

## **WHY REMODELING IS MORE EXPENSIVE**

Thinking of adding room, remodeling the kitchen, or updating a bath? Many folks are. They enjoy their neighborhood, their neighbors, and their proximity to work, school and the other activities in their life. But changes in lifestyle or career—as well as age—have families re-considering their existing space, and how they can get more out of it.

However, unless you have recently completed a remodeling project, you need to prepare yourself for “sticker shock.” Many people think building a new home and adding a new room to an existing home is about the same, so the cost per square foot should be about the same. This perception is wrong. Though concrete, wood, and nails are used on both projects, the similarity stops there.

### **COSTS OF NEW CONSTRUCTION**

- Most new homes are designed with one overriding priority: fitting within a given cost range. Considerations related to the specific site, its relationship to other buildings, or personal preferences are often ignored.
- New homes flow from start to finish in a predetermined method of operation, often not even affected by weather. For example: rain during the framing stage does not create a major problem because most products easily damaged by moisture have not yet been installed.
- The convenience of working in an unoccupied space reap production efficiencies: cutting for trim and finish work, for instance, can be accomplished anywhere in the house.
- Protection of furnishings and existing materials is much easier: new cabinets, wall coverings, and floor materials do not need to be protected since these items are installed last.
- Clean up can be delayed until it is convenient: as long as everything is neat and tidy at the end, it doesn't have to be closely monitored during the construction process.

### **COSTS OF A REMODELING PROJECT**

- Architects must develop a design that fulfills your needs while blending in with the architecture on your home and fitting the parameters of your pocketbook. Several designs variations are often needed to achieve a workable balance.
- Access to the work site can present many challenges: fences may have to be removed and re-installed; landscaping needs to be protected, moved, or eliminated; concrete might have to be pumped, carted, or poured with a wheel barrow; lumber must be carried in and debris hauled out by hand. Excavating, reinforcing the foundation, re-routing utility lines, all of these tasks are more

difficult in the restricted area of an existing structure, and therefore more expensive.

- The work site itself may be confined, and workers must maneuver around scaffolding or temporary supports. Oftentimes equipment needs to be set up outside or in the garage, necessitating countless trips back and forth to perfect those flawless joints and miters. Additional time must also be spent in dust control, moving furnishings and clean up.
- Remodeling may require temporary posts and beams to support ceilings and floors while new spaces are constructed. When a roof is opened up (or removed) to tie in a new addition it must be protected. A large portion of your remodeling dollar is spent during the demolition phase and incorporating the new with the old. The first six inches on an addition is the most expensive, but the overall cost per square foot normally decreases with greater size.
- Our craftsmen need to focus on seamless results—everything must match the existing conditions as close as possible, and many items need to be custom. This takes greater skill, time, and increased costs.
- Scheduling subcontractors and suppliers is more involved on a remodeling project, and requires greater attention to detail. Most trade contractors charge more for this type of work because of its unpredictable nature—their crews simply cannot be as efficient as they are doing new construction. Additionally, shorter workdays are usually required when building in an occupied space.

These are just a few reasons why remodeling is more expensive than new construction. This expense, however, is justified by studies that show how remodeling adds value to your home. It also allows you the flexibility to change your home to meet changing needs, and brings efficiency, happiness, and pride while bringing a good return on your investment.