



Remodeling Costs in Northern Virginia

What are your neighbors spending?





8th Edition | Remodeling Costs in Northern Virginia: What Are Your Neighbors Spending?

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About This Guide

WHAT?

This is a guide for homeowners who plan to hire a professional remodeling company to take full responsibility and accountability for designing, planning, and executing all phases of a home remodeling project. This is not a guide for the do-it-yourselfer.

WHY?

When a homeowner is considering a remodeling project, one of their first questions is: what will this cost? This guide takes the mystery out of that question, helping homeowners plan, budget, and understand what drives project cost.

WHO CREATED IT?

This guide was created by Northwood Construction, Inc., a leader in design/build remodeling in Northern Virginia. The guide is reflective of our experience working for homeowners in our area whose house values are typically \$750K to several million dollars.



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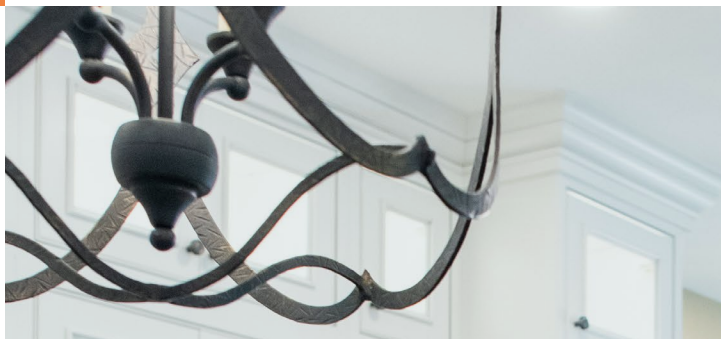
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Introduction

After working in the home remodeling business in the Northern Virginia area for 35+ years, we know that's one of the first questions on your mind when you're considering a home remodeling project. Since early 2021 the remodeling industry, like many industries experienced significant price inflation in materials, labor and business operating costs. Some of these costs have eased recently and some have continued to rise.

No two remodeling projects are the same—all have different variables that impact cost. Your project will budget out to be less or more than the figures in this guide. However, these figures are from real projects in our area using the materials, products and service that are expected by homeowners in Northern Virginia.



SECTION 1:

Kitchen Remodeling





Often considered the heart of a home, and one of our most popular renovation requests, the kitchen was the obvious place to start this guide.

Kitchens are also one of the best remodeling investments, as homebuyers tend to place high value on kitchens and bathrooms. So just how much should you budget for a kitchen renovation in the Northern Virginia area? This chapter will help you figure that out, as well as discussing less-obvious costs and other potential pitfalls.

BEFORE YOU START

As you start planning your new kitchen, here is something to keep in mind:

Identifying the cost of a kitchen remodeling project is sort of like asking how much a bag of groceries costs—it all depends on what you put in the bag. Decisions about appliances, finishes, and building materials can make project budgets differ drastically. For these reasons, no two kitchen projects are the same.

With that in mind, let's move forward.

Remodel vs. Update

Before you start budgeting for your kitchen remodeling project, it's helpful to define a few terms. Are you looking for a kitchen update or a total kitchen remodel? There are significant differences between the two projects, and the price will reflect that difference.

KITCHEN UPDATE

A kitchen update is comparable to a facelift. The updated kitchen may include brand new products but there are no changes to locations of appliances or configurations of walls or counter space. We typically consider an "update" as confined to the kitchen with no impact on adjacent spaces.

Kitchen Updates Commonly Include:

1. Painting, refacing, or replacing cabinets
2. Changing appliances
3. Replacing flooring
4. Replacing lighting
5. New countertops

Are you looking for a kitchen update or a total kitchen remodel?



KITCHEN REMODEL

A kitchen remodel is different from a kitchen update in that it goes deeper than a facelift, and the variations are almost limitless. A kitchen remodel will involve redesigning the original space. It might involve:

- Reconfiguration of layout
- Rerouting electrical wiring, plumbing, and gas lines
- Removal of walls and/or soffits
- Structural changes to accommodate a larger kitchen
- Maybe bumping into the garage to accommodate a large refrigerator
- Adding or relocating windows or doors or doorways
- Blending the surrounding spaces to the newly remodeled kitchen
- Stone or quartz countertops
- Cabinets with lots of accessories and moldings
- Upscale appliances or additional appliances (like a steam oven or wine refrigerator)
- Layered lighting
- Wood or tile floors
- Tile or stone backsplashes
- Large custom islands
- Upgrading, expanding or adding a pantry
- A dedicated specialty place—like a coffee, wine or charging station



A kitchen remodel is different from a kitchen update in that it goes deeper than a facelift, and the variations are almost limitless.

Pricing out a kitchen update is easier because there are fewer variables. For the opposite reason, it can be more difficult to come up with a price of a total kitchen remodel. But we use the following pricing guidelines to help get you in the ballpark.



Mid-Level Kitchen Remodeling Costs

In *Remodeling's* 2022 Cost vs. Value Report, a mid-level major kitchen remodeling project in the Washington DC/Northern Virginia area averages \$81,053. This number is a good starting point.

However, the product and scope assumptions in the Cost vs. Value Report do not include the upgraded products and popular modifications that people in our area have come to expect as standard. These upgrades include things like granite, soapstone, or quartz countertops (as opposed to laminate as *Remodeling's* Cost vs. Value Report assumes); tile backsplashes; layered lighting; removal of soffits; door/window modifications; stainless steel appliances; upscale faucets; and wood or tile flooring (as opposed to vinyl flooring that is assumed in *Remodeling's* Cost vs. Value Report).

In our region, the real cost for a mid-level kitchen remodel, where people are selecting a mixture of upgraded products with minimal layout modifications, is slightly higher. Generally, the starting point is roughly \$110,000–\$120,000, moving into the \$130,000–\$140,000 range or more when folks include soffit removal, add in a fair number of upgraded options, and request structural modifications. If your project does not require structural changes, tile backsplashes, stainless steel appliances, and you are okay with laminate countertops and vinyl floor, then you should be in the mid/upper \$80's (~\$86,000).

In our region, the real cost for a mid-level kitchen remodel, where people are selecting a mixture of upgraded products with minimal layout modifications, is slightly higher.

BEWARE OF SCOPE CREEP

Many projects also experience what we call scope creep. Scope creep frequently occurs when the owner realizes that the spaces adjacent to the new kitchen also need updating to match the new look. Improving these additional spaces to blend with the new kitchen adds to the overall project cost. One request we have had many times this past year is upgrading the appearance of an adjacent family room fireplace. On the low side this has been about \$4,500 and can exceed \$15,000. Almost everyone has a little scope creep—usually it is additional painting or flooring.

So to summarize, we see your neighbors investing in the \$115,000 range for a nice kitchen without changes to the structure. However, we see a lot of people investing \$130,000–\$140,000 for a nice kitchen remodel with some changes to structure like removing soffits or taking down a non-bearing wall and some scope creep into the adjacent spaces. Keep in mind that if your kitchen is large you'll likely invest more.



Upscale Kitchen Remodeling Costs

In the same report, *Remodeling* lists an upscale major kitchen remodel in our region as \$157,660. This is consistent with our experience for an upscale major kitchen remodel that includes some minor structural changes.

However, when upscale kitchen remodeling projects include making significant structural changes to the kitchen space, relocating appliances and/or plumbing, and scope creep into adjacent living spaces the project budget can break \$160K pretty quickly. When owners combine these types of changes with the selection of commercial-grade appliances, stone floors, top-of-the-line cabinets with more elaborate trim, and layered lighting, it is not uncommon to have a project move above \$200,000. Bottom line: without affecting other areas of the house and no big structural changes \$160,000–\$180,000 is a pretty accurate starting point for an upscale kitchen remodeling project.

When owners start selecting commercial-grade appliances, stone floors, top-of-the-line cabinets with more elaborate trim, and layered lighting, it is not uncommon to have a project move into the \$200,000 range.

Choices that Drive Up Kitchen Remodeling Costs

If you are trying to keep costs down, you may want to know which remodeling choices are the most expensive.

With 35+ years in the remodeling business, experience has shown us that the following items tend to drive up cost the most:

- Removing soffits
- Removing walls and creating openings
- Relocation of exterior windows or doors
- Blending the surrounding living spaces to match the newly remodeled kitchen (scope creep)
- Significant electric and HVAC modifications
- Relocation of plumbing
- Selection of high-end or luxury appliances, finishes, and other luxury items

Now let's take a deeper look at a few of these items and why they can drive up prices.



REMOVING SOFFITS

Let's start with removing soffits. A soffit is a drywall box located between the top of kitchen wall cabinets and the ceiling above; they are not present in all kitchens. A very popular look in today's kitchen is to have tall cabinets with nice crown molding. Accomplishing this look usually requires removing the soffits. In some kitchens, the soffits are decorative. In others, the soffits are there to conceal plumbing from a bathroom above or, perhaps, ductwork.

So the simple act of removing the soffit can easily turn into a major replumbing of bathroom drains above, or relocating ductwork. And because plumbing, electrical, and ductwork move through multiple spaces, moving any of these elements often means a disruption or alteration to other areas of the house. Now what appeared to be a straightforward task has turned into a larger project that touches multiple areas of the house. It is not unusual for this type of modification to add several to many thousands of dollars to the project cost.

REMOVING WALLS AND CREATING NEW OPENINGS

How about removing walls or creating new openings? This is almost always a consideration in an upscale kitchen remodel, as many kitchens can benefit from more space and improved traffic flow. However, unlike home improvement TV shows where a sledgehammer is slammed into a wall and everyone stands in amazement as plumbing or ductwork is revealed, responsible kitchen remodeling professionals should never make the mistake of removing a wall without first determining what is inside the wall. So how does the thought of having strangers swinging sledge hammers in your house sound? Don't worry, that drama is on TV. In the real world, responsible remodelers disassemble your kitchen.

Walls, like soffits, many times hide ducts, electric wiring, plumbing or even structural posts. So, as with soffits, removing a wall can add hundreds to thousands of dollars to a project. Removing walls can also create the need for structural solutions, as many walls are load bearing, meaning that they

The simple act of removing the soffit can easily turn into a major replumbing of bathroom drains above, or relocating ductwork.



provide critical support to the integrity of the structure. Removing the load-bearing wall will require drawings, support solutions, building permits, and structural inspections by the local building inspector. Again, all of this adds to the cost and duration of the project. Also, finish flooring does not extend under walls. So when a wall is removed or a doorway widened the finish flooring will have to be addressed. You guessed it—increased cost.

ADDING, RELOCATING, OR REMOVING EXTERIOR WINDOWS OR DOORS

Another potential modification that can have a significant impact on the cost of your kitchen remodeling project is adding, removing, or relocating a window or exterior door. For exterior work, drawings, structural solutions, building permits, and inspections will be needed.

The work typically involves:

- Framing by the carpenter
- Additional drywall work
- Relocation of electric, plumbing, or ducts
- Repairs to the exterior skin of the house (siding, brick, etc.)
- Interior and exterior trim work
- Painting
- Purchase and installation of the door or window
- In the case of a door—addressing the flooring



Beam in ceiling replaces 18' of load-bearing wall.

We see the same pattern: relocating or adding windows or doors to your kitchen project will impact the cost and duration of the project.

SELECTION OF HIGH-END APPLIANCES, FINISHES, AND OTHER LUXURY ITEMS

The selection of certain upgrade or luxury products can also significantly drive up the cost of your project. There are so many variations here that this topic deserves its own section.

High-End Appliances, Finishes, and Other Luxury Choices

Beyond the expensive structural changes discussed in the previous section, choosing high-grade cabinets, stone countertops, high-end appliances, and other luxury choices will really make your kitchen an attention grabber, but can significantly increase the total cost of your kitchen remodeling project.

Here are some choices to keep in mind:

- Cabinet configuration
- Cabinet construction
- Drawer construction
- Granite, quartz, soapstone, or concrete countertops
- Tile or stone backsplashes
- Wood or tile floors
- Appliances



CABINET CONFIGURATION

Having a cabinet configuration that is unique and complicated often increases the time needed to complete the installation. Multi-piece crown molding, light rails, end panels, and large islands create a great look but increase the kitchen remodel cost, not only due to the additional materials but also because of the increased time to correctly install these items. Simpler designs help to contain cost.

CABINET CONSTRUCTION

Cabinet material construction can be a fairly big driver of a kitchen remodel price. For example, low-cost cabinets use thin particle board sides, medium-cost cabinets use furniture board sides, and with above-medium cost, you will find 3/8" to 1/2" plywood sides and, at the top, 3/4" plywood sides.

The cabinet back will also drive cabinet cost. Thin backs, with maybe a 1/2" thick wood rail at the back top of the cabinet, will be more cost-effective than a cabinet that has a 1/2" thick plywood back with top wood rail.

Cabinet doors made from solid wood, such as cherry, maple, birch, or oak, will be more expensive than doors that are a wood veneer on top of some other wood core or on top of a medium density fiber (MDF) door. MDF doors are used extensively these days for cabinets that are painted. Using MDF Painted doors can sometimes save a couple thousand dollars over painted maple doors.

***NOTE:** There are advantages and disadvantages to each of these door construction techniques that we will hold off discussing here.*



Inset cabinet doors are used in many luxury kitchens. They look terrific but are very time-consuming to install when walls are out of plumb and out of square, which is the case in most houses. So while these cabinets look great, they can be time consuming and expensive to install correctly.

DRAWER CONSTRUCTION

Drawer construction can also have a big effect on cabinet cost. Inexpensive drawers are butt-nailed or stapled together. Drawers that are constructed using a dovetail technique are stronger and a little more expensive. Some manufacturers even have metal drawers, which can be inexpensive or pricey, depending on the quality and brand.

Drawer hardware can make a huge difference on how long the drawers will function well. Inexpensive cabinets will have hardware that makes the drawers feel loose, sometimes allowing the drawer to come off the track. The standard for good to excellent quality cabinets has recently become full-extension, soft-close drawer hardware. This hardware allows the drawer to completely extend out of the cabinet, and when aggressively closed the hardware slows the drawer and pulls it back into the cabinet carefully without allowing the drawer to slam into the cabinet box.

***NOTE:** We have seen this type of hardware in the Ready-To-Assemble cabinet market; however, the hardware appears to be a low priced/low quality copy of the good hardware that comes out of Europe.*

GRANITE, QUARTZ, SOAPSTONE, CONCRETE, & BUTCHER BLOCK COUNTERTOPS

Granite and quartz (the term “quartz” is the industry term for engineered stone made in a factory) are pretty much the standard countertop materials in our area. However, they can cost four to eight times more than laminate counters. Quartz countertops (trade names: Silestone, Cambria, Caesarstone and others) are ground-up bits of quartz mixed with pigments and resins to make stone-like countertop slabs. Granite has different price levels, so you can control some of your cost by controlling your choice of stone.

Recycled glass, ground into small pieces and blended into engineered quartz countertops, is an interesting, nice look as well. These tops tend to be more expensive than standard engineered quartz tops, and they perform pretty much the same as engineered quartz.

Soapstone was used in kitchens as early as 1900, and it has become popular again. Soapstone has a great warm look and soft feel. There are fewer color options in soapstone—typically blue/gray or greenish/gray with light color veins. Soapstone is usually more expensive than granite. Fabrication options, such as simple vs. elaborate countertop edges or serpentine designs, can also significantly affect the price of stone countertops.



Polished concrete countertops have been popular for a while. However, the installation is specialized—code word for expensive—so they tend to cost more than medium/ high granite. BTW, if you like the look of concrete countertops, it is now available from several Quartz countertop manufacturers.

Butcher Block countertops can come in a variety of woods, edge profiles and thicknesses. They do require frequent maintenance to protect the surface of the wood. Butcher block countertops provide a warm aesthetic and pop of color in kitchens. Depending on the wood species, these countertops can vary in cost. They can be comparable in price to a high level granite or quartz.

TILE OR STONE BACKSPLASHES

Custom tile backsplashes have become very popular, as they add color and texture and can really make your kitchen pop. The material cost can be significantly more than basic wall tile, but the big cost driver here is labor. Tile backsplashes take time to lay out and install correctly, and most have some sort of design or accent element that increases installation time.

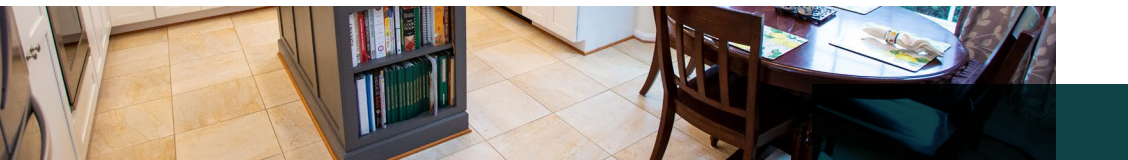
Another option that has a nice look is a full-height granite/quartz backsplash that matches your countertop granite. While this saves on labor costs compared to tile, granite is generally far more expensive as a material than tile. Both tile and granite backsplashes cost significantly more than the everyday 4" laminate backsplash.



TIP: A possible cost saver is to install a tile backsplash above/behind the cooking appliance only—not the entire countertop.

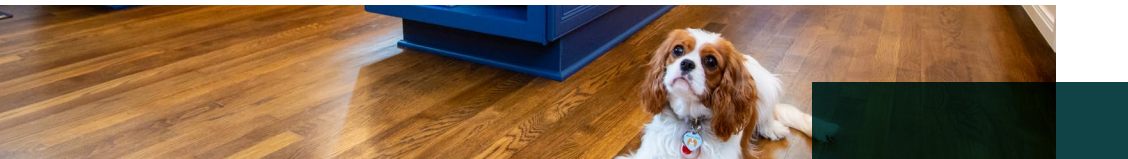
WOOD OR TILE FLOORS

These products have almost become the standard for our customers. Wood can be three to five times the cost of vinyl. Tile can be five to seven times the cost of vinyl. There are pros and cons of each which we will discuss briefly here. Tile—whether natural stone, ceramic, or porcelain—is one of the most popular choices and wins the durability contest.



Tile Floors:

+ Pros	– Cons
Very durable. If you have pets or young children going in and out of the kitchen this flooring will withstand the traffic.	Expensive. \$25–\$33 per square foot installed for decent tile including underlayment. (Stone runs even higher as do the recently popular very large format tiles).
Easy to clean (once you seal the grout). Typically, a damp mop is all that is needed.	Not forgiving. If you drop a glass on the floor, the glass usually breaks.
Lots of variety from which to choose. (Wood-look porcelain tile planks have been very popular.)	Hard. There is no flex in the floor or floor covering so it can be uncomfortable for those who experience knee or back pain.
Appearance is quite attractive.	Difficult to remove.
	Proper installation of underlayment is key to tiles not cracking.
	The move toward large tiles (from a design standpoint) can increase installation time on wavy or unlevel existing subfloors.



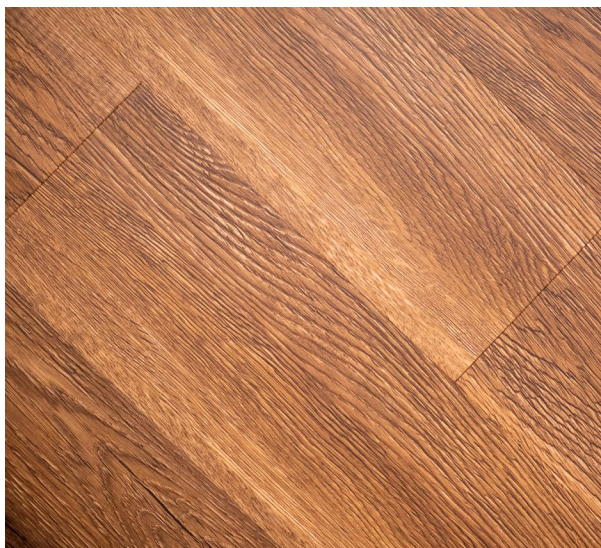
Wood Floors:

+ Pros	- Cons
Natural wood flooring is a popular alternative to tile. Natural wood flooring means raw wood that is installed, sanded, and then stained and finished in place.	Installation and finishing process takes 4–5 days. Some finishes can take 30 days before reaching maximum durability, which limits the use for the first 30 days.
Attractive. Allows one style and color of flooring to be carried seamlessly throughout one level of the house.	Not as hard as tile or stone, but it may bother some people to stand on it for lengthy periods of time.
Durable. With the right finish it can be very durable even with kids and medium-size pets (large dogs will still scratch the most durable finish).	Large water spills or leaking dishwashers or ice makers will likely warp the flooring. The warp will dissipate some over time, but refinishing is really the only option to restore the floor to new condition.
Moderately priced (\$13–\$15 per square foot).	
Somewhat forgiving if a glass or dish is dropped.	
Can be sanded and refinished, which will restore the floor to new appearance.	
Natural wood also applies to prefinished solid wood flooring that is finished at the factory and installed as a finished product. The major advantage of prefinished flooring is that the floor can be walked on immediately after installation.	

LUXURY VINYL PLANK (LVP)

A flooring material that has been around for several years and is really popular is “Luxury Vinyl Plank.” These are vinyl planks that look like real wood, tile or stone—really! They “click” together and are easy to install. The better flooring has a cork or thin foam backing which adds a little cushioning. They are advertised as “waterproof” by most of the manufacturers.

***NOTE:** The flooring material may be waterproof, but the flooring does not create a waterproof barrier over your home’s plywood subfloor. If you have a significant water event, moisture will likely seep through the seams or around the perimeter of this flooring resulting in a wet subfloor. However, you can remove this flooring easily to allow a wet subfloor to dry and then reinstall the planks—if you remember where each was installed.*



LAMINATE FLOORS

Laminate floors were popular for a number of years. However, we have not had anyone interested in these for a couple years. Luxury Vinyl Plank have replaced them.

APPLIANCES

When it comes to appliances, there is a huge range of price and quality. Bottom line: product decisions can make or break the kitchen budget pretty easily. The easy example here is that one can purchase a low-end kitchen appliance package for \$4,000–\$5,000 or a high-end package for more than \$75,000. And at almost any price in between. Frequently, folks select kitchen appliance packages in the \$12,000–\$18,000 range for mid to upper-end kitchen remodels. We see a lot of higher end appliance packages in the \$25,000–\$35,000 range. Much of the cost depends, of course, on how many appliances you have in your kitchen.

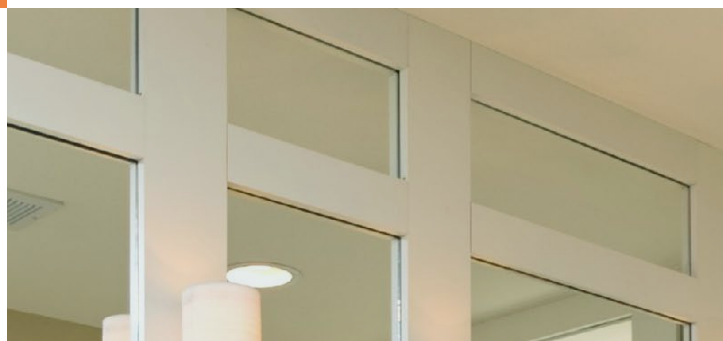
We have seen a number of people confused by the terms “Counter Depth” and “Built-in” refrigerators. Both refrigerator styles are shallower than standard depth refrigerators. “Built-in” refrigerators are designed to install virtually flush with kitchen cabinetry and not show any gap between the refrigerator and the surrounding cabinetry. “Counter depth,” in our opinion, should be called “Almost Counter Depth.” These refrigerators frequently extend beyond your cabinetry and countertops and do not provide the true “Built-in” look that you may be expecting. Our advice: research this and know what you are buying AND ask your kitchen designer/installer for suggestions on how to make counter depth look more built-in.

NOTE: Some appliances require special installation or additional accessories to comply with manufacturer instructions and code requirements. This can raise the cost. An example is a ventilation hood that has an exhaust capacity in excess of 400 cubic feet per minute. This type of hood needs an additional accessory—a make-up air system to replace air being exhausted. Typically, this system adds another \$950 or more to the ventilation cost.

Another example is the Steam function being added to many wall ovens these days. They require a plumber to add a waterline to your oven.



TIP: By selecting all your appliances from the same manufacturer, you may qualify to receive one of the appliances for free (usually the dishwasher or ventilation, sometimes both).



SECTION 2:

Bathroom Remodeling





Bathrooms are another frequent remodeling request and one of the most important areas for potential homebuyers. What's the real cost of remodeling a bathroom?

Similar to kitchens, the answer is: it depends. There are many variables, including size, extent and difficulty of demolition, the number and type of fixtures, complexity of tile, extent of drywall disturbance, ease of access, etc. This chapter will discuss costs and considerations of remodeling both general house bathrooms and the master bathroom.



General Bathrooms

The [Remodeling 2022 Cost vs. Value Report](#) lists the cost of a mid-range 5' x 7' bathroom in the DC Metro area/Northern Virginia to be \$28,432.

A review of the case study specifications in their example shows that their sample bathroom includes the most basic and economical materials (like 4" x 4" white tiles and cultured marble sink tops). However, most people who contact us are looking to upgrade this type of bathroom to something more middle to upper grade so we will speak to this level of fit and finish.

To build a budget for a bathroom remodeling project in our region, you must take into account the following considerations:

COMPLETE DEMOLITION

When it comes to bathroom renovations, removing all the drywall, in addition to the fixtures and tile, will often result in a better-finished product. If mold or mildew is present on the drywall, then it is definitely worth removing all of the drywall. This extra demolition and subsequent re-drywalling of the bathroom increases project cost and duration. However, this allows for a much better-finished product, especially since wood blocking can be installed where the towel bars will be situated, preventing the kids from pulling them off the walls. For more information on demolition, see the master bathroom section below.

HIGHER QUALITY TUB/SHOWER

Standard steel bathtubs are available today and are still used by many. But many owners want to upgrade to the next level of tub or shower. The next level is a steel tub with a porcelain finish and a proprietary 1/4" polymer on the back side of the tub that provides better insulation and a quieter, sturdier tub. This upgrade offers a significantly better product than the standard steel tub but at a little more than twice the cost.

When it comes to bathroom renovations, removing all the drywall, in addition to the fixtures and tile, will often result in a better-finished product.

UPPER-MEDIUM GRADE PLUMBING FIXTURES

Plumbing fixtures today come in many different finishes and styles. Most of the owners we talk to want one of the new finishes, such as brushed nickel, oil-rubbed bronze, polished nickel, stainless steel, or brushed chrome. One of these finishes, combined with the desire to upgrade the style and quality of faucets, can add several hundred dollars or more to your bathroom budget. Other than finishes, there are many upgrades to plumbing fixtures. For example, since the pandemic, washlet (bidet) seats are a frequent request. These can vary in price due to their options such as heated seats, separate settings, remote control, nightlights, and more.

UPGRADED/IMPROVED VENTILATION

Replacing an old, noisy, or inefficient bathroom fan is a given in most bathrooms. And adding an exhaust fan to bathrooms without one is always a must-have. The new fans are powerful and quiet. Unfortunately, they are also several times more expensive than the old ones we remove. A code requirement typically comes into play with changing a bathroom fan. Many homes in our area have the bath fans vented into the attic. The code no longer allows this. Bathrooms, if vented with an exhaust fan, must vent directly to the exterior. This means a little roofing or siding work for your bathroom remodel, which means more cost.



TIP: Panasonic makes a nice exhaust fan that includes an integrated recessed LED light. With this product, you only see the recessed light. There is no visible fan or plastic ceiling grill.

UPGRADED OR CURRENT DESIGN TILE

Gone are the days of 4" x 4" off-white tiles—even in the kids' hall bathrooms. Most remodeled hall bathrooms now feature larger tiles, corner soap dishes, maybe even a recessed shampoo box/niche, or a shower locker. Many have some accent tile or pattern. These seem to be standard

desires in our area, which help drive the price above the mid-range bathroom remodel. However, simple subway tiles are being selected for these bathrooms and are very cost effective. Subway tiles are usually 3"x 6" tiles; however, a nice upgrade is a simple 6"x 12" or 4"x 12" in a brick pattern. This won't break the bank and will be different from many other bathrooms.

***NOTE:** Large tiles must be installed on very flat walls and floors, or some tiles will protrude above the adjacent tile (called "lipping"). So a great deal of preparation (time, which means labor, which means more cost) must be performed on the existing wall and floor framing to create a flat surface on which to correctly install the large tile. Of course, if you don't care about the neatness of the tile installation these measures are not necessary.*

Shower drains which can be surrounded by tile can be installed in various locations—depending on the existing floor system direction. For example, linear drains are desirable for a more modern/contemporary design. While these drains provide a clean, aesthetic design, they are an upgrade to your standard circular or square drain.

UPGRADED CABINETRY, INCLUDING CABINETS WITH DRAWERS

Lack of storage: we hear this problem a lot when speaking with people about their bathrooms. Sometimes nothing practical can be done. Many times, however, we upgrade the cabinetry to include not only new aesthetics but also drawers to ease the storage stress.



***TIP:** Consider installing a bathroom sink cabinet that has a functional bottom drawer and no fake top drawer at the sink. This will provide some pullout storage and still leave storage space under the sink for bathroom essentials.*



UPGRADED COUNTERTOPS

Cultured marble is the older standard countertop (with integrated sink), and we rarely see it anymore. Most people prefer granite or engineered stone (Cambria, Silestone, etc.) with an under-mount sink. Many granite shops sell remnant pieces which are moderately priced for such purpose.

NEW AND IMPROVED LIGHTING

For most people in our area, having current-style lighting coordinated to the finish of the bathroom hardware and faucets is a must. The more complicated and labor-intensive the design, however, the more expensive it will be. LED disc lights (many are wet-location approved) are a great option for lighting above a shower or tub or just to replace an outdated ceiling fixture. Plus, they are inexpensive.

ADDING A DEDICATED ELECTRIC CIRCUIT

In many homes in our area built in the 70's, 80's, or 90's, the bathroom GFI outlet is tied into all the other GFI outlets inside and outside the house. This makes it impossible to run two hairdryers without tripping the GFI. Putting the remodeled bathroom outlet on a dedicated GFI circuit eliminates the hassle of resetting the circuit due to someone using a hair dryer in another bathroom. However, this electrical work will add more than you would think to the project's total cost (for example, additional drywall and painting so that a circuit can be brought from the electric panel to the bathroom).

UPGRADED MIRRORS AND MEDICINE CABINETS

Stylish, framed mirrors are the desired choice when replacing flat, unframed mirrors. Medicine cabinets with mirrored door backs and interiors are common replacements for old rusty cabinets. Again, the higher the quality and brand, the higher the expense. A common selection here is a mirror framed with wood that matches the finish of the vanity cabinet. These look good and are cost effective if out-of-the-box sizes are used.



The higher the quality and brand, the higher the expense.

HIGH-QUALITY PAINT

Luckily, paint is not a huge cost driver, but high-quality paint can be two to four times the cost of standard-grade paint. High-quality paint offers advantages, however. Being more durable and less porous means that it will clean easier, and mold/mildew will find it more difficult to grow on the paint film.

IMPROVED BATHROOM ACCESSORIES

Bath accessories, such as towel bars, coordinated with faucets and light fixtures always complete the look of a bathroom. It's possible to still find \$10 towel bars, but if you want to have a finish and style that matches your faucets and light fixtures, expect to pay four to ten times more than the cost of the very basic towel bar. Some of these offer very nice features, such as a double towel bar or even electric heaters to warm your towel.



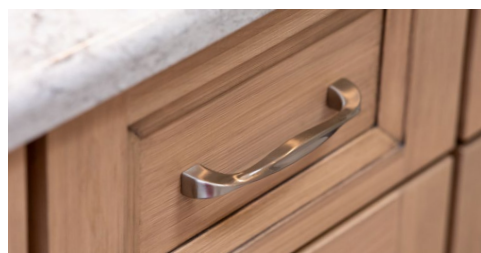


General Bathroom Remodeling Costs

Depending on your choice of upper or high-end finishes, tiles, and fixtures, the smaller 5' x 7' bathrooms in our area typically fall into the low \$40K range.

Many of our clients who have slightly larger bathrooms invest \$45,000–\$55,000. Keep in mind, this higher-level upgrade is not intended for someone who expects to sell their home in the near term, as the return on investment may not be worth it.

We typically suggest that this level of upgrade only be performed if you plan to remain in the house for at least five years (or more).



Master Bathrooms

Like general bathrooms, the cost of remodeling the master bathroom is dependent on a number of important variables.

The following drivers can have a significant impact on master bathroom remodeling costs, and should be considered carefully as you make decisions about your project.

SIZE

Master bathrooms can range as small as a 5' x 7' bathroom to as large as a 25' x 25' room. So size is a very big cost driver.



DIFFICULTY OF DEMOLITION

Some older bathrooms have so-called mud-set floors, shower floors, and walls. These are very time-consuming to demolish. In addition to being difficult to demolish, they are heavy and require much more labor time to carefully haul the pieces out of your house. Labor costs will go up if you have this type of existing construction. Removal of old wallpaper can be a big labor cost.

→ **TIP:** We find it to be more cost effective to remove all drywall in a bathroom that has been wallpapered rather than take the time to strip the wallpaper and repair the walls.

RECONFIGURATION

Significantly reconfiguring the bathroom drives up cost, as relocating plumbing can be quite costly. Projects like these often involve extra demolition, relocating of drains, relocating hot—and cold—water pipes, effects of relocation on adjacent spaces, re-venting the sewer pipes, and impact on finishes (paint/drywall) in other rooms.

NUMBER OF FIXTURES

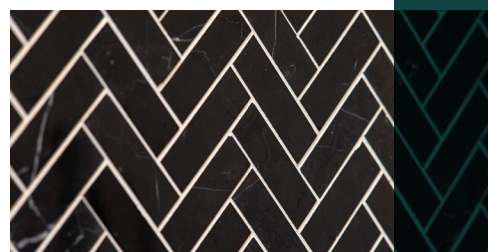
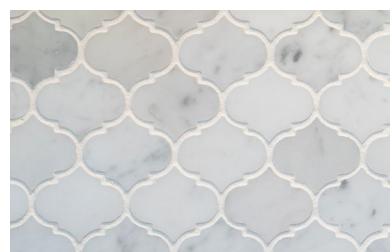
A bathroom with a single sink, toilet, and shower has three fixtures. A bathroom with dual sinks, a bathtub, a shower, and a toilet has five fixtures to replace. The cost of the project increases as you purchase more products and the labor needed to install them.

FIT, FINISH, AND FUNCTION OF PLUMBING FIXTURES

There is an astonishing range of prices for plumbing fixtures. Faucets can be under \$100 to well over \$1000 each. The configuration of the fixtures can be simple or complicated, meaning that they are time-consuming to install. For example, a single, high-end shower with shower valve, diverter, hand-held spray, several body sprays, and a shower drain can take up to a day to perform just the plumbing work. Some fixture finishes can be twice the cost of a classic chrome finish on the same faucet.

TILE CHOICES

Tile can make or break a master bath budget. Tile can be super simple or extremely complex. The good news here is that you, as the owner, have a good deal of control over tile cost. By choosing a straight pattern with a medium-sized, middle-of-the-road priced tile, a nice look can be achieved with an affordable budget. However, adding accent strips, cut corners, glass tiles, stone tiles, alternating patterns, or complex waterjet cut mosaics significantly increases the installation time and material cost, driving up the overall project cost and project duration. Larger tiles, which are very popular, can actually be more difficult to install correctly than smaller. Wall and floor framing often need a lot of modification or adjustment to create surfaces that are flat enough to correctly install large tiles. Large tiles must be installed on very flat surfaces (all on the same plane in geometry terms) so that one tile does not protrude over adjacent tiles. Sometimes a carpenter can spend several hours to a day or two correcting existing framing that will provide a nice flat surface for large tiles. There are new tile installation accessories that help the tile setter with uneven floors—but the labor time still increases if the owner wants the tile installed correctly.



STRUCTURAL DESIGN CHANGES

Design that includes relocating walls, encroaching into adjacent spaces, organizing the master closet, or adding/relocating windows in the master bathroom is almost always a significant cost driver. Once the design forces some construction activity to occur outside the confines of the master bathroom, the owner has now introduced scope creep—adding new work areas onto the original project—which can be quite costly. Now other rooms will need drywall work, painting, reworked trim, reworked or replaced flooring, relocated electric, relocated ductwork, and perhaps other trade work.



Master Bathroom Remodeling Costs

In Northern Virginia, we typically see the following master bathroom items considered as necessary or standard by people we serve (*Remodeling's Cost vs. Value Report* would call these specifications "Upscale"):

- Frameless glass shower enclosures
- Stone or engineered stone countertops
- Upgraded tile
- Nice cabinetry
- Increased storage
- Increased space
- Improved lighting
- Upgraded plumbing fixtures
- Improved ventilation
- Heated tile floors (luxury upgrade)





With all this in mind, here is what we see as a rough range of project costs:

Complete remodel of a 5' x 8' master bathroom:

Standard: \$45,000–\$55,000

Upscale: \$55,000–\$65,000

Complete remodel of a 5' x 8' master bathroom that requires taking down a wall to create a bigger bathroom around 10' or 12' x 8':

Standard: \$75,000–\$85,000

Upscale: \$90,000–\$105,000

Include Reworking of Master Closet: add \$5,000–\$10,000.

***NOTE:** Remodeling's 2022 Cost vs. Value Report is based on expanding a 35 square foot bathroom to 100 square feet (10'x10') using these products/features. Their reported job cost for 2022 is \$84,667. This appears to be very consistent with the ranges that we see for this size bathroom.*

Complete remodel of a large master bathroom (12' x 12' or larger):

Standard: \$95,000–\$115,000

Upscale: \$125,000+

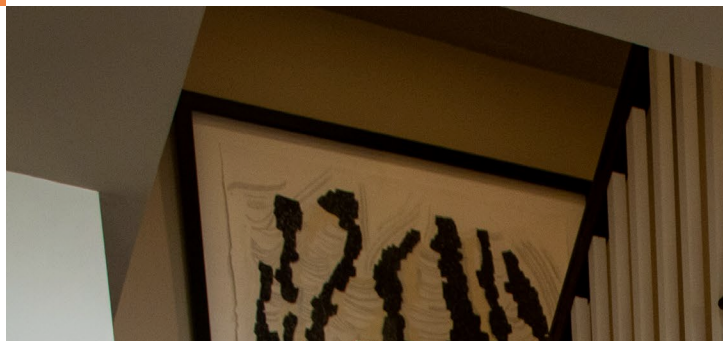
In recent years we have seen a lot of nice master bathrooms larger than 175 square feet in the \$140,000–\$160,000 range.

***NOTE:** Remember that the word “standard” above is defined by what many of our clients, in Northern Virginia, consider to be necessary or normal. There are certainly other products that are more cost effective. Also, the price ranges mentioned above are completely designed, permitted, managed, full-service projects where the owner does not do any of the physical work. So, the implied here is that a homeowner can reduce their cost by perhaps doing some of the work themselves—maybe demolition or painting.*

In summary, there are three things that you, as the homeowner, can control to maintain your bathroom project budget:

- 1) **Your level of involvement**—can you do some of the work?
- 2) **The scope of the project**—do you have to do everything on your wish list?
- 3) **The products selected**—do you really need the bathtub with the built-in TV and surround sound speakers, or will a nice soaker do the job?





SECTION 3:

Basements & Additions





Rather than buying a new house, many people decide to expand the living space of their homes by finishing their basement or building on an addition.

Here there are several different kinds of renovations that are possible, and each one requires different costs and considerations:

- Basement Remodeling
- Room Additions
- Second-Story Additions, Above the Garage
- Second-Story Additions, Not Above the Garage

This chapter will tackle each type.

Basement Remodeling

The *Remodeling 2022 Cost vs. Value Report* did not include basement remodeling/finishing. According to the 2017 Report (the last year they included basement finishing), the cost to finish a basement in the Northern Virginia area is \$74,216 for a mid-range fit and finish.

Their assumptions, in the 2017 report, are a 20' x 30' entertainment room with laminate floor, recessed lights, painted walls and ceiling, a walk-up bar area, and a 5' x 8' full (basic finish) bathroom.

Our experience has shown that the price for their set of specifications in 2017 was pretty accurate. For 2022, we believe it's prudent when budgeting to think roughly \$105,000–\$115,000. However, many people in our area have different specifications and prefer higher-grade finishes, which of course raises the price. Here are a few additional considerations which may help you better judge the cost to finish a basement at your home:

BASEMENT EGRESS

By code, many newly finished basements must have a means of direct exit to the outside in case of fire—so that occupants can easily escape and rescuers can enter—this is called Emergency Escape and Rescue Opening (certain local jurisdictions do not require an EERO if the home was built before October 1, 2003 and there is no bedroom in the basement). There are minimum specifications set forth in the code. If your current basement does not allow direct exit to the exterior, then you will have to create some sort of



new exit that complies with the code. This can be as simple as enlarging an existing window or as complicated as adding a door with stairs up to the ground. Depending on the type of exit you need to create, this extra step can add a couple thousand to more than \$20,000 to the cost of your basement renovation project.

LARGER BASEMENTS

Most basements in the area where we operate are significantly larger than the 640 square foot example in *Remodeling*. We see many basements more than 1000 square feet to several thousand square feet. So, to estimate a realistic basement renovation cost, we suggest using roughly \$110–\$125 per finished square foot (minimum) plus \$30,000–\$35,000 for a basic bathroom. And remember that their example is for “mid-range” fit and finish. Most people who are finishing 1,000 square feet or more are likely to expect a higher fit/finish, so you may want to add a few dollars per square foot to be more realistic.

EXTRA ROOMS

Adding multiple rooms to the basement increases the cost. Some people want an exercise room, spare bedroom, finished storage, theater room, or home office in their basement in addition to a bathroom and a large entertaining room. Including more rooms will typically increase cost, because there are more walls, drywall, doors, HVAC, flooring, and electric involved in the project—not to mention any special finishes needed in special purpose rooms like rubber flooring in a home gym.

UPGRADED FIT AND FINISH

Many homes in our area have upgraded trim, lighting, cabinetry, flooring, and bathrooms. Assuming that you want the basement to match the rest of the house which already has upgraded finishes, the result will be a basement that is more expensive than the mid-range example in the magazine.

Including more rooms will typically increase cost, because there are more walls, drywall, doors, HVAC, flooring, and electric involved in the project.

FLOORING

One big trend in basement finishing is flooring. We see (and this has been confirmed by the flooring companies that we use) people drifting away from carpet and pad as the primary basement floor finish. We are seeing many people use Luxury Vinyl Plank (LVP) flooring. These are thick vinyl floor planks that look very much like real wood, weathered wood or stone. Some of these products are called waterproof (not harmed by water), but it would pick up mold if your basement flooded and you did not remove the floor quickly. This type of floor can be “unsnapped,” removed, and reinstalled.

BAR/SERVING AREA

The bar described in the mid-range basement finishing is functional but basic. Many people desire a walk-behind bar with wood or stone countertops, custom design, and several appliances, including a dishwasher and wine storage. The addition of these to the bar area will drive the cost out of the mid-range and into the upscale range. A nice bar area can add \$20,000 to \$25,000 to a basement finishing project. And it is not unusual for a nice bar to add \$50,000 to \$75,000 to the project total.

Adding up all these considerations, and assuming that folks in our area often have about 1000 square feet of basement to remodel, the price starts to surpass the example listed in the magazine pretty quickly. When homeowners want the fit and finish a little higher than medium and include a big entertaining room, a simple bar area, a full bath, plus a basic exercise room or home office, we see a range of \$180,000–\$200,000 for a nice turnkey basement remodeling project.



Room Additions

If finishing your basement is not an option (or has already been done), the next option for expanding your living space is building an addition.

A room addition is the kind of expansion that requires increasing the footprint—the actual foundation—of the house outward to accommodate a new room. Cost is often top-of-mind when people contemplate adding a room addition to their house. But, like any other construction, room addition costs can vary greatly based on a number of variables. Here are some of the cost drivers to keep in mind as you start budgeting:

Simplicity

When it comes to design, simplicity is always less expensive. The basic family room type of addition with no plumbing and only a minimal amount of structural change to the existing house is generally the most cost-effective.

Structural Changes

Every time you make changes to the existing structure to accommodate the new room, you're adding substantial cost. For example, removing 20 feet of an existing rear wall of a house involves planning, engineering, demolition, temporary support, permanent support, logistics/man-power to install the new support, removal and relocation of electric and plumbing, flooring alignment, security, weather protection, and maybe ductwork relocation. On the other hand, if you can use existing openings to create an entrance to a new room addition, such as an existing sliding glass door, you will save both time and money.

Complexity

Sometimes adding a room addition that is functional and architecturally pleasing involves altering other areas of the house to execute the plan. For example, many times when new rooms are added, the tie-in of the new roof impacts windows above the new



space. These upper windows may need to be made smaller or even eliminated, which creates additional interior and exterior work in spaces not actually touched by the new room addition. Another frequent challenge is the removal of exterior brick on the first level of the existing house where the addition ties in, while keeping the brick intact on the second level.

Scope Creep

Many times when a room is added, other parts of the house are also affected, adding to the scope and cost of the initial project. We call this phenomenon scope creep. For example, when adding on to a house with existing hardwood floors, both the new hardwood and the existing hardwood will need to be sanded and refinished to create a seamless, “it has always been there,” look. Many additions also require the removal of walls in the existing space so that the new and existing spaces are combined into one. The costs of doing all the rework in the existing house is unavoidable so that the addition and existing house combine to accomplish the owners’ goals of function, design, and an aesthetic appearance that looks like the house has always been this way.

Matching Existing Exterior Finishes

We have encountered many addition projects where the existing house siding or brick is no longer made and cannot be matched. Sometimes it all works out, and the architectural style of the house accommodates a different exterior finish or siding for the addition that blends well with the existing exterior. However, many times the addition requires a significant overhaul of the existing siding—even completely residing the entire house. Again, this cost is necessary to make the addition look as though it has always been part of the house. Brick can be especially difficult to match. Some solutions include finding a matching style or texture brick and then having the new brick stained to match the existing, using stone as an architectural accent to blend with existing brick, painting all the



Many times when a room is added, other parts of the house are also affected, adding to the scope and cost of the initial project.

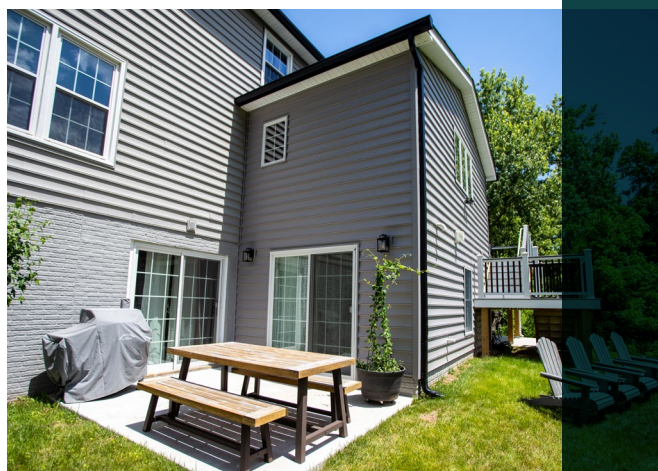
brick, or using a nice siding that complements the existing brick. With the aging of our local housing stock, we are starting to have difficulty in matching new vinyl siding with old. Many older styles and colors have been discontinued. Sunlight eventually fades even the best vinyl making blending new with old difficult.

Existing House Systems

Many times when substantial additions and modifications are made to a home, we discover that the existing HVAC and/or electrical system cannot adequately serve the increased size of the home. Upgraded electrical service, combined with an additional HVAC system or a new HVAC system, can easily top \$15,000. On the cost effectiveness side if you are adding a simple room, sometimes a separate heating/cooling unit can be added for only that room. The range here can be roughly \$2,500–\$9,000.

Extra Features

Though not a complete list, additional items that can affect the cost of a room addition include site access, size (since making even a small structural change is expensive, generally as the addition gets larger, the cost per square foot decreases), foundation type, roofing style, relocation of existing underground utilities, energy efficiency goals, level of finish, and number of stories. A nice HVAC improvement that we have seen many people decide to undertake is to add a second heat/AC system in the attic to serve the top floor bedrooms and re-purpose the existing system to handle the lower two levels and new addition. This is often not as simple of a solution as I just stated. It is a conceptual idea that needs an experienced HVAC engineer to design.



ROOM ADDITIONS REMODELING COSTS

Keeping in mind that no two additions are the same, here are some very general/rough square footage costs to help you plan. We have assumed permit costs, architectural/engineering fees, material, and labor to be included in these figures.

Level 1:

Basic one room, family-room type addition, with no plumbing and very little structural work: \$525–\$580 per square foot.

Level 2:

One story addition with a medium amount of structural work to tie in the new space with the old space, middle-grade finishes, some work in existing space, maybe a separate HVAC unit: \$650–\$750 per square foot. Including a bathroom or kitchen in the new space will increase your budget (please see the other chapters of this guide for more information on bathroom and kitchen costs).



Level 3:

Multi-story addition with substantial structural tie-in, remodeling of kitchen or bathrooms, new mechanical and/or electrical systems, and higher-end finishes: \$750 per square foot and up. Sometimes these projects have so many complications and variables that it doesn't make sense to try to attach a square foot cost because looking at it from that perspective can make you real uncomfortable.

Second-Story Additions, Above the Garage

Adding a second-story addition above a garage can make a dramatic change to your current home's appearance and, of course, provides a big increase in living space. However, like all remodeling projects, adding a second story addition has a broad range of complexity and complications.

Probably the simplest second-story addition is adding new living space above an existing garage. Most two-car garages in the Northern Virginia area are in the range of 440 to 500 square feet. This offers enough space for a couple of kids' bedrooms plus a full bathroom, or a bedroom, bathroom, and nice laundry room, or a really nice master suite.

Here are some of the challenges to adding a second story addition above the garage:



Aligning the new floor above the garage with the existing second floor

This can be very challenging and typically involves shortening or increasing the height of the existing garage walls and making changes to the existing door and window headers.

Aesthetically joining the new exterior to the existing exterior so that the addition cannot be detected

Often, the exterior finish of the garage and house may be 20+ years old so the challenge becomes finding siding, shingles, brick, or stone to match the existing house so the addition can match the house. Also, a garage is a large structure, so care needs to be taken in the design to not draw attention away from the main house when adding the additional mass of a second story addition above the garage.

Building a floor to accommodate the long expanse of the garage below

Garages are typically 20' to 24' from front to back and side to side. Designing a floor system to support the rooms above while adding zero or few posts to interfere with car parking below can be difficult. The floor must be stiff enough so that it does not bounce and tiles don't crack. The thicker the floor system, the less it will bounce. The challenge is that the floor has to align with the existing second floor, but not interfere with the garage door height below.

Creating balanced heating and cooling in the new space

Heating and cooling of the new space is critical. The space must be comfortable to occupants and must prevent pipes that are above the unconditioned garage from freezing. Many HVAC systems are in the center of basements, rendering them ineffective or inefficient to provide adequate heating and cooling above a garage. Some sort of additional HVAC system design is almost always required with above-garage additions.

Creating a smooth transition from the existing interior living space to the new space above the garage

Creating smooth transitions can be very challenging. Sometimes space in an existing bedroom or even a bathroom has to be sacrificed to extend access into the new addition above the garage. There are times that an owner gets lucky and maybe the only change to the interior is removing a closet at the end of a hall, but this will vary from house to house.

Connecting plumbing drains for the new space to the existing house drain

The location of the existing house waste-water drain can significantly increase or decrease the complexity of the addition. If the existing drain connection is in the middle of the house, it may require lots of drywall demolition, framing reconfiguration, cabinet removal, or even ductwork relocation to extend the new drain to the existing.

The challenges of adding a second-story addition above a garage can be substantial. But, if you have the right house in the right neighborhood and need more space, this is one way to gain extra bedrooms and/or a bathroom.

COST OF A SECOND-STORY, ABOVE-GARAGE ADDITION

Let's talk cost. As with all remodeling projects, when it comes to cost, the key phrase is, "it depends." The cost of your addition will depend on the number of challenges, the difficulty of the challenges, the level of fit and finish, and how far the project creeps into other parts of the house.

An easy-to-execute, simple fit and finish, basic addition above a garage could be as low as \$400–\$425 per square foot. Truthfully, this is pretty unlikely—there are always complications that impact some aspect which pushes cost higher.

If you are thinking about this type of project, it would be safer to start your budget at \$500–\$550 per square foot as the starting point.



Second-Story Additions, Not Above the Garage

In the previous section, we discussed adding a second-story addition above a garage—somewhat difficult but not too challenging. A more complicated second-story addition is to add a second floor to an existing house.

This type of project includes many of the same challenges associated with building above a garage, as well as other challenges unique to building above an existing living space, without wrecking the space below.

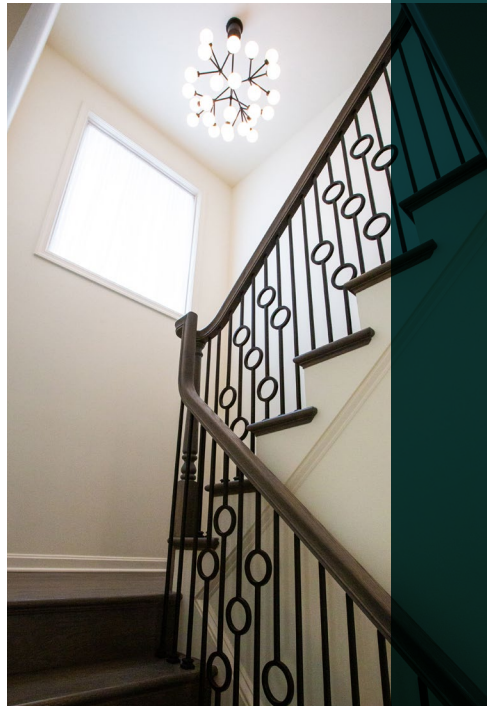
There are seven critical elements to consider when adding a second-story addition above an existing house:

Determining the location of stairs up to the new space

This is a planning and math exercise, and it's easy to get it wrong. To ensure that the stairs have been planned properly and to prevent time and cost overruns, each person involved in planning the staircase should be double-checked by someone else on the team before the project is started.

Protecting the space below from inclement weather

After the roof of the house has been removed, great care must be taken to protect the living space below from being damaged by the elements. Not much needs to be said here except that a plan needs to be in place on how the first floor will be kept dry while there is no roof on the house.



Protecting the drywall ceiling below from collapse during and after roof removal

Once the roof rafters have been removed and the carpentry crew starts working on installing the new second floor, the possibility of the first-floor ceiling collapsing or someone accidentally falling through the ceiling increases dramatically. Temporary walls may be needed on the first floor to prevent ceiling collapse.

Relocation of utilities in the existing attic (ductwork, wires, gas appliance flues and plumbing vents)

In the design phase for adding a second-story addition, solutions to extending or eliminating existing attic ductwork, wiring, gas appliance flues and plumbing vents need careful deliberation. Nothing could be worse than finding out you have no place to run the sewer gas vent other than through the middle of a room. By the way: ductwork includes existing bathroom venting and cooking ventilation—don't forget to determine how these will be impacted.

Extending fireplace and gas furnace chimneys

The code has very specific requirements for fireplace and gas furnace chimney height and proximity to windows. Forgetting to pay attention to these could lead to costly overruns.

Determining the impact of the additional weight of a second floor on the existing structure below

The architect, structural engineer, and contractor all need to work closely here. The architect prepares the design, the structural engineer makes sure the building can handle the load, and the contractor provides cost and execution input. Some solutions may look intuitive to one stakeholder, but may be budget busters when looking at execution. To ensure efficiency and cost reduction, all three team members need to work together during the planning phase.

The architect, structural engineer, and contractor all need to work closely.

Analyzing the impact of the new space on the existing mechanical systems (plumbing, HVAC, and electric)

The special trades need to be involved early in the design phase of a second-story addition to assist the architect on changes that are necessary to the existing mechanical, plumbing, and electric systems. The remodeling contractor needs to provide input to the special trades as to how the special trade's solutions affect cost and execution. Many times, the first round of solutions is not the final. After all the trades confer, there are typically modifications to how the HVAC, plumbing, and electric will be installed.

Creating a second-story addition over an existing house is quite complicated and involves multiple stakeholders. This list of seven critical elements does not come close to touching all the elements that must be included when adding this type of addition. Hopefully, they will help avoid some of the more expensive oversights and potential pitfalls.

COST OF A SECOND-STORY ADDITION

There are so many variables to adding a second story addition over the first floor living space that coming up with any reasonable cost rule of thumb is like declaring you have a solution for world peace—anyone and everyone can come up with exceptions. With this in mind, we are not comfortable suggesting a square foot cost on a project like this, because there are so many variables that impact cost. However to help, I suggest starting around \$575–\$600 per square foot, going up from there. As mentioned earlier, sometimes looking at cost per foot can get scary, but these are complicated undertakings that require very skilled and competent people to get it right the first time.



Conclusion

Undertaking a major house remodeling project is a big decision, and cost is just one of the many factors to consider before you start. Some other important considerations include:

Timing

How long will the project take? Do you have time constraints that will make the project harder or easier? For instance, if you are going on a two-week vacation, this might be an ideal time to give your kitchen a facelift. A deeper renovation, however, will take longer. If you plan to use the renovated house for a special event, such as a holiday family gathering or an engagement party, you will need to start planning early.

Special Accommodations

Most people choose to live in the house during the remodeling project and will necessarily experience some inconveniences. How will living in the house while it is being remodeled work? Will you need to make special plans, preparations, or accommodations? How will you cook, clean dishes, store food, and bathe? Do you have an infant or elderly person in your house who will require special contingencies? How will remodeling impact your working from home? These are all factors to consider before remodeling.

Cost is just one of the many factors to consider before starting a remodeling project.

Choosing a Contractor

Choosing a contractor can be overwhelming. Remodeling is a major investment, and you are allowing people you don't know to come into your home and be around your family and belongings while you are not home. You want someone who is trustworthy, has lots of experience, follows a process and schedule, is reliable, and does quality work. We recommend requesting to see a potential contractor's licenses and certificate of insurance (workers compensation, liability, and auto), asking about the permitting and inspection process, checking to ensure they have a physical address (no P.O. Box), making sure that the business is well-established (has survived good and bad times), viewing testimonials and project portfolios, and contacting references (in addition to ensuring that they have plenty of verified references).

Bundling

Bundling is performing multiple remodeling projects at the same time. I know it is self-serving as a remodeling contractor to suggest a bigger project. However, there are significant potential cost savings by bundling. For example, a bathroom with a kitchen project or two bathrooms with a kitchen. We have found bundling can reduce the cost of doing separate projects by at least 10% when combined and performed at the same time. Savings come from: one set of permits, one set of drawings, efficient debris removal, more favorable pricing from special trades, and most importantly reducing the duration of performing separate projects (which means less days of overhead charged by the remodeling company). If you know you will, for example, remodel your kitchen now and remodel two bathrooms next year, consider combining the projects to take advantage of efficiencies and reduce your overall remodeling expense.





Want to Learn More?

Northwood Construction is a home remodeling company serving Northern Virginia, including Reston, Vienna, McLean, Herndon, Fairfax Station, Ashburn and other areas. We are committed to our clients and the home renovation projects they trust us with.



We're committed to taking care of your home as if it were our own. Whether you want to enhance your living space or remodel for an eventual sale, our goal is to deliver a beautiful and functional remodeled space with minimal disruption.

If you have a remodeling project in mind, get in touch. Let's have a conversation to see if Northwood is the right fit for your needs. Northwood's remodeling professionals can be reached at **703-481-3325** or by email at: mail@northwoodconstruction.com

You can read more about home remodeling on our blog at:

northwoodconstruction.com/resources/blog