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Home Addition Planning & Structural Feasibility Checklist

Central Massachusetts Edition | Prepared by Akaza Builders

This checklist is designed to help homeowners evaluate zoning, structural capacity, budget alignment, and timeline readiness before beginning a structural expansion project.

PROPERTY & ZONING REVIEW

Before planning your home addition, confirm the legal and land-use requirements for your specific lot.

- ☐ **Zoning District:** Confirm that your local zoning district allows for the intended expansion.
- ☐ **Setbacks:** Verify front, side, and rear setback requirements from property lines.
- ☐ **Lot Coverage:** Ensure you understand the maximum allowable building footprint on your lot.
- ☐ **Conservation & Wetlands:** Check for environmental overlays or wetland restrictions.
- ☐ **Historic District:** Confirm if any historic preservation rules apply to your property.
- ☐ **Height Limitations:** Review height restrictions for second-story additions or roofline changes.

Notes: _____

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STRUCTURAL FEASIBILITY

Older homes in Central Massachusetts often require reinforcement before a structural tie-in can be performed.

- ☐ **Existing Foundation:** Evaluate the current foundation's condition and weight-bearing capacity.
- ☐ **Roof Structure:** Assess the existing roof for compatibility with the new addition's tie-in.
- ☐ **Load-Bearing Walls:** Identify internal and external walls that support the current structure.
- ☐ **Framing Capacity:** Review floor and ceiling joist capacity for vertical expansions.
- ☐ **Snow Load Engineering:** Ensure the design meets Massachusetts snow load requirements.
- ☐ **Structural Reinforcement:** Confirm if the existing frame needs reinforcement to support the addition.

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MECHANICAL SYSTEM CAPACITY

Additions often require system upgrades to meet current energy stretch codes.

- ☐ **Electrical Service:** Review your electrical panel's amperage and available circuit space.
- ☐ **HVAC Load:** Perform a manual J-calculation to determine if your heating/cooling system can handle the extra space.
- ☐ **Boiler/Furnace Sizing:** Evaluate the capacity of your primary heating system.
- ☐ **Plumbing Systems:** Review supply lines and drainage capacity for new bathrooms or kitchens.
- ☐ **Septic System:** Confirm septic tank and leach field capacity (for homes not on municipal sewer).

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BUDGET ALIGNMENT (Central MA Market Estimates)

Aligning costs before the design phase prevents expensive redesigns later.

Small Addition (< 250 sq ft): $75,000 – $125,000

Mid-Sized Addition (250 –500 sq ft): $100,000 – $250,000

Large Addition (500+ sq ft): $250,000 – $450,000+

- ☐ **Budget Defined:** Have you established a realistic budget based on current structural costs?
- ☐ **Contingency:** Have you set aside a 10–15% reserve for hidden structural conditions?
- ☐ **Finish Level:** Are your expectations for interior finishes aligned with your budget?
- ☐ **Utility Upgrades:** Have you accounted for the costs of required electrical or HVAC upgrades?

DESIGN & TIMELINE EXPECTATIONS

The total duration for structural additions typically ranges from 6 to 14 months.

- **Feasibility & Planning:** 1–2 months
- **Design & Engineering:** 2–4 months
- **Permitting:** 1–3 months
- **Construction:** 4–8 months
- ☐ **Timeline Flexibility:** Are you prepared for potential municipal permitting delays?
- ☐ **Living Logistics:** Do you have a plan for living through major structural construction?
- ☐ **Primary Goals:** Is your layout functionality prioritized over cosmetic trends?

COMMON RISK FACTORS

Structural integration requires proactive planning to avoid cost overruns.

- ☐ Hidden structural decay or previous improper repairs.
- ☐ Required septic system expansion or relocation.
- ☐ Complex roof tie-ins and drainage adjustments.
- ☐ Unexpected foundation or soil issues.

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NEXT STEPS

1. **Feasibility Review:** Confirm zoning and structural capacity with a licensed professional.
2. **Budget Calibration:** Align your financial goals with local construction market rates.
3. **Design-Build Planning:** Begin the integrated process of architectural design and engineering.

About Akaza Builders

Licensed Design-Build General Contractor | Serving Central Massachusetts

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Specializing in: Custom Homes, Home Additions, ADUs, and Structural Remodeling.

DISCLAIMER:

This checklist is for informational purposes only and is not intended as engineering, legal, or construction advice. Property conditions and municipal regulations vary. Always consult qualified professionals for evaluations specific to your home. Akaza Builders is not responsible for decisions made based solely on this informational content.

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