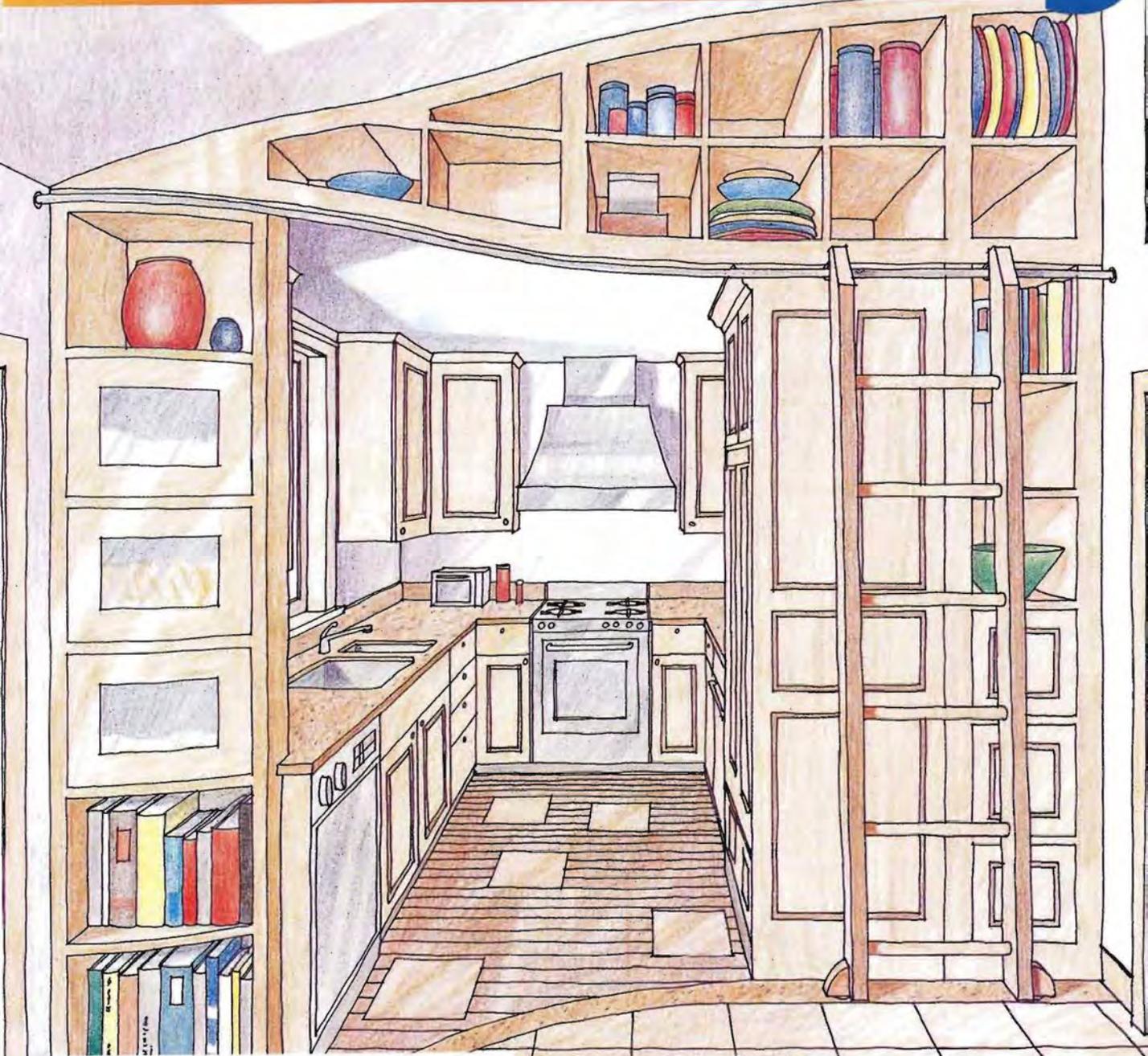


# Remodeling



COVER STORY, P. 88:

## **Kitchens That Work**

PLUS:

■ **Falling in Love Again** P. 82

■ **Batten the Hatches** P. 111

ACCESSIBILITY

## Gracious Accommodations

Just because a house is accessible to people who are disabled doesn't mean it has to look institutional.

Quite the contrary, as these two projects demonstrate. Both earned honors in the 1996 Easy Access Housing Design Awards. The competition—which is sponsored by the National Easter Seal Society, Century 21 Real Estate Corporation and the American Institute of Architects (AIA)—recognizes “innovative housing designs that enhance accessibility for persons with all categories of disability.”

Architect Joshua Zinder, AIA, of Cold Spring, N.Y., snagged an award with this remodeled master bath (below, right). Zinder divided the room into two zones—a dry and a wet area. The former includes a cantilevered sink and counter and a toilet, and the latter an accessible whirlpool and an open shower. A strip drain separates the two zones.

Simple, attractive materials on the walls and floor—ceramic tiles and tongue-and-groove cedar paneling—in tandem with soft but plentiful lighting lend the room a pleas-

ant, noninstitutional air.

Another award-winning project involved the rehabilitation of a low-income housing complex in Somerville, Mass. The architectural firm Bruner/Cott & Associates, Inc., of Cambridge, Mass., along with Stateside Builders, Inc., of Wayland, Mass., set out not only to renovate the complex's six buildings and make them completely accessible, but also to “deinstitutionalize” the site. “Low-income tenants,” asserts Bruner/Cott in the company's application, “particularly those who may be less mobile, deserve to live in an environment that promotes a level of dignity and hope.”

That philosophy is well-illustrated by the team's deft treatment of the buildings' entrances. Previously, steep flights of cement steps led to industrial-type doors; flat, unadorned overhangs provided bare-bones shelter but no sense of welcome. Today, the remodeled units feature stepless, rampless entries graced with gabled porticoes (below, left). As Bruner/Cott points out proudly: “Although the entries were originally one-half level above grade, our innovative solution was to raise the grade around each building to make all entries accessible and barrier-free. We have achieved this without using a single ramp.” ■



Before

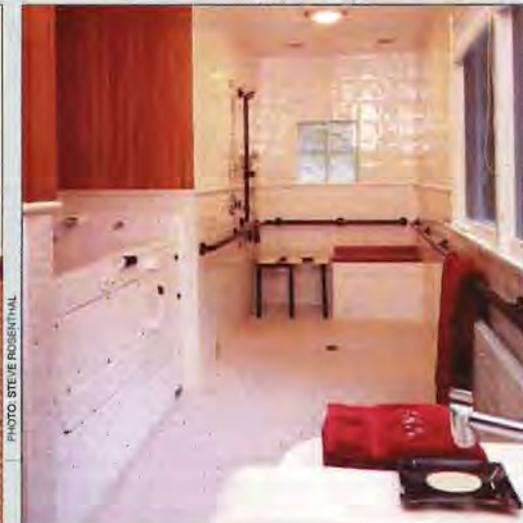


PHOTO: STEVE ROSENTHAL

PHOTO: MICK HALES

## MARKET WATCH

Prices of all construction materials rose 1.8 percent from the end of 1995 to the end of 1996. The ultimate impact of that increase on remodelers depends on the mix of products they purchase. Softwood lumber topped the list with a 20.7-percent rise. At the other end of the spectrum were hardware prices, which

### Change in Prices of Building Materials

December 1995 to December 1996



took a 6.9-percent fall.

There were large increases in other materials besides lumber. Gypsum and cement prices jumped 11.7 percent and 5.4 percent, respectively. All three of these products are more volatile in price than most, and will probably head the list again this year. Oil-based materials such as plastic pipe, already at the bottom of the price change list for '96, will probably remain there too. That's because oil prices are declining again as Iraqi crude oil comes on the market, and imports tend to limit price increases.

Building prices should rise again this year by 2 percent.

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