with a set price for the work.

Flashing - The building component used to connect portions of a roof, deck, or siding material to another surface such as a chimney, wall, or vent pipe. Often made out of various metals, rubber or tar and is mostly intended to prevent water entry.

Flat Ceiling - A ceiling with no change in elevation.

Flush bolts - Bolts mounted in a door to lock a door in place. These bolts slide up into the jamb above the door, and down into the threshold or floor below door. These are used primarily on double doors, where one door is locked in place and the other door is the one used.

Foil-Faced Vapor Retarder - Created by coating a foil-backed paper with a thin layer of asphalt adhesive. The coated side of the foil-backed paper is then applied to the unfaced insulation material. The asphalt adhesive bonds the foil-backed paper and the insulation together.

Footing - Trenches of poured concrete around the perimeter of the house and below each pier or column that supports and distributes the weight of the house to the ground.

Forced Air Heating - A common form of heating with natural gas, propane, oil or electricity as a fuel. Air is heated in the furnace and distributed through a set of metal ducts to various areas of the house.

Frame - The enclosure in which window sash or door panels are mounted.

Framer - The carpenter contractor that installs the lumber and erects the frame, flooring system, interior walls, backing, trusses, rafters, decking, installs all beams, stairs, soffits and all work related to the wood structure of the home.

Framing - The structural wood and/or metal elements of most homes. The floor and ceiling framing is called the joist work. Wall framing is usually made out of 2 inches by 4 inches or 2 inches by 6 inch studs.

French hinged door - Hinged door(s) that has (have) wider panel members around the glass.

French sliding door - Sliding door having wider panel members around the glass, giving the appearance of a French hinged door.

Fungal Wood Rot - A common wood-destroying organism that develops when wood-containing material is exposed to moisture and poor air circulation for at least 6 months. Often and incorrectly referred to as dry rot.

Furring Strip - Flat piece of lumber used to build up an irregular framing to an even surface, either the leveling of a part of a wall or ceiling.

Fuse - A device often found in older homes designed to prevent overloads in electrical lines.

G

Gable End Wall - The triangular end of an exterior wall above the eaves formed under a gable roof.

Gable Roof - A roof that consists of two sloping planes that meet at the ridge or peak. The planes are supported at their ends by triangular, upward extensions of walls known as gables.

Gable Vent - A louver mounted in the top of the gable to allow the passage of air through the attic.

GFCI - An electrical device used to prevent injury from contact with faulty electrical appliances and faulty wiring - electrical shocks. GFIs should not be confused with AFIs, the later are designed to prevent electrical fires. GFIs are required in new home bathrooms.

GFI - An electrical device used to prevent injury from contact with faulty electrical appliances and faulty wiring - electrical shocks. GFIs should not be confused with AFIs, the later are designed to prevent electrical fires. GFIs are required in new home bathrooms.

Glazing - Glass in a window or door; the act or process of fitting with glass.

Glazing stop - The part of the sash or door panel holding the glass in place.

Grade - Ground level, or the elevation at any given point. Also the work of leveling dirt. Also the designated quality of a manufactured piece of wood.

Grille - A term referring to windowpane dividers or muntins, usually a type of assembly to be detached for cleaning.

Ground Fault Current Interrupter - An electrical device used to prevent injury from contact with faulty electrical appliances and faulty wiring - electrical shocks. GFIs should not be confused with AFIs, the later are designed to prevent electrical fires. GFIs are required in new home bathrooms.

Gypsum Wallboard - A wall finish consisting of a manufactured panel made out of gypsum plaster and encased in a thin cardboard. The panels are nailed or screwed onto the framing and the joints are taped and covered with a 'joint compound'.

H

Head - The main horizontal member forming the top of the window or doorframe.

Header - A horizontal framing member placed over the rough opening of a window to prevent the weight of wall or roof from resting on the window frame.

Heat pump - A device which uses compression and decompression of gas to heat and/or cool a house.

Hinges - Hinges are the metal objects that attach your door to the jamb, normally with screws. They can be made from brass, steel, iron or other products.

Hip Roof - A pitched roof with sloping sides.

Hopper - A window unit in which the top of the sash swings inward.

HVAC - Heating, ventilation and air conditioning.

Hydronic Heating - A heating system that uses various types of fuel to heat water which is then distributed through pipes to radiators located in various portions of the house.

I

Ice Dams - A condition which can occur during winter with snow and freezing conditions. When snow or ice melts on a roof over a heated or partially heated attic space, the melting water may refreeze over an unheated area such as a roof overhang.

Inset Staple - Stapling to the inside portion of the stud or rafter.

Insulated Ceiling (I.C.) - Marking on recessed lighting fixture indicating that it is designed for direct insulation contact.

Insulating glass - A combination of two or more panes of glass with a hermetically sealed air space between the panes of glass. This space may or may not be filled with an inert gas, such as argon.

Insulation Density - Denser insulation products have more fibers per square inch and, therefore, give you greater insulating power through higher R-values.

Interior Finish - Material used to cover

J

Jamb - The wood that surrounds the door, and which the hinges are attached to on one side, and which the latch goes into on the other side of the door.

Jamb liner - In a modern double-hung window, the track installed inside the jambs on which the window sashes slide.

Joist - Part of the framing that provides the structure for a floor. In most homes, floor joists are made of 2x8s or larger lumber set on edge and spaced 16 inches apart, from center to center.

K

Keyway - The part of the lock mechanism where the key is inserted. Can be changed if needed for security reasons, or changed for ease of use, where more than one lock is in existence, and you want all the locks to take the same key.

Knee Wall - A wall-like structure that supports roof rafters.

Knob - Round part of door handle that you hold with your hand.

Knocked down - Unassembled window, door, or cabinet-millwork unit.

Kraft-Faced Vapor Retarder - Created by coating kraft paper with a thin layer of asphalt adhesive. The coated side of the kraft paper is then applied to the unfaced insulation material. The asphalt adhesive bonds the kraft paper and the insulation together.

L

Lanai - A porch-like room or open-sided living room.

Landing - A platform between flights of stairs or at the termination of a flight of stairs. Often used when stairs change direction. Normally no less than 3 ft. X 3 ft. square.

Lap Siding - Slightly wedge-shaped boards used as horizontal siding in a lapped pattern over the exterior sheathing. Varies in butt thickness and in widths.

Latch - The latch is the part of the door hardware that moves with the turn of a knob or lever. It slides into the latch plate attached to the doorjamb, and holds the door shut.

Lath and Plaster - The most common wall finish prior to the introduction of drywall. Thin wood strips, known as lath, were nailed onto the framing as a base for the sand/lime plaster.

Left hand swing - Used to describe which way the door is hung on the jamb. Left Hand describes the side of a door the handle is on as it is pulled towards you.

Lever - A lever has the same function as a knob, except it is longer and thinner. To open a door, levers are pushed down. Besides the decorative uses of a lever, they are also used because it is generally easier to grasp a lever than a knob.

Lien - A lien is a claim for money owed against another person's real estate. Deeds of trust and mortgages are examples of liens.

Light (window) - A separately framed piece of glass in a window or door. A traditional double-hung window, for instance, often has several lights divided by muntins in each sash.

Load-Bearing Point - A point where a bearing or structural weight is concentrated and transferred to the foundation.

Load-Bearing Wall - Includes all exterior walls and any interior wall that is aligned above a support beam or girder. Normally, any wall that has a double horizontal top plate.

Low-emissivity (low-E) glass - A special type of glass having a transparent material fused into its surface acting as a thermal mirror.

Low-Voltage System - Provides security, entertainment, communications, environmental control, networking, and other functions generally powered by a signal cable, phone line or data cable.

M

Manufactured Wood - A wood product such as a truss, beam, Glue Lam TM or joist that is manufactured out of smaller wood pieces and glued or mechanically fastened to form a larger piece. It is often used to create a stronger member that may use less wood.

Manufacturers Specifications - The written installation and/or maintenance instructions which are developed by a product manufacturer which may have to be followed in order to maintain the product's warranty.

Masonry opening - The space in a masonry wall left open for windows or door.

Metal Flue - A metal channel through which hot air, gas, steam or smoke may pass.

Metal Insulation Support - 16' or 24' wire rod or crisscrossed wire to hold floor insulation in place.

Monolithic Slab - A slab foundation that is part of the footings.

Mortise - A slot or rectangular cavity cut into a piece of wood to receive another part.

Mortise-and-tenon - A strong wood joint made by fitting together a mortise in one board and a matching projecting member (tenon) in the other.

Mullion - A wood or metal part used to structurally join two window or door units.

Muntin - Applies to any short or light bar, either vertical or horizontal, used to separate glass in a sash into multiple lights. Also called a windowpane divider.

N

Niche - A recess in a wall, usually designed to contain ornamental statues or other decorations.

Non-Rising-Pin - A pin inserted into a hinge that cannot be removed. Used mainly where security is needed, so that the pin cannot be removed. On exterior doors which open outward, the pin is on the outside of the building. In this case, these pins may be used more often.

Nonbearing Wall - A wall supporting no load other than its own weight.

Noncombustible - The material will not burn. The glass fibers in PINK fiber glass insulation have a natural fire resistance, and are considered non-combustible when tested in accordance to ASTM E136.

O

Oriented Strand Board or OSB - A manufactured wood panel composed of 1 and- 2 inch wood chips and glue. It is often incorrectly used as a substitute for plywood.

Overhang - Part of the roof that hangs over the wall.

P

Palladian window - A large, arch-top window flanked by smaller windows on each side.

Panel - Usually refers to the separate panel or panels in a doorframe.

Parging - A rough coat of mortar applied over a masonry wall as protection or finish; may also serve as a base for an asphaltic waterproofing compound below grade.

Particle Board - Plywood substitute made of course sawdust that is mixed with resin and pressed into sheets. Used for closet shelving, floor underlayment, stair treads, etc.

Parting stop - In a double-hung window, a strip of wood applied to the jamb to separate the sash.

Partition - A wall that subdivides spaces within any story of a building or room.

Passage lock - Passage lock knobs or levers are for doors that do not need locking, such as a closet or doors between rooms and family rooms or living rooms.

Patio - An interior courtyard or a paved backyard area.

Payment Schedule - A schedule of payments to a contractor agreed upon in advance and usually based upon the amount of work completed. Such a schedule may include a deposit prior to the start of work. Payments are often scheduled for the beginning of the month.

Percolation or Perc. Test - A test to determine if the soil on a proposed building lot is capable of absorbing the liquid affluent from a septic system.

Permit - A governmental authorization to perform a building process.

Pewter - Used here as a term for a hardware finish, a non-shiny gray color, called US15A by the door industry.

Pilaster - A projection or the foundation wall used to support a floor girder or stiffen the wall.

Plans - A type of copying method often used for architectural drawings. Usually used to describe the drawing of a structure that is prepared by an architect or designer for the purpose of design and planning, estimating, securing permits and actual construction.

Plasterboard - A wall finish consisting of a manufactured panel made out of gypsum plaster and encased in a thin cardboard. The panels are nailed or screwed onto the framing and the joints are taped and covered with a 'joint compound'.

Plates - Pieces of wood placed on wall surfaces as fastening devices. The bottom member of the wall is the sole plate and the top member is the rafter plate.

Plenum - A chamber which can serve as a distribution area for heating or cooling systems, generally between a false ceiling and the actual ceiling.

Plot Plan - An overhead view plan that shows the location of the home on the lot. Includes all easements, property lines, set backs, and legal descriptions of the home. Provided by the surveyor.

Pointing - Treatment of joints in masonry by filling with mortar to improve appearance or protect against weather.

Polished brass - Brass finish that is shiny, also called US3 by the door industry.

Polished chrome - Chrome finish that is shiny, also called US26 by the door industry. The image above shows polished chrome on the backset.

Poly-Wrap - Polyethylene wrap that encloses Owens Corning MIRAFLEX® insulation, making it comfortable to touch, less likely to itch and irritate, and easier to handle and install. The poly wrap has tiny perforations that allow the insulation to breathe.

Polybutylene - A type of plastic pipe, often gray in color, used in domestic water supply systems. Some polybutylene plumbing systems have been recalled due to a history of leaks and failure.

Polyethylene Vapor Barrier - Plastic film used to prevent moisture from passing through unfaced insulation. Both 4- and 6-mil polyethylene are preferred because they are less likely to be damaged during construction.

Polyisocyanurate Foam - A rigid foam board insulation often used in locations where there is not enough room for standard batt insulation. It is programmed for many temperature settings and is one of the least expensive ways to reduce energy consumption.

Porte-cochère - A porch-like roof extending over a driveway.

Portico - A portico (Latin) is a roofed area, open to the air on one or more sides, typically supported on one side by the facade of a building and on the remaining sides by columns or arches.

Post - A vertical framing member usually designed to carry a beam.

Post-And-Beam - Wall construction in which beams are supported by heavy posts rather than many smaller studs.

Pressure Relief Valve - A device mounted on a hot water heater or boiler designed to release high steam pressure in the tank and thus prevent tank explosions.

Privacy lock - Privacy lock knobs or levers are used on doors where low security locks are needed, such as on bathrooms, or bedrooms on interior doors.

Punch List - A list of discrepancies that need to be corrected by the contractor.

PVC - A type of white plastic pipe sometimes used for water supply lines.

Q

Quarry Tile - A man-made or machine-made clay tile used to finish a floor or wall. Generally 6' X 6' X 1/4' thick.

Quarter Round - A small trim molding that has the cross section of a quarter circle.

R

R Value - A measure of insulation. A measure of a material's resistance to the passage of heat. The higher the R value, the more insulating 'power' it has. For example, typical new home's walls are usually insulated with 4' of batt insulation with an R value of R-1.

Rabbet - A groove cut in a board to receive another board.

Radiant Heat - A heating system utilizing hot water, steam pipes, or electric resistance coils to heat the floors, walls or the ceiling of a room.

Radius Window - A window with an arched top.

Radon - A naturally-occurring radio active gas common in many parts of the country often associated with lung cancer. Mitigation measures may involve crawl space and basement venting and various forms of vapor barriers.

Rafter - The framing member directly supporting the roof sheathing. A rafter usually follows the angle of the roof and may be a part of a roof truss.

Rail - The top and bottom horizontal members of the framework of a window sash.

Rebar - Ribbed steel bars installed in foundation concrete walls, footers, and poured in place concrete structures designed to strengthen concrete. Comes in various thickness' and strength grade.

Red-Lined Prints - Blueprints that reflect changes and that are marked with red pencil.

Reinforcing Bar - Ribbed steel bars installed in foundation concrete walls, footers, and poured in place concrete structures designed to strengthen concrete. Comes in various thickness' and strength grade.

Relative Humidity - The ratio of the amount of water vapor in the air at a specific temperature to the maximum amount that the air could hold at that temperature, expressed as a percentage.

Resilient Channels - Metal channels used to further inhibit sound transmission through wall and ceiling framing. Create a break in the vibration path from drywall to the framing.

Ridge Board - A horizontal board that serves as the apex of the roof structure.

Ridge Vent - A vent mounted along the entire ridge line of the roof to allow the passage of air through the attic or cathedral ceiling.

Right hand swing - Describes the way in which the door is hung on the jamb. Right Hand describes the side of the door the handle is on as it is pulled toward you.

Riser - The board between one stair tread and the next that is the upright section of a stair.

Roof Certification - A written opinion given by a roofing contractor or inspector, estimating the remaining useful life of a roof system (roofing, venting, flashing...).

Roof Valley - The 'V' created where two sloping roofs meet.

Roof Vent - A louver mounted in the top of the gable to allow the passage of air through the attic.

Rosettes - Plate behind lever or knob that holds the lever or knob in place.

Rough opening - The framed opening in a wall into which a window or door unit is to be installed.

S

Sanitary Sewer - A sewer system designed for the collection of waste water from the bathroom, kitchen and laundry drains. It is usually not designed to handle storm water.

Sash - A single assembly of stiles and rails made into a frame for holding glass.

Sash cord - In double-hung windows, the rope or chain attaching the sash to the counter balance.

Sash lift - A protruding handle screwed to the inside bottom rail of the lower sash on a double-hung window.

Sash weights - The concealed cast-iron weights used to counterbalance the sash in older double-hung windows.

Satin brass - Brass finish that is not shiny, also called US4 by the door industry.

Satin-chrome - Chrome finish that is not shiny, also called US26D by the door industry.

Scotia - A concave molding.

Scupper - The drain in a downspout or flat roof, usually connected to the downspout.

Seepage Pit - A sewage disposal system composed of a septic tank and a connected cesspool.

Septic System - An on-site wastewater treatment system, consisting of a septic tank that promotes the biological digestion of the waste and a drain field which is designed to let the left over liquid soak into the ground.

Septic Tank - A sewage settling tank in which part of the sewage is converted into gas and sludge before the remaining waste is discharged by gravity into a leaching bed underground.

Setback Thermostat - A thermostat with a clock that can be programmed to different temperatures at different times of the day and week. Usually used as the heating or cooling system thermostat.

Sewage Ejector - A pump used to lift wastewater to a gravity sanitary sewer line. Usually used in basements and other locations that are situated below the level of the side sewer.

Shake - A wood roofing product, usually composed of cedar, which is produced by splitting a block of the wood along the grain line. Modern shakes are sometimes machine sawed on one side.

Sheathing - The plywood, board, OSB or other material used as the base for the roofing.

Shed Roof - A roof that pitches up further on one side than the other. Shed roofs are also used over some porches.

Sheet rock - A wall finish consisting of a manufactured panel made out of gypsum plaster and encased in a thin cardboard. The panels are nailed or screwed onto the framing and the joints are taped and covered with a 'joint compound'.

Shim - Thin tapered piece of wood used for leveling or tightening a stair or other building element.

Shingle - A thin oblong piece of material, such as wood or slate, that is laid in overlapping rows to cover the roof or sides of a house or other building.

Sidelights - Narrow fixed units mullied or joined to door units to give a more open appearance.

Siding - Slightly wedge-shaped boards used as horizontal siding in a lapped pattern over the exterior sheathing. Varies in butt thickness from and width.

Sill - The main horizontal member forming the bottom of the frame of a window or door.

Single glazing - Use of single panes of glass in a window. Not as energy-efficient as double glazing.

Single-hung - A double-hung type of window in which the top sash is fixed or inoperable.

Slab on Grade - A type of foundation with a concrete floor placed directly on the soil. The edge of the slab is usually thicker and acts as the footing for the walls.

Sleeper - Strip of wood laid over concrete floor to which the finished wood floor is nailed or glued.

Soffit - The underside of the roof overhang or porch ceiling that covers the rafter bottoms. This horizontal surface usually has vents to allow air into the attic.

Specifications or Specs. - A list of materials, methods, model numbers, colors, allowances, and other details which supplement blue print.

Splash Block - A pad placed under the lower end of a downspout and diverts the water from the downspout away from the house. Usually made out of concrete or fiberglass.

Square Footage, Living - The square footage in a home that is heated and/or cooled. The space occupied by two-story rooms and stairwells is counted once in the lower floor's square footage. Living square footage usually does not include garages, bonus rooms, or porches unless otherwise.

Stachybotrys - A toxic black colored mold sometimes found in wet or flooded homes.

Stapling Flange - A protruding edge on faced insulation used to staple the insulation to the framing.

Stick-Built Home - A house built without prefabricated parts. Also called conventional building.

Stile - The main vertical members of the framework of a sash.

Stool - An interior trim piece on a window extending the sill and acts as a narrow shelf.

Stop - A molding used to hold, position or separate window parts. A molding used for a door to close against.

Storm Sewer - A sewer system designed to collect storm water and is separated from the waste water system.

Strike plate - Plate attached to door jamb, which receives the latch to hold the door in a closed position.

Stringer - A long, horizontal member which connects uprights in a frame or supports a floor or the like. One of the enclosed sides of a stair supporting the treads and risers.

Stud - An upright piece of lumber or steel in a wall, to which panels, siding, drywall, or other coverings are attached.

Subfloor - The structural material that spans across floor joists. It serves as a working platform during construction and provides a base for the finish floor.

Sump - A pit in the basement in which water collects to be pumped out with a sump pump.

T

Take Off - The list of materials necessary to complete a job.

Tempered glass - Glass manufactured to withstand greater than normal forces on its surface. When it breaks, it shatters into small pieces to reduce hazard.

Tenon - A rectangular projection cut out of a piece of wood for insertion into a mortise.

Thermal break - The addition of a thermal insulating material between two thermally conductive materials.

Time and Materials Contract - A construction contract specifying a price for different elements of the work such as, cost per hour of labor, overhead, profit, etc.

Title Insurance - Title Insurance is a title company's guarantee the title to a parcel of real estate is affected only by matters shown on a written report.

Top Plate - The horizontal member nailed to the top of the studding of a wall.

Transom - A small hinged window directly above a door.

Tray Ceiling - A decorative ceiling treatment used to add volume and/or height to a room. 2 Common types are: 1) Angled area toward the center leading to a flat ceiling surface, and 2) Stepped square edged leading toward the center of the ceiling.

Tread - The flat part of a stair step.

Treated Lumber - A wood product impregnated with chemicals to reduce damage from wood rot or insects. Often used for the portions of a structure likely to be in ongoing contact with soil and water such as a deck. Wood may also be treated with a fire retardant.

Trombe Wall - A passive solar wall, usually masonry or concrete, used for passing heat from one room (like a sun room or solar garden room) to another.

True divided light - A term referring to windows in which multiple individual panes of glass or lights are assembled in the sash using muntins.

Truss - A manufactured wood member often in the form of a large triangle used to form the ceiling joists and rafters on the top floor of a home.

Turnkey - A term used when the subcontractor provides all materials (and labor) for a job.

U

U-value - Rate of heat flow-value through the complete heat barrier, from room air to outside air. The lower the U-value, the better the insulating value.

Unfaced Insulation - Insulation with no attached vapor retarder.

Unison lock - A casement locking system securing the window at two locking points by operation of one handle.

UURHOT - An unused underground residential heating oil tank. Usually found in homes once heated with oil.

V

Vapor Retarder - Helps control the amount of moisture passing through the insulation and collecting inside exterior walls, ceilings and floors.

Vaulted Ceiling - A ceiling that angles upward on one or both sides to create volume in the room.

Veneer - Extremely thin sheets of wood. Also a thin slice of wood or brick or stone covering a framed wall.

Vent Unit - A window or door unit that opens or operates.

Ventilation - Creates a positive flow of air that allows the house to 'breathe' and helps prevent moisture build-up year-round.

Vinyl - A plastic material used by some window manufacturers for cladding or entire window units.

Voltage - A measure of electrical potential. Most homes are wired with 110 and 220 volt lines. The 110 volt power is used for lighting and most of the other circuits.

W

Wafer Board - A manufactured wood panel composed of 1 and- 2 inch wood chips and glue. It is often incorrectly used as a substitute for plywood.

Walk Through - A final inspection of a home before 'closing' to look for and document problems that need to be corrected.

Wall Out - When a painter spray paints the interior of a home.

Warranty - In construction there are two general types of warranties. The manufacturer of a product, such as roofing material or an appliance, provides one type. The second type is a warranty for the labor.

Watt - A measure of the electrical requirement of an appliance, calculated by multiplying voltage times current.

Weatherstripping - A material or device used to seal the openings, gaps or cracks of venting window and door units to prevent water and air infiltration.

Widow's Walk - A platform with a rail around it, built onto the roof of a house. The platform is accessible by stairs or a ladder from the interior of the house.

Windload - Force exerted on a surface by moving air.

Window Buck - Square or rectangular box that is installed within a concrete foundation or block wall. A window will eventually be installed in this 'buck' during the siding stage of construction.

Wire Nut - A plastic device used to connect bare wires together.

Y

Y - A 'Y' shaped plumbing fitting.

Yard of Concrete - One cubic yard of concrete is 3' x 3' x 3' in volume, or 27 cubic feet. One cubic yard of concrete will pour 80 square feet of 3" sidewalk or basement/garage floor.

Yoke - The location where a home's water meter is sometimes installed between two copper pipes, and located in the water meter pit in the yard.

Z

Z-Bar Flashing - Bent, galvanized metal flashing that is installed above a horizontal trim board of an exterior window, door, or brick run. It prevents water from getting behind the trim/brick and into the home.

Zero-lot line - The positioning of a house near or on top of the lot boundary, resulting in little or no space between houses.

Zone - The section of a building that is served by one heating or cooling loop because it has noticeably distinct heating or cooling needs. Also, the section of property that will be watered from a lawn sprinkler system.

Zone Valve - A device, usually placed near the heater or cooler, which controls the flow of water or steam to parts of the building; it is controlled by a zone thermostat.

Zoning - A governmental process and specification limiting the use of a property. Types include single-family use, high-rise residential use, and commercial, among others.