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Local remodel a mix of expectations, unpredictable discoveries

EDITOR'S NOTE: Over the next three to four months, the Sentinel will be following Paul and Cheryl Johnson as they remodel their Pleasure Point home.

The remodel of Paul and Cheryl Johnson's home in Pleasure Point is moving at a fast pace. Some things in the project worked out just as they planned, but some unexpected discoveries were found once the work started that will increase the budget for the remodel.

The Johnsons began renovating in December and plan to remodel the interior to create a more spacious feel. Their old and outdated kitchen needed to be completely gutted, while their son Fisher's bedroom needed insulation to be usable. Their second bath had not been used in years and was due for an overhaul. The entryway to the home is also due for an update.

The Johnsons decided to redefine the 1400 square feet of space within the existing footprint of the home using James Hartje Construction as the contractor.

So Far, So Good

The additional expense for an entryway project was approved by the Johnsons, Fisher's room now has a vaulted ceiling, the rough plumbing, electrical, gas, framing and sheet metal work has been completed and just passed permit inspection last week. There will be six inspections over the course of the job.

The mood of everyone involved with the project still is positive and the partnership between the Johnsons and James Hartje Construction is strong.

Cheryl has had to make endless decisions and with her kids coming down sick, she feels a bit less energetic than the rest, but that can happen to any mother who has two children under the age of 3½ and who is going through a complete remodel. Paul is focusing on the budget and the extra projects to ensure that they are not over-improving their home.

In reviewing the actual contract between Hartje and the Johnsons, it appears to be a fair contract that protected Hartje as well as the Johnsons in case something was to go south by either party.

The contract covers the job site, with sufficient breakdown on work, as well as an agreement about how any extra work will be handled.

It covers subcontractors, owner obligations, payment schedules, as well as termination of contract, notice of completion, cleanup and worker's compensation insurance and fire insurance. The document also lists what is excluded from the contract to help set and manage expectations. It is a seven-page extremely comprehensive document.

When Hartje prepares a proposal as well as a contract, he works with his subcontractors to get a bid based on the Johnson's requirements at that time. Hartje then assigns a cost allowance for various items.

The allowance is a budget number assigned for the item and when final decisions are being made, if the actual cost is lower than the allowance, the Johnsons get that money back. If the

cost is higher, then the Johnsons pay the additional cost. All invoices include a copy of the bill for the actual material purchased.

In creating the budget, Hartje adds 20 percent on the items for his overhead and profit.

"There is a lot of time that I put in working with subcontractors to ensure that everything runs smoothly," said Hartje explaining his markup policy.

"I review all specs, plans, drawings and proposals for each and every item that is being purchased. I also warranty my work so that if there is a problem, my team will come back and correct it," he said.

The Johnsons have no problem with the 20 percent markup.

"For the time, effort and value that Jim provides, the 20 percent markup is worth it," said Paul. "He provides quality work, and his attention to detail is incredible. Jim's dedication to the success of our home is amazing."

Cost Overruns and Extras

The Johnsons are projecting that the overall project is going to come in about 25 percent over the original contract. This is due to increasing the overall scope of work because of either unforeseen site conditions such as dry rot and substandard installations or additional projects the homeowners wanted to add.

So many good ideas have come up in terms of adding to the quality of the house that it made sense to complete additional work as well, said the Johnsons. Hartje works up change-order proposals for the Johnsons review to determine if it makes sense to include these "extras."

The existing plumbing at the Johnson house was sketchy at best and could use an upgrade.

Montano Plumbing is the plumbing subcontractor for the job. When Larry Montano, President of Montano Plumbing, Inc., first came to the house to prepare a quote, he was fortunate enough to be able to crawl under the residence to examine the existing pipes and quality of work.

Many times plumbers can only "guesstimate" what they might find since there is sometimes not enough room to go under the house and the only access is to open up the floor. Based on his observation, Montano was able to quote the job as well as present alternatives to correct some of the existing plumbing problems.

The Johnsons approved all the upgrade and improvement recommendations.

Besides the plumbing that the homeowners will actually see, such as the kitchen faucet and the new shower fixtures — most of the existing plumbing had to be re-worked. The existing hot and cold domestic water was piped in galvanized pipe and fittings mixed with copper.

Proper dielectric unions were not installed which was causing the copper to eat away at the galvanized material, and the size of the pipe was not adequate for proper flow rate for the added fixture load. Montano's crew added insulation to all the hot water piping located in non-heated areas.

The water service was replaced with PCV and the size of the pipe was upgraded to accommodate the water demands and a new shut-off valve and pressure-reducing valve were installed.

It appears that the plumbing waste and vent system were installed by a handyman or a former homeowner, not a licensed plumber as the installation was not up to code. All of that has now been changed and has passed inspection. Montano tested the existing gas piping and it was in good condition and passed the pressure test.

Cheryl has been busy making endless decisions about where phone jacks should be placed, the wood type for the cabinetry, the kitchen sink and appliances, and where towel bars will be hung, as well as ensuring that the proper backing is put in before drywall is installed. She and Jim talk daily to review each other's task list to keep the project moving forward. They are anticipating a completion date in May.

The focus of the next four weeks will be on the decisions needed to be made to the entry porch materials, tile for the bathroom, wainscoting, kitchen countertops as well as finalizing the plumbing fixtures.

Jennifer Barley is a design student at West Valley College in Saratoga and the showroom manager at Bay Plumbing Supply. She believes with the right use of style, you can make anything look good. Contact her at jenn_barley@yahoo.com.

Budget Breakdown

This budget does not include the 20 percent markup on products purchased by the contractor, workmans' comp, liability insurance, taxes and additional contractor profit.

CARPENTRY

Demolition and removal of existing interior: \$5,761

Rough framing and lumber: \$13,022

Finish carpentry: \$5,465

THERMAL AND MOISTUREPROTECTION

Water proofing — shower: \$500

Thermal insulation: vaulted ceiling and Fisher's bedroom: \$1,088

Roofing — composition shingles to tie into existing shingles: \$2,400

DOORS/WINDOWS/AND GLASS

Interior doors — includes prehung doors, hardware, trim: Allowance of \$1,250

Entry door — includes prehung door, hardware, trim: Allowance of \$800

Windows — total of 3: Allowance of \$665

Shower door — includes installation: Allowance of \$1,661

Skylights — 1 in kitchen, 2 in family room, 2 feet by 3 feet: Allowance of \$1,200

FINISHES

Dry-wall, match existing texture: \$4,500

Stucco improvements: Allowance of \$1,500

Painting: \$4,782

Kitchen wood floor improve-ments: Allowance of \$1,800

Bathroom tile installation: Allowance of \$4,660

CABINETS AND COUNTERS

Kitchen cabinets: Allowance of \$8,470

Hall linen cabinet: Allowance of \$816

Kitchen granite: Allowance of \$2,750

Kitchen granite slab fabrication: \$3,675

MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL

Plumbing rough-in and install of finish \$9,840

Plumbing fixtures for kitchen and bathroom Allowance of \$3,319

Heat/sheet metal \$2,750

Reduct five supply registers \$686

Electrical work, recessed lighting, stereo wiring, phone jacks and electrical plugs, closet lighting, fan installation \$8,860

Misc.

Dumpster rental and hauling of debris Allowance of \$823

Chemical toilet rental \$190

Total \$93,233

Project estimate: \$127,000

Change orders ????????

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