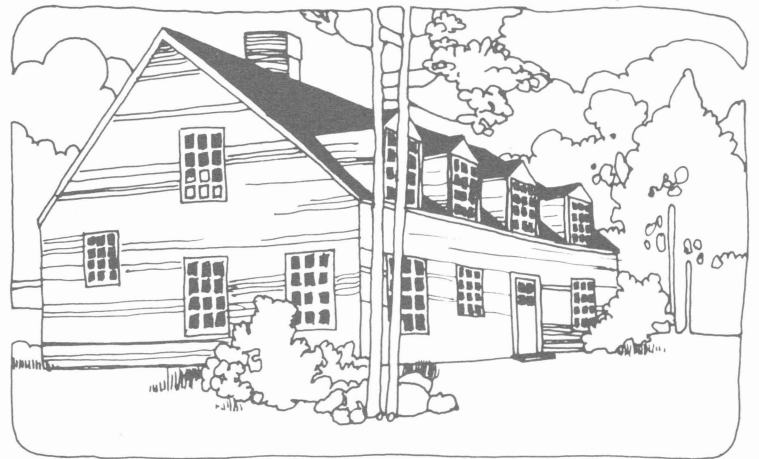


Planning Remodeling Projects



Home Remodeling

PLANNING REMODELING PROJECTS

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After the decision to remodel a house has been made, the following points should be considered:

- family needs
- local building ordinances
- working plans

Family Needs

Knowing what changes and additions need to be made can be relatively simple if the house has been lived in for awhile. A house should be comfortable, convenient and adequate for the family. Choose what to keep, what to add and what to remove in both the interior and exterior so that the old and new will work together. There is no one design solution for all houses. Each house has a potential character of its own just as a family does. Roof line, window placement and circulation should be considered just as family composition, interests and finances.

The first step is to decide what is wanted. Make a list of features that are annoying and what might be done to correct them. Anticipate future needs. Don't let convention dictate the shape of a remodeling program. Indulge in daydreams and then weed out ideas that are not feasible.

Careful planning is one of the most important parts of a successful remodeling project. Determine what would be acceptable if all changes cannot be made. Discover the choices available.

The family should play a large role in the planning process. Consider the stage in the family life cycle. Are children old enough to benefit from what remodeling will cost in terms of time and money? Will there be another child or will children be leaving soon for college or a job away from home? What will be wanted at retirement? Is it possible that an older relative will be coming to live in the house someday?

What is the family's lifestyle? Are peaceful, quiet activities or noisy, active games preferred? What type of entertaining and entertainment is preferred? Is the feeling of being outdoors or a cozy hideaway most desirable? Is a sewing area, office space or room for a pool table needed?

Look at a remodeling project as an investment and assess probable returns in the event it becomes necessary to sell the house. Although an added room may cost more, a return of up to 100 percent may be expected. Painting and improvements to existing walls may yield a 75 percent return while luxury additions or those designed specifically for one family, such as a sauna or dark room, may bring less than a 50 percent return. Most realtors emphasize modern, built-in kitchens, several bathrooms, central air conditioning and landscaping as the most valuable selling points.

Before adding to a house, be sure the existing space is being used effectively. Working within the present framework of load-bearing walls, using existing plumbing and heating, rearranging space, making one room work as another, knocking down walls and creating new ones or using space from the attic, garage or under a stairway will generally be more economical than the addition of new space.

If space must be added, be sure it is sufficient to meet the need for which it is intended. For example, make sure a bedroom can accommodate the furniture and has adequate storage space.

There is no one answer for remodeling a home. Problems of circulation, lack of space for expansion or storage or simply improving the general comfort and convenience can all be solved in a number of ways. Think about available options while weighing finances, existing conditions and available materials against basic requirements, desires and dreams.

Changing the floor plan of a house to meet family needs can add to its livability. The floor plan is also important when space is to be added to a house. When evaluating floor plans, consider:

- Traffic patterns — the movement from room to room and through the rooms
- Activity areas — the working, living and sleeping zones
- Room relationships — the function of one room with respect to the functions of others.

Traffic Patterns

Movement through a house should be direct, convenient and logical. A good traffic pattern does not interfere with the desired furniture arrangement or

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activities in a room. A room that must be crossed to reach another room loses much of its space to traffic and related disturbances. Convenient access to all areas of a house can usually be accomplished through the use of a hall.

Activity Areas

Three main activity areas should be considered. Inadequate conditions in one or more of these three areas may justify remodeling.

Working areas include the kitchen, laundry and/or utility areas. They should be planned for convenience and efficiency. Remodeling the working areas usually receives priority when home owners assess needed changes.

Living areas include the living room, dining area, family room or den and guest entrance. The dining area may be combined with the living, den or kitchen area. The number and size of living areas are determined by family needs and resources. Remodeling may mean adding a family room or a formal dining area depending on needs identified by the homeowner(s).

Sleeping areas usually should be grouped in one area of the house to provide privacy and protection from the working and living areas. Many home remodeling projects include the addition of bedrooms or bathrooms needed for the family.

Room Relationships

When remodeling, consider how one room relates to another. For example, a patio used regularly for dining should be easily accessible from the kitchen; a formal dining room should be adjacent to the living room. Bathrooms and bedrooms should be planned to achieve the maximum in privacy (both sight and sound) and convenience.

Local Building Ordinances

Construction standards in most Texas communities are regulated by a building code. Copies of the local building ordinances or codes should be secured from the local building department. Remodelers must make sure plans meet local codes since certain stages of the project will need to meet the approval of the local building inspector. Also, building permits will be required.

Checking local zoning ordinances is a must for remodelers. Zoning ordinances specify what percentage of a given lot may be used for actual structures, the required setback from the street, side-yard and rear-yard dimensions. Variances or permission to disregard a portion of the zoning ordinance may be required before remodeling can begin.

Carefully check the deed to the house to discover any deed restrictions. Specific lots, sub-divisions or whole developments may be protected by deed restrictions or protective covenants prohibiting some types of remodeling projects. If no deed is available, a copy is on file with the county clerk's office.

Working Plans

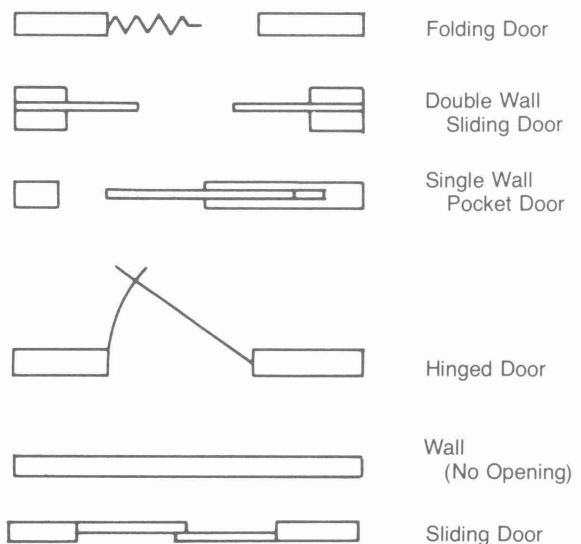
After considering family needs, remodeling alternatives and local building ordinances, a working plan should be developed. A plan of the changes proposed in the remodeling project is needed by the homeowner and professionals such as contractors, builders, architects, engineers or designers who will be working on the project.

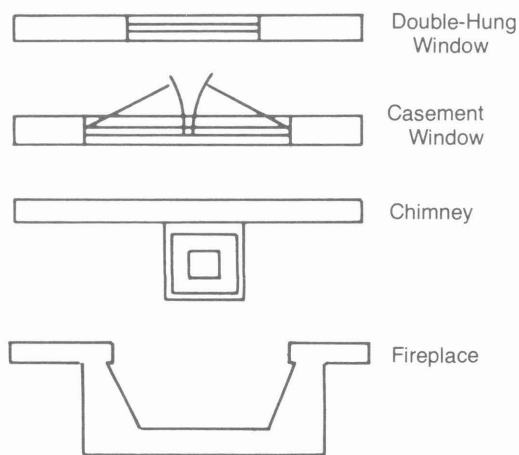
How to Make a Remodeling Plan

Use the following outline to prepare a plan for a remodeling project if the original is not available. The question may arise as to why you need a floor plan of the complete house to make an addition or modification to a small area of the house. In many cases, a complete floor plan is not needed. But when room function and traffic patterns change, the whole floor plan is needed to evaluate the plan to be sure you will have a livable and functional house.

The procedure for development of the plan is illustrated in three steps. Prepare a scaled drawing of the floor plan of the house in its present form and then make any additions and alterations to this plan. Use a scale of ¼ inch equal to one foot.

The equipment needed is a steel tape, a 6-foot ruler or a yardstick, a sheet of lined or graph paper, a 12-inch ruler, a pencil and an eraser. Use these drafting symbols:





Step 1. Take outside measurements.

- Start at one corner and measure length of sides; continue around the house in one direction until all sides have been measured.
- Draw these measurements to scale on the lined paper as they are taken. The ruler can be used to keep the lines straight. Show the dimensions on the sketch, but keep the dimension lines about ½ inch away from the drawing so there is room for additional dimensions and notes.
- For ease and simplicity, draw wall thickness as being 6 inches wide. For any unusual thickness of walls, make suitable notes or show actual thickness on drawing. Complete by noting the dimensions of the sides and locating all openings such as doors and windows. Accurate location and size of these openings is important.
- Additional outside measurements taken and items noted would include height of floor above grades, material and condition of porches, orientation of house, direction of drainage, location of drives and walks, roof overhang and roof type and slope. These items are recorded and sketches made for future reference as may be needed.

Step 2. Take inside measurements

- Take overall inside room dimensions and show on plan sketch.
- Measure and locate doors and windows. Start at corner of a room; measure to inside of window or door jambs. Then measure width of openings and from one opening to the next until the next corner is reached. Repeat on all walls and show dimensions on plan sketch.

When measuring doors and windows, the jamb is the finished opening in which the window or door is fitted.

- Show direction of door swings.
- Measure and note ceiling height.
- Measure window glass size and distance from floor to underside of window head jamb.
- Show size and location of chimney or flue.
- Locate stairway; measure width. Count number of risers and measure height of riser and width of tread. Measure total vertical height of stairway (distance from one floor to the next).
- Show size, spacing and direction of floor and ceiling joists.

Step 3. Make additions and alterations to existing floor plan.

- After you have prepared a floor plan showing the house in its present form, you can begin to sketch in the desired additions and alterations. If additional rooms are to be added to the existing floor plan, these should be sketched in the desired location. Use tracing paper over the existing floor plan for sketching proposed changes. Keep the existing plan neat and free of changes.
- Remember that load-bearing partitions cannot be removed without special provisions. Non load-bearing partitions may be easily removed. Usually, any partitions running parallel with the ceiling joists are non load-bearing and can be removed.

Summary

The remodeling plan can be used to aid discussions with contractors and financial institutions. No remodeling project should be attempted until a set of plans and specifications are agreed upon by the family, the lending institution if applicable, and the people who will do the work.

References

- A Manual for House Planning and Reconditioning.* Agricultural Engineering Leaflet No. 12, Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, 1975.
- Family Housing Handbook.* Midwest Plan Service, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, 1971.

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