

Plan, save pennies

Have a masterplan and do your homework to avoid costly redesigns, writes Jackie Sinnerton

IF YOU are planning a kitchen renovation you'll need a kitty of at least \$10,608, up to \$31,722. But a masterplan is a must to reap the financial rewards.

Work in wet areas can particularly blow out the budget if not thoroughly planned.

A new cost guide researched by Archicentre shows that renovation costs have gone up just 1 per cent in the last quarter.

Archicentre Queensland manager Ron Tanton said he expected renovations to surge this year as many people try to increase the value of their property as part of their super-annuation strategy.

But Mr Tanton advises renovators to do their homework to make sure no unplanned variations crop up during the construction.

"The original design process and material selection, which provides the vital information for costing and managing the budget, is the foundation for a successful and financially rewarding renovation," he said.

"The significant costs of replacing and upgrading kitchens and wet areas means that a masterplan can ensure such renovations are optimised for value in relation to future potential additions to the home."

Rising house prices, interest rates and the cost of moving – estimated at \$50,000 to \$60,000 for the average move when property taxes and expenses are added – were likely to provide more incentive for people to renovate their current home.

"When people prepare a budget they see the benefit of investing in their homes for a return rather than hand over large amounts to government coffers," he said.

Mr Tanton said he was seeing an increasing trend to alternative construction systems, such as lightweight materials and low-embodied energy, which can eliminate some trades and offset cost increases in other areas.

"Balanced against this is that we are now seeing a shortage of suitably skilled tradespeople in some areas of the building industry, resulting in some price increases in labour due to the substantial rise in construction activity from the Government's stimulus package in schools, health and first-home buyers areas.

"While renovation costs at this stage are remaining reasonably static, the major challenges for renovators and owner-builders is to ensure that they get the design of the renovation correct to ensure it delivers a sustainable lifestyle on budget.

"For new houses and major renovations,



HUB OF THE HOME: Queensland Large Kitchen Designer of the Year Darren James said some people even wanted a second kitchen

Kitchens keep growing

Michelle Collins

HOMEOWNERS are demanding bigger kitchens and bathrooms.

A new report from the Housing Industry Association predicts the value of kitchen and bathroom installations and renovations will reach a record \$12 billion by 2012.

It predicts the value of kitchens will rise to almost \$6 billion this financial year and almost \$7 billion by 2010-11, while the bathroom industry is expected to climb by 25 per cent, with homeowners spending almost \$4.9 billion on bathroom renovations within three years.

ations, the cost structure is approximately 46 per cent on materials, labour 33 per cent, and 21 per cent on fees, levies, permits, taxes and GST.

"The cost will vary for country areas, adding 5 per cent to 15 per cent to the renovation."

HIA chief economist Dr Harley Dale said that despite evidence suggesting new houses were getting smaller, the trend was for bigger and better kitchens.

"The intense competition among kitchen installers is likely to see the trend towards better quality kitchens continue for the foreseeable future," he said.

Queensland Large Kitchen Designer of the Year Darren James agreed kitchens were getting bigger.

"People are generally spending a lot of money on their kitchens because it is such an important part of the home," he said.

"It is the hub of the home. Some

people are asking for a scullery – basically a second kitchen – to house all of the working areas, so they can keep the kitchen as the showpiece whenever they are entertaining."

Mr James said homeowners also wanted more appliances.

"It is not just an oven, a microwave and a cooktop. There is a steam oven or a combination oven and people are having two fridges and two dishwashers," he said.

Dr Dale said homeowners were using more expensive hardware and storage systems.

"The fastest growth was for soft-closing drawers," he said. "Lift-up door operating systems and touch-

opening door and drawer systems also grew in popularity."

In appliances, the biggest rise was for wine cooler/fridges, LCD/plasma TVs, European free-standing stoves, and dishwasher drawers.

The HIA found the most popular items replaced in bathrooms were basins, vanity units, tapware and tiling.

There was also a large increase in semi-frameless shower screens, and multiple basins and showerheads. Under-mount sinks continued to be the fastest growing sink.

"Engineered stone, solid surface and granite benchtops were all in high demand," Dr Dale said.

or aesthetic reasons, the plan was not delivering the desired outcome, requiring a costly redesign.

The Archicentre Summer Cost Guide shows that while the cost of renovating kitchens ranged from \$10,608 to \$31,722; bathrooms cost

\$9588 to \$24,990; and laundries \$4182 to \$9894. Bedrooms ranged from \$4080 to \$8466, while a 20sq m single room cost \$4794 to \$10,302.

Download the Archicentre Summer Cost Guide at www.archicentre.com.au/pdf/09summercostguide.pdf

Fall in love with the mists of Avalon

Michelle Collins

AVALON Wedding Gardens owner Nancy Seymour bought her home and business five years ago after reading a story about the Mt Tamborine retreat in *The Sunday Mail*.

With plans to move on to another business, she hopes history will repeat itself.

The popular wedding setting, at 287

Long Rd, is being marketed by Patricia Box and is one of more than 120 properties that will go under the hammer at The Event mega-auction held by Ray White Surfers Paradise at the Gold Coast Arts Centre on January 24.

The gardens were named by one of the previous owners, who had just read the novel *The Mists of Avalon* by Marion Zimmer Bradley when she and her husband bought the property in 1998.

And there are mists, adding a magical touch to wedding photos. Couples can choose from the Grecian-style wedding temple, the Rose Garden, or Nature's Cathedral with its massive hoop pines.

The gardens and a low-set house are on a property of 3.6ha. The house has four bedrooms, three bathrooms, informal and formal living and dining areas, wood-burning and gas fireplaces, entertaining area and two-car garage.



MAGICAL: Avalon Wedding Gardens.

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