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## Booklet offers remodeling information

**H**OME improvement can be rewarding, but, before lifting a hammer or signing a contract, homeowners should think through their ideas and plan carefully. "Planning for Remodeling," a new publication of the Small Homes Council-Building Research Council at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, provides a listing of the factors which should be considered before any remodeling project is begun.

Remodeling is an investment of time and money. It will affect the value of the home and the cost to own and operate it. Some remodeling does not pay, and could actually reduce the value of the home or price it out of the neighborhood in which it is located.

There are many types of home improvement. Maintenance improvements include painting, decorating and repairs made to offset the effects of normal wear and tear on a home. It seldom increases the value of the home, but rather brings the home up to the standard a buyer would expect. Remodeling generally increases the livability and value of a home and may involve structural changes.

**THERE ARE SIX** types of remodeling, according to the Council. Preservation is keeping the building in its current condition and preventing further deterioration. Restoration refers to restoring a home to its original character. It may mean removing "improvements" made in the past, and is the most expensive and challenging type of remodeling. Rehabilitation involves updating existing features, such as baths and kitchens. Retrofitting is a term used for improvements made to an existing house, usually to make the home more energy-efficient. Conversions change the use of existing spaces to fit current needs. Additions usually involve adding space to the exterior of the home.

The homeowner needs to decide whether it is better to move to a different house or to use the money to remodel. Advantages of remodeling may include maintaining ties to the existing neighborhood and schools; better financing rates; and avoiding the cost of selling, buying and moving. In addition, do-it-yourself projects can be less expensive than buying a house where the work has already been done.

Disadvantages include the dust, dirt and clutter which will disrupt family life during the project; costs which are higher than expected; dissatisfaction with the finished result; and "over-improvement," where the house is priced out of the neighborhood.

A two-page checklist of items to be considered before remodeling is included in the eight page circular, "Planning for Remodeling," is one of a series of publications for the homeowner issued by the council. Single copies are available for \$1 including postage and handling, from the Small Homes Council-Building Research Council, University of Illinois, 1 E. St. Mary's Road, Champaign, IL 61820. Visa and Mastercard are accepted.

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