

# Renovating or Adding On?

## here's what to expect



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**D**reaming about a new home, but so attached to your old neighborhood, location and current home that the thought of moving brings tears to your eyes? Sounds like the answer isn't a new home, but an update of your existing one; plus some sorely-needed additional space that works with today's needs, and all updated with the latest styles and gadgets.

### Where to Begin

With your mind wandering in that direction, it's time to take stock of what you like and don't like about your existing home, how long you're planning to stay there, and what you want to accomplish. When compiling your list, it will help to prioritize your needs, because due to size and scope of the work you're anticipating, you may choose a multi-stage process that might better fit both your financial

requirements and the length and type of disruption to your daily activities.

After you've created your wish-list, its time to start thinking in dollars and cents; and about which contractor you would entrust with your most valuable assets – your home and your peace of mind. This can be one of those proverbial “chicken or the egg” questions, but you probably have an idea of what you think this

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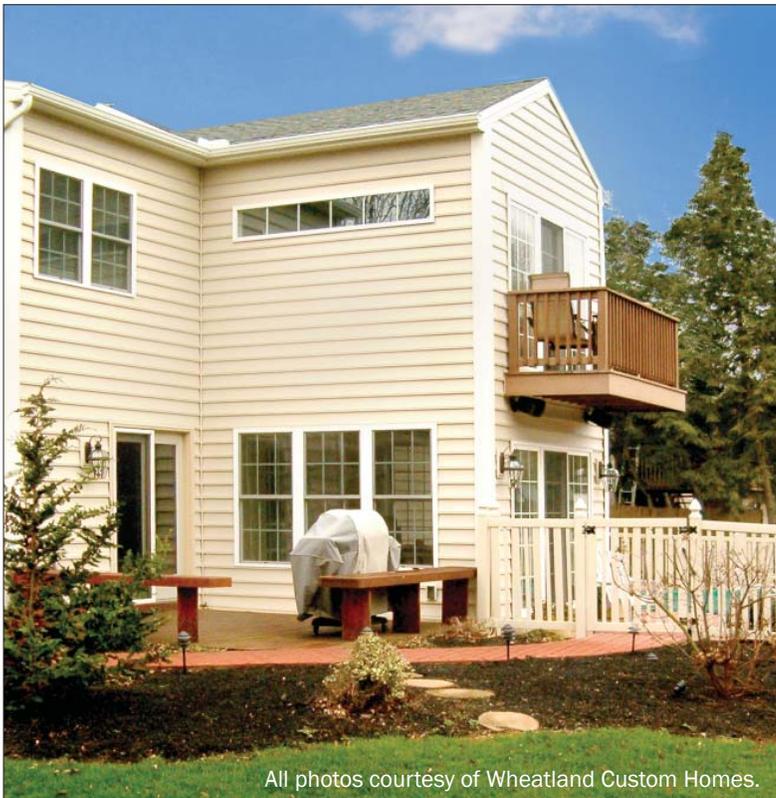
type of investment is worth to you. You also have friends, co-workers or family members who have experienced some type of renovation over the last few years, who will provide you with some referrals and, asked for, or not, a list of suggestions.

If you're not certain of the cost of certain types of renovations or additions, there are many publications available that will give you a range

of values, as well as a multitude of ideas to include in your wish list. These same publications will also provide some general guidelines relating to the potential value of certain renovations as opposed to others. In addition, the wealth of options and product information available to homeowners through home stores, the internet, and various product showrooms, provides tangible access to view those options and make your choices relating to what you can and cannot live without.

### Choosing Your Contractor

Typically choosing a plan, a budget and a contractor will go hand in hand. You will be asked to make many choices and selections during your construction process, but choosing the right contractor that is a good fit for you and your family will be the MOST important selection you'll make. Depending on the size of your project, you will be interacting with your contractor and staff on an “almost-daily” basis for an extended



All photos courtesy of Wheatland Custom Homes.



This two-story addition (left) features a first floor sunroom, and the second floor added a sitting room/home office area to the master suite. Fluted trim details included in moldings, columns, and door style blends together beautifully in this sitting room and family room area (above.)

period of time. Using the input of friends, family, and neighbors who have done work that is similar to what you may be considering, will provide you with a starting point. Also choosing a contractor who is a member of your local homebuilder's association will help you to choose someone who is proud of their profession and subscribes to a code of ethics and behavior that enhances his or her reputation.

### The Planning Process

Contractors usually have the ability to help you with the design process and can create plans for you within their organization. Most homeowners don't have the luxury of moving out of their existing home during the renovation process, so your contractor's desire and willingness to make this process as pain-free as possible for you and your family is paramount.

The contractor's staff and trade partners will be in and out of your home



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Wheatland Custom Homes, Inc. was founded in 1994, by Rick Martin. Rick has spent more than 38 years in the construction industry and has a wealth of experience in helping homeowners create their dream homes. At Wheatland, each and every renovation and addition is created to fit your needs and lifestyle.

Our in-house design team works closely with you every step of the way to insure that the elements you desire are integrated into your new living space. Our goal is to insure each of our homeowners a quality home of exceptional value—whether it be an addition, a renovation or a brand new home, our service starts the first time our homeowners walk through our door.

regularly and your trust and flexibility will be the key to keeping things moving as quickly and smoothly as possible. (At Wheatland, although we build custom homes in a much larger geographic area, we limit the area of our work on renovations and additions to an area that is much closer to our office so we

have the ability to visit the job whenever the need arises—multiple times daily, if necessary. This allows us to react quickly to client questions and concerns.

As with any type of investment, there are many levels of finishes available that can significantly affect the cost

of your project. You can keep your costs lower with designs and finish levels with good value, but have more basic finishes including standard-size painted moldings, flat ceilings, box-type kitchens with laminate counters, standard-grade appliances, basic chrome faucets and more typical plumbing fixtures, and vinyl flooring or carpeting.

You can step up the detail and luxury of your finishes by one notch or many, by adding



A custom kitchen with Shirestone™ countertops, generous work areas, designer appliances, and tons of lighting, create a work space that any cook would dream of.

higher ceilings, more windows and transoms, heavier trims, upgraded cabinetry with solid surface, concrete or granite counters, higher end stainless or “commercial-look” appliances, upgraded faucets and bath fixtures, and enhanced flooring materials.

Though the basic structure won't change a lot, the final contract price can increase substantially and is directly influenced by the homeowner's preferences. It's important to research the type of finishes that you want and budget for them so when you visit the showroom to make selections, you stay within the guidelines that work for you. (At Wheatland we work closely with our homeowners to insure that we understand their needs so their preferred finishes are included in their budget. Every contractor handles things differently, but Wheatland's clients work through the selection process with an experienced member of our staff who provides guidance, if needed, and introduces them to the design specialists available to them through our key trade partners. The homeowner is provided with a list of the choices they will need to make, and it can be broken down into groupings so the required materials can be ordered as they're to be installed. This allows our homeowners a little more flexibility in making the



The use of detailed moldings and luxury finishes sets the tone in this richly remodeled dining room.

interior selections that typically prove to be the tougher choices.)

#### **The Work Begins**

When the plans are completed, the contract signed, and the financing in place, it's time for the contractor to start your project, which begins with the permitting

process. Today's new building codes and permit process require about four to six weeks before the permits are issued. Cosmetic renovation work can be messier, but can move much more quickly, while larger-scale additions or renovations involving moving walls, new mechanicals, replacing cabinetry and



A project of grander scale is featured in this seamless addition of 2,000 square feet (everything to the right of the pyramid pine)—creating an attractive in-law quarters to this suburban home.

plumbing fixtures, etc. will take longer. Installation of plumbing fixtures, cabinetry, countertops and other fixtures is affected by the lead time required by suppliers, and once final selections are made and delivery dates are established, a more detailed schedule can be created.

Frequently if a major kitchen or bath renovation is included, it can alleviate some stress for the homeowner family, if the schedule can be made to coincide with a family vacation or get away for a short period of time. This allows the contractor's staff and trade partners to more effectively isolate the unaffected areas of the home, and also provide free access to the concentrated areas like kitchens and bathroom that aren't as accessible when family members are getting ready for work and school.

#### **Project Completion**

Once your project is complete, your contractor or a staff member will review the job with you, go over any minor adjustments that need to be made, and provide you with the information necessary for maintenance and operation of new appliances, equipment, etc. (At Wheatland we provide our homeowners with both a walk-through to familiarize them with everything and with a manual that includes operating instructions, product warranty cards, and a list of all trade partners and contact information for use in case of emergency. By that point, we've all worked together so closely, that contact numbers for our staff members are already on their speed-dial list. We also provide them a list of all the selections they've made in the completion of their home, so interior and exterior color selections, if possible, are included on one sheet of paper.)

#### **The End Result**

As your project has worked it's way to completion, you and your family can now slip seamlessly into your new space and start enjoying it. And while you're at it, go ahead and pat yourself on the back for making a decision that will bring ongoing comfort, security, and value to your family now and well into the future.

R&A

# TIMELESS ADDITIONS



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