



These “after” photos showcase the renovation work. The “before” photos are above, right page.

## Making Practical and Beautiful Upgrades

TAKE A WALK DOWN any of Barrington’s roads and you’ll discover a diverse assortment of homes, reflecting the town’s deep roots in character, tradition, and history. For many residents, this vintage charm is exactly what drew them in. With the passage of time, growth of a family, or a change in ownership, home renovations may be necessary, but this can create a tension between your needs and personal preferences while maintaining the original character.

Perhaps the room most commonly in need of an update is also the most commonly used—the bathroom. It is where our days start and end, defining important routines that determine whether a workday is productive, or a night is restful. Despite its prominence in our daily lives, these renovations are often put on the backburner due to challenges they create. Many bathrooms, particularly in older homes, are limited in square footage which leads to concerns on how to enhance the space without negatively impacting adjacent

rooms through demolition or having to start entirely from scratch.

Fortunately, there are several relatively simple ways to make significant upgrades. The following categories are crucial considerations of any room, including the bathroom—featured here in before and after photos.

### SPACE

When budgeting square footage, prioritization is vital. Consider ditching the tub. Most people prefer to shower, so unless you are intending to use the tub, don’t hold onto it. Instead, create a more spacious shower that can include a seat for comfort. You always want to keep one tub in the house for future resale purpose, but it is no longer necessary to have several if they are not serving you. Limited space can work to your advantage; a modestly-sized bathroom can allow for higher-end materials to be utilized without breaking the bank.

### LIGHT

Many bathrooms have insufficient light. If possible, increase natural light with a larger, unfrosted window. Utilize recessed lighting throughout the ceiling, including the shower. Sconces hung at eye-level on each side of the vanity provide better illumination for your face. Dimmers can control the amount of light needed based on the time of day. Partnering bright colors and a monochromatic palette with more effective lighting will also help to create the illusion of a larger space.

### FUNCTIONALITY

At the end of the day, even the most beautiful bathroom is useless if it isn’t also practical. Its features must work seamlessly with one another, as well as flow nicely with the look and feel of the rest of the house. Keep the routines of your family in mind when considering the design. Declutter what you can by determining what is most essential in taking care of yourself. There are many unique storage solutions such as specialty cabinets with hair dryer holders and cubbies for specific items.

Whether tackling bathroom renovations as a DIY-project or working with a designer, keeping space, light, and functionality as primary considerations will allow you to maximize luxury while maintaining the original charm and character of your home. U



Radka Sumberova is a designer with Suran Built. “I believe that home is a sanctuary where we return to at the end of a day to relax and rejuvenate. In that sense, it needs to support and nourish us through all our senses.

My favorite word is flow, about how space transitions itself from one area to the other, how it brings people together or creates privacy, how it pulls us in or offers the view beyond, for we all need to day-dream. What I aspire for is to tap into my client’s creative side and bring out their inner designer. Suran Built is a home renovation and design firm located at 30 N. Williams in Crystal Lake. Learn more at [www.SuranBuilt.com](http://www.SuranBuilt.com), or call 815-444-1293.



The bathroom photos before renovation.

