



FACTSHEET #14

Don't move, it's time to improve!

Instead of hunting down a perfect kitchen or extra room in a new house, why not save on commissions and transfer fees and upgrade the property you have!

One of the many benefits of a clay brick home is that it is easy to extend and renovate.

TECHNICAL CONTRIBUTOR

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DON'T MOVE, IT'S TIME TO IMPROVE!

Did the recent mortgage rate hike frustrate your plans to buy that dream home?

Instead of hunting down a perfect kitchen or extra room elsewhere, why not save on commissions and transfer fees and upgrade the property you have.

One of the many benefits of a clay brick home is that it is easy to extend and renovate.

CREATE SPACE

Face it. In a lot of old houses, walls get in the way. Knock out a non-structural wall, or change a door to an inviting entrance. Anything that opens the space and creates a sense of flow in the house will increase your home's value.



In a warm climate like South Africa, open-plan designs allow the free flow of light and air, look spacious and are an efficient use of the floor area.

Unlike concrete that has internal reinforcing, many interior brick walls are not load bearing. By removing portions of internal walling, older homes can have all the benefits of modern, open-plan living while retaining their charm and character.



If you are removing entire walls, a structural engineer should be consulted. A steel beam may be required to carry the load from the upper floor or roof to the side walls.

If you are knocking through interior or exterior brick walls, recycle the bricks for use in other areas.



BUILDING NEW ROOMS

Extending a home gives you an opportunity to improve energy efficiency in walling, roofing, windows and insulation. Clay bricks are dense and essentially perform like thermal batteries. They slowly absorb and store heat during the day over a 6 to 8 hour period, and then release that heat when it is needed most – at night.

If you are extending your home, combine existing brickwork with a contrasting colour brick, or complement smooth concrete and glass surfaces with satin or textured facebrick.

There are several techniques to tie a new brick wall into an existing brick wall, without affecting structural stability.



KEEPING RENOVATION COSTS DOWN

Property price growth is expected to slow in the next year. Watch your costs to prevent overcapitalising on your renovation.

One of the key advantages of brick walling is that no matter where you build in South Africa, you have easy access to experienced bricklayers and competitively-priced bricks. See the website www.claybrick.org for a map-based search of local brick suppliers.

RENOVATIONS THAT INCREASE HOME VALUE

Kitchen and bathroom renovations increase property value substantially, but these are also the most difficult and expensive.

One desirable and practical project is a paved patio entertainment area. A patio creates a versatile and vibrant social space while cutting back on high-maintenance lawn and scrappy garden beds. Remove large sections of non-loadbearing exterior brick masonry to create a feature glass wall for additional light indoors.





Add curb appeal. Exposed brick is a popular trend and buyers associate a classic brick home with higher property values. Existing brickwork can be repointed, and damaged bricks replaced – so don't assume you need to plaster and paint.

Go Green. Energy savers and will save monthly electricity bills for life and will make your house more desirable if you do put it on the market.

If you're getting ready to put a house on the market, don't allow walls with chipped paint to go unmaintained. If you need to do more than a touch up, choose neutral, natural colours.



Refresh old brickwork with a coat of paint – a dark charcoal will add drama to a feature wall, or fresh white keeps the texture while lighting up the room.

If you have a basement room, consider turning it into an extra family room or “man cave” where a large television will hide the lack of outdoor views.



Tangled trees, a patchy lawn and unkempt bushes can obscure views from the house and make interiors feel dark and cold. Replace a high-maintenance garden with hard landscaping, paving and brick-built planters and seating. With less garden to maintain, you can spend time and effort on spectacular landscaping.



See the claybrick.org website for DIY project ideas you can complete in a weekend.



New London Architecture's "Don't Move, Improve!" Competition shows that renovation projects can inspire.

Overall first place went to House of Trace. Both 1st and 2nd places, as well as several individual prizes went to houses that used brick enhanced by glass.



The Gables won the New London Architecture award for best use of materials with its innovative blend of polished concrete, timber screens and whitewashed original brick.

For further information:

The Clay Brick Association of South Africa

Website: www.claybrick.org