



Who Owns the Problem?

A homeowner's guide to accountability when design and construction decisions overlap.

SEPARATE AGREEMENTS

Homeowner

Architect + Builder

Two contractual relationships

DESIGN-BUILD AGREEMENT

Homeowner

Design-builder

One entity responsible for design + construction

When demolition reveals a surprise

An existing condition requires a revised detail, a cost decision, and a change to the sequence of work. Who connects those decisions?

Separate architect and builder agreements

Responsibility is addressed across two agreements. The homeowner may need to coordinate the parties when scope or responsibility is disputed.

Single-contract design-build

The homeowner brings the concern to the design-builder. That entity coordinates the design and construction response within its team.

Less room for finger-pointing. A clearer place to turn.

Unexpected conditions still require decisions, approvals, and a documented response.

The diagrams explain delivery models. Single-contract responsibility applies when the executed agreement places both design and construction with one design-builder. Scope, exclusions, change procedures, and warranties remain defined by the agreement.

Source: Design-Build Institute of America, "What Is Design-Build?" dbia.org/what-is-design-build/ | Further reading: AIA, "How to work with an architect," aia.org/globalcampus/work-architect.

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