



HOUSING

Home remodeling: evaluation checklist

no. 9.921

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Quick Facts...

There are many factors to consider when evaluating a house for remodeling, from location and foundation to mechanical systems and landscaping.

The remodeling plan itself should enhance the exterior design, meet current building codes, provide adequate natural light, fire escapes, furniture arrangements and traffic patterns.

The family considering a remodeling project needs to evaluate the remodeling potential of the house.

Evaluations should include location, lot, foundation and footings, structure, mechanical systems and the remodeling plan. As these items are evaluated with the aid of the following checklist, a family should think about its housing needs today and in the future. As a family changes, so does its housing needs.

Location

- Is the house conveniently located with regard to friends, relatives, schools, parks, shopping centers, church and place of work?
- Is the neighborhood attractive, pleasing and well maintained?
- Is the neighborhood free from heavy traffic, wind, dust, noise, odor and other forms of pollution?
- Is the neighborhood and particularly the home free from threat of flooding?
- Is the remodeling compatible with neighboring properties—(their view maintained, no drainage problems, sunlight maintained. etc.)?
- Is the neighborhood shown as residential on the community comprehensive plan and therefore likely to remain residential?

Lot

- Is the property graded so that moisture will drain away from the house?
- Is the house oriented so that maximum benefit and protection are provided from sunlight, wind, rain, and snow?
- Is landscaping established to the point of being of significant value?
- Is the view from the house pleasant and likely to remain unchanged?
- Is it direct, simple and easy for people to walk and drive to get to the house?
- Are the property lines established and located?
- Is the lot big enough to avoid encroachment on a neighbor's property?
- Does the land use (lot) comply with zoning regulations?

Foundations and Footings

- Are soil conditions suitable for making an addition at reasonable excavation and construction cost?
- Does the alignment of the foundation and footings appear to be straight and true?
- Is the foundation sound and free from large cracks, deterioration and water damage?
- Is siding at least 8 inches above the outside fill and free from decay?

If there are quite a few unchecked items, either remodeling is of questionable value or a great deal of money and time will be spent for personal satisfaction alone. "No" answers also may help identify remodeling needs.

For more information on remodeling, see fact sheets 9.920 Home remodeling: the decision, 9.922 Home remodeling: the design, and 9.923 Home remodeling: doing the work.

- Is the basement free of excessive moisture or waterstreaks or marks on doors and walls?
- Is there (or can there be added) a vapor barrier on the ground under a crawlspace area?

Structure

- Are floors sturdy and even? (Does furniture rattle when someone walks across the floor?)
- Are walls and ceilings free of cracks, bulges and waterspots?
- Are doors and windows tightly fitted, yet easy to open and close?
- Are the exterior walls free from excessive paint blistering and peeling (a possible sign of an improperly installed or missing vapor barrier)?
- Does the house have at least 3 inches - R-11 of insulation in exterior walls and 6 to 10 inches - R-19 or more in the ceiling between the uppermost living area and attic or roof (or is there the potential to conveniently install this insulation)?
- Is the roof free from sagging, bowed surfaces, or missing shingles?
- Are the flashings (around chimneys and dormers, gutters and downspouts) in good repair, free of rust and holes?
- Are there any pest control problems (termites, fungus, dry rot)?
- Are stairways (if any) sturdy and safe?

Mechanical Systems

- Is the electrical system adequate for personal requirements? (Recommended is 100-amp service or more; 8 or more 110-volt circuits; at least one 110-volt outlet on each wall; and enough 220-volt outlets for major appliances.)
- Is the water supply line large enough to maintain adequate pressure when the toilets are flushed and the bathroom faucets are turned on simultaneously?
- Will the water heater be adequate to meet additional demands after remodeling (at least 40 gallons for a four-member family with washer)?
- Will the source of water be adequate, especially if it is from a well and if a washing machine, dishwasher or garbage disposal are to be added?
- Will the existing method of sewage disposal be adequate, especially if a dishwasher, garbage disposal or washing machine is added?
- Does the design of a new bath or kitchen make use of existing plumbing hookups?
- Are the plumbing fixtures in good condition?
- Will the cost to replace old plumbing be reasonable?
- Will the present heating system be adequate and efficient after improvements? (Check with the utility company on rates for the area.)

Remodeling Plan

- Will the design of the exterior of the addition fit or enhance the present exterior design?
- Can the addition or change be made without altering the roofline or requiring major roof changes?
- Will proposed changes or additions require the entire structure to be brought up to current building codes?
- Will the addition or change provide adequate natural light in the existing structure?
- If needed, can skylights, window walls or clerestory windows be added?
- Does the new plan allow for paths and means of escape in case of fire?
- Are the new house traffic patterns practical and acceptable?
- Does the new area provide for suitable furniture arrangements?

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