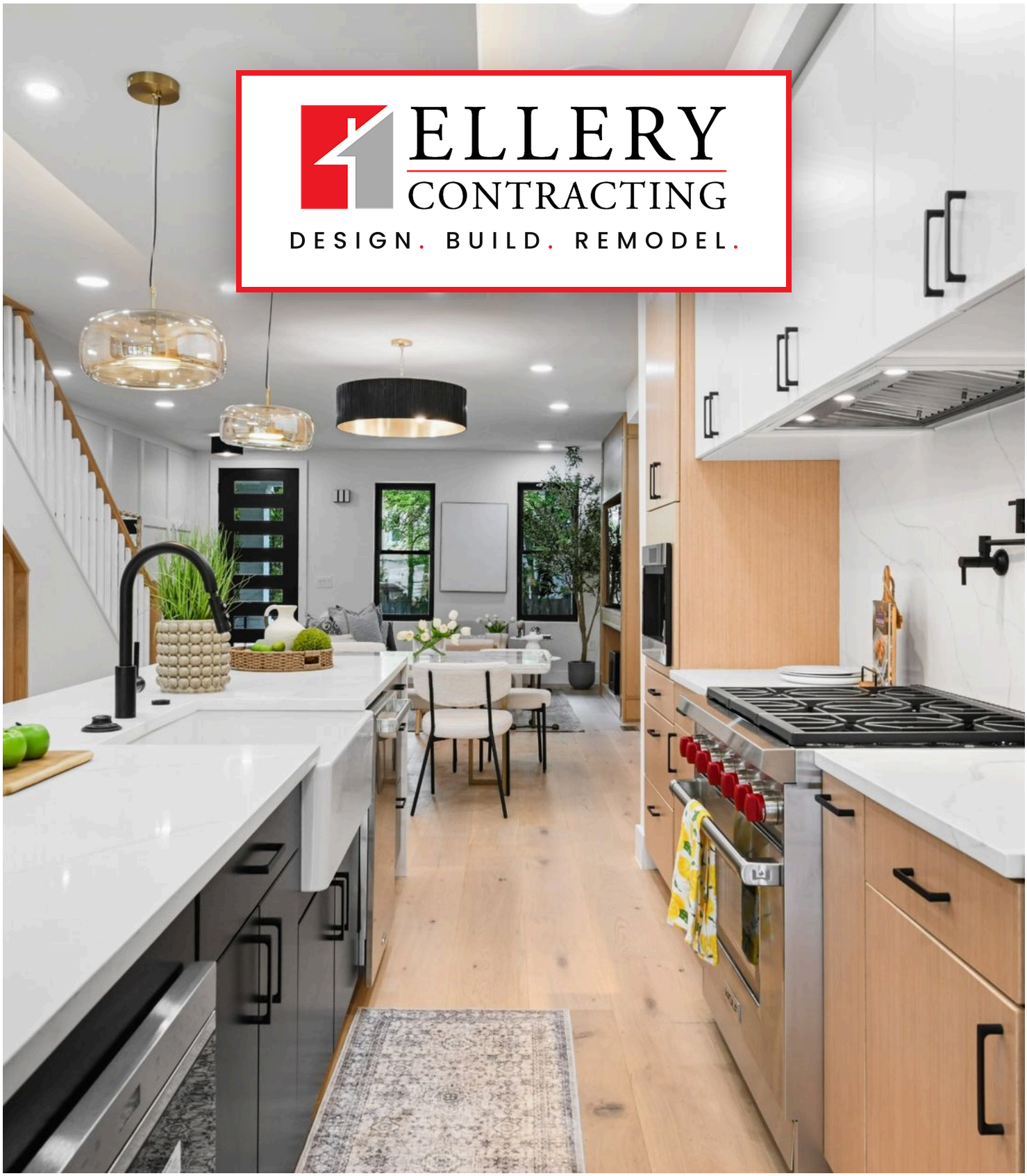
HOMEOWNERS' REMODELING GUIDE

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CONTRACTOR



202-322-7241 www.ellerycontracting.com info@ellerycontracting.com



Ellery Kirkpatrick

FOUNDER

Serving Washington, DC · Maryland · Virginia

Hi there!

Welcome to Ellery Contracting's Homeowners' Guide to Remodeling. I'm Ellery Kirkpatrick, founder of Ellery Contracting. For more than a decade, our team has designed, built, and remodeled homes across Washington, DC, Maryland, and Virginia — from kitchens and baths to basements, additions, and whole-home renovations and new builds.

I created this guide to give homeowners the tools they need to choose the right contractor with confidence. Remodeling your home can feel overwhelming, but with the right partner it can be one of the most rewarding investments you make. Inside you'll find what to look for in a contractor, the questions to ask, and what to expect along the way. At Ellery Contracting, our promise is simple: **your vision is our commitment.**







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ELLERY CONTRACTING

DESIGN. BUILD. REMODEL.

ELLERY

SELECTING THE RIGHT CONTRACTOR

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01

WHAT TO PRIORITIZE

Choosing the right contractor is the most important decision you'll make during your remodeling journey. Here's what to prioritize:

PROOF OF ESTABLISHMENT

Make sure the contractor runs an established business with the people and systems to support your project — scheduling, accounting, purchasing, and a real point of contact. Look for tangible proof of longevity and financial stability.

LICENSING

Verify the contractor holds the right license for where you live. In DC, check with the Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection (DLCP); in Maryland, the Maryland Home Improvement Commission (MHIC); in Virginia, the Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR). Also check whether the company has recently changed its name.

CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE

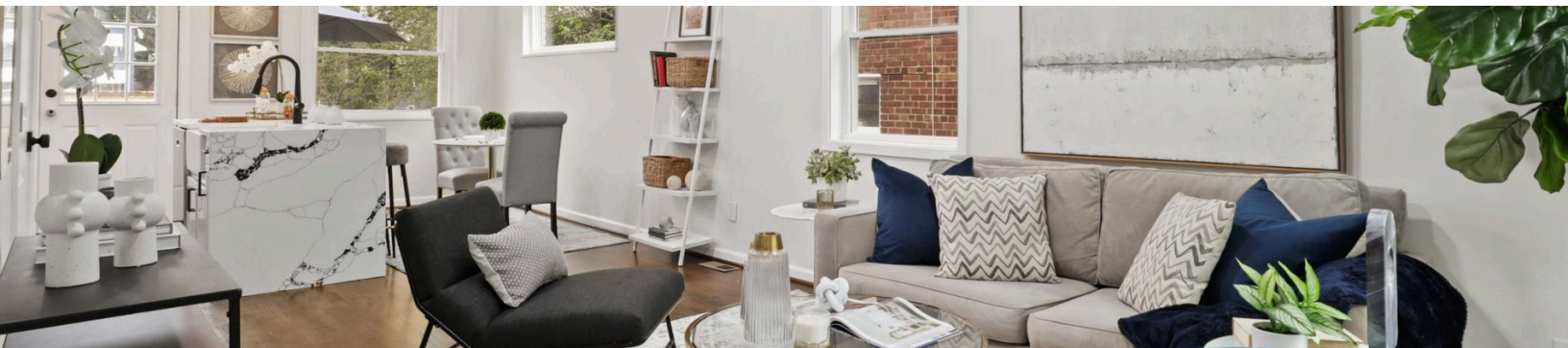
Ask for a current certificate of liability insurance. It proves the company carries active coverage that protects you and your home if an accident or error happens during the project.

REVIEWS AND REPUTATION

Reviews are a powerful indicator of trustworthiness and expertise. Google reviews are especially useful because businesses can't pay to remove negative feedback there. Look for consistency over time, not just a handful of glowing comments.

TRANSPARENT CONTRACTS

A reputable contractor provides a clear, written scope of work, cost, payment schedule, timeline, and list of responsibilities — before any work begins.



02

COMPANY STANDARDS

Choosing a contractor is about more than the final result — it's about the experience along the way. Clear standards keep the process safe, respectful, and professional. At Ellery Contracting, we hold our team to standards that give our clients real peace of mind.



JOBSITE CLEANUP

A clean jobsite isn't just about appearances — it's about safety and respect for your home. Your contractor should follow a daily cleanup routine to remove debris and hazards, with a thorough final cleaning when the project is complete. Our crews leave the work area clean at the end of every day.

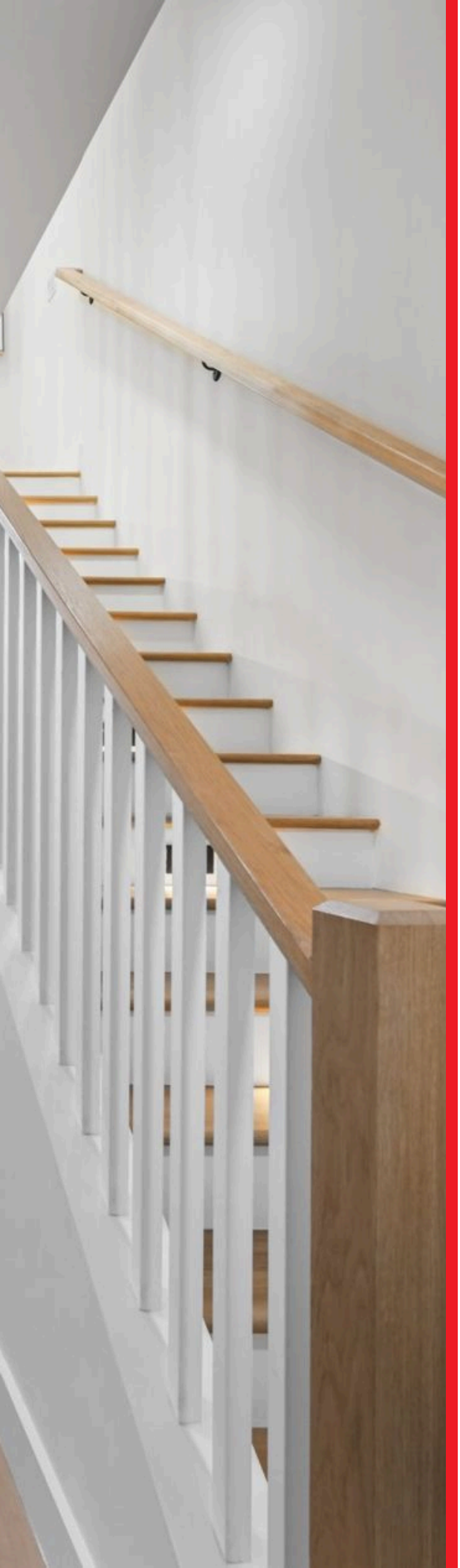
PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Your home is a personal space, and when it becomes a jobsite, behavior matters. Ask how a contractor sets expectations for its crews and trade partners: arrival times, protecting floors and furnishings, noise, and how your family's routines will be respected.

TRUSTED, VETTED CREWS

You should feel safe and comfortable with everyone working in your home. Ask who will be on site, whether they are employees or subcontractors, and how the company vets the people it sends. If a company can't answer clearly, that's a red flag.

> High standards aren't optional — they're essential. From cleanliness to conduct, we bring professionalism to every step for a stress-free remodeling experience.



03

PROFESSIONALISM

DETAILED PROPOSAL

Too many contractors skip a written proposal — they shouldn't. A proper proposal gives a detailed breakdown of materials, products, and scope of work, so everyone is aligned from the start.

At Ellery Contracting, our detailed proposals serve as a clear roadmap, setting expectations for a smooth remodel from concept to completion.

PLANS & PERMITS

Some contractors cut corners by skipping permits or building from unapproved plans. That puts your home, your safety, and your resale value at risk. Insist on:

- Drawings that match the scope of work, prepared by qualified professionals where required.
- Permits obtained before work begins, in compliance with local building codes.
- Required inspections scheduled and passed throughout the project.

A NO-PRESSURE SALES EXPERIENCE

Unethical contractors use high-pressure tactics to force quick decisions. If you ever feel rushed, treat it as a red flag. A reputable contractor encourages due diligence and gives you what you need to make an informed choice.

We believe in transparency, not sales tactics. Your project, your decision.

04

DESIGN FEASIBILITY



As a design-build firm, Ellery Contracting brings design and construction together under one roof — a seamless approach from concept to completion. Here's why that matters:

SEAMLESS COMMUNICATION

When design and construction work as one team, miscommunication is minimized — leading to a more efficient process and fewer costly errors.

COST AND TIMELINE PREDICTABILITY

Design-build offers early cost analysis and realistic timelines, reducing the risk of budget overruns and delays.

ACCOUNTABILITY FROM START TO FINISH

Instead of juggling a separate designer and builder with competing priorities, one team owns the outcome — keeping quality and continuity consistent throughout.

FEASIBILITY FROM DAY ONE

Design and build collaborate from the first conversation, so the vision for your project is both beautiful and buildable.

05

REPUTATION



A contractor's reputation reflects its commitment to quality, customer service, and integrity. When you research a contractor, prioritize Google reviews, word-of-mouth recommendations, and testimonials. Consistent positive feedback is a strong indicator of reliability and professionalism.

★★★★★

"Ellery and his team have made it less stressful and ease my anxiety around home improvement projects."

— DYANA FORESTER

"Simply stated, this is a great company to work with."

— PAULA PORTER

WHY GOOGLE REVIEWS MATTER

Online reviews play a crucial role in judging credibility, quality, and customer satisfaction. There are many review platforms, but Google Reviews should be a top priority when you evaluate a remodeling contractor.

Unlike some paid review platforms, Google doesn't let businesses filter, curate, or pay to remove negative reviews. That makes it a more transparent source of information.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- A steady history of reviews, not a sudden burst.
- Reviews that mention specific people and projects.
- How the company responds when something goes wrong.

06

LICENSED CONTRACTORS

A general contractor (GC) oversees a construction project — managing trade partners, sourcing materials, ensuring code compliance, and keeping the project on schedule and on budget. The GC is your primary point of contact with everyone involved. In DC, Maryland, and Virginia, contractors performing home improvement work must be licensed by the District or the state where the work takes place, so always confirm the license matches your address.

EXPERTISE AND CREDENTIALS

Licensing requires contractors to meet qualifications and, in many cases, pass exams — evidence they have the technical knowledge to manage complex projects.

CODE COMPLIANCE AND PERMITS

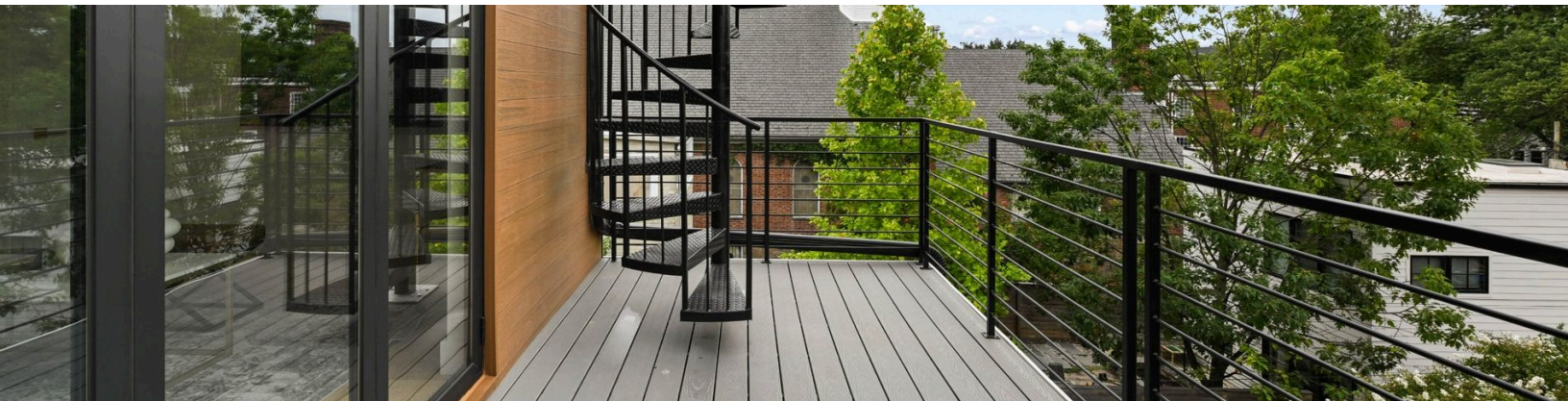
Licensed contractors know local building codes and can pull the necessary permits, reducing the risk of fines, delays, failed inspections, or legal issues.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Licensing boards set and enforce standards, and a licensed contractor's livelihood depends on maintaining them — which raises the odds of high-quality work.

TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Licensed contractors answer to a regulator and, in some jurisdictions, homeowners have access to recovery funds. Unlicensed contractors lack that oversight, raising the risk of poor workmanship or fraud.



07

COMMUNICATION

When selecting a contractor, communication is one of the most important factors to consider. At Ellery Contracting, we prioritize transparency and keep you informed throughout the entire process.



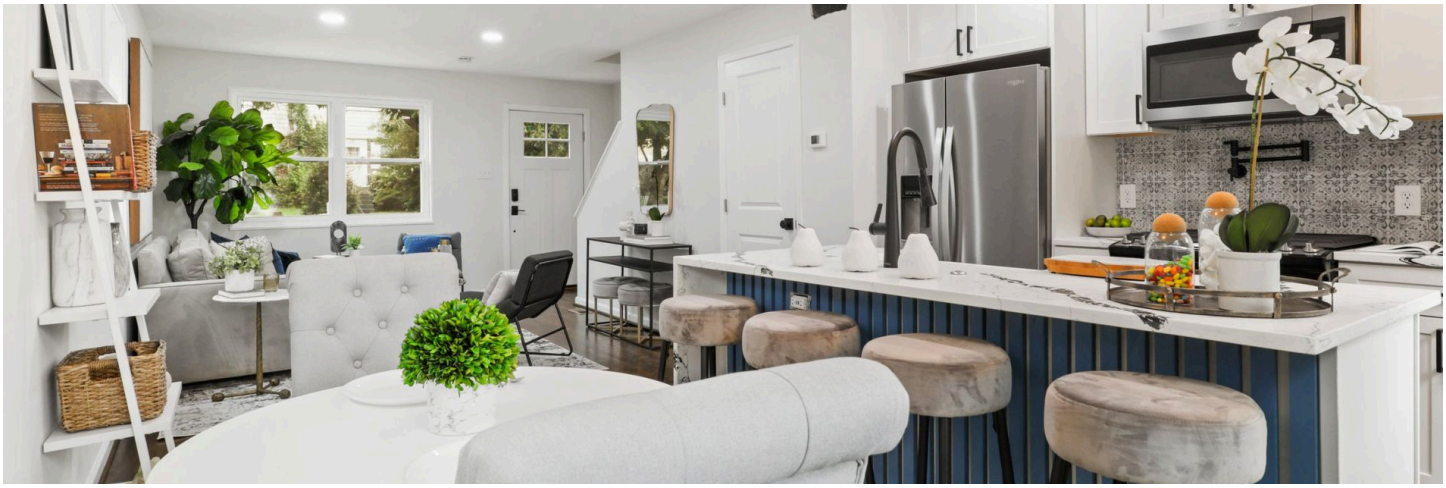
Many contractors leave homeowners in the dark, with poor communication and few updates. Without clear reports, clients are often unsure about progress or problems.

We take a different approach. From your first walkthrough to final completion, you'll have a dedicated point of contact who keeps you up to date on progress, schedule, and any challenges that come up — with clear answers and no surprises.

We believe consistent, open communication is essential to the success of any project. You should never be left wondering what's happening in your home.

QUESTIONS TO ASK ANY CONTRACTOR

- Who is my main point of contact?
- How often will I get updates, and how?
- How are changes and surprises handled?



08

WORKMANSHIP



Craftsmanship shows in the details — clean lines, tight joints, level surfaces, and finishes that hold up for years. A true professional delivers quality work without cutting corners and stands behind it.

Great remodeling starts with competence, built through training, experience, and hard work. Before you hire, ask to see completed projects similar to yours, and ask what happens if something isn't right after the job is finished.

At Ellery Contracting, we deliver high-end renovations finished on schedule and within budget. Our work speaks for itself — and we stand behind every project we complete, because you deserve a remodel done right the first time.

ASK ABOUT WARRANTIES

Get the contractor's workmanship warranty in writing — what it covers and for how long.



09

FINANCING & PAYMENTS

Many homeowners explore financing options before starting a remodel. Understanding your budget and how payments are structured up front makes the whole process smoother and stress-free.

Before you sign, make sure you understand how and when you'll pay. A professional contractor ties payments to clear project milestones, never asks for most of the money up front, and puts every change in writing.

- **Know your budget** – Talk with your lender early about home equity, renovation loans, or other options.
- **Milestone payments** – Payments should follow completed work, not run ahead of it.
- **Plan a contingency** – Set aside extra funds for surprises behind the walls.
- **Written change orders** – Every change to scope or price should be documented and signed.

Our team will walk you through a clear, detailed quote and payment schedule so you can plan with confidence.



GET A DETAILED QUOTE

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info@ellerycontracting.com

RESOURCES



TERMS TO KNOW

DESIGN-BUILD FIRM
A company that manages both the design and construction phases of a project for a seamless process.

CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE
Proof that a contractor carries liability and workers' compensation coverage.

PERMIT
Official approval required for certain types of construction work.

SCOPE OF WORK
A detailed document outlining all the tasks, materials, and timelines involved in a project.

TRADE PARTNER
A specialist hired by the contractor for specific tasks, such as plumbing or electrical work.

WORKMANSHIP WARRANTY
The contractor's written promise covering the quality of its work for a set period after completion.

UNDERPINNING
Strengthening and deepening an existing foundation — often used to lower a basement floor and gain ceiling height.

GENERAL CONTRACTOR (GC)
A licensed professional who manages all aspects of a construction project, coordinating trade partners, materials, and permits.

BUILDING CODE
Regulations set by local authorities that specify safety and structural standards.

CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY
A document issued by local authorities certifying a building complies with codes and is safe to occupy.

CHANGE ORDER
A signed document detailing changes to the original scope, timeline, or cost.

PUNCH LIST
A list of final tasks or touch-ups to complete before the project is closed out.

DIG-OUT
Excavating below an existing basement or crawl space to create new, usable living area.

FINAL WALKTHROUGH
An inspection of the completed project with your contractor to confirm it meets expectations.

REMODELING PROCESS

1

DEFINE YOUR SCOPE

Outline your renovation goals, desired outcomes, and budget. This clarity helps you communicate effectively and receive accurate estimates.

2

INITIAL CONSULTATION

Share your ideas, preferences, and objectives. It's also a chance to review the firm's portfolio and reviews to make sure you're aligned.

3

BUDGET PLANNING

Set a realistic budget with your remodeling firm and plan a contingency for unforeseen conditions — especially in older homes.

4

SITE VISIT & MEASUREMENTS

The team visits your home to assess the space, take measurements, and discuss your vision in detail before developing design concepts.

5

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Concepts are refined into detailed plans: layouts, materials, and finishes are finalized. Thorough planning now prevents costly changes later.

6

PERMITS & PRE-CONSTRUCTION

Permits are obtained, trade partners scheduled, and materials ordered. A pre-construction meeting confirms scope, schedule, and expectations.

7

CONSTRUCTION

Work begins, with regular updates from your point of contact so you always know the progress and any decisions that need your input.

8

PROJECT COMPLETION

A final walkthrough reviews every detail, completes any touch-ups, and hands over a clean space that's ready to enjoy.

F.A.Q.

ANY OTHER RED FLAGS TO LOOK OUT FOR?

Watch for contractors with no business address, no website, no written contract, requests for large cash deposits, prices far below everyone else, or reluctance to pull permits.

CAN A CONTRACTOR FAKE THE STANDARDS IN THIS GUIDE?

Some contractors claim to follow best practices but don't deliver. Ask for proof: license numbers, insurance certificates, permits, and client references. If they hesitate, consider it a warning sign.

HOW DO I KEEP MY PROJECT ON BUDGET?

Choose a contractor who provides a clear, detailed proposal. Avoid vague estimates, make sure you understand what is and isn't included, and keep every change in a written change order.

SHOULD I WORRY IF ONE BID IS MUCH LOWER THAN THE REST?

Yes. Some price difference is normal, but an estimate far below others can mean cut corners, lower-grade materials, or costs left out that will show up later.

DO I NEED PERMITS FOR MY PROJECT?

Most structural, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical work requires permits in DC, Maryland, and Virginia. A professional contractor will know what's required and handle it for you.

CONTRACTOR CHECKLIST

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Not all contractors are created equal. Use this checklist to compare companies and make sure you're hiring a team that delivers quality, transparency, and a great remodeling experience.

CONTRACTOR COMPARISON	ELLERY	COMPANY A	COMPANY B
Established business, 10+ years	✔		
Licensed for your jurisdiction (DC · MD · VA)	✔		
Proof of insurance	✔		
Strong, consistent Google reviews	✔		
Design-build: design and construction in one team	✔		
Detailed written proposal	✔		
Permits pulled for all required work	✔		
No-pressure sales experience	✔		
Dedicated point of contact	✔		
Daily jobsite cleanup	✔		
Portfolio of completed projects	✔		
New builds, additions, basements, kitchens & baths	✔		
Written workmanship warranty	✔		

US, AT A GLANCE



OUR EXPERTISE

EXPERT CRAFTSMANSHIP

Skill and attention to detail ensure your project is completed with precision and care.

THOUGHTFUL DESIGN

Design that blends style with function, crafting spaces tailored to the way you live.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Quality materials and industry best practices, held to a high standard on every job.

TURN-KEY SERVICE

From first consultation to final touches, we handle everything for a seamless, hassle-free project.

COMMUNICATION

We keep you in the loop every step of the way, building trust through transparency.

ON SCHEDULE, ON BUDGET

High-end renovations finished on schedule and within budget — your vision is our commitment.

WHAT WE BUILD

- New Home Builds
- Whole Home Renovations
- Home Additions
- Basement Remodeling
- Dig-Outs & Underpinning
- Kitchen Remodeling
- Bathroom Remodeling
- Decks & Outdoor Spaces
- Commercial Build-Outs

Washington DC · Arlington · Alexandria · Silver Spring · Rockville · Bethesda · Reston · Bowie

OUR CLIENT REVIEWS

"Ellery and his team have made it less stressful and ease my anxiety around home improvement projects."

— Dyana Forester ★★★★★

"Everything was completed professionally, on-time, and for a reasonable price."

— Jonathan Retzke ★★★★★

"The whole process went smoothly from start to finish, the price was reasonable."

— Leticia Long ★★★★★

"Ellery Contractors did an amazing job building an addition to my house."

— Kishan Alexander ★★★★★

"Other quotes were lower but worth the pay for the reduced headache and ease!"

— Lennard Long ★★★★★

"Ellery provides excellent customer service."

— L. Jenkins ★★★★★

WHAT'S NEXT?

PROPOSAL

01

After your consultation, we'll prepare a detailed proposal outlining the full scope of work, a budget estimate, and our design-build approach. It becomes the foundation for your project and gives you a clear picture of what's possible.

REVIEW

02

We want you to feel confident in every decision. We'll walk through the proposal with you in detail, make any adjustments, and explain our process, timeline, and next steps.

SIGN

03

When you're ready to move forward, you'll sign your contract and officially kick off your project — with finalized plans, selections, permits, and a schedule you can count on.

LET'S BRING YOUR VISION TO LIFE.

202-322-7241 · info@ellerycontracting.com



FEATURED PROJECT

THE SPA-INSPIRED PRIMARY BATH

Warm, calm, and built to last — a private retreat designed and built by Ellery Contracting.

- Floor-to-ceiling fluted wood-look tile
- Frameless glass walk-in shower
- Full-width lighted niche
- Herringbone marble tile floor
- Freestanding soaking tub
- Ceiling rain head plus dual wall shower heads
- Brushed-gold fixtures and linear drain
- Backlit vanity mirrors

LET'S DESIGN YOURS.

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ELLERY DESIGNS



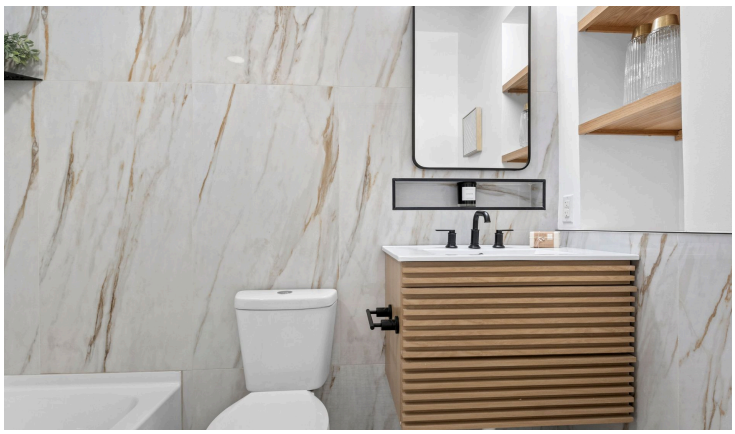


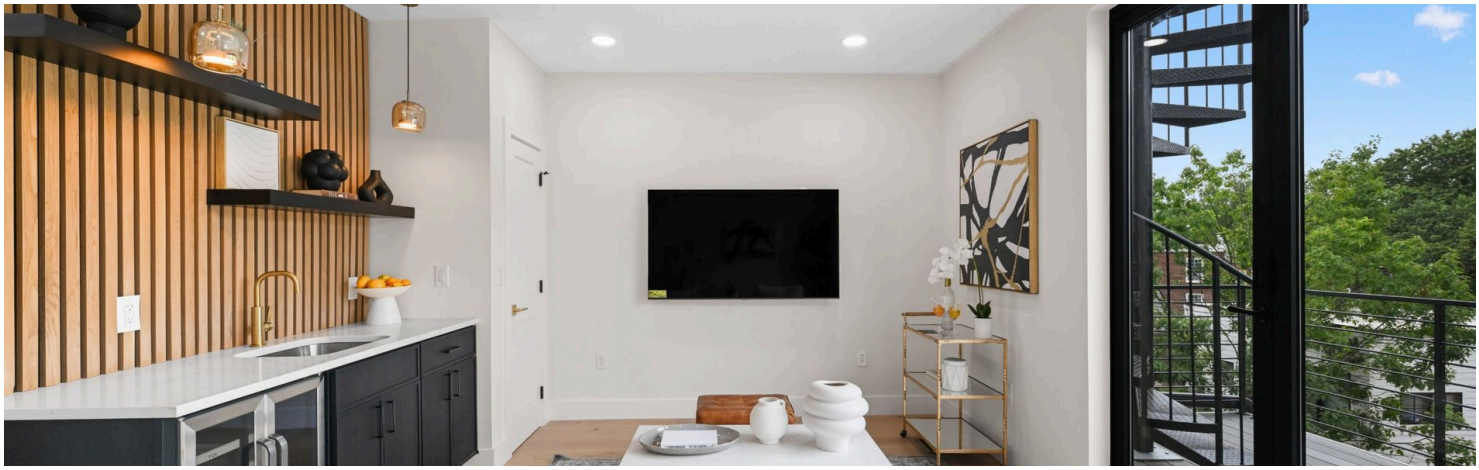






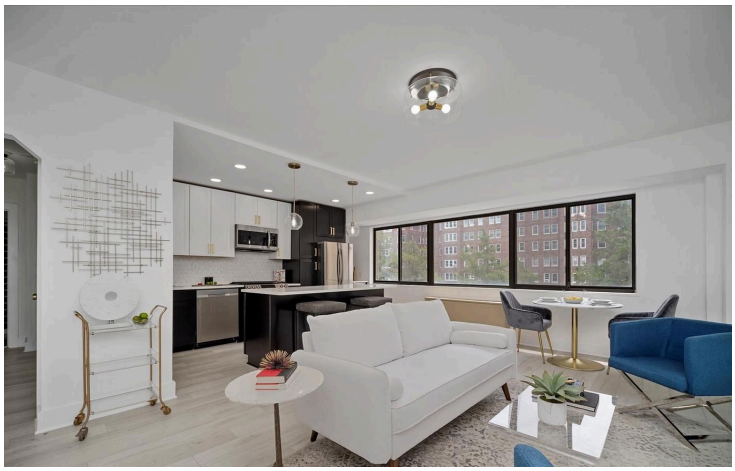


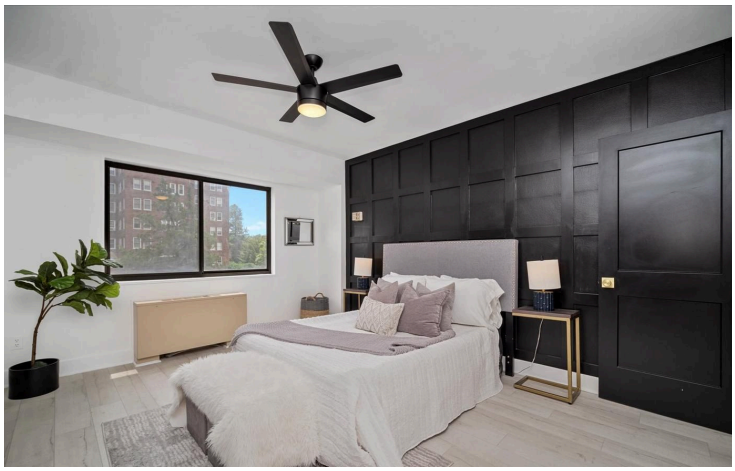






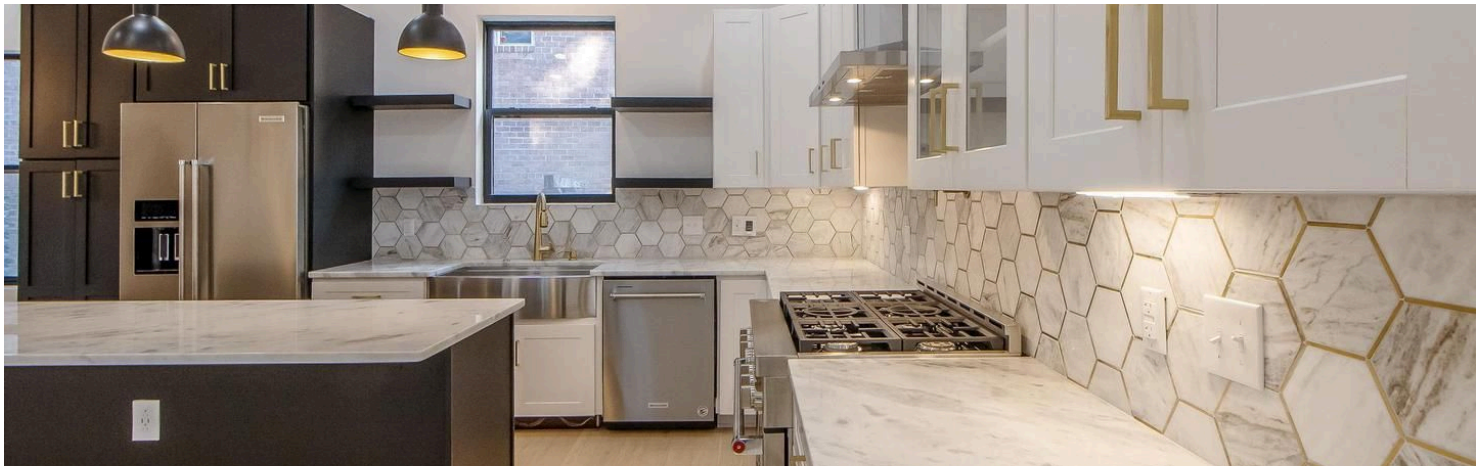


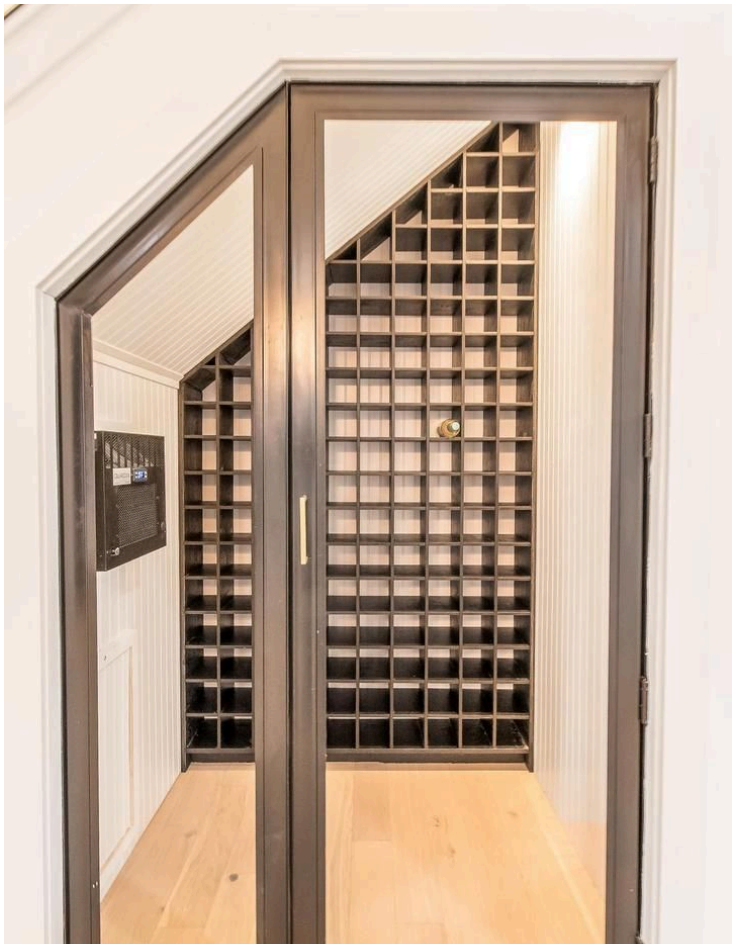




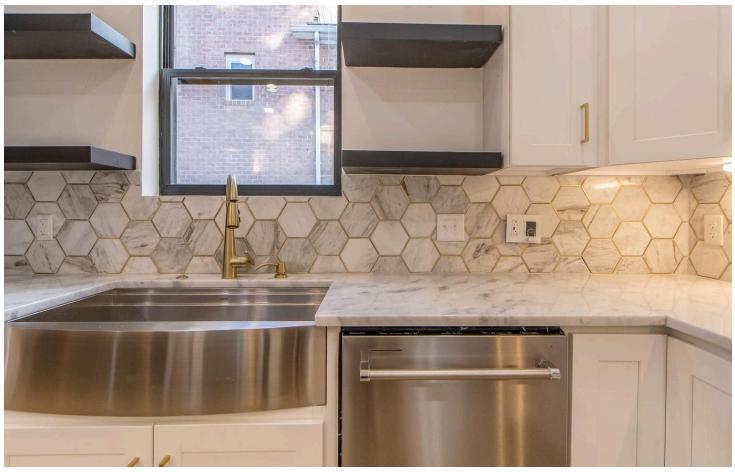










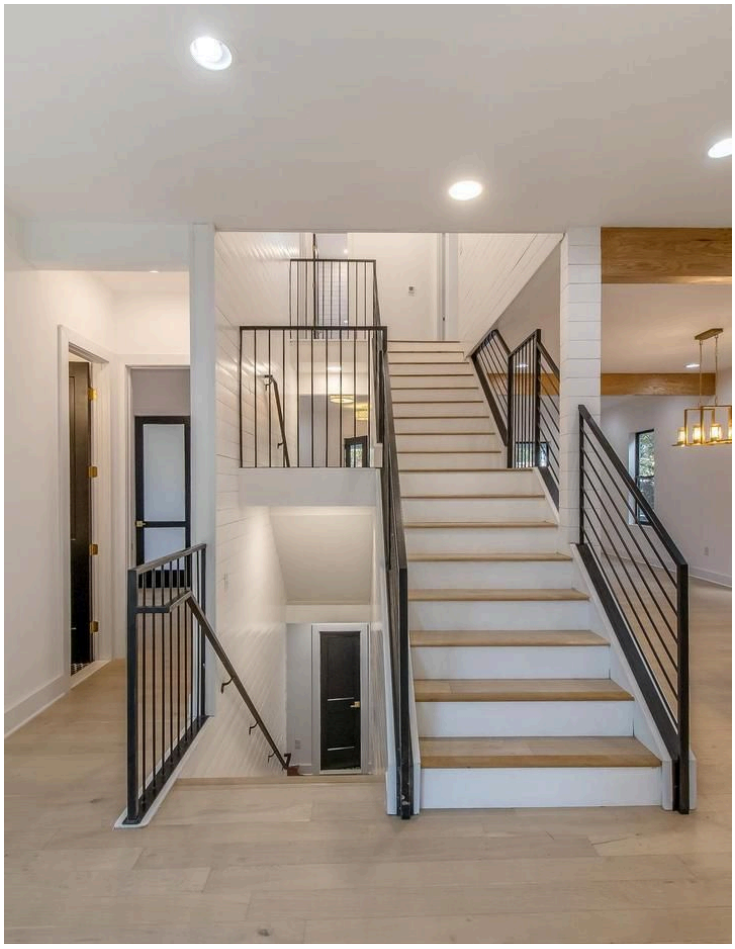








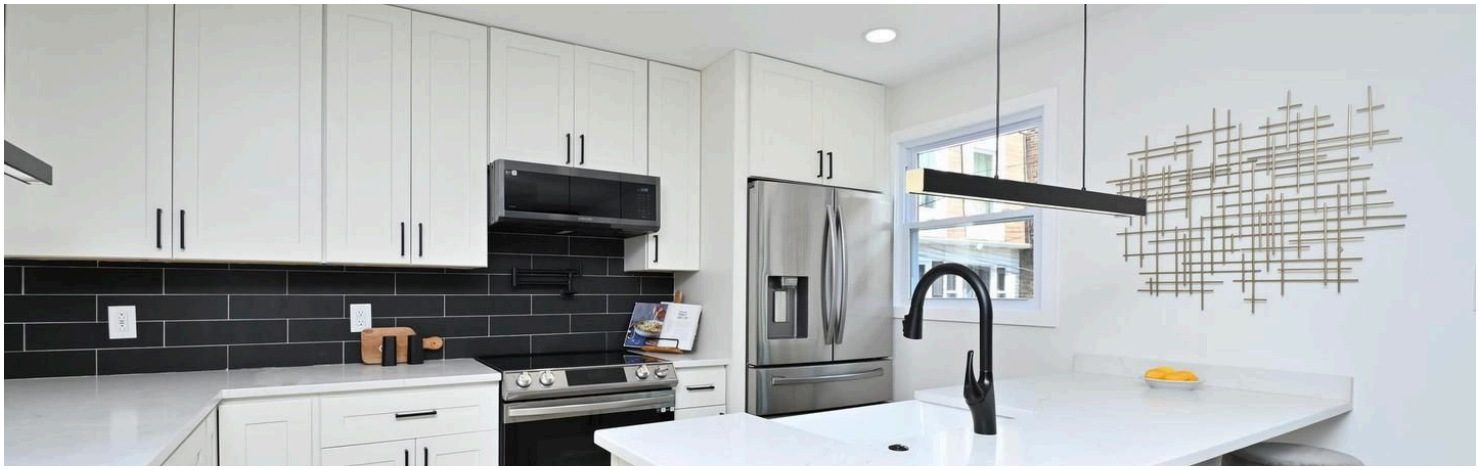


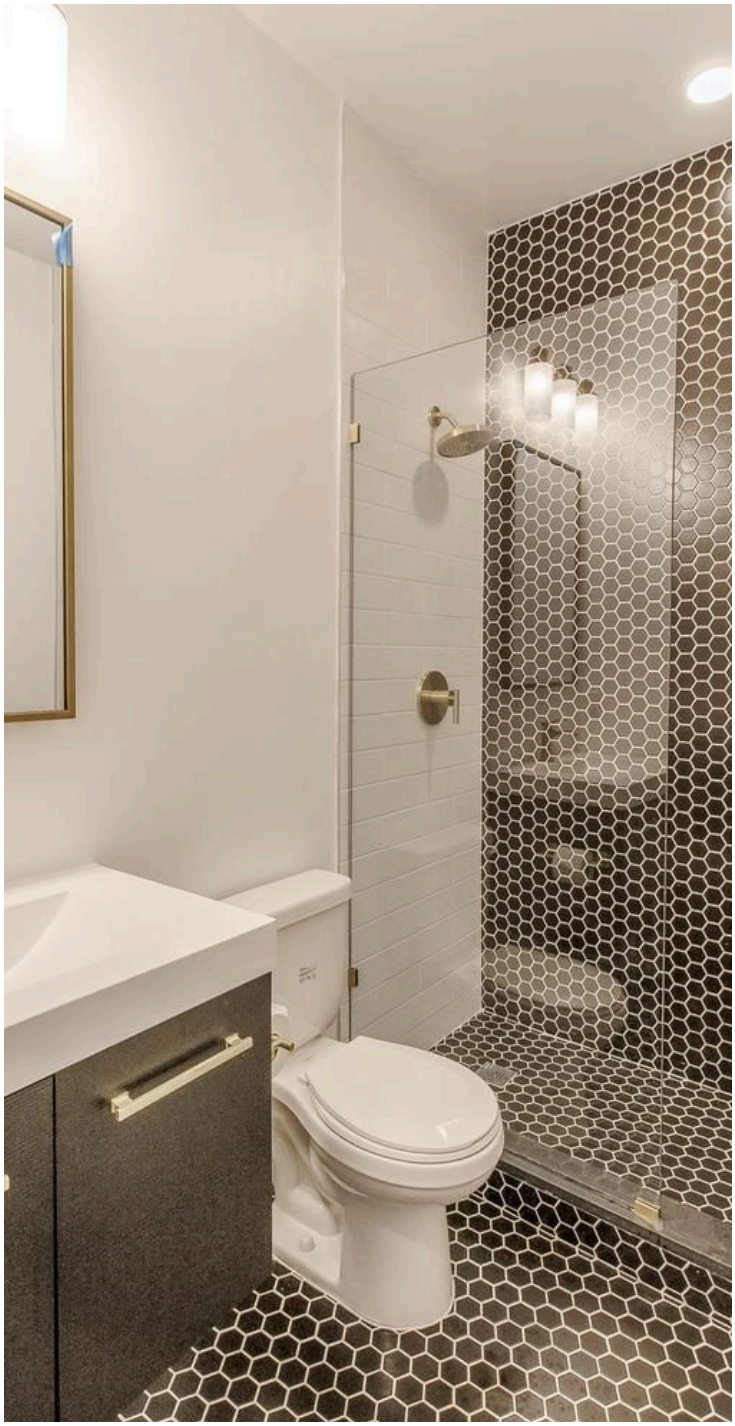














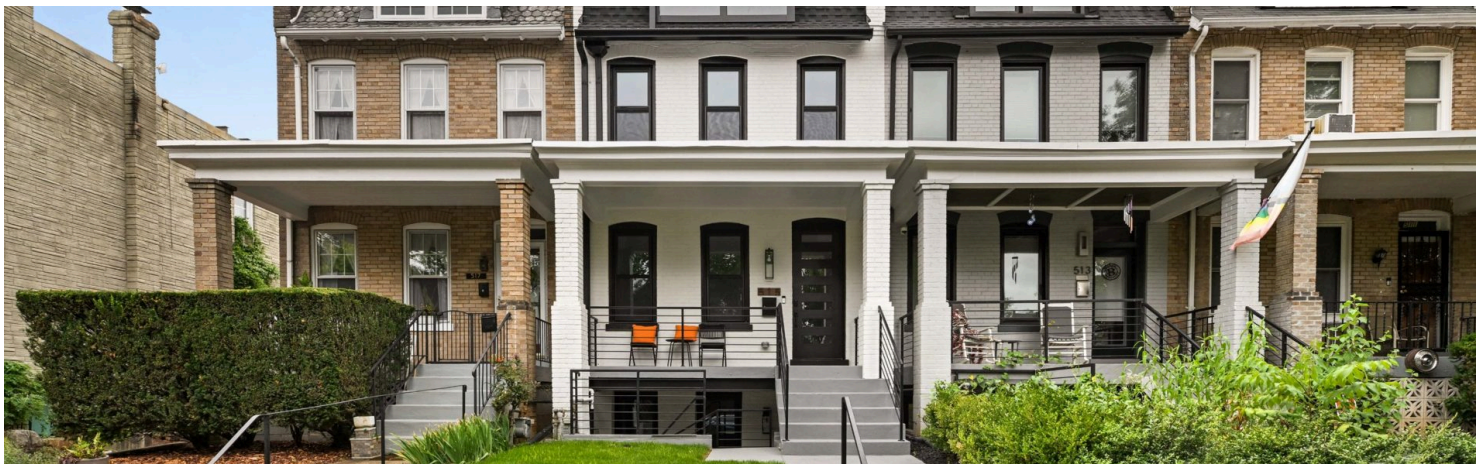


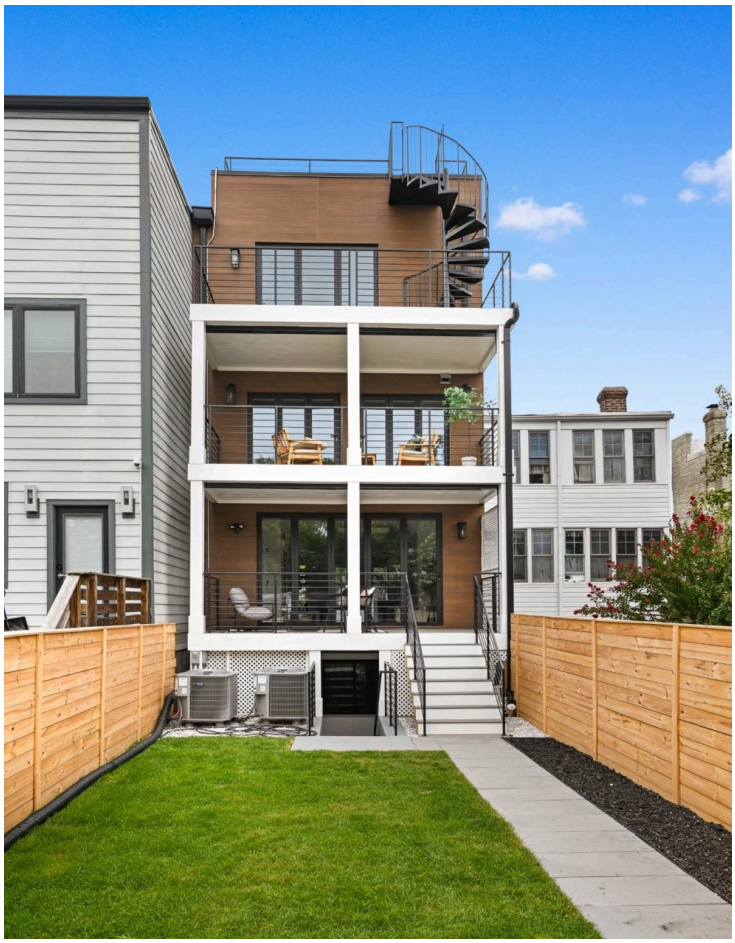


EXTERIORS

From the curb to the backyard, Ellery Contracting builds exteriors that add beauty, function, and value to your home. Our exterior services include custom **decking**, **roofing**, **siding**, and **concrete** work — from rooftop and rear decks to parking pads, walkways, and steps — all built to stand up to every season.

DECKING ROOFING SIDING CONCRETE





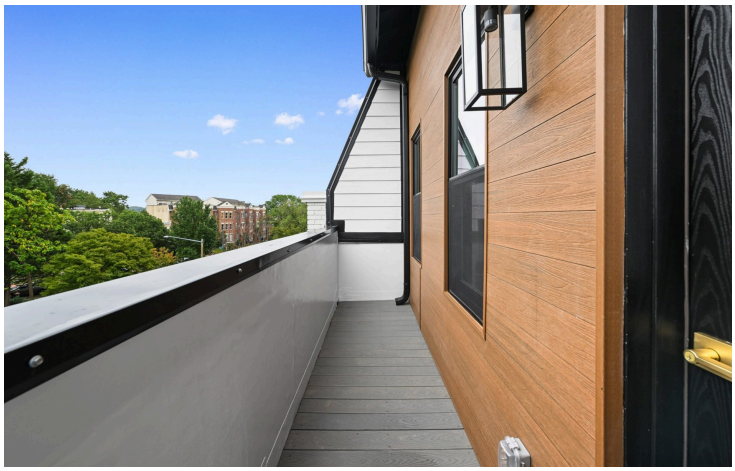
















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