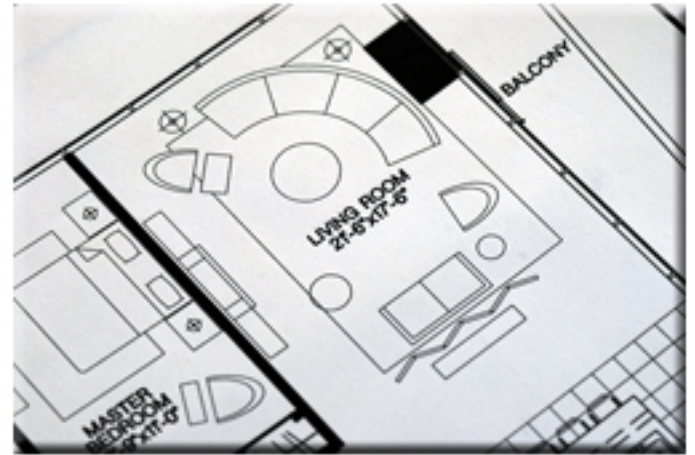


Small Scale Remodels Easier On The Bottom Line

Is it possible to get more space in your existing home without remodeling? Sarah Susanka is an architect and proponent of the "Not So Big House" as well as the "Not So Big Remodeling Job." In a series of articles and books on the subject, Susanka points out that a thoughtful re-examination of a home's existing footprint can provide answers to better-utilize square footage.



For example, Susanka writes, space problems can often be solved by rethinking the locations of activities in a home. This is contrary to the way many remodeling projects actually begin – with the idea of adding specific rooms, floors or wings. While its true activities need space, not all activities need to be performed in a separate room. For example, a home office can double as a guest-room, allowing the space to perform double-duty.

Decluttering a home before undertaking any remodeling project is a process Susanka recommends. This deliberation allows the homeowner to observe and reflect on the space and the activity patterns occurring within. By slowing down the remodeling in this way, the current usage of a home's space becomes apparent, and helps homeowners take a more thoughtful approach to remodeling. This breathing room can prevent digging into a remodeling project and then questioning or rethinking the project when it's half-completed.



When planning a remodel, a homeowner should include storage space within each activity area. Evaluating a home's existing storage, including closets, cupboards and pantries, will provide more information about how to reconfigure existing space. It is often the case that more heavily-used areas have inadequate storage. The bulk of a home's storage is often located in areas that are out of normal traffic

patterns and seldom used. Well-designed and well-managed storage in the right place can open up living space in previously cramped locations in the home.

The kitchen is often the place many homeowners plan to add space. But rather than building on or out, adding space can sometimes be as simple as relocating cabinetry, stove, sink, and refrigerator. This option greatly diminishes cost and mess. The next "not so big" step might be adding or removing a wall or partial wall, or adding or enlarging windows and doors.



These changes can make a big difference in space utilization, traffic patterns, light and work areas, at a much lower cost than a major remodel or vast expansion of the home's footprint.

Additional space can sometimes be found in a pantry or closet located in or near the kitchen that can be repurposed to add extra work, storage or counter space.



Attic or garage remodels can be good choices for adding space without sacrificing existing yard or parking space. Attic conversions can make use of unused space directly underneath slanted rooftops or over a garage. Planning ahead of time can incorporate low ceilings into a unique and attractive living area with custom features, such as built-in headboard or bookcases. This planning will help provide more space and better resale value.

More homeowners are looking to their garage for a place to add a home office, studio space or workshop. Since many garages are attached or near the existing home, they can be a good option to simply extend wiring and infrastructure for heating, cooling and in some cases, even plumbing. When transforming a garage in this way, the garage can become multifunctional, still performing traditional functions such housing a car and other items, as well as accommodating a home office or workshop.

One way this can be accomplished is with the creation of a small storage shed elsewhere in the yard to make up for any lost storage space in the garage. A building separate from the house will expand your storage space for many items that simply don't need to be located in a heated or lighted building.