



**J.D. Coussens Inc.**

**563-388-0967**

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**[www.jdcoussens.com](http://www.jdcoussens.com)**

## **Attic Antics**

If you're looking for space for a new bedroom or master suite, look up. Here's how to determine whether your attic is a good candidate for conversation.

### **How's it built?**

Grab a flashlight and take a peek up there. If you see a network of W-shape trusses supporting your roof, forget about it. You could probably build an addition more cost-effectively than remodel this type of attic. If, however, you find rafters that form an A shape to support the roof – with open space underneath the rafters – you've got a potential remodeling candidate.



## **Think Up and Down**

Figure out how you're going to get up and down from the finished attic space. Enlarging an existing stairway or adding a new one will affect spaces below. A straight-run stair will chew up 10 to 14 feet of floor space; a stair designed with an intermediate landing and two runs needs about 8 feet on the lower level. Spiral staircases take up only about 5 feet.



## **Measure for Headroom**

Most building codes require that a living space be at least 7-1/2 feet high over 50 percent of the floor area. Keep in mind the thickness of finishing materials when you calculate headroom.



## Evaluate Light and Access

You may need to add windows or skylights. If you plan to use the attic as a bedroom, many codes require egress through a window in case of fire.



## More Planning - Consider Adding One or More Dormers

These small additions that raise the roof over a portion of the attic will boost usable space and create the feeling of living in the treetops.

## Assess the Plumbing

If your attic plans include a bathroom, try to locate it above a bathroom on the floor below to reduce costs and avoid the need to cut a hole in the room for a new vent stack.



## Get Creative with Minor Obstacles

Vent stacks and brick chimneys can be hidden behind walls and cabinets. Modern furnaces don't need to vent through a chimney, so if an existing chimney doesn't vent a fireplace or water heater, it might be removable.

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