

# BUILDING EDGE MAGAZINE

## REMODELING AND RESTORATION

By James M. Williams

If your household is blessed with an artistic and creative two year old then you may be involved in a daily restoration of your home - constant washing of the walls, or even an occasional painting of a room to restore the child's canvas back to the original hall or living room wall. Or you may be inspired by one of the several home decorating television shows that seem to be the recent rage and remodel an entire room. There are a growing number of home owners that for numerous reasons are thinking of remodeling or restoring a major portion of their home. What is the difference between remodeling and restoration and when should you take on such a project? Is the cost and inconvenience really worth it?

When a home is restored it is returned to its former or original state or to a position and rank. Homes with historic value, sentimental value, or homes that have good architecture – meeting the needs of the owners, are all prime candidates for restoration. Architectural details, paint colors, floor coverings, etc should all be consistent with the original construction.

Historically, architects have developed their ideas on small residential projects. This is still true today. There are numerous homes and buildings that should be restored even though restoration costs can sometimes exceed the cost of tearing down the building and starting over.

There is a home in Utah that had been used as a horse barn for years. It had fallen into a state of disrepair and deterioration. The home is one of only a few homes in this part of the country designed by the late, great American Architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. The home has since been restored. Original Frank Lloyd Wright homes, like original works of art, can be sold for millions in today's market.

Remodeling is to make over or to rebuild and is usually the most expensive and time consuming, but at the same time usually has the most to gain.

The costs associated with remodeling an existing house normally exceed the unit cost for new construction. The starting unit cost of construction for a custom home located in the valley may range between \$100.00 and \$125.00 per square foot. The unit cost for remodeling usually starts around \$150.00 per square foot.

Victorian, foursquare, bungalow, cape cod, colonial, as well as ranch and split-level homes were the most common residential styles dating from the late 1800's through the

1970's. There is a large market for these homes due to their locations, affordability, charm and architectural detailing. Each had its unique and charming qualities, but each also has its deficiencies for today's lifestyle; small inefficient kitchens, baths, closet space, not to mention small formal rooms and non-existent master suites. Often times plumbing, electrical and even the structure can also be concerns. A well designed plan and realistic budget and schedule can correct these deficiencies, providing a user-friendly home that will function well for today's lifestyle.

Remodeling can take place within the original envelope or building shell, converting an existing attic storage area into new bedrooms and bathrooms. Attics can be expanded by constructing dormers or even larger shed dormers, almost doubling the existing space. Roofs can be removed and an entire second level can be constructed providing the largest increase in square footage. New one or two story wings can often be added to the rear of the house providing areas for new kitchens, family rooms, mudrooms, storage areas and master suites. Great care should be taken to maintain the existing character of the home, both in proportions and exterior finishes.

When designed and constructed properly, a remodel or addition will never be noticeable. Always save the parts of the house that are worth saving. Identify the best features of the home and build on them.

Because kitchens are usually the gathering place of any home a good kitchen remodel will have the largest impact. Increased area, (sometimes stealing from an adjacent hallway), improved functionality, new countertops, appliances and usually cabinets, as well as an adjacent nook or dining / sitting area and an increase of natural light and openness to the yard, are a few of the things that can be done to improve this area of the house.

A new master suite with well organized closet space and a well designed master bath area can also greatly enhance an existing home.

Providing a more open main level, larger family or living room is another great improvement. Space can be taken from an adjacent hallway and added to the room or a feeling of openness and increased size can be accomplished by simply providing an opening between the room and the hallway. You can also provide larger windows or French doors to the yard. Connecting an interior space to a new exterior space such as a patio can also increase usable area. A new room in a new wing is the most desirable.

A new front porch or enclosing an existing porch and extending into it can provide additional square footage, as well as improve curb appeal.

Never underestimate new floor coverings, windows, moldings and two-toned paint.