



Quality Construction, High Standards, and Integrity Are Hallmarks of Longtime Baxter Construction

The house is the structure, but the home is where the heart is.

An especially important sentiment during this difficult time of coping with COVID-19, when people are relying on the safe haven of their home every day.

Jim Baxter, founder and owner of Baxter Construction, at 31 West Broad Street in Hopewell, has helped clients enjoy the comfort of their homes for almost 40 years.

Indeed, helping homeowners build memories within their home has been the focus of his company since he opened it in 1981.

Well-Designed Space

Whether it's a 200-year old colonial needing total renovation, or a 1960s kitchen or bath in need of updating, Baxter Construction will create just the look the homeowner hopes to achieve.

Jim Baxter understands the importance of family and relationships, the value of well-designed space, and the fact that these experiences create memories that will endure for generations.

Houses of all kinds and from many periods of history are visible all over Princeton. Many of the historic houses' exteriors are as relevant now as when first constructed, but the interiors are not designed for today's standards.

"When we work on older houses, whether it's repairs, renovations, or

additions, we emphasize keeping the original character of the house," explains Baxter.

Many people are opting to stay put, rather than move, he adds, and that can mean not only updating, but redesigning space for today's changing needs.

"We do a lot of remodeling of kitchens and bathrooms and expanding family rooms. In one house, we converted a two-car garage into a family room. People definitely want to reopen spaces."

Past and Present

Respectfully transforming houses and creating living spaces for today is clearly a specialty. Another recent project in Princeton was for clients with a young family. They wanted to create an open concept in an historic house, which had a series of small rooms and cramped spaces.

The house was rejuvenated with an updated kitchen and family room, allowing cooking and homework to happen simultaneously. Antiquated bathrooms were modernized, a mud room created, and light now floods former dark spaces.

Historic elements still remain, including cabinetry and moulding, perfectly balancing past and present.

Baxter Construction also fills the needs of clients in another way — as

a Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS). As Jim Baxter points out, "We can widen doors, put in hand rails, grab bars in showers and tubs, and add ramps, as well as other support features so that as people get older, they can continue to live in their house."

Standards of high quality, superior service, and attention to detail are key to Baxter Construction's success. This includes pre-planning with detailed scheduling. "We strive to learn what our clients want, and we deliver. We are a team of 29 members. At Baxter Construction, we want to do what is right for our clients and for the project. From our project managers to our lead carpenters, and all of our workers, we are there to see the project through to the client's complete satisfaction. Our clients always come first. We have built the company on this level of quality and service.

"We always emphasize good project management," he continues. "We're a traditional builder assigning a lead carpenter and project manager on every job, every day — which helps to create peace of mind for the client.

We do a very detailed estimate, and the goal is getting a clear definition of the scope of the work. We always strive to reach and exceed customers' expectations."

Added Dimension

In addition to the careful attention to the building details of the project, Baxter Construction brings an added dimension to its relationships with clients. Understanding that it is a privilege to enter the private home of a client, Baxter's workers focus on creating trust and understanding. They will let the dog out when the family is not at home; they have rescued a child who was accidentally locked in the bathroom; they hang the swing set in the little girl's room for a birthday surprise. They go the extra mile and become part of the family. *continued >*

Baxter Construction is also experienced in nonprofit projects and light commercial building. Among many other projects, it built the Whole Earth Center store, a LEED certified green construction project. Baxter is designated as a Certified Green Professional (CGP).

Energy efficiency, sustainability, and environmentally friendly methods and materials are very important today, emphasizes Jim Baxter. “People are definitely thinking green now, and this is reflected in our construction projects.”

Over the years, the company has completed many award-winning projects, and received many honors. Among these, and most recently, was the national GuildQuality’s 2020 Guildmaster Award. This is in recognition of Baxter’s “exceptional customer service within the residential construction industry.”

Out of 700-plus eligible applicants, Baxter Construction was one of 300-plus businesses within the residential construction industry recognized by GuildQuality for consistently delivering superior customer care.

Another important honor for Baxter was the 2019 NARI CotY Contractor of the Year Award for its renovation of the Wojciechowicz Barn at the Updike Farmstead in Princeton. The farm, which is listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places, now belongs to the Historical Society of Princeton.

Volunteer Efforts

Baxter Construction’s expertise has also been cited by recognition from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry, Qualified Remodeler Master Design, and Chrysalis Awards, among many others.

For many years, Baxter Construction has supported community organizations through its volunteer efforts



BUILDING SUCCESS: “We strive for the highest level of customer satisfaction in all of our projects. Our focus is on residential and light commercial, and we do all sizes of projects, as well as new construction.” Jim Baxter, right, founder and owner of Baxter Construction, is shown looking over plans with his longtime colleague (26 years!) and lead carpenter, Weir Strange.

with the Historical Society of Princeton, Morven Museum & Garden, the Hopewell Borough, and the Sourland Mountain Preserve, among others.

The company’s efforts have been greatly appreciated by those it has helped. As Izzy Kasdin, executive director of the Historical Society of Princeton, points out, “Baxter Construction is deeply committed to the local community not only through its local construction projects but also by providing essential support to a number of important local nonprofit organizations. We have come to know that Jim and the whole team at Baxter are right there when we need them, from providing enthusiastic manpower to help set up a fundraising event to gifting generous financial support that sustains our organization. Jim and his team’s steadfast kindness and passion for this community is undeniable, and for that we are so grateful.”

Adds Jill Barry, executive director of Historic Morven Museum & Garden, “Baxter has been a partner with Morven Museum & Garden in so many ways. From helping to build the plane that graced the front lawn during

our Lindbergh exhibition and sending manpower to help set up Morven in May, in addition to their long-standing sponsorship, Baxter Construction goes far beyond just helping us keep this National Registered Landmark in good working order on projects both big and small. They help us thrive.”

Baxter Construction projects are found all over the Princeton area and beyond. Jim Baxter continues to enjoy the client contact, and he takes pride in the quality of work he is able to provide his customers.

As he says, “I appreciate the level of craftsmanship Baxter Construction brings to the job. To see the customer’s satisfaction at the end of the project is very rewarding. I love my work. I walk away at the end of the day, and am proud to look at what we have built.”

And, together, the Baxter Construction team and their clients build memories that can last a lifetime.

The company can be reached at (609) 466-3655. Website: www.baxterconstruction.com.

—Jean Stratton