



# **BROST ARCHITECTS & PLANNERS LTD**

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## Testimonial

"Sadly, we tucked away our outdoor furniture last week, just as winter creeps in. It was nice to throw a tarp over all of our outdoor furniture on the porch instead of hauling it to offsite storage as we have in the past.

The porch and deck configuration and detailed design from Brost Architects transformed our outdoor setting into a fabulous family oasis with very low maintenance. Brost Architects took great care to make the new screened in porch and deck addition seamless with our original home design.

The porch has served many functions this last year... from "outdoor" children's sleepovers to a dance floor for parties. Many weekend afternoons were spent napping on the couch with and without sports viewing on the outdoor TV by the fireplace (without bugs!!!). The addition served as a fabulous space for hosting a graduation party and grilling with friends and family, just to name a few. It's also a favorite hang out for the family dogs.

The best thing about the experience is how Dave and Malorie listened to how we wished to use the space and the aesthetics we preferred; then provided beautiful design options with great surprise features while tackling the logistics with integration with the existing site. We have been more than pleased with our experience with Brost Architects and absolutely love the final space."

*-Lisa Ramlo, Homeowner*

## Expanded Outdoor Living



Above: Photos of the screened-in-porch addition to a residence in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.



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## Contact Us

For more information:  
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To receive our monthly newsletter,  
visit the "Contact Us" page on our  
website and sign up for our email  
newsletter.

We have worked on many outdoor living space additions and always find more material options than there used to be. One recent project included resurfacing an existing wood deck with Azek decking, as well as adding a screened-in porch. The old wood deck needed constant maintenance and was rotting. The existing staircase was also underused because of steep steps.

This project used cedar wood for the structure and ceiling of the screened-in porch, pvc decking, stone veneer for the fireplace, and metal railings. We worked closely with the owners on their material selections. These different materials combined to create a great outdoor living environment. Special finishes included custom metalwork on railing posts, rain chains, and incorporating a variety of lighting, including recessed lighting, stair riser lighting, and railing post lighting.

One thing that is unique about residential additions is that the connection to the existing house is very important, both in appearance and function! We used the same roof slopes and materials as the existing house and connected the new porch roof with the existing laundry room roof. By removing part of the existing roof to connect the two, this porch looks like it was designed to be there from the start.

The design also includes a gas burning fireplace, a wall mounted television, a ceiling fan, and balusters to prevent their dogs from puncturing the screens. The family also proceeded with a landscape upgrade, including paving and an outdoor wood burning fireplace. Because we were able to create a screened area, the family is always able to use the outdoors without dealing with bugs, and now spends much more time outside.





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## About Us

Since its formation in 1968, Brost Architects & Planners LTD has demonstrated its commitment to architectural problem solving on a full range of projects throughout Iowa and surrounding states. We take great pride in our record of developing distinctive solutions to complex problems within the budget established and in our reputation for improving the environment of the communities where we are privileged to work.

We promote environmentally friendly design and have LEED accredited professionals. We are a family owned and operated firm that has strong ties to the Iowa community. We're talented enough to handle almost any project, but personal enough to value your business. We have strong relationships with our consultants as well as our clients.

## Natural, Artificial, Or Both?

With winter weather now officially here, you are probably reminiscing about your summer outdoors. Maybe this summer you started to notice some wear on your deck or started contemplating turning that patio into a deck. The type of decking you choose for your project will impact the appearance, cost, construction time, and maintenance of your deck.

### *Wood*

Wood is the original decking material and is the most common. Wood is renewable, strong, and easy to install. Wood requires an annual cleaning, can rot, splinter, and warp. Wood needs to be re-stained periodically and requires the most upkeep of the materials listed.

Pressure treated wood is the most common type of decking and has a relatively low cost. This wood will splinter if not maintained. Redwood and Cedar contain defenses against rot and insects. They are soft and do not stand up extremely well under high-traffic areas but have a strong visual impact. Tropical hardwoods are dense, durable, and have a distinct look. These woods are mostly splinter-free, but are expensive and heavy.

### *Composite*

Composite decking first appeared in the 1990s. All composite decking materials are different: some are made of 100% recycled material, while others contain none. Composite decking is usually made of plastic and cellulose fibers. When researching, make sure to check what procedures are used to ensure that the wood elements will not rot. Most mold and mildew can be prevented by scrubbing the decking annually.

Composite decking companies have developed visually stunning products that can easily incorporate lighting, railing systems, and trim pieces. These products are usually advertised as being resistant to rotting, fading, splintering, and splitting. One of the major companies of composite decking is Trex.

### *PVC*

PVC decking is the most recent addition to the list of decking materials. PVC usually provides more stain, scratch, and mold resistance, as well as improved weather resistance and color retention than composites. Because PVC products are made from 100% new materials, then tend to cost more than composites.



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PVC is the choice that most people will make if low maintenance is the largest concern.

Some people have spoken out against PVC based products, as they have been criticized for having volatile organic compounds. Another complaint that people sometimes have is that this decking doesn't feel or sound like real wood (which it isn't). One of the largest companies for PVC decking is Azek.

There are some common things to keep in mind with decking:

- With all man-made building products, it is important to find a product that has a good warranty.
- Darker colored materials are going to get hotter, no matter what!
- Make sure that you do not unintentionally void the warranty by misuse or improper installation methods.
- There is no such thing as a maintenance free deck. All products are going to need some care!
- Always search for recent reviews for decking materials. This industry is constantly changing and reviews of products from five years ago may no longer be relevant.

Many people are looking for low maintenance products, but still like to have natural materials. One solution we have used is to combine low-maintenance man-made decking materials with naturally occurring wood details, such as ceilings, trim work, pergolas, etc. Adding other elements, such as metal and glass, can add contrast to any project.

If your family would like to spend more time outdoors and is considering expanding or renovating your current outdoor living space, please contact us. Winter is a perfect time to start designing your project so that you can start enjoying your project as soon as the weather turns warm again!