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Departments of
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MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

EXTENSION BULLETIN E-848

SHOULD I REMODEL MY HOUSE?

Today's housing market, along with people's desire to move to or remain in a certain area often brings about the decision to remodel an existing home rather than purchase a new home. In order to help make this decision as realistic as possible, the following checklist should be used. Answer these questions objectively and then evaluate your situation.

FINANCIAL

- Yes ___ No ___ Will the cost of improvement be less than 60% of the cost to build a new home of equal quality?
- Yes ___ No ___ Will the value of the house after improvement be less than 20% greater than the average home in the neighborhood?
- Yes ___ No ___ Will your monthly costs after improvement, including increased taxes, insurance, maintenance, and utilities be less than one week's take home pay?

LOCATION

- Yes ___ No ___ Is the house conveniently located to schools, parks, shopping centers, the church of your choice, and your place of work?
- Yes ___ No ___ Is the neighborhood attractive, pleasing, and well maintained?
- Yes ___ No ___ Is the neighborhood free from heavy traffic, dust, noise, and other forms of pollution?
- Yes ___ No ___ Is the neighborhood free from threat of flooding?

LOT

- Yes ___ No ___ Is the property graded so moisture will drain away from the house?
- Yes ___ No ___ Is the house oriented so maximum benefit and protection is provided from sunlight, wind, rain, and snow?
- Yes ___ No ___ Is the view from the house pleasant and likely to remain unchanged?
- Yes ___ No ___ Is pedestrian and automobile access direct, simple, and easy?

FOUNDATION

- Yes ___ No ___ Does the alignment of the foundation appear to be straight and true?
- Yes ___ No ___ Is the foundation free from large cracks and deterioration?
- Yes ___ No ___ Is siding at least 8" above the outside soil and free from decay?
- Yes ___ No ___ If the house has a basement, is the space free from excessive moisture? (Look for streaks or marks on floors and walls.)

STRUCTURE

- Yes ___ No ___ Are floors sturdy and even? (jump up and down; floor should not shake.)
- Yes ___ No ___ Are doors and windows tightly fitted, snug, and yet easy to open and close?
- Yes ___ No ___ Are the exterior walls free from excessive paint blistering and cracking (a possible sign of an improperly installed vapor barrier?)
- Yes ___ No ___ Does the house have at least 3" of insulation in exterior walls and 6" in the ceiling between the uppermost living area and attic or roof?
- Yes ___ No ___ Is the roof free from sagging, bowed surfaces, or missing shingles?
- Yes ___ No ___ Are the flashing (around chimneys and dormers) and the gutter downspouts in good repair (free from rust and holes?)

UTILITIES

- Yes ___ No ___ Does the electrical system include the following: 100 amp service or more; 12 or more 110-volt circuits; at least one 110-volt outlet on each wall; and enough 220-volt outlets for major appliances?
- Yes ___ No ___ Does the water pressure remain adequate when the toilets are flushed and the bathroom faucets are turned on at the same time?
- Yes ___ No ___ Will the water heater be satisfactory after remodeling (at least 40 gallons for a four-member family with washing machine?)
- Yes ___ No ___ Will the source of water be adequate, especially if it is from a well and if a washing machine or dishwasher are to be added?
- Yes ___ No ___ Will the existing method of sewage disposal be adequate, especially if a dishwasher, garbage disposal, or washing machine are to be added?
- Yes ___ No ___ Are the plumbing fixtures in good condition?
- Yes ___ No ___ Will the present method of heating be adequate and efficient after improvements? Check with the utility company on rates for the area.

Now review your answers. If you have quite a few no's, either remodeling is of questionable value or you are willing to spend a great deal of money and time for your personal satisfaction alone.

Also, your no answers may indicate items that you should consider improving, if possible.

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