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# Improvements Boost Comfort, Value

"Repair, renovate, remodel—and expand!" In more and more homes, that's the slogan now. As homeowners prepare to embark on home improvement activities that range from modernizing the kitchen and bath to adding a bedroom or a family room, from replanting the lawn and garden to re-roofing and re-siding the house.

Naturally enough, the first goal of all these projects is to enhance family comfort convenience and pleasure. But increasingly, a bonus benefit is getting attention: the boost in property values that stems from home improvement.

For owners of older homes, this increased value may well be the deciding factor when the question is, "Should we move or should we improve?" To families cramped for space or impatient with antiquated facilities, moving often seems the only solution. Yet in many instances they would really prefer to remain in their present homes and neighborhoods.

By improving comfort, they can also improve the ultimate resale value of the property. Investment in improvement becomes an attractive alternative.

Even relatively new homes are candidates for improvement, too. Living in a new home, for a few months or years, often reveals family needs that were not apparent at the time of purchase. Changing trends in home life are another factor.

The more elegant family room, for instance, is gaining in importance and often calls for additional space. Growing use of the dining or queen-size beds points up the need for larger bedrooms or more bedrooms. Outdoor improvements, from patios to swimming pools, attract the interest of many homeowners, whether the home be almost ancient or almost new.

In both newer and older homes, more space is likely to be the immediate improvement objective, to be achieved in one or both of two ways: remodeling and modernizing existing space, or expanding space with room additions.

A survey conducted for the National Home Improvement Council reveals that, among homeowners intending to solve their space problems with additions, family rooms and bedrooms are first on the "most wanted" list. For those who plan to remodel existing space, kitchens and bathrooms take priority, the same survey shows.

Better storage facilities are stated as specific space needs for kitchens and bathrooms, and new appliances and plumbing fixtures play a significant role in expanding both the space and the convenience of these rooms.

As indoor family rooms grow more elegant, so does the outdoor, or garden, living room. Homeowners surveyed include a high proportion who intend to build a patio, for informal entertaining and to provide a play area for the children.

Comfort and practicality play a strong role in home improvement plans, as evidenced by the Council survey. Some features preferred by 69 per cent of the responders were: insulation added to walls, sound conditioning of ceilings in the recreation room and wall-to-wall carpeting over wood floors.

Man-made and other materials still face strong competition from wood, the survey shows. Sixty per cent preferred wood paneling, as opposed to plaster and other types of wall coverings for interior walls, while 86 per cent voted for wood as the favorite material for kitchen cabinets. And local craftsmen can have cause for pride, since the survey indicates that 59 per cent of those questioned chose locally-built wood cabinets over the factory-built variety.

## One Stop Centers Serve Needs of All

Women actually make many of the major decisions involving home improvements projects, and are often out buying supplies while their husbands are busy at home on household projects.

So reports Building Supply News, Trade Journal for the industry.

Often, that excursion in search of supplies will be a one-stop shopping trip. The Journal further states:

There was a time, not long ago, when a homeowner who needed lumber, nails, lighting fixtures, an air conditioner, plumbing supplies and floor tiles would have had to go to six different stores.

Under the same roof, the customer is likely to find paints, power tools, fertilizers, ceiling tile, swimming pools, roofing, wallpaper and mailboxes—along with many other products.

Increase in home ownership and the do-it-yourself trend have caused yesterday's lumber yard to expand into a one-stop "supermarket" for building supplies.

## Time For Remodeling? Be Careful of Builder

Remodeling can be a rewarding experience for a homeowner if he feels he has received a good job at a fair price.

There are more good remodelers today than ever before, with inventive ideas, skilled workmen and excellent materials. But to guard against the few questionable firms, The Aluminum Association offers these tips:

The remodeling contractor should be chosen with the same care as a family physician. Look through the phone book for names that are well known, or check with your local Better Business Bureau of Chamber of Commerce.

In the case of aluminum siding, as an example, you should ask friends who have had good jobs done for the name of their contractor.

Ask the contractor to show you recent jobs. Talk with these homeowners. Make certain that the applicator you are considering is the same who actually did their work.

Get a total of two or more bids on your job, specifying what is wanted and spelling out exactly how much siding is to be installed. Be certain the quote includes all materials, accessories and labor.

Never make a deal without a written agreement. Lack of a written agreement can lead to misunderstanding, hard feelings and loss of money.

If you ask the contractor to make changes while the work is in progress, request that he put the costs for the changes in writing. You will be asked to sign this agreement and attach your copy to the original contract.

Be sure the contract includes a detailed cost estimate and the total price. It should include terms of payment and a statement that the premises will be clean upon completion of the job.

Of course, it's always wise to have an attorney check the document for more protection. Sign the completion certificate only when the job has been completed in accordance with the contract or sales agreement.

## Don't Save Attic Trash

A little elbow grease now may save a lot of grief from fire later.

Best prescription for Spring Clean-Up is a good, vigorous clean-out of trash—one of the smartest things you can do to keep your home and your family safe from fire.

It's smarter still if you repeat the job at regular intervals throughout the year.

Almost everyone's attic, closets and basement get to be the final resting place for clothing, or draperies, or lamp shades, or mattresses—the list is a long one—which seem to be too valuable at the moment to be thrown away. Every bit of it is fuel for destructive fire.

So add a trash can to the three tools you probably are using this Spring—broom, rake and paint brush.

Remember, about one of every twelve fires starts in rubbish, according to National Fire Protection Association records.

## Classified Ads Get Quick Results

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