

HOME & DESIGN

Experts discuss the ins and outs of remodeling your home

What are the most common mistakes homeowners make during the remodeling process?

The following common mistakes decrease the homeowners' chances of ending up with a successful project: not seeking professional design advice and neglecting to carefully plan your project; making small changes during the process and selecting expensive products that drive the project cost over budget; and choosing a company that lacks a proven track record of completing projects on time and on budget and that is not current with the code, permit and regulation environment.

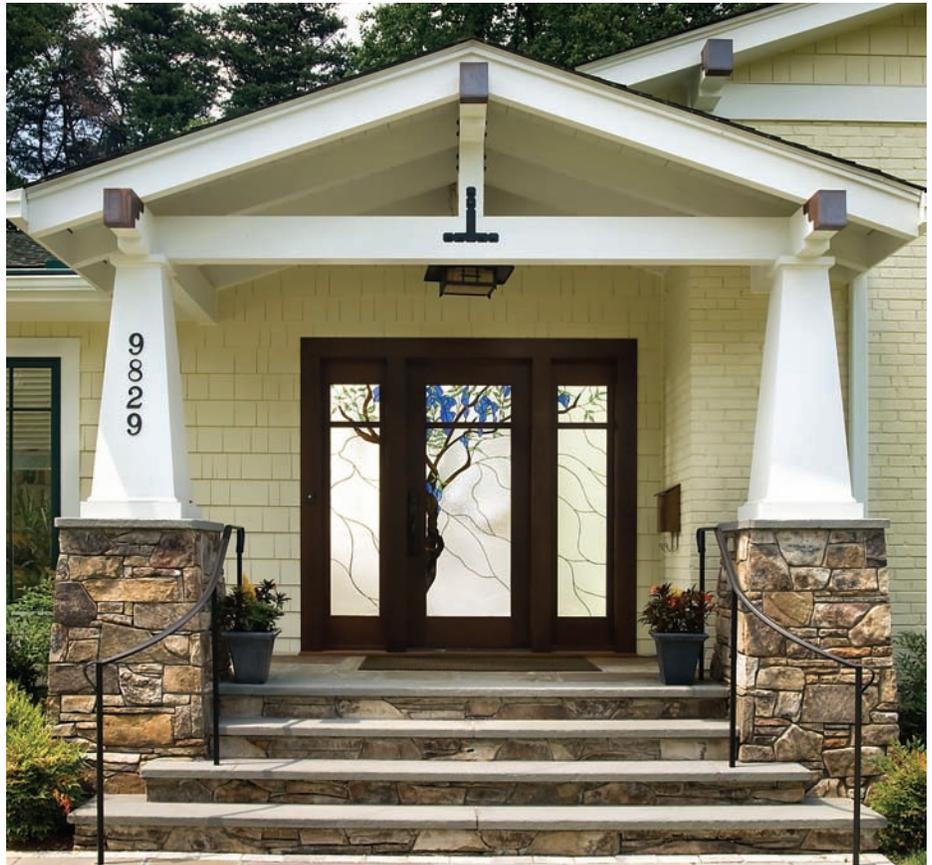
—Bill Millholland, *Case Design/Remodeling, Inc.*

What amenities are you seeing in homes and which ones are providing the best investment return?

The rise in popularity of smart phones has led to unprecedented remote control over home products such as security cameras, lighting and kitchen appliances—even when homeowners are not at home. Programs are being created that will control almost any electronic device in the home with a flick of a finger. Another popular amenity is the heated electric floor mat; thermostatically controlled, it provides an inexpensive way to have the luxury of a warm floor. It also tends to reduce heating costs over the course of the year. —Anthony Wilder, *Anthony Wilder Design/Build*

What qualifications should I look for in a remodeling firm?

It is always smart to cover the basics—years in business, a list of references, job pictures and some online research of a company's reputation. When speaking directly with different firms, observe how much they really listen to you. The right firm will ask intriguing



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Anthony Wilder transformed a split-level home into an Arts and Crafts-style bungalow with a portico and custom stained-glass window.

questions without telling you how great they are. They should be able to communicate an understanding of your vision and project, summarize how you want to move forward and give specific examples of how their firm will be able to meet your needs. —Jim Grace, *Reico Kitchen & Bath*

How can I assess the quality of materials my contractor is using?

Be sure to hire a contractor who has a proven track record of experience with your particular type of project, materials and products. Do they have relationships with local building supply representatives with whom you can speak? Your contractor should be able to recommend two or three specific product options for each phase of your project and describe the benefits of each. From there you can use the

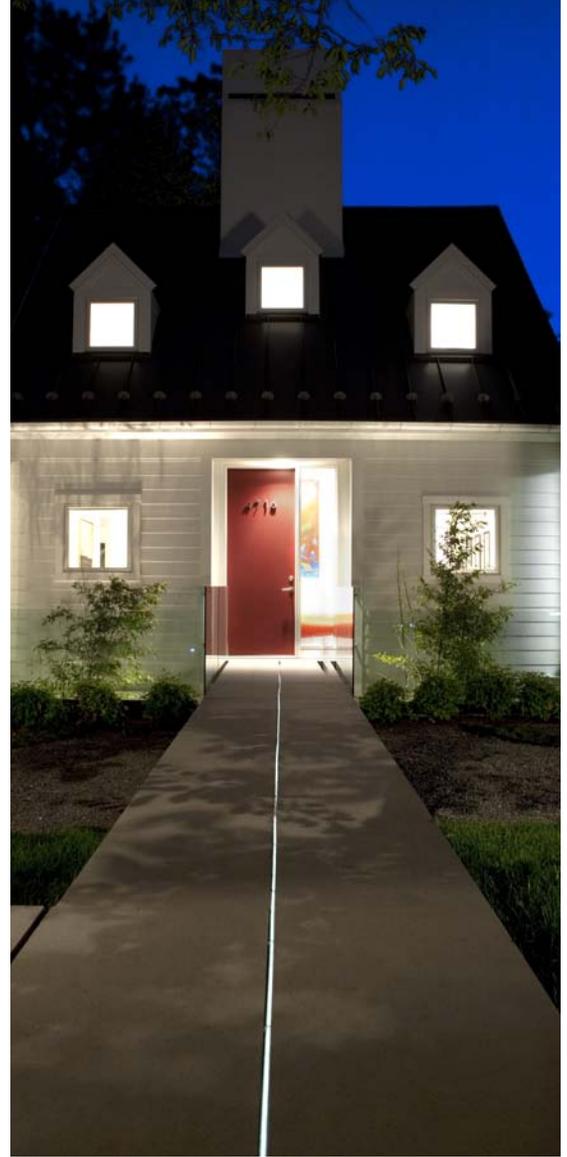
Internet to verify and support what you've learned. —Troy Fenley, *Sun Design Remodeling Specialists, Inc.*

What factors will affect the construction time for my remodeling project?

Many factors can affect the delivery of a custom remodeling project, including scheduling, decision-making, product lead times, reliable subcontracting and weather conditions. A harmonious relationship between client and builder is a necessity. A design/build team should provide the homeowner with a plethora of information, including design integration and implementation costs, durability, lead times, alternative materials, etc. A well-informed client can make timely, informed decisions that will be reflected in a home renovation they will enjoy for years to come.

—Chryssa Wolfe & Hanlon Design Build

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