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REMODELING FOR YOUR FUTURE

Preserve your lifestyle. Stay in the home you love!



with JOHN SYLVESTRE, SYLVESTRE REMODELING & DESIGN

FEATURE ARTICLE WRITTEN BY JEN LARSON ROESLER,

SOUTHWEST JOURNAL HOME GUIDE – MARCH 2015

E-BOOK DESIGN BY RACHEL GREENHOUSE

LETTER FROM JOHN SYLVESTRE

I don't want to admit that I am getting older, but guess what? I am getting older.

I am dead center in the “baby boom” generation which is described as people born during the demographic Post-World War II baby boom between the years 1946-1964. We are a growing part of the population that is rethinking how our homes might serve us in the years ahead.

Part of our job as remodelers is to transform spaces to work better for our clients, both now *and* in the future. Many of my “coffee conversations” begin with a wish list of items to be remodeled but morph into this question: “How can remodeling easily serve us in the years ahead so that we can stay longer in our home?”

In this e-book are a number of ideas to consider when remodeling for the long term, and in this letter are a few of my favorite recommendations:

ONE-LEVEL LIVING

Imagine your everyday tasks and think how you might accomplish them if you had limited mobility. Level changes and stairs become a challenge. The more we can keep things on one level the easier it will be to accommodate future longterm needs. We have done a number of projects that make sure there is a full bathroom on the first floor, a possible sleeping room and even better, a space for laundry. If you are thinking of a first floor family room, make sure there is enough space for a future bed and if you are adding a first floor bathroom, adding a shower or tub makes sense if you have the room. Even if you don't have the room now, think about

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where you “might” be able to add space in the future.

FLEXIBLE BATHROOMS

One of the hardest working spaces in your home is the bathroom. The first thing to consider in a bathroom is the size of the door. Typically it's the smallest door in the house. Make sure it is of adequate space to provide easy access to the space and there is enough room in the bathroom for maneuvering with future aids – canes, walkers or even a wheelchair. Kids with sports injuries need to be able to move with helpers or crutches during their rehabilitation. If available, provide room around the toilet. New toilets are taller, which makes it easier to get up and down (except the smallest children) and wall hung toilets can be adjusted to a specific height that works for you.

Stepping over the wall of a tub can be challenge. We have been installing showers that many times do not even have a curb. This not only creates a modern look but gets rid of another step and can provide more flexibility in how you would use the

shower space. Shower controls can also be placed in almost any location that is convenient for you with a wide range of shower heads, body sprays and hand-held units to meet your needs.

KITCHENS THAT WORK

Take a look at the clearances around the cabinets, doorways and islands. Make sure there is adequate room to accomplish your tasks – opening the refrigerator door, access to the dishwasher and oven door clearances which should be addressed in any kitchen remodeling and become critically important if you are less mobile and need help or more space to operate. Anything you can do to minimize lifting hot items, perhaps from a microwave or standing on a step stool would be steps to making a kitchen more workable for everyone.

GOING UP: HOME ELEVATORS

We have installed a few home elevators and done a number of feasibility studies to see if it would make sense for other client's homes. One client had an early case of arthritis and knew it was only going to get more difficult to take the stairs in their 3-story home. Another client had a teenage daughter with mobility issues and stairs were a difficult thing for her. We installed an elevator for a client in a 1920's home with a special needs child. In each case, integrating the elevator into the character of the home was a key factor, so it blended in and was just another door in the hallway. In all cases, the elevators met their specific needs and better allowed them to stay in their homes.



GOOD DESIGN MEANS A HIGHER QUALITY OF LIFE

Future needs should be incorporated into any remodeling project. Think about ways that your home could operate better if your family's needs may change. Most remodeling is done with the intention to be part of the long term life of your family. It is good to know that there are many available options to help you remodel your home for the long term, even if you aren't an aging Baby Boomer.

If you want to talk about remodeling for your future, we can have an informal chat about your needs over a cup of coffee.

JUST GIVE ME A CALL AT 612.861.0188 OR EMAIL ME:
JOHN@STLYVESTRECONSTRUCTION.COM.

IT'S NOT SOMETHING ANYONE LIKES TO THINK ABOUT, YET IT'S SOMETHING THAT WILL EVENTUALLY HAPPEN TO ALL OF US: WE AGE.



ALONG THE WAY, THINGS THAT ONCE SEEMED SIMPLE REQUIRE A BIT MORE EFFORT:

Things like climbing the stairs to the bedroom; getting into and out of the tub; or carrying a basket of laundry up from the basement.

Many homeowners would like to stay in their homes and live independently as long as possible. Fortunately, forward-thinking firms like

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have found ways to make home modifications that allow people to manage the challenges of aging and live safely in the homes they love.

HOMES THAT FIT OUR NEEDS

"Renovating to make homes easier to live in isn't just something for people with aging on their minds," says John Sylvestre, owner and chief architect at Sylvestre. "We work with a wide range of people. From a woman whose daughter lives with a range of physical disabilities, to a client who is 85 years old and wants

THE FOLLOWING FEATURE ARTICLE WAS WRITTEN BY JEN LARSON ROESLER, FOR SOUTHWEST JOURNAL HOME GUIDE – MARCH 2015

to stay in her own home, to my contemporaries who are getting ready to retire and want their home set up so when they're retired they won't have to spend money on a remodeling project."

THE GOAL THEY ALL SHARE IS TO MAKE MODIFICATIONS THAT MAKE THEIR HOMES MORE LIVABLE.

For someone who has never thought much about their home's layout beyond the basics, the most common renovations Sylvestre's team performs might come as something of a surprise.

ONE-LEVEL LIVING

Think about the everyday tasks that require you to make a few trips up and down the stairs on any given day. Now imagine how you would accomplish the same tasks (and stair climbing) with limited mobility.

That's why Sylvestre says that while bathroom renovations are certainly a priority, other modifications make equal sense when it comes to livability.

"One of the goals is often to bring the laundry up from the basement," he explains. Simply eliminating the need for homeowners to climb up and down stairs – carrying heavy baskets of clothes – can mean the difference between remaining independent or needing outside help.

“In general, we try to make homes more user-friendly and get most necessary functions onto the first level,” he says.

While elevators and other devices are an option, usually a creative re-purposing of space is enough to make an upstairs laundry center a reality. In addition, retirement living usually means an empty nest, so the large-capacity washer and dryer once needed for a growing family simply aren’t necessary anymore and stacked space-saving machines make more sense all around.

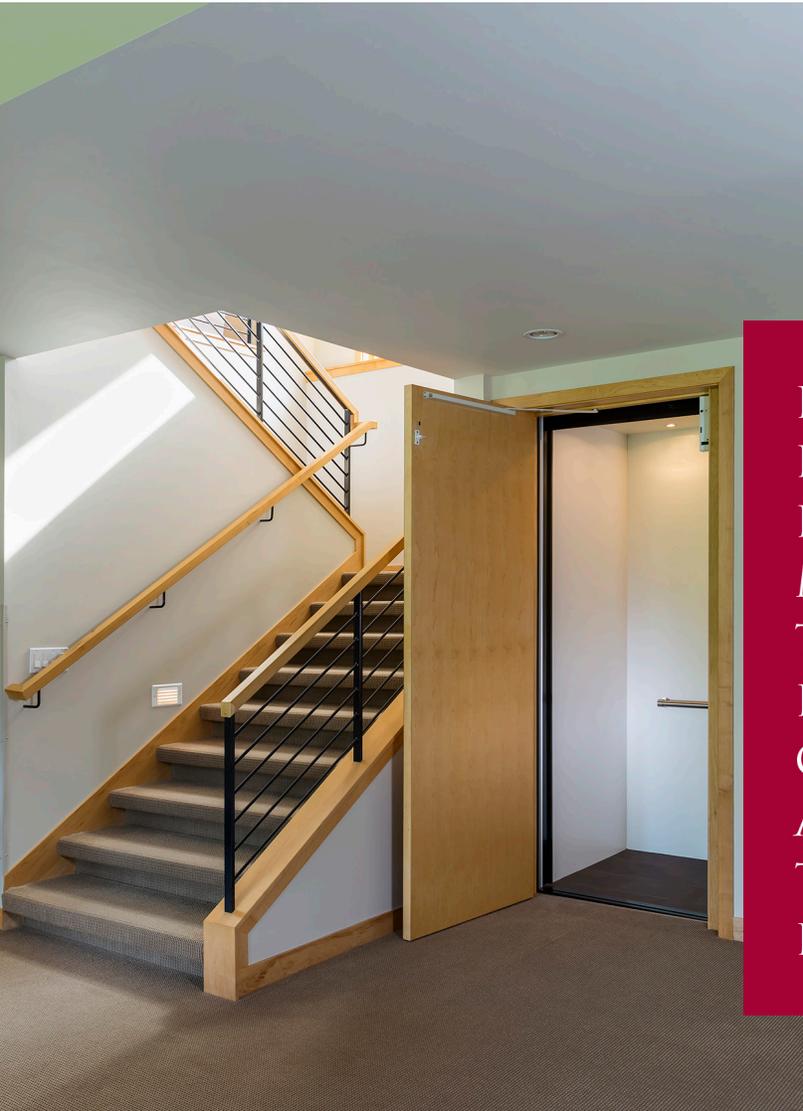
IN GENERAL, THE MORE ESSENTIAL SPACES THAT CAN BE ACCOMMODATED ON THE FIRST LEVEL, THE BETTER.

Bringing a bedroom onto the first floor by reconfiguring spaces can be a major upgrade in terms of livability. *“Then if you’ve had a knee or hip replacement or something similar, people can still work from home if needed, and manage by themselves on one level.”*

SMOOTHING OUT STEPS AND CREATING ALL-AROUND ACCESSIBILITY

Most Minneapolis homes of a certain age have steps not only to get from the basement to the main level or from the first floor to second floor bedrooms, but also smaller sets of stairs here and there.

*“The few steps up from the garage or from the yard to the back door can present big challenges,” says Sylvestre. Remodeling tweaks can remove these types of obstacles that might otherwise go un-*considered.



FORWARD-THINKING FIRMS LIKE SYLVESTRE HAVE FOUND WAYS TO MAKE HOME MODIFICATIONS THAT ALLOW PEOPLE TO MANAGE THE CHALLENGES OF AGING AND LIVE SAFELY IN THE HOMES THEY LOVE.



BATHROOMS

Of course, one of the trickiest areas of accessibility in the home is the bathroom, with its traditional narrow doorway, small footprint and a bathtub that can be difficult to get into and out of.

“When space is tight, we look to other spaces around the bathroom to see what we might be able to gain. In some cases, a small adjacent bedroom can be used,” says Sylvestre.

Above all, access is key. Doorways can be widened and a variety of tub and shower options make it easier and safer for people to roll in or simply walk into a shower.

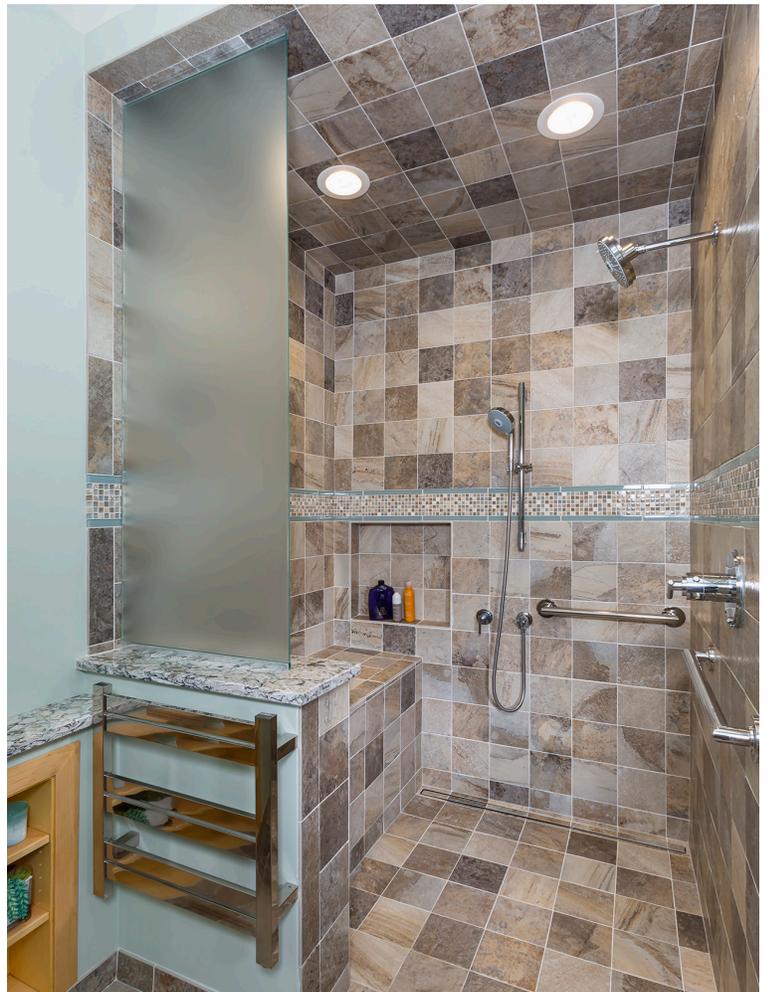
“Many homeowners choose to take out existing bathtub/shower combinations in exchange for an accessible shower,” he says.

“That’s something to consider in terms of resale value; it’s best to keep one bathtub in the home and convert space to an accessible shower if possible, so that both options are there for future residents. In other cases, where there’s a half bath existing, we can add a shower to create that one level living that’s so important,” Sylvestre says.





SMART UPDATES ALLOW
HOMEOWNERS TO LIVE
INDEPENDENTLY
LONGER.



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BETTER FOR US...
NO MATTER WHAT
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REMODELING WITH AN EYE ON THE FUTURE

Even if homeowners aren't thinking about remodeling for aging at the moment, current projects can include components that will make future accessibility modifications easier to make down the road. In the course of a kitchen renovation for one client, Sylvestre shares that *"we were able to rough in plumbing and electricity in a corner of the client's kitchen, so that if she wanted to move the laundry upstairs in the future, the space would be ready for it."*

Above all, it's comforting to know that there are steps that can be taken to transform the homes we love into spaces that will gracefully accommodate our aging or other physical challenges that may come our way.

"We've worked with people who have lived in their home for 50 years who want to make modifications, as well as people who are looking at purchasing a new house and want to make renovations so it will work for them, before they even buy it," Sylvestre says.

No matter where you are on your aging-or remodeling- journey, it's nice to know that the options exist to make our homes better for us, **NO MATTER WHAT STAGE OF LIFE WE'RE IN.**

IMAGINE YOUR LIFE TRANSFORMED

ENJOY  YOUR HOME LONGER



Preserve your lifestyle. Stay in the home you love!

For over 40 years, SYLVESTRE DESIGN & REMODELING has been helping Minnesotans adapt their homes for enjoyment through all stages of life. Preserve your independence with creative solutions from our experienced Certified Aging in Place Specialists.

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free consultation
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-  Bathroom accessibility
-  Kitchen adaptations
-  One-level living
-  Elevators and lifts
-  Laundry room relocation
-  Stair modifications
-  Widened doorways + more



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