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“Station Renovations & Additions”

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Have you ever gone through a major renovation of your home? It’s exciting, but what a challenge (nightmare?) it can be. If your station project looks more likely to be renovations and/or additions instead of a new facility there are dozens of considerations. Let’s look at just a couple of the issues that you’ll likely have to address.

Move-in or move-out?

The most pleasant location for your department to be during construction is *not* in the building being renovated. If you can relocate during the construction period do it! Running the department day-to-day can be challenging enough by itself. Add to that the hustle of a building being demolished or built around you and you’ve got a real circus on your hands.

A whole variety of reasons may dictate that you must live in the building...or at least on-site, during construction. This may mean renting modular admin/living units to locate on an “out-of-the-way” portion of the site or this may mean playing musical chairs with the building as your move out of the parts of the building that the contractor needs next.

Keep in mind that phasing construction means multiple mobilizations for many of the same sub contractors and extended construction schedules. All of this results in higher construction costs and coordination efforts on your part.



“The Erwin Fire Station renovation required construction staging in order for vehicle bays to remain operational.”

Upgrades

Even if there are portions of your facility that you did not intend to renovate, you may find yourself required to do so. Most building codes only allow a defined quantity of renovations before other code upgrades are triggered. Many of these required code upgrades center on accessibility, life safety and handicap. Other code required upgrades to non-renovated portions of the building may be structural, plumbing, mechanical, electrical, hazardous materials and even landscaping.

Don't assume that the current general building code is your only choice. For example, North Carolina has adopted a Rehabilitation Code that solely applies to renovations of existing buildings. The Rehab Code allows for much more flexibility than the International Building Code that is required for new construction.

There are potential "non-code" upgrades that you may be required to address. These may include; roofing, paving, parking locations and emergency power back-up.

Facelift

The aesthetics of the remaining portions of the existing facility may be worthy of preserving and continuing in the new structures. If so, you will likely need to address some overdue maintenance issues on the older facades. If not, you may desire to modify or redesign the appearance of the existing building to compliment the new.



Lincolnnton Fire Dept & City Hall before renovations.



Lincolnnton Fire Dept & City Hall after renovations.

Tidbits

Generally speaking, we have found on addition & renovations projects that it is less expensive (and less headaches) to add new vehicle bays sized for modern equipment and clearances, than renovate the old bays into the required administrative or living spaces.

As the building owner, you already have property insurance on the existing facility you will be renovating. It is less expensive for the building owner to purchase a *Builder's Risk* rider from the current insurance company that insures property during construction than it is for the general contractor to purchase a separate *Builder's Risk* policy.

Conclusion

These and a thousand other issues are reasons that you would be well served to have a design professional on board for the project that has weathered the storms of renovations & additions to public safety stations. Renovations are typically less expensive than new construction, but those savings can come with a price if not considered properly.