



HOME IMPROVEMENT

A rundown on roofing projects

No two home renovation projects are the same. Some projects are highly detailed undertakings that take months if not years from start to finish, while others can be tackled by skilled do-it-yourselfers over the course of a single weekend. Though each project is different, categorizing renovations as needs or wants can help homeowners determine when the time is right to go forward.

Roof replacement projects typically fall into the "need" category. A decaying roof can jeopardize the safety and security of a home and lead to additional issues, like water damage. It's unwise to delay roof replacement projects when signs of a decaying roof start to appear. Homeowners who are starting to see such indicators can look to this rundown of roof replacement projects as they begin the process of replac-

ing their roof.

Cost

Roof replacement costs vary considerably depending on a host of variables. Materials, location and the cost of labor, dimensions of the roof, and even choice of contractor all affect the cost of the project. The home renovation experts at Angie's List indicate the average roof replacement project costs \$9,500. Asphalt is among the more affordable roofing materials, costing an average of \$1 to \$1.20 per square foot, according to NerdWallet. Slate roofs will be more expensive, costing anywhere from \$10 to \$30 per square foot.



Life expectancy

Homeowners may blanch at the cost of a roof replacement project, particularly if

they choose a more expensive material. However, it's important to keep life expectancy in mind when replacing a roof. Many homeowners never replace a roof twice, making this a potentially costly but ultimately one-time expense. Though slate roofs are expensive, homeowners may find it reassuring that estimates from various roofing resources indicate slate roofs come with a life expectancy ranging from 50 to 200 years. By contrast, NerdWallet estimates an asphalt roof lasts around 10 to 20 years, while others suggest such roofs can last as long as 30 years.

Materials

Choice of materials is arguably the most significant decision homeowners will

make when replacing a roof. The experts at This Old House report that materials typically account for 55 to 65 percent of the overall cost of a roof replacement project. Decisions regarding roof materials will be affected by budget, local climate (certain materials are better suited to particular climates than others), aesthetic appeal, and required maintenance. It's also important that homeowners consider the material warranty of each roofing product. Some materials offer longer warranties than others, which can provide a measure of security to homeowners investing so much in the project.

A roof replacement project is not a renovation that can be delayed when signs the roof is fading start to appear. Homeowners are urged to consider a wide range of variables before committing to a project.

Popular kitchen flooring materials

It's well-documented that kitchens are popular gathering spaces in homes. Perhaps that's one reason why homeowners looking to sell their homes direct so much attention to the kitchen before listing their properties. The real estate experts at Trulia note that emphasis is well worth it, as buyers inspect kitchens and primary bathrooms more than any other spaces in a home.

Cabinets and countertops garner considerable attention when pondering kitchen renovations, but it's equally important that homeowners pay attention to flooring when planning a remodel. The following are some notable flooring materials homeowners may want to consider as they plan to remodel their kitchens.

Ceramic tile: Ceramic tile is a popular kitchen flooring material. The flooring ex-

perts at Avalon Flooring note that ceramic tile boasts an elegant and clean feel. Ceramic tile also is durable and easy to maintain. That simple maintenance includes ease of cleaning, as ceramic tile can be quickly cleared of spills and dirt tracked into a kitchen from outside. Ceramic tile also comes in a wide variety of colors, a versatility that undoubtedly adds to its popularity.

Porcelain tile: Porcelain tile is another versatile option that can add instant aesthetic appeal to a kitchen. Porcelain tile is waterproof, which appeals to many homeowners looking to renovate their kitchens. Porcelain also is easily cleaned and durable, as flooring experts estimate that porcelain tiles can last anywhere from 15 to 50 years. Porcelain tile also requires minimal maintenance, which appeals to

busy homeowners.

Engineered hardwood: Engineered hardwood is a popular choice that many homeowners appreciate due to its strength and aesthetic appeal. This flooring material is made with real wood that's reinforced to make it even more durable and water-resistant. The result is an easily maintained product that also can last as long as solid wood flooring so long as it's well-maintained. Various shades, designs and textures are available, which makes this a versatile option.

Laminate flooring: Laminate flooring is a budget-friendly option that's available in a wide range of styles, colors and patterns. The smooth surface of laminate flooring makes it easy to clean, and its resistance to water is another characteristic that appeals to homeowners. But spills on



laminate floors are best cleaned up quickly, and the material is vulnerable to warping and staining if exposed to moisture for extended periods of time.

These are some of the options homeowners can consider as they ponder which material to install on their kitchen floors as they remodel these popular rooms.

Is a sunroom right for you?

There is no denying the appeal of a sunroom. Sunrooms bring more of the outdoors inside by bridging the gap between home and yard. Demand is shifting, with more than 61 percent of homeowners now preferring four-season insulated rooms for year-round use, according to Market Reports World. A sunroom has the potential to offer a roughly 50 percent return on investment and can cost anywhere from \$22,000 to \$72,000 on average.

A sunroom addition is a significant investment and a decision not to take lightly, as it changes both

the interior floor plan and backyard space. To decide if a sunroom really is a worthwhile endeavor, it's important for homeowners to consider the footprint of their homes/yards, how they plan to use the space, and the amount of sun the home receives.

Home footprint

Professionals with the National Association of Realtors say that a sunroom should not consume more than 30 percent of the remaining backyard and urge homeowners to avoid over-developing a lot. If installing a sunroom will leave a homeowner with only a small patch of

yard afterwards, the result can feel heavy and unbalanced. It also won't match the neighborhood. Another consideration is the local zoning ordinances where a person lives. The City of Los Angeles, for example, warns that most towns require a setback between the sunroom structure and the property line. It's also important to look at the home's roof and whether or not the sunroom will fall right under the eaves or if it will require an expensive tie-in to the existing roof.

Utility

It is vital that homeowners determine how they will use the space and

when. This will dictate the type of sunroom that should be built. A three-season room is typically uninsulated with only single-pane glass. This is ideal if someone is looking for a screened-in retreat without all of the bugs and a little weather protection. Four-season rooms are fully insulated and tie into a home's HVAC system. This space will be functional all year long, but it is a more expensive undertaking as well.

Light evaluation

The purpose of a sunroom is to benefit from the sun. The value of the space will depend entirely

on which way the room faces. North-facing sunrooms have soft light with minimal heat or glare that likely can be used all day. Morning people can appreciate an east-facing sunroom while drinking coffee or reading, and the space will cool down in the afternoon. South-facing rooms will be bright most of the day and may need high-end HVAC hookups or shades to stay comfortable, even in cooler months. West-facing sunrooms are great for watching sunsets, but the hot afternoon sun must be considered.

UV-rated glass to prevent floor fading and even sunburn likely will be needed.

It is important to work with a company that specializes in sunrooms. Such firms are experienced in helping homeowners design and ultimately build these spaces to avoid common pitfalls, advises Champion, a window, sunroom and home exterior company.

In general, a sunroom is not a DIY project since it typically involves a major structural change. It can be a viable addition to a home when built correctly to remain durable through every season.

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