



## Remodeling Your Home With An Enclosed Porch Conversion

If your family is growing and you find that you need additional space, if your home has an enclosed porch, you're in luck! Converting your three-season porch into a finished heated room can not only provide you with the space you need, but it can also be a simpler and more cost-effective way to gain that extra room!

Remodeling your porch offers plenty of advantages. First, since it's already existing, there is no loss of yard space like you'd have with an addition. Plus, you'll have fewer zoning issues as it's an existing structure, and much of the structural work is already in place.

## Assessing Your Existing Porch



This 4-season, heated & cooled sunroom, started as the back screened porch on a home. The old porch was removed, and totally re-built on top of the original foundation.



A screened porch was demo'd and a 4-season sunroom with a 16' Andersen patio door installed in this contemporary porch conversion project.

You have many options when remodeling your porch. There are a couple of concerns that you should speak with your design-build remodeler about. First, you want to make sure that remodeling your porch will not detract from the



style of your home. This is especially important if you're enclosing a porch on some bungalows or Victorians, as it can affect the home's much sought after charm. Your design-build contractor can work with you to make sure that your new structure will be architecturally compatible.

Side porches can easily be converted into a home office, play space for the kids or a den/family room. If your porch is located on the rear of your house, it's ideal for adding space for an extended kitchen. With new insulation and energy efficient windows, and porch can be converted into a light-filled Florida room (a sunroom or 3-season room) that can provide you with plenty of year-round enjoyment.

You'll need to examine the existing structure before you start. While much of the infrastructure may be in place, you will need to carefully consider the foundation to make sure that it's capable of supporting the finished structure. Also, you need to consider the cost of:



A 3-season room connected to the home with a folding hinged patio door, it uses a gas fireplace for occasional winter heating.

- **Insulation:** Insulating walls and ceilings may be necessary. How much and what type of insulation you use depends in part on the existing structure and your planned use for the space.
- **Replacement Windows:** Your design-build contractor can determine if the existing window frames are usable, which can reduce costs. Remember to match your homes existing windows to make sure your new porch fits into your homes architectural style.
- **Plumbing:** The location of your new room to existing plumbing will significantly

impact the difficulty and cost of installing plumbing if needed.

**Electrical:** If electrical service exists on your existing porch, you may still need to update your electrical service to meet your local building codes.

- **Drywall, flooring, and millwork**

- **Heating and Cooling:** This is an important consideration. While your home may have systems that can easily accommodate an additional room, you may need to supplement the HVAC for this room. Baseboard heating could be one option, however, although it's easy to install, baseboard heating can be expensive to operate on an ongoing basis. Consider adding a fireplace, pellet stove, or wood stove for heat. New models are efficient, look great, and can quickly heat a large space during our cold Madison, Wisconsin winters.

**Even with these elements in the mix, converting an existing porch into a usable space can be more cost-effective than adding an addition to gain usable space.**

## Avoiding Some Common Pitfalls



This screened porch was converted to a 3-season room with a fireplace, the perfect way to enjoy the pool and backyard view!

While enclosing your porch to create usable space is a cost-effective solution there are a couple of pitfalls you'll need to watch out

for. Here in Madison, Wisconsin our winters can be particularly harsh. Your design-build contractor will understand the local weather conditions and take these into account when designing your space. Insulation and energy efficient windows are an important consideration here in Madison, and if you're planning on connecting your new room to your home, you'll need to make sure that it is as energy efficient as the rest of your home.

The foundation is another area that is critical when it comes to converting your porch into usable space. The depth of your foundation must be able to handle the additional weight of the porch's roof, walls, and windows, Failure to

properly inspect the foundation can result in leaking or failure. Often, a porch's foundation will be shallower than your house's foundation. Adding to the structure without proper foundation prep can result in cracking in both the foundation and the roof where it meets the house. This can end up costing you big money for repairs and may affect your ability to sell at a later date.

Finally, the building codes dictate improvement projects like enclosing a porch. Your design-build contractor should be up to date on all of your local building codes and will take care of permitting and building inspections. You need to be prepared for some additional costs. Local building codes require permits for any updates to electrical, plumbing, and HVAC. Failure to follow building codes can result in your home being unsellable in the future.

Remodeling your porch and creating additional living space can add value and functionality to your home. Make sure that you discuss your project thoroughly with your design-build contractor before construction begins. They can help you to create a space that will seamlessly match your home's existing architecture and can provide you with all the additional space your family needs!

### **View our Porch Design Projects**

- **Front & Back Ranch Home Porch Additions** - [Extending The Living Space Into The Outdoors](#)
- **Three Season Porch Renovation** - [A Cathedral Ceiling Porch Remodel in Nakoma, Madison](#)
- **Two Story Porch Solution** - [A Small Deck is Remodeled Into a Screened In Three Season Addition](#)
- **Screen Porch To Sunroom** - [A DeForest, Wisconsin Screen Porch Is Remodeled Into A Sunroom Addition](#)



*This article was updated by Abe Degnan on 11/1/2022.*

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