



NEW KITCHEN FOR CHRISTMAS? TALK TURKEY NOW...



by Mark Cooper

Lots of people have been calling me about kitchen renovations, and one of the consistent questions is "How long will it take?"

Like everything in home renovations, the answer is "It depends..." But let's take a look at the time involved for various aspects and how the necessary sequence of events will determine your schedule.

The first step is figuring out what you want to accomplish. Unless the changes you're making are "off the rack," it's well worth getting a professional designer involved. Most good contractors have one. There's a week or two to schedule a meeting. (Don't be surprised if you're asked for a retainer at that first meeting – a good designer won't be working on spec.)

Also, ask your designer where the cabinets will be made. We prefer B.C.-made – our humidity is quite different than back east, so local products will present fewer problems with warping and grain issues when introduced into our rainforest here.

After that, you're got a couple of weeks going back and forth about design details – styles, colours, location of cabinets, types of drawers, special features – to be sure you've got a solid plan. Delivery can take eight weeks or more after you order. And you have to know where the pipes and wires are going to be before you start construction.

Then expect two weeks for demolition and

clean-out. Walls and floors will probably have to be gutted, even if you're not making changes affecting the exterior. Assuming there are no surprises with the underlying structure, you can begin roughing in the ductwork for fans, the electrical connections and the plumbing.

This is also the time to put in audio-visual wiring. Even if you don't want stereo speakers or a TV right now, when you do you'll be glad the wiring is already in place. It's easy now, or expensive and disruptive later. And you certainly don't want to start thinking about a heated floor after you've finished your renovation.

So, about two weeks for the rough-in. Then another two or three weeks to install the insulation and vapour barriers and put up the drywall. You'll also want to get a coat of primer on and maybe some of the paint, before the flooring and cabinet work starts.

You ordered your cabinets, fixtures and flooring, and made sure the appliances you want are available, back before demolition started, so they're ready for installation now. And that will take a couple of more weeks. Then some finishing work, and you can stop dining out or eating at your friends' houses.

Overall, that's 10 to 12 weeks. So, if you get a contractor and designer on board before the end of summer, you could be ready to cook Christmas dinner in your new kitchen. Remember, this is an approximate timeframe. And it's based on an interior-only renovation,

without major structural alterations or changes to the interior or exterior. However, if you're also re-doing your bathroom, the overall time involved won't be much more.

The toughest part – especially these days when everyone is so busy – is finding and scheduling the trades. That's one of the key reasons to get a good general contractor – someone with a reputation for having good tradespeople who will be available when they're needed for your schedule.

I don't ask people about previous renovations, and I try not to comment on how homeowners have done their own contracting. But what I do hear, from time to time, is women saying things like, "My husband did the bathroom, and he's not touching the kitchen..."

Finding a good contractor should probably be your first job. Ask around, get references and look at contractors' previous work.

RAINSCREENING

It seems homeowners across the North Shore are starting to talk about "Rainscreening," and I've heard some people ask where to buy it... It's actually a term for aspects of the new building code, and I'll explain the changes in the next issue.

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