

Where to Spend Your Time in Your Home's Remodeling

By Marcus McCue, Executive Vice President & Chief Business Development Officer, Guardian Mortgage Company, Inc.

As a homeowner, one of the best perks is the ability to remodel a home and make it your own. There is, however, a trick to a successful home remodel—tackle remodel projects that not only add visual appeal to your home but also provide you with a solid investment that will pay off when the time comes to sell your home.

There is no guarantee that you'll recoup every dollar you spend on your remodeling projects, but here are a few ideas for spending wisely. These projects are sure to bring you enjoyment while you're in your home while allowing you to spend your remodeling dollars wisely.

Match Materials to Your Neighborhood

Before you choose new cabinets, tiles or flooring, take an honest assessment of your neighborhood. What are the selling prices for homes in your area? If you're in a higher-end neighborhood, then plan on using materials that reflect that.

Using low-end remodeling materials in a high-end neighborhood will diminish your home's value, and putting high-end finishes in a lower-priced neighborhood will cause your home to out price your ability to sell in the area.

Not only do materials matter, but the amount you spend matters too. If you over-improve your home, you'll end up getting less at resale and losing the money you put into your home. Remodel and update to suit your tastes—just be sure you don't put in more than you'll be able to get out of your home when it comes time to sell your home.

Timeless Outperforms Trendy

In decorating, timelessness will always outperform the

latest trendy looks for what will appeal to most prospective homebuyers. Those trendy remodeling finishes of today could easily become tomorrow's dated 1970s orange shag carpet décor nightmares.

Even the most beautifully executed trendy remodel will fade and date with time, so stick to the classics to get the most bang for your remodeling investment buck—neutral colors, marble finishes, hardwood flooring and pewter fixtures.

Focus on Existing Spaces First

Before building on an extra bathroom or guestroom, evaluate the space you have available first and use it to your advantage. That unused basement can easily become a fun game room with a bar and private bathroom, or that extra space in the attic can turn into a great guestroom, man cave or additional bedroom for a teenager that is currently sharing a cramped room on the second floor with a younger sibling.

Adding on to your home is a great idea if you don't already have unused or underutilized built-out space. Working with what you have is much more cost effective in the long run and is more likely to garner you a better return on your remodeling investment.

However, before you turn that third bedroom into the ultimate walk-in closet, be sure it makes sense to the overall value of your home. If homes that sell in your neighborhood typically come with three to four bedrooms, your walk-in oasis may not be as appreciated or appeal to prospective homebuyers in the future.

So what's the long and short of remodeling your home? Do your homework and know what the homes in your area offer and are selling for first before you tackle your next home remodeling project.

