

Home Improvement

By JUDITH REIDEL

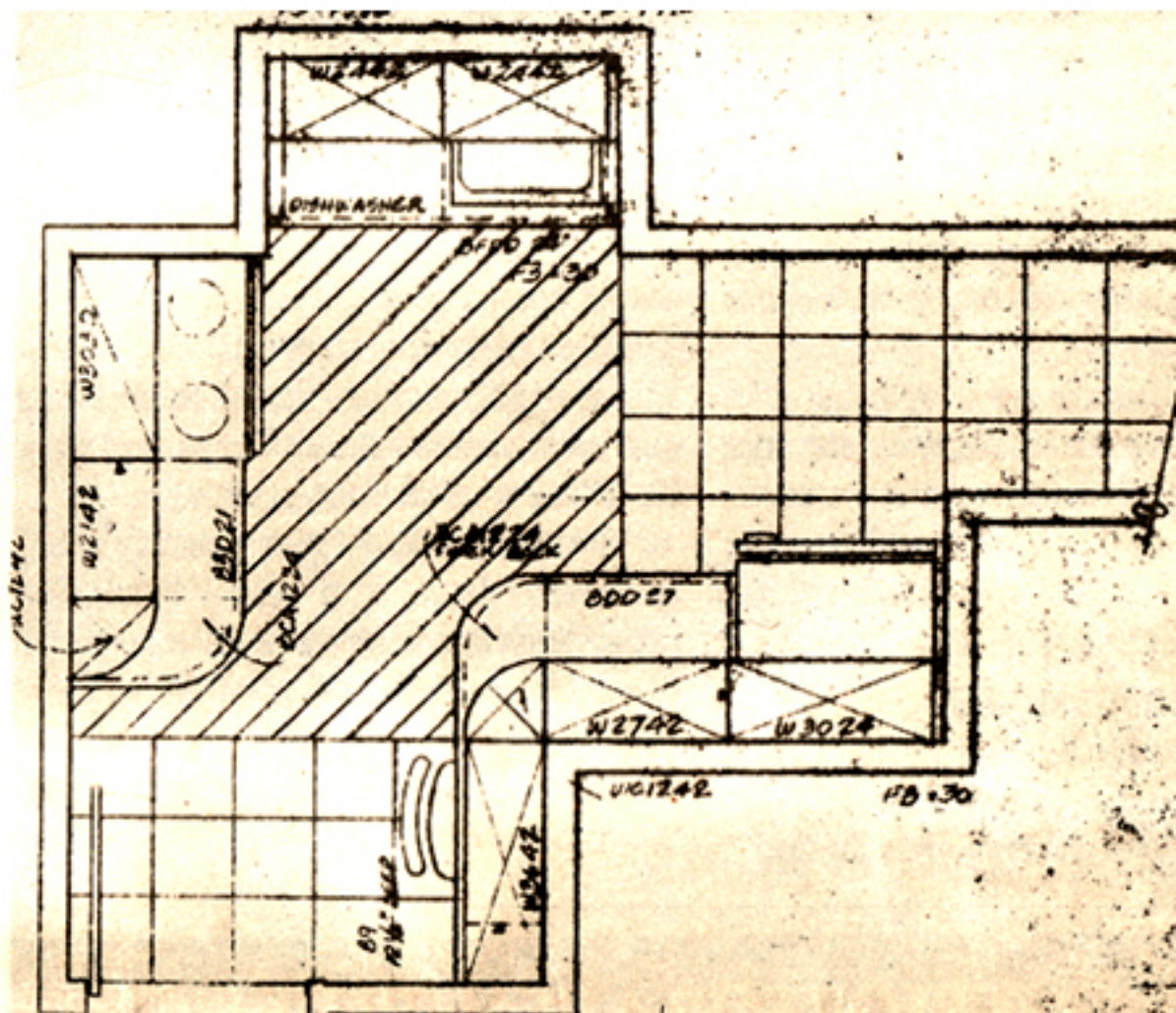
THE *Dos* AND *Don'ts* OF KITCHEN REMODELING

Today's kitchen has a new identity. It is a work space filled with all kinds of high-tech machinery to dice onions, brew espresso and extract juices. It is also a place to gather with family and friends. Nowadays, it seems more "hanging out" is done in the kitchen rather than in the living room.

That means your kitchen has to be inviting. Thus, there are many details to consider when you decide to remodel. You may wake up one day and say, "I need a new kitchen," but the most important question really is, "Where do I start?" One must carefully plan.

THE FIRST STEP IS TO MAKE A LIST WHICH WILL ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- 1) What do I like about my old kitchen?
- 2) What don't I like?
- 3) How much time do I spend in my kitchen?
- 4) What do I expect from my kitchen?
- 5) Do I have the proper amount of space for body movement?
- 6) Do I have enough counter space?/Would I like more?
- 7) Can I have more lighting?/What are my electrical needs?
- 8) Do I have adequate ventilation?
- 9) Am I taking necessary safety precautions?
- 10) What do I envision this kitchen will look like, from an aesthetic standpoint?
- 11) What type of entertaining do I do (small or large dinners, parties, buffets)?
- 12) Will I need additional seating?
- 13) Can I have a second oven/microwave, disposal unit, hot water dispenser, etc?



Of course, you may also be facing some bigger issues. Here are some of the most common questions clients have asked:

I HAVE KIDS, AS WELL AS MY ELDERLY AND INFIRM PARENTS LIVING WITH ME. ARE THERE SPECIAL MEASURES I SHOULD TAKE?

Obviously, all chemicals need to be stored away from a child's reach, but there are other, less obvious, safety features to consider. These include non-slip floors and ovens with controls on top, rather than at a child's eye level.

Is this a kitchen for the handicapped? A person in a wheelchair needs a minimum of 48 inches aisle space. You'll also have to create a knee hole space a minimum of 36 inches wide and at least 21 inches under the sink. This allows a wheelchair to pull under the countertop. Built-in ovens can be installed at the height of a seated cook. Another possibility is creating a cart with casters that can provide storage for table-top appliances which can be hidden under the countertop in a handy position for the disabled cook.

To make the kitchen more accessible to seniors, use full extension glides in base drawers for easy pulling out, use 180-degree hinges, a solid surface countertop in a light color, non-glare lighting,

a non-slip floor (preferably a vinyl,) pot and pan drawers at eye level, large handles on cabinets and a countertop with controls in front.

HOW DO I FIT IN EVERYTHING IF I'M KOSHER?

It's hard to imagine a New York City apartment with enough space to handle the Noah's ark-like demands of a Kosher kitchen. Indeed, if you're intent on completely following Jewish dietary restrictions, which requires the absolute segregation of meat and dairy (as well as plates and silverware), you may need to make space for two dishwashers, two sinks, two ovens, two 18-inch drawers to hold the two sets of silverware. You'll also need plenty of cabinet space to accommodate all your double kitchenware. So give yourself plenty of room for a kitchen or be prepared to make compromises (one oven, one dishwasher, one sink).

WHAT'S BETTER: AN ENCLOSED KITCHEN OR AN OPEN ONE? AND WHAT EXACTLY DO THESE TERMS MEAN?

Enclosed means detached from other areas of the environment. Open means one that opens onto an adjoining room. My preference is an open kitchen that affords me the luxury of cooking while enjoying the company of my guests at the same time. But, the choice really depends on your needs and your personality.

MY KITCHEN IS SO SMALL. ANY TIPS FOR LIVING WITH IT?

Anything is possible. One client with a small galley kitchen thought that her greatest desire was just a dream. She wanted a 48-inch refrigerator in a small space. We did this by removing a pantry she seldom used.

Another woman who is 6'1" (actually, she tells people she is 5'13") felt like a contortionist when using her dishwasher. We created a space for the dishwasher several feet off the floor. We also had fun creating a window seat, library unit and an executive desk using kitchen cabinetry for an office space.

Another client said that every time she expressed what she wanted in a kitchen, she was given the same answer: move. She knew that her space was the size of a deep narrow closet, but all she needed was a little help visualizing the best use for the space. We blocked off space with newspaper on the floor and she quickly got a better sense of what would fit where.

Judith Reidel specializes in kitchen remodeling. To contact her, call 721-5641. ■ ■ ■