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# Remodeling gives new life to older homes

**By Shari Held**

For Custom Publications

**S**hould you remodel your home — or move on to greener pastures? Many homeowners face this dilemma after living in their home for several years. Maybe they've added a child or two to the family, are sharing the home with an elderly parent or need room for a home office.



Gray

Whatever the catalyst, it's wise to take time to investigate the remodeling options.

"The first thing I ask people is, 'Do you like the neighborhood

you're living in?'" said Steve Gray, of Steve Gray Renovations in Indianapolis. "Sometimes the location sells the renovation. People like the neighborhood and they're willing to spend the money to make the home into what they want."

Staying in your neighborhood has advantages. You get to keep your neighbors, familiar shopping venues, doctors and schools. You also can skip the hassle and cost of moving.

## Pros and cons

On the micro level, there's the home itself to consider.

"In our first meeting with a client, we ask what they like about their home and what they dislike about their home," Gray said. "Once we find out what's on those lists, we're better able to have a conversation about what can realistically happen in the remodeling process."

At the top of most dislike lists are kitchens, master bedrooms and

bathrooms — they're too small or don't allow for easy entertaining. Generally, homeowners feel their homes no longer fit their lifestyle.

Gray said an addition isn't always the best route to create usable space. Reconfiguring the home — knocking out walls, adding built-ins or repurposing space — might suffice. A professional remodeler can advise what can and can't be done, suggest alternatives and provide a ballpark estimate of the cost.

"Reconfiguring what's under the existing roof is less expensive than adding a new foundation and roof and creating space outside the existing home," Gray said.

He cited a family who had a large dining room that essentially was wasted space. They used it only a few times a year. Most of their entertaining was done casually around the pool. The solution was to transform the dining room into a cabana room that connected the pool with the kitchen.

"It had a wet bar and its own private bath and turned out to be an awesome area," Gray said. "The family uses it five times a week or more now, and they love it. For them, it was like getting a new home."

Remodeling isn't the solution for everyone. No amount of upgrades can make up for an undesirable neighborhood. But in today's competitive real estate market, remodeling might be an asset whether you intend to stay in your home for decades or move when the kids start school.



Before

Before committing to building an addition, Steve Gray of Steve Gray Renovations recommends considering a remodel. Remodeling can make spaces like this living room more suitable without the expense of adding on — which requires a new foundation and roof.



During



After

"Making improvements along the way helps you get ready for the time when you do sell your house," Gray said. ●

## Steve Gray Renovations

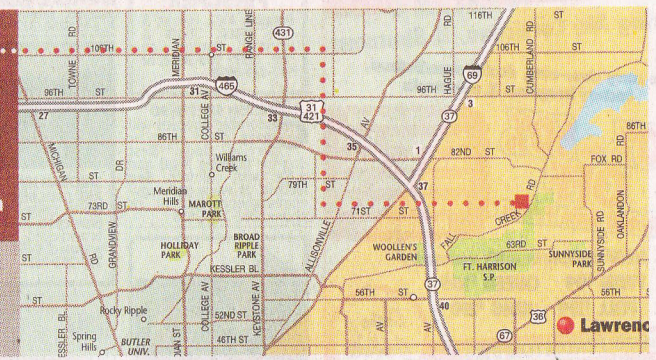
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**Specialty:** Home remodeling

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