

Question remodeling needs

If you find yourself wondering what to do with "this old house," the best thing to do is interview yourself to determine what improvements need to be done.

Here are some questions to ask yourself in checking the adequacy of the old design.

- Have the children grown? If so, it will ease the strain on bedrooms, den, kitchen and bath. This may mean having the space to convert old rooms for new functions.

- Has there been any addition in the number of family members?

- Has there been a change in work habits, such as more or fewer family members in the workforce? This may call for changes in living patterns.

- Has there been a change in affluence? More money usually means more entertaining, putting new demands on kitchen, bathroom and living quarters.

- Has there been a change in family living, such as new interest in gourmet cooking or in his-and-her sharing of kitchen activities, or a new awareness of health and fitness?

- Are there things about the house that really bother you such as a dishwasher door that cramps you at the sink when it is open? Or

traffic cutting across your kitchen work triangle? Lack of lighting in areas where you do close work? Always bumping your elbows in your bathroom?

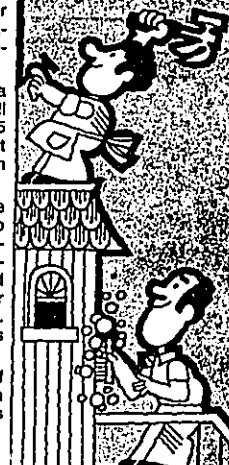
All of these problems call for some type of remodeling. You can try to do it yourself or you can go to a professional remodeling contractor who has a showroom that shows you both products and ideas.

If you do this, you can opt either for design, purchase and installation or for design only or for design and purchase only.

Professional design help for a kitchen or bathroom usually will cost anywhere from \$150 up to 5 percent of the estimated total cost of the job, and it could run much more for other rooms.

If you want to do it yourself, be realistic. Knowing how to do something doesn't mean your fingers can follow orders. Even ordinary carpentry requires skill and the right tools. Plumbing calls for care and precision at every step. Electrical work can be dangerous if not done correctly.

But whether you do it yourself or have the work done, you can look forward to a house that is what you want it to be.



The bottom line

A survey of 2,500 contractors showed the following remodeling costs:

- Kitchen remodeling — \$7,299. The range is usually \$6,000-\$16,000, including new cabinets, countertops, appliances and sink.

- Bathroom remodeling — \$1,853. This figure is too low to include much bathroom cabinetry beyond a vanity cabinet.

- Bathroom addition — \$5,330. Again, this did not include much cabinetry.

- Room addition — \$15,105. For 400 square feet, the price will range from \$18,000-\$24,000.

- Finishing an attic — \$6,450.

- Adding a second story — \$20,150.

- Enclosing a porch — \$3,897.

- Adding a garage — \$5,487.

- Roofing — \$3,945.

- Siding — \$3,231. To get 1,500 square

feet of aluminum siding with quarter-inch insulating board, the range is \$3,350-\$4,300.

- Insulation — \$804.

