



After

T. Morgan Construction remodeled the kitchen in the home of Yvonne and Dan Harter.



Before

Stacy Harter Photos

Renovation contemplation

Remodeling improves what homeowners already have

By Barbara E. Cohen
For Custom Publications

There's no such thing as a perfect house — so homeowners modify their existing homes to better meet their needs. The projects they tackle generally depend on how long they intend to stay put.

"Kitchen and bath makeovers offer the best value for freshening up a house and improving its resale value if you don't plan to live in the house much longer," said Tim Williams, owner of T. Morgan Construction, which handles about 100 remodeling and renovation projects a year. "Adding a deck, new rooms or upgrades in existing rooms are for people who plan to stay in their homes."

Purpose-driven remodeling

Remodeling involves one of three kinds of change. According to Williams, people who plan to live in their homes for less than five more years typically want maintenance upgrades to improve resale value. People who've lived in their homes more than eight years and are planning to stay put for the immediate future crave lifestyle-related upgrades and improvements.

Homeowners who consider staying in their homes indefinitely are looking for top-quality upgrades that bring the home up to current

standards of comfort.

Most of Williams' clients want to stay in their homes, usually because they're attached to their community. However, they're dissatisfied with old-fashioned appliances, inconvenient cabinetry and aging plumbing or electrical systems.

For Yvonne and Dan Harter, the decision to remodel came only after rejecting moving choices.

"We bought a lot in Hamilton County," said Yvonne Harter, who lives with her husband in a 1960s house in northeast Indianapolis. "But we decided that for the price of building a new home in a new community, we could renovate our existing home and stay in the established neighborhood we love."

In the last six years, the Harters have remodeled three bathrooms and their kitchen, which was gutted to the studs and rebuilt. They've also added a sunroom, a deck and an outdoor kitchen.

"We were really tired of what was here; it was old and hard to make look good," Harter said.

In the kitchen, the Harters switched from an electric to a gas stove, upgraded the countertop and cabinet materials, changed the layout of cabinetry and entirely replaced the electrical, plumbing and lighting systems. All cabinets now have fully

accessible shelves that roll out, and there's a pantry-type cupboard for easier access to groceries.

"I'm not straining to reach anything anymore," Harter said. "And the new task lighting is a significant improvement over the old fluorescent lighting."

Minimizing temporary disruptions

Williams established a temporary kitchen in another room so the Harters were only minimally inconvenienced during their three-month kitchen makeover. That kind of attention to detail means a great deal to homeowners living in the reconstruction zone.

In a similar vein, Williams performed a six-week kitchen remodel for Becky and John Montgomery of Fishers. Knocking down a kitchen wall turned the Montgomerys' kitchen and dining room into a large eat-in kitchen that's more functional than the original configuration.

A master bath remodel for Sharon and Bob Jamison took five years for the couple to work out on paper, but just a few weeks for Williams to complete.

Remodeling can be a disruptive process, but the results often are well worth it for homeowners who are planning to stay put for as long as possible.