

## Are You Making These 6 Costly Remodeling Mistakes?

*Your house is an asset and the choices you make will determine what it is worth when you try to sell.*

Last week, a couple came into the office with a great question.

They just bought land and were about to build their home. They showed us their blueprints and said, “We’re planning to live here for 10 years and want to make sure we can sell this down the road. What mistakes are we making right now that will hurt us when we sell?”

They’re wise to think about the future and to consider what buyers want in their build. Your house is an asset and the choices you make will determine what it is worth when you try to sell.

Avoiding these 6 mistakes will help you protect the value of your home:

### **Mistake #1: Kill interest with a structural mistake**

Structural mistakes happen when you turn your bedroom into a closet or a giant office, and the house no longer works. A floor plan that doesn’t work will squash buyer interest in a home quickly and fatally.

If your kids are grown and gone, avoid the temptation to get rid of their bedrooms to make a bigger master or a home theater. Repurpose those empty bedrooms while keeping the walls intact. You’ll be happy you did when it’s time to sell your home.

Stick with a traditional floor plan: the perfect (i.e. most buyer-friendly) house is one with four bedrooms, including a master, two kids’ rooms and a guest room with bath attached or en suite, preferably downstairs or separate from the rest of the bedrooms.

### **Mistake #2: Disregard the needs of people who might buy the house**

Tailoring your home to your current phase of life or your unique interests is risky if your goal is to sell.

For example, if you have teenagers you might be tempted to put some distance between your bedroom and theirs. Before you remodel your home in order to put their bedrooms up and your master down, consider this: chances are somebody younger will buy your house. Young families usually want their master bedroom on the same floor with their kids, and won’t buy a house that has been remodeled to do the opposite.

Think about what floor plan your buyer would want.



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### **Mistake #3: Fail to get permits**

Always get permits. *Period.*

The permit history is available online, and buyers in the Palo Alto area do look it up during the course of the sale.

This is especially important if you are adding square footage. If the information in the permit history shows that it's a 3,000 sq ft house, but you're advertising it as a 3,500 sq ft house, you can sabotage the sale.

No matter what size the job is, whether you're adding a room or turning your stairwell into a wine cellar, always get the permit.

### **Mistake #4: Do a sloppy job**

Don't try to save money by doing your home improvement projects over the weekend with a couple trips to Home Depot. If the results are not high quality, things can go bad in a hurry when your house gets appraised for the sale.

People want to be reassured that the work that's been done is high quality. Investing in a great contractor will pay off when you sell.

### **Mistake #5: Turn your house into something it's not**

Don't put a country kitchen in an Eichler.

Don't try to be modern with a Craftsman.

Your remodel job should be consistent with the style of your house.

That doesn't mean you can't tastefully update an older home. If you add a modern kitchen to a house built in the early 1900's, retain the character by keeping a few turn-of-the-century details like those beautiful moldings in the dining room – those are things that resonate with buyers.

### **Mistake #6: Sweat the small stuff**

Tastes change.

What's trendy now probably isn't going to be five years from now. *So what?*

Face it – the countertops you choose today won't be in style in 2022.

Paint fashions change even faster than countertops. Don't worry about it! By the time you sell it, we're going to paint it a new color anyway.

Details are cheap to change.

Pick what you love and enjoy it.



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