



Virginia Cooperative Extension Service

VIRGINIA TECH AND VIRGINIA STATE • VIRGINIA'S LAND GRANT UNIVERSITIES

Publication 356-143

Reprinted March 1987

KITCHENS: Preliminary Plans

Prepared by: Robert J. Thee, Ph.D., Extension Specialist, Housing, Virginia Tech

KITCHEN PLANNING: New and Remodeled

Today's kitchen is often part of a family-living area. The location and many other decisions depend upon family needs, life-style, and the physical limitations of the house.

A well-designed kitchen should be functional as well as aesthetically pleasing. From the beginning one must realize how materials and furnishings affect the overall appearance or character of the kitchen.

The character of the kitchen should relate to the rest of the house and the family life-style. The relationship of the other areas of the house and the kitchen should be harmonious for a consistent "total look." To establish a theme or style, analyze the needs and living habits as individuals and as a family. Hobbies or special interests may play a part in the establishment of character. For example, if the family emphasized natural materials in the rest of the house, and they enjoyed an informal, warm, contemporary feeling, the cabinets might be natural wood without molding or ornate hardware, wood planks at a 45° angle on walls and/or ceilings, warm colors, macrame hangers for plants, and baskets or pottery as accessories.

Kitchens will be completed with fewer problems and less delay if you follow the general order of work listed below. Many kitchen professionals are helpful in the early planning stages, including identification of family needs.

GENERAL ORDER OF WORK TO COMPLETE A KITCHEN

Be prepared for everything to take longer and cost more than expected.

Planning phase

- identify family needs,
- determine general location of the kitchen and actual kitchen space,
- develop the plan, including work and storage areas, plumbing, wiring, and lighting needs,
- secure needed building permits.

Construction phase

- lay foundation,
- construct or change exterior walls, roof, and floor framing; install or change windows and doors,
- install plumbing and wiring,
- install cabinets and appliances—cabinets may take up to six months to arrive after placing order; exact measurements for cabinets are taken after plaster board is installed, or measure from the stud wall and adjust for the thickness of the plaster board,
- install floor covering—some types may be installed before cabinets,
- install counter tops,
- install sinks,
- install wall covering—some types such as paneling may be installed before the cabinets.

Based on: "Kitchen Planning, New and Remodeled." Special Report 92, by Wanda Olson and Delores Ginthner, Agricultural Extension Service, University of Minnesota.

Virginia Cooperative Extension Service programs, activities, and employment opportunities are available to all people regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, handicap, or political affiliation. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and September 30, 1977, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Mitchell R. Geasler, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, and Vice Provost for Extension, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061; Clinton V. Turner, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State University, Petersburg, Virginia 23803.

LD
5655
A162
no. 356-143
VPI
Spec

IDENTIFICATION OF FAMILY NEEDS

Beginning with a good kitchen plan will save you time and money both initially and in the future. Planning a kitchen requires decisions balancing the scope of intended use, good design, and cost. List your needs in relation to use, appearance, and cost and then decide the importance of each. Only after considering your family needs can you analyze your situation and determine the help you will need.

Consider:

How many people use the space and share in food preparation?

What is the size of the household?

What are the heights of the people?

What are the ages of family members?

Who cleans the kitchen and how much time is spent in this task?

What activities must the kitchen space accommodate in addition to cooking?

Are there special storage needs?

How often do you entertain and how?

What are the family's eating habits?

What are the preferences in terms of color and design?

What fits within your budget?

How long do you expect to use the furnishings and materials?

Will the total plan be completed at one time?

Implications:

If several people work in the kitchen at the same time, you may need larger work areas.

Larger families may need more eating and storage space, depending on life-style.

If the primary cook is much shorter than average, some lower work surfaces should be incorporated.

With young children and older people there will be higher priority for surfaces that are easily cleaned, accessible, and safe.

If time is minimal, it will affect all choices. Hard wearing materials are important and usually expensive.

It may be necessary to include a study and home office area, television viewing, an intercom, a place for sewing, laundry, household business, pet feeding, and storage for related items.

Storage may be necessary for canning, freezing, and food drying equipment, as well as for coats, boots, brooms, etc.

Entertaining large groups means storage for serving pieces, additional counter space, and easy access to dining area.

A snack counter may function best for families that eat at different times.

Select an overall feeling that blends with your life-style and the rest of the house—formal or informal, traditional or contemporary, etc.

There is a range in cost with all choices: sometimes cost makes your decision.

Durability and cost over time affect the initial purchase price.

Set priorities. Some things are needed immediately, others may be added as finances permit.

GETTING PROFESSIONAL HELP

How big is the project you have in mind? Will you be developing a total kitchen plan which includes selecting cabinets and appliances? Will you also be improving or replacing wiring, plumbing and duct work, changing or reinforcing walls, and changing windows and doors?

Find, then hire, the professional service and experience you need. Select professional help if you lack the skills, experience, knowledge, and the time. It is essential to have a well-designed plan to meet your needs. Expensive cabinets and appliances won't improve a poor plan. To avoid unnecessary expenses, plan the entire kitchen before any actual work is done, even if you plan to do the work in stages. Kitchen professionals who will be working on your project should be a part of the early planning. Before selecting professionals to help you, check their business reputation with your mortgage office, local housing authority, or the Better Business Bureau. If you are remodeling, ask about their experience in remodeling kitchens.

Written agreements should indicate specifically:

- what will be done, how it is to be done, and the schedule of when things will be done,
- what equipment and materials will be used and how the materials will be finished,
- that all work is in compliance with any applicable codes,
- the method of payment.

In some cases, the agreement may stipulate what is not to be done or what is the owner's responsibility.

People vary greatly in experience and skills, but you can expect the following professionals to have capabilities in these areas:

- architects, interior designers: identification of family needs, relationship of the kitchen to the total house, preparation of complete kitchen plans and specifications,
- contractors: coordination of all phases of building or remodeling from start to finish, including hiring subcontractors and getting permits,

- certified kitchen designers (CKD): identification of family needs, preparation of complete kitchen plans and specifications, hiring subcontractors and getting permits; today, CKDs meet stringent requirements assessing their knowledge and ability to design kitchens and they must have established a reputation for high quality work and satisfied customers,
- kitchen planners: some identify family needs and relate the kitchen to the total house; some prepare complete plans and specifications; others prepare only limited plans.

KITCHEN REMODELING CONSIDERATIONS

Remodeling a kitchen is time-consuming, dirty, messy, and may mean going without water and electricity in the kitchen for several days. It also means:

- you do not need to move from the neighborhood,
- you avoid costs associated with selling, moving, building, or buying (may also avoid financing another house at a higher interest rate—BUT home improvement financing, unless part of a special program, generally carries a higher interest rate than that of a home mortgage),
- you may be able to do some of the work yourself; consider skills, experiences, time, and energy you have available for this project.

Remodeling which improves the kitchen may increase the resale value of the house. Usually remodeling is a good investment when the kitchen is in poorer condition than the rest of the house and the mechanical systems are not up to code. It may not be a good investment when all of the house is in poor condition, or if remodeling increases the value of the house far above the value of the existing houses in the neighborhood.

Most remodeling is done within the present kitchen area. Additional space may be added from a pantry, hallway, or an adjacent room. Removing an interior wall is not difficult if it is not a load-bearing wall, and if it does not contain plumbing, gas lines, wiring, or ductwork for heating. In conventional rafter

and joist construction, interior walls are normally located to serve as load bearing for ceiling joists as well as room dividers; walls located parallel to the direction of the joists are commonly non-load bearing.

Moving the kitchen to a totally different space, such as converting a dining room, depends somewhat on the location of the present or proposed kitchen to the rest of the house. Consider also the space needed, traffic patterns, and the willingness to rewire and replumb.

If your remodeling includes rearranging or adding cabinets and appliances, you will probably need to make changes in wiring, lighting, and plumbing. Moving the sink to a

more convenient location is a major consideration: sinks need to be located near the vent stack and drain pipe. Adding a dishwasher may require changes in both the plumbing and electrical systems.

Remodeling may be an opportune time to reduce the heat loss from your house and make it more energy efficient. Three main factors affecting the energy used for home heating are:

- size of the house,
- number and size of windows (location of windows is critical because a south window can add heat from the sun if the window is not shaded during the day, and if it is covered at night to prevent heat loss),
- insulation and air leakage.

