



## Six Things To Consider Before Renovating a Basement

MACK Estates, a premier provider of redeveloped and new-construction for-sale housing, shares six vital tips for homeowners considering a basement renovation

By: MarketWatch | July 31, 2014

CHICAGO, Jul 31, 2014 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Tinley Park, Ill.-based MACK Estates, a division of MACK Companies, one of the largest owners and managers of single-family properties in the Chicago area, knows that a basement renovation can increase a home's value anywhere from 15 to 20 percent, depending on the renovations and the market. But as John Gutman, vice president of sales and acquisitions at MACK Estates notes, homeowners can maximize value by considering these six tips before the renovation work begins:

### Know the local building codes

Before investing money into a home, homeowners need to make sure renovations are in compliance with local permitting, building and zoning codes so that it won't need to be redone later. "Although the rules vary by municipality, in addition to plumbing, electricity and other mechanical requirements, many include standards on ceiling height, egress windows and other features that may be overlooked if you haven't done the homework upfront," said Gutman.

### Make sure it's water-tight

The greatest enemy of any basement is water, and the best offense to deal with water issues in a basement is a good defense. Installing a sump pump with a back-up battery will ensure the pump keeps working in the event of a power outage. "If you are redoing the basement flooring, take the time to install drain pipe in the floor along the entire perimeter of the basement walls to catch leaking water and pump it to the sump pump," said Gutman. "There's nothing worse than making your space look perfect, only to have it destroyed by water damage because you didn't take this extra step."

## Don't consume ceiling height with lighting

Although track and pendant lighting may create a homier feel, recessed lighting will allow for more head clearance. "Most basements have lower ceiling heights than other floors in a house, so you can't approach it in the same way," said Gutman.

## Check the staircase width

Evaluate the staircase to ensure it meets code requirements and is wide enough to move furniture and other accessories into the new space. "Stair width is an easily overlooked detail, until you're stuck at the top of the stairs wondering how you're going to get all your new furniture down there," said Gutman.

## Don't make access panels inaccessible

"When installing drywall, make sure not to bury electrical circuit junction boxes in the ceiling, even if it's not in an area where you're planning to put an outlet," said Gutman. Homeowners will need periodic access to HVAC dampers and electrical circuits to control air flow and electricity in other areas of the house.

## Add rooms - and resale value

Adding bedrooms or bathrooms to a basement will also add value when it's time to sell. "Remember that building a room so it can function as a bedroom doesn't mean you need to use it as such - home gyms, storage rooms and game rooms can all work in the space built as a bedroom," said Gutman.

## About MACK Estates

MACK Estates provides quality new-construction and redeveloped homes to the Chicago area, and is led by professionals with more than 50 years of experience in new-home construction and redevelopment. MACK Estates is a division of MACK Companies, which is comprised of specialized businesses that offer investment, construction, residential, commercial, landscape and brokerage services.

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