



ON THE HOUSE

Ideas for Improving Your Home

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Client Focus

The Sooner, The Better

Sometimes you remodel your house because you want to. Sometimes you remodel your house because you have to. And sometimes when you remodel your house because you have to, it turns out so great you wish you had done it sooner.

That was the case recently, when a married couple needed to remodel their 40-year old Colonial home in Chicago’s northern suburbs because the wife’s mother was moving in with them. As the mother was elderly, the mother’s living area needed to be on the first floor.

“Originally, we just wanted an ‘aging parent’ apartment – a bedroom and bathroom suite – on the first floor,” the client said. “It needed to be on the first

floor because stairs would be a challenge. But this required an addition, and that gave us an opportunity to look at the footprint of the house and

ects. “Because of Forde’s approach, we had a lot of confidence in them,” the client said.

The project was particularly challenging, because it involved building an addition onto the house that turned a 2,500 square foot home into a 4,000 square foot home. “This was complicated,” said Maurice Forde, owner of Forde Windows & Remodeling. “Because of village ordinances, we could only go back three feet. But the addition itself extended 70 feet wide. This obviously



involved carefully tearing down walls, and dealing with electrical, plumbing and heating and cooling systems.”

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The project included the following key improvements on the ground floor:

- An expanded kitchen – double the size of the existing kitchen – with an island and an eat-in area. The kitchen was equipped with all new appliances, and was enhanced aesthetically with granite countertops, and a glass backsplash. A custom wine rack was also built to

talk about how to maximize the space to accommodate our lifestyle.” For example, the couple liked to entertain, and they used the opportunity to expand the kitchen, to gut the existing combination dining room/family room, and to create new, separate family and dining rooms. The client was also able to expand the master bedroom on the second floor.

The client chose Forde Windows and Remodeling as the contractor because of the satisfaction they had with the company on smaller proj-

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From Maurice

Clichés for Our Time

To state the obvious, the economy is a mess. I'm not going to depress you with the details, because you know them. And those of us in the construction industry know it is hitting us particularly hard.

So people are sometimes surprised when I tell them that our business is good...and we are adding staff. That ultimately leads people to ask why I think that is the case.

I'll give you the answer I give them. But I have to warn you. It may disappoint you. There are no secret pearls of advice, no magic formulas. In fact, the answer is really a series of clichés. So I apologize if they sound trite, but they are truly the reason we are successful.

- 1. Don't overcharge.** It actually is OK to leave some money on the table. There are companies out there that overcharge. Their business model is to grab as much money as they can as soon as they can. The problem with that business philosophy is that you get a reputation for being expensive or, worse, not providing value for your price. So we operate under the assumption that the best way to maximize business in the long term is to forego some revenues in the short term to keep our customers truly satisfied.
- 2. Win-win.** It is important to us that we do a great job for our clients. They need to feel good about the project when it is done. They need to be happy with the work, and they need to feel they paid a fair price for it. After all, if they are not satisfied, they won't recommend us. At the same time, we steer away from clients whose only interest is to beat us up as much as possible on price, and who don't care whether we "win."
- 3. People make the difference.** Especially in today's tight economy, people want to know they are getting a quality product for their money. While we work with the best products, the fact is many of our competitors do too. We like to think what sets us apart is the quality of our people. As you read other sections of this newsletter, you will hear clients mention the professionalism of our staff. They are skilled, and they are courteous. They are our most important asset, the reason we have a strong reputation, and the reason that so much of our business comes from referrals.
- 4. Positive mental attitude.** I know there are people out there who follow the three points mentioned above, and who are struggling. We have bad days too. But what gets us through is the belief that tomorrow will be better. It's amazing how often that turns out to be the case.

I think it is those four factors that have led to our success. If you have any thoughts, I'd like to hear from you. **Call us at 847/562-1188, or e-mail us at info@fordedesignbuild.com.**

Keep plugging,
Maurice

"Extreme Makeover"

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add to the unique nature of the space.

- An "aging parent suite" on the main floor. This included a spacious bedroom, a large walk-in closet, and a bathroom featuring a walk-in shower with a railing.
- A larger family room that provided more room for relaxing. The family room included a new fireplace with a stone front.
- An upgraded dining room with a vaulted ceiling that gives the room a slightly different look and feel than the rest of the house.



Upstairs, the added space allowed the client to add a master bedroom suite. The new suite included a walk-in closet as well as a sitting area. The master bathroom was also renovated with the addition of dual sinks, a two-pulse shower and a hot tub.

"We are absolutely happy," the client said. "Maurice and his staff are perfectionists. They were punctual, very reliable, and very aware of not disturbing our day to day living."

The client advised that homeowners should not put off making improvements if they are considering them. "We wish we had done it sooner. The sooner you get it done, the sooner you will be able to enjoy it."

For more information about this project, or others, call us at 847/562-1188, or e-mail us at info@fordedesignbuild.com



Preventive Maintenance: Check It Out

In these trying economic times, people will defer spending money on simple maintenance. Unfortunately, what are small problems now can become big problems later. Here are a few things you can do now to avoid major expenses and headaches down the road.



Check gutters and downspouts.

Gutters should be kept clean to keep water from pooling and seeping into the house, and downspouts should allow water to drain away from the house.



Check your windows.

Cracked or leaky windows, loose putty around the glass panes, and holes in screens can bring in excess outside air, putting a strain on your heating and cooling systems and driving up costs.



Check caulking. If the caulking around your sinks, bathtubs or showers is becoming brittle, it may allow water to seep through, causing potentially expensive damage.



Check all your alarms monthly.

Make sure your smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors, etc. all are in good working order and have fresh batteries.



Check your appliance cords. A faulty appliance cord not only can short circuit your electric system, it is also a potential fire hazard.



We Can Do It

Yes We Do (Commercial) Windows

Our residential clients frequently ask us if we do commercial projects as well. The answer is yes.

We install replacement windows on all types of commercial properties, including condominiums and apartment buildings, office buildings, schools, hospitals, etc.

We recently have been working with a condominium management company to replace windows in several of their buildings. Here is what the project manager had to say.

“Windows are windows. It’s the



people who install them that make the difference. I like the tradesmen that Forde uses. They put the windows in properly, and they tell us if there is just a window problem, or if there is something else wrong. They are also courteous as they go through the units, and try not to disrupt the people living there.”

For more information about our commercial window capabilities, call us at 847/562-1188, or e-mail us at info@fordedesign-build.com



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Meet the Forde Team

Meet Norbert Sehenick



As seen in other articles in this newsletter, we believe it is the quality of our staff that sets our business apart.

For that reason, we are very proud to announce that Norbert Sehenick has joined our company as a carpenter and window installer. Norbert will be working on both commercial and residential projects.

Norbert lives in Chicago with his girlfriend and their daughter.