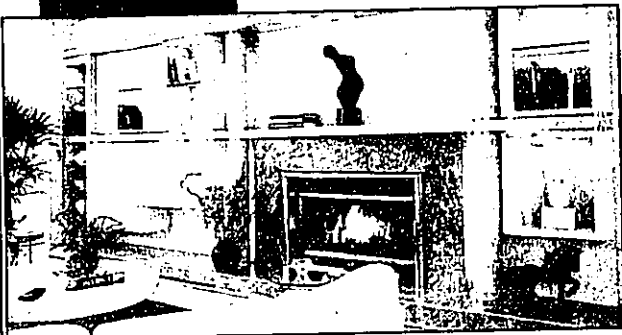


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LET'S REMODEL

City inspections are part of the process

Q: I went through the proper channels in hiring a good contractor to do a master bed and bath addition. Several times the inspector has come during the job and the work has failed inspection. What is the contractor doing wrong?

A: Probably nothing. To understand why your project might fail inspection, it is first necessary to understand the many factors involved. Building codes are complex laws enacted by government, establishing basic standards for construction to protect the health and safety of its citizens. Building inspectors are responsible for maintaining those standards. Besides the basic building code that deals primarily with the structure (foundation, walls, floors, roof etc.) there are separate codes that deal with specific systems plumbing, heating, electrical, etc.).

Codes vary from state to state, and even, from city to city. Codes, like other laws, are subject to interpretation by the inspectors charged with enforcing them. Again, these interpretations also vary from city to city, and even among inspectors within the same department. Codes constantly evolve as new materials are introduced and better designs are conceived. To further complicate matters, different aspects of the codes are affected by specific conditions that vary from job to job. This is especially true in remodeling, when a contractor is trying to marry materials and methods of installation from two different eras.

Often the materials used in the original building are no longer available, and sometimes conflicts occur when existing construction does not meet the current code. Is it any wonder then, that inspections don't always pass the first time?

As a responsible consumer, you did your homework and selected a good contractor. The building inspector, with his or her extensive training, did their job, and the system, designed to protect everyone, worked perfectly. As a professional remodeler, I don't mind failing an inspection from time to time. I always learn something new and valuable. I view the building inspector as a member of my team, helping me do a better job.

John Baker, Owner of the House Mechanic, Leonard, 1-800-98-HOUSE.

Q: We're considering an island in our kitchen. Do you have suggestions for purpose and design.

A: The trend of the sixties and seventies to move the kitchen table out of the workspace has finally taken an about face in today's kitchen. We are finding that most of our customers miss the



As a professional remodeler, I don't mind failing an inspection from time to time. I always learn something new and valuable. I view the building inspector as a member of my team, helping me do a better job.

gatherings of friends and family around all of the action. Center islands have become one solution to fit a more active lifestyle.

Moms and dads can prepare dinner on one side while children can play or get their homework questions answered on the other. Their storage needs can be met, as well as the cooks needs, with a well-thought-out and beautiful cabinet system. Angles are used more than ever to direct traffic and make them easier to maneuver around. Unique and space saving accessories are incorporated to fit the needs of the user instead of the cookie cutter kitchen plans of yest that said everyone lives the same way.

Marty Kuretzky, Kurts Kitchen and Bath Centers, Livonia, 313-522-7600.

For your home improvement questions or a copy of our roster booklet, call Gayle Walters, executive director of the Michigan Remodeling Association (MRA) at 810-335-3232, or send questions to "Let's Remodel," 2187 Orchard Lake Road, No. 103, Sylvan Lake, MI 48320. Answers are provided by members of the MRA, the local chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI). Members include professional contractors, manufacturers, wholesalers, consultants and lenders representing all facets of residential and light commercial remodeling. Members also answer questions on "Construction Talk" will Murray Gula on WEXL-AM 1340, 1-2 p.m. Saturday.

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