



SMART Remodeling

“Most people think that simply creating a larger space will make them happy, when in reality, manipulating the current space, and tweaking the work area may be able to achieve their goals without the added expense of expanding the area.”

– Ronny Barenz,
Barenz Builders

As the size of families change, often times, we are forced with choosing to either move to a new home, or to remodel the one we’re currently in. Remodeling has many benefits, not the least of which is that it allows you to stay in a familiar neighborhood – one that you presumably enjoy very much. However, if you’re considering remodeling your existing home, there are certain considerations that must be made.

Generally, there are five key reasons given by people who choose to remodel their homes: to add or reallocate space; to upgrade and modernize a space; to improve the energy efficiency of a home; to make the home more user-friendly for older inhabitants or those with disabilities, and; to increase the resale value of the home. Regardless of the specific reasons for the remodel, it is important that a homeowner makes a list of things he or she

wants to accomplish with the remodel, and then those that the homeowner needs to accomplish with the remodel. Distinguishing between the two, especially as the plans for the remodel progress and budgeting becomes a key concern, will help to keep everything in proper perspective.

WHERE TO START?

In the case of one remodeler, Barenz Builders, they start with two questions for the homeowner: “What do you like about your current home, and what don’t you like about it?” Ronny Barenz goes on to say that by asking these questions, “we can start to dive into what they are really trying to achieve and what are the minimum actions we can take to provide this for them.” By doing this, cost is the preeminent concern, and an insistence on staying within a budget can put homeowners at ease.



BEFORE

MAKING YOUR EXISTING HOME A GREEN HOME

In addition to modifying a space to add usefulness to a home, making a home more energy and resource efficient can pay big financial dividends for homeowners. Something as basic as adding insulation to walls or installing new windows, can drastically reduce electric and gas bills each month. In addition to remodeling for the purposes of improved energy efficiency, other “green remodels” often have the goal of improving a home’s indoor air quality. Adding a central vacuum to a home, selecting paints with no volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and swapping out certain mechanicals to ensure that more fresh air enters the home are all ways that people remodel to make their homes healthier.

INCREASE YOUR HOME’S RESALE VALUE

As you remodel, always consider how your decisions may affect the resale value of your home. Things such as selecting neutral paint will make your home more desirable to a broader



group of people. Similarly, remodeling for the purpose of maximizing a home’s space will help to de-clutter areas, thus making the home seem more pleasing to prospective buyers. Adding light to a space, either through increasing the number of fixtures, or expanding existing windows or adding additional ones, will also prove to pay off should you need to sell your home in the foreseeable future. Lastly, as you remodel, do not forget to touch up your exterior landscaping. If you’re spending money to ensure that the interior of your home is functional and beautiful, you should try to mimic that same feeling on the exterior.

WHEN REMODELING, PREPARE FOR SOME DISRUPTION

When remodeling, and especially if you stay in your home throughout the remodeling process, homeowners

must be aware that some disruption will occur. While we take things like running water, ample light, appliance usage, and the like, for granted during other times, these amenities may be interrupted during a remodel. This is especially true if you have a very busy lifestyle. Because of this, prepare for these changes and communicate with the remodeler as to what disruptions will occur during various stages of the project.

Ronny Barenz of Barenz Builders, Cheri Ware of Ware Design, LLC and Deron Butler of Joseph Douglas Homes & Remodeling, LLC shared their expertise for this article.

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“If you love your neighborhood or your schools, there’s a value to undertaking a project that makes it more conducive to staying put.”

– Deron Butler,
Joseph Douglas Homes & Remodeling, LLC