

PORCH & DECK BUILDERS LLC

DECK, PORCH, PATIO OR SUNROOM?

A simple guide to choosing the right outdoor project



The best choice starts with how you want to live.

Compare comfort, openness, maintenance and complexity.

See the strongest use case for each project type.

Know what to discuss during an on-site estimate.

CHARLOTTE, NC | FREE, NO-OBLIGATION ESTIMATES

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THE SHORT ANSWER

Start with the experience you want

These four projects can all improve outdoor living, but they solve different problems. Choose by your everyday use first. Materials and details come later.

	DECK	PORCH	PATIO	SUNROOM
Best for	Flexible raised living space	Covered or screened outdoor comfort	Ground-level dining and gathering	Bright, enclosed living space
Open-air feel	High	Medium to high	High	Low to medium
Weather protection	Low unless covered	Medium to high	Low unless covered	High
Maintenance	Depends heavily on material	Roof, screens and finishes	Surface and joint care	Similar to an interior room
Project complexity	Moderate	Moderate to high	Low to moderate	High

One question makes the choice easier

Do you want to be outside, protected while outside, or inside with an outdoor view? Your answer usually narrows the field quickly.

A simple decision path

- Choose a deck when elevation, views or a direct connection from the house matter most.
- Choose a porch when shade, rain protection or insect control is the priority.
- Choose a patio when you want a durable, ground-level gathering area.
- Choose a sunroom when year-round comfort and enclosure matter more than an open-air feel.

Combination projects are common

A covered porch can open onto a deck. A deck can step down to a patio. A sunroom can connect to an uncovered grilling area. The property and daily routine should shape the mix.



OPTION 1

Deck: flexible space with an open-air feel

Best when

You want an elevated platform, a direct transition from the house, or a flexible place to cook, dine and gather.

Why homeowners choose a deck

- Works well on sloped lots and raised rear doors.
- Can be sized around furniture, traffic flow and views.
- Supports custom stairs, railings, privacy features and multiple levels.
- Offers wood, composite and PVC surface options.

Think about

- Sun exposure and whether shade should be added now or later.
- Maintenance expectations before choosing the surface material.
- Railing sightlines, stair placement and lighting.
- How water will move around and beneath the structure.

A deck may not be the best fit if

You want a fully weather-protected room or the most seamless ground-level connection to a lawn or garden.

Good questions for the estimate

How will the deck attach to or stand apart from the house? What framing and flashing details protect long-term performance? Which surface best matches the maintenance level I want?



OPTION 2

Porch: outdoor comfort with protection

Best when

You want shade and rain protection - and possibly screens - while keeping the sounds, breezes and atmosphere of being outdoors.

Covered porch or screened porch?

COVERED	SCREENED
A roof protects the main seating area while the sides stay open. This preserves airflow and wide views.	Screens reduce insects and outdoor debris. Doors, screen type and panel layout become important design decisions.

Think about

- Roof shape and how it connects to the existing home.
- Ceiling height, finish, fans, lighting and outlets.
- Furniture zones, door swings and traffic to the yard.
- Whether future screens, heaters or media should be planned now.

A porch may not be the best fit if

Your main goal is maximum sun exposure, the lowest project complexity, or a conditioned room that feels fully inside.

Good questions for the estimate

How will the new roof meet the house? How will water be directed? Which ceiling, screen and finish details are included?

OPTION 3

Patio: durable, ground-level gathering

Best when

You want dining, seating, a fire-pit area or a garden connection close to grade, without an elevated structure.

Why homeowners choose a patio

- Creates a natural connection to lawns, landscaping and walkways.
- Works well for dining zones, grills, fire features and freestanding shade.
- Offers concrete and paver options in many patterns and colors.
- Can anchor a larger backyard plan with walls, steps or planting beds.

Think about

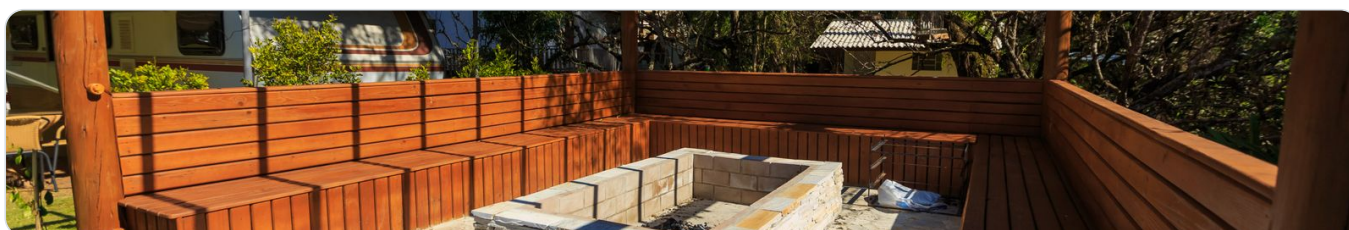
- Drainage, slope and finished height at doors and foundations.
- Base preparation, soil conditions and access for equipment.
- Where furniture, grills and future features will sit.
- Sun exposure and whether a pergola or covered area belongs in the plan.

A patio may not be the best fit if

The main living level is well above grade, the yard has a challenging slope, or you want an attached roofed structure.

Good questions for the estimate

How will the base be prepared? Where will water flow? Are excavation, haul-off, edge restraint, joints and final grading included?



OPTION 4

Sunroom: light-filled, enclosed living

Best when

You want more protection, longer seasonal use and a room-like connection to the outdoors.

Three-season or four-season?

THREE-SEASON	FOUR-SEASON
Designed for extended seasonal use. Comfort varies more with outdoor temperatures and the room's specific construction.	Designed as conditioned living space for year-round use. Insulation, windows, HVAC and energy details become central.

Think about

- How often you want to use the room and in which seasons.
- Heating, cooling, insulation and window performance.
- The transition from the existing interior and exterior.
- Electrical needs, flooring, furnishings and glare control.

A sunroom may not be the best fit if

You want the strongest open-air experience, a simple outdoor platform, or a project with fewer building systems.

Good questions for the estimate

What makes this a three-season or four-season design? Which insulation, glass, HVAC, foundation and interior finishes are included?

NEXT STEP

Choose the right project for your home

A comparison guide can narrow the choices. A site visit turns the choice into a practical design by accounting for doors, elevation, drainage, sunlight, rooflines, access and budget.

Before the estimate

- Take photos of the house and yard from several angles.
- Estimate how many people the space should hold.
- List your three must-haves and three nice-to-haves.
- Note the times of day you expect to use the space.
- Collect a few inspiration images and identify what you like about them.

Request a free, no-obligation estimate

Porch & Deck Builders LLC builds custom decks, covered and screened porches, sunrooms, patios, pavers and retaining walls across the Charlotte area.

Call or text: (980) 352-2143

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**VISIT
THE SITE**

Helpful reminder

Final scope, feasibility and requirements depend on the property and jurisdiction. Confirm current permit, engineering and approval needs for the specific project before construction begins.

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