

Walk down a street in Woodland Hills and you can usually guess which homes were built in the 60s or 70s without checking the records. Low ceilings, small closed-off kitchens, original tile baths, and tired finishes are common. The good news is that this neighborhood also has some of the best potential for smart remodeling in the Valley, whether you want a light cosmetic update or a full-gut transformation.

The first question most homeowners ask is simple: what is this actually going to cost? The real answer depends on how deep you go. A cosmetic remodel might keep most of your walls and systems in place, while a full-gut remodel strips spaces down to studs and often moves plumbing, electrical, and layout.

What follows is a grounded, Woodland Hills specific look at what you can expect to spend, how long it may take, and how to think about hiring a general contractor so you get the result you are paying for.

What “cosmetic” vs “full-gut” really means on a Woodland Hills project

Contractors toss around terms like “cosmetic remodel” and “full-gut” all the time, but they do not always mean the same thing to every builder. Before talking numbers, it helps to be clear on scope.

A cosmetic remodel usually means you are not moving walls or changing where plumbing and electrical rough-in lines live. Think of it as changing what you see and touch daily without re-engineering the bones of the house. That might include new flooring, paint, cabinetry refacing, countertops, light fixtures, hardware, and sometimes new appliances that fit existing locations.

A full-gut remodel means you take the space down to framing. Drywall comes off, old insulation goes, plumbing lines are exposed or replaced, electrical gets redone, and layout often changes. In older Woodland Hills homes, that is where you discover original cloth wiring, undersized drain lines, or no insulation in exterior walls. Full-gut projects are typically where you reconfigure rooms, add beams to open up spaces, or change window and door openings.

A quick way to think about it: if you are mainly changing materials and finishes, you are in cosmetic territory. If you are touching framing, rough plumbing, or rough electrical in a major way, you are closer to a full-gut remodel.

Cost ranges: cosmetic vs full-gut in Woodland Hills

Local labor rates, material preferences, and city requirements all play into what a Woodland Hills general contractor will charge. The numbers below are ranges I commonly see for projects done to a solid, code-compliant standard, not bargain-basement work and not ultra-luxury celebrity builds either.

Think of these as ballparks for planning, not fixed bids.

Cosmetic remodel cost ranges

For a typical Woodland Hills single family home, cosmetic renovations generally fall into the following ranges:

- Whole-home cosmetic refresh, limited layout changes, using mid-range materials: roughly 40 to 80 dollars per square foot over the remodeled area. On a 2,000 square foot home where you touch most rooms, that might mean 80,000 to 160,000 dollars, depending on how far you go with cabinetry, tile, and fixtures.
- Kitchen cosmetic remodel, leaving cabinets in place or refacing, keeping appliances in same locations: usually 35,000 to 75,000 dollars with a Woodland Hills general contractor. Smaller galley kitchens with budget-

friendly finishes can land on the lower end. Larger kitchens with quartz or natural stone, quality appliances, and good lighting design naturally climb.

- Bathroom cosmetic remodel in Woodland Hills, CA, where you keep the plumbing fixtures in the same location and avoid heavy structural work: typically 18,000 to 35,000 dollars for a hall bath. Primary baths with double vanities, separate tub, and a larger shower usually fall between 30,000 and 60,000 dollars for cosmetic level work.

These ranges assume licensed contractors, city inspections where required, and materials that hold up in a real home, not just a photoshoot.

Full-gut remodel cost ranges

Once you strip spaces to studs, move plumbing or electrical, or open structural walls, you move into a different cost category. In Woodland Hills, a full-gut remodel reflects Los Angeles labor rates, permit fees, and code requirements.

- Whole-home full-gut renovation including new electrical, new plumbing in many areas, new HVAC, insulation upgrades, and layout changes: commonly 150 to 300 dollars per square foot of remodeled space. For a 2,000 square foot home where you touch nearly everything, it is realistic to see bids from roughly 300,000 dollars on the bare bones side up to 600,000 or more with nicer finishes and complex structural work.
- Full-gut kitchen remodel with walls open, rough trades updated, and layout changes: 80,000 to 175,000 dollars is a real-world range with a Woodland Hills general contractor. The lower end might be a smaller kitchen, limited structural changes, and semi-custom cabinets. The upper end can include removing load-bearing walls, high-end custom cabinetry, luxury appliances, and detailed finish work.
- Full-gut bathroom remodel in Woodland Hills, CA: simple hall baths that are fully stripped, re-plumbed, retiled, and rebuilt often fall between 30,000 and 55,000 dollars. Larger primary baths with structural changes, heated floors, custom glass, and more elaborate tile layouts can range from 60,000 to over 100,000 dollars.

One reason these numbers surprise homeowners is hidden conditions. Many of the original Woodland Hills tract homes were built quickly and to the standards of their time. Once walls are open, contractors often discover undersized framing, ungrounded wiring, or drainage issues that must be corrected to meet current code.

How much does a Woodland Hills general contractor charge?

People usually want to know if they should expect a flat percentage, a cost per square foot, or something else. Most general contractors in Woodland Hills build their price into the overall project cost rather than charging a separate, obvious line item labeled "contractor fee." You will see labor, materials, subcontractors, and sometimes a separate management or overhead line.

On a typical remodel, a Woodland Hills general contractor might effectively earn 15 to 30 percent of the total project cost after paying subs, materials, and overhead. Smaller jobs sometimes carry a higher effective percentage, simply because permits, supervision, and basic scheduling costs are not much lower for a small bath than a big one.

Some contractors work on a cost-plus basis, charging you the actual cost of labor and materials plus a transparent fee, such as 20 percent. Others bid a fixed lump sum. Both approaches can work, but each requires trust and clear documentation.

If a proposal looks unusually low compared to two or three others, there is usually a reason: missing scope, unpriced items, or a contractor planning to make it up on change orders. That rarely ends well for the homeowner.

How much should you pay upfront to a Woodland Hills contractor?

California has clear legal limits. For most home improvement contracts, the contractor can only collect up to 1,000 dollars or 10 percent of the contract price as a deposit, whichever is less, unless the contract is for a very large custom project that falls into different rules. After that, payments should be tied to clear milestones: framing complete, rough inspections passed, cabinets delivered, and so on.

If a contractor asks for half the money upfront “to lock in your project” or “buy materials,” consider that a red flag. Material deposits may be appropriate for fully custom items like cabinets or special order windows, but those should be spelled out in the contract and tied to specific purchases, not vague promises.

Kitchen remodel costs with a Woodland Hills general contractor

Kitchens are often the heart of Woodland Hills remodels. The most common question I hear is some version of “How much does a kitchen remodel cost with a Woodland Hills general contractor?”

Here is how I usually break it down when I walk a kitchen with a client.

A light cosmetic kitchen update might focus on painting or refacing cabinets, swapping countertops, changing hardware, adding a backsplash, and upgrading lighting. With a licensed contractor handling permits when wiring is altered and coordinating trades, you might reasonably spend 35,000 to 60,000 dollars for a mid-size kitchen.

Once you replace cabinets entirely, upgrade appliances, and redo flooring, costs typically climb into the 60,000 to 120,000 dollar range, even if the layout stays similar. Custom or semi-custom cabinets, better drawer hardware, and quartz or natural stone tops add both value and cost.

If you decide to knock down a wall to open the kitchen to the living area, relocate the sink or range, or run a new gas line, the job moves toward full-gut territory. Structural engineering, beam installation, extensive drywall, and higher electrical demands mean it is not unusual to see 100,000 to 175,000 dollar ranges for a fully reimaged Woodland Hills kitchen.

Keep in mind that appliance packages can swing totals by 10,000 to 30,000 dollars or more. A fridge and range set alone can range from 4,000 dollars for solid but basic units to 25,000 or more for high-end brands.

Bathroom remodel costs in Woodland Hills, CA

Bathrooms are deceptively expensive per square foot. Tile labor, waterproofing, plumbing fixtures, and glass all add up quickly.

For a straightforward hall bathroom remodel in Woodland Hills, where you keep the same layout, include good waterproofing, reasonable tile, and quality but not exotic fixtures, a realistic range with a licensed contractor is 18,000 to 35,000 dollars for a cosmetic level job. If you go full-gut to address plumbing, venting, or moisture issues, that range often shifts to 30,000 to [Woodland Hills home builder](#) 55,000 dollars.

Primary bathrooms often involve more complexity: double vanities, larger showers, perhaps a freestanding tub, and sometimes layout changes. Here you are looking at 40,000 to 80,000 dollars for a solid full remodel, with highly customized work climbing above 100,000.

Because moisture damage is common in older baths, it is wise to assume some repair work, especially in homes where tile or caulk has failed over many years.

Whole-home renovation and custom home costs

When homeowners realize they want to touch most of the house, they usually ask two questions: how much does a whole-home renovation cost in Woodland Hills, CA, and at what point is it smarter to build new?

For an existing home that you plan to keep mostly within the current footprint, a whole-home renovation that is mostly cosmetic typically runs 40 to 80 dollars per square foot of remodeled area, if you avoid major structural and systems overhauls.

Once you tackle a true full-gut renovation with new systems, layout changes, and higher-end finishes, total project costs of 150 to 300 dollars per square foot become common. On older homes with serious structural or foundation corrections, that can climb higher.

By comparison, if you ask how much it costs to build a custom home in Woodland Hills, CA, a realistic modern range is often between 350 and 700 dollars per square foot, depending on slope, design complexity, and finish level, not counting land cost. Many tight lots and hillside conditions in and near Woodland Hills push costs up due to engineering and retaining work.

The break-even point between deep remodel and new build depends on how much of the existing structure you are required to bring up to current code. Sometimes it makes financial sense to remodel 50 to 70 percent of a house. Other times, especially when foundations or framing are severely compromised, serious conversations about starting over are warranted.

Permits and regulations in Woodland Hills

Homeowners often ask whether a permit is required for home remodeling in Woodland Hills, CA. The short answer: if you move or significantly alter plumbing, electrical, or structural elements, you need permits through the City of Los Angeles, since Woodland Hills is within L.A. City limits.

Examples that nearly always require permits:

- Moving walls, especially load-bearing ones
- Adding or relocating plumbing fixtures, such as a shower or sink
- Rewiring circuits or adding new circuits
- Adding square footage or converting a garage or accessory structure into living space

Simple cosmetic work like interior painting, swapping existing light fixtures on the same boxes, or replacing flooring usually does not require a permit. But once you open walls and start touching rough trades, skipping permits can become a costly mistake when you go to sell or if something fails.

A trustworthy Woodland Hills general contractor should be upfront about when permits are required and handle the process for you or clearly outline who is responsible.

Timeline: how long does a home remodel take in Woodland Hills, CA?

Permitting, subcontractor availability, and material lead times control much of the schedule. As a general guide, assuming a competent contractor and no major surprises:

A cosmetic hall bathroom remodel might take 3 to 6 weeks once work begins. A full-gut bath with inspections and custom glass can stretch to 6 to 10 weeks.



A mid-size kitchen remodel often takes 8 to 14 weeks, depending on cabinet lead times and whether walls or structural beams are part of the scope.

A whole-home cosmetic refresh may run 2 to 4 months, whereas a full-gut whole-home remodel can easily run 6 to 12 months, especially if you are living off-site and the contractor has full access for efficient work.

Timelines also stretch when homeowners change scope after work begins, or when long-lead materials are ordered late. Good planning before demolition is one of the best ways to keep a project on track.

What home renovations add the most value in Woodland Hills?

Not every dollar you spend comes back when you sell, but certain renovations tend to pull more weight in this neighborhood.

Updated kitchens and baths remain top value-adds. Buyers in Woodland Hills pay attention to functional open kitchens, enough counter space, and clean, bright bathrooms. A well-designed kitchen remodel with quality materials often returns a strong portion of its cost, especially if the existing kitchen is severely dated.

Floor plan improvements matter as much as finishes. Removing a wall to create an open kitchen-living area or reworking a choppy primary suite can significantly improve perceived value. Usable outdoor space also carries weight in Woodland Hills, where many lots allow for patios, outdoor kitchens, and improved yard access.

Energy efficiency upgrades, such as better insulation, new windows, and updated HVAC, often do not show as dramatically in listing photos, but they make the home more comfortable and attractive during inspection and can

help with long-term ownership costs.

Common remodeling mistakes homeowners make in Woodland Hills

I see some patterns over and over:

Homeowners underestimate the scope of older home issues. On a 1960s house, original plumbing and electrical behind the walls can derail a budget if not planned for. Building a contingency of 10 to 20 percent into your budget is prudent.

Another mistake is focusing on finishes and ignoring infrastructure. Shiny fixtures on top of failing drain lines or a roof past its life may look good for a year, then turn into surprise repairs. In Woodland Hills, especially in areas with mature trees and aging sewer lines, it is wise to address core systems while walls are open.

Many people also rush to hire the lowest bidder without checking whether the contractor can actually manage a project with permits, inspections, and proper scheduling. That is where jobs stall, quality slips, or conflicts arise.

Finally, trying to act as your own general contractor on a complex remodel often looks like an easy way to save the 15 to 30 percent contractor fee, but it shifts scheduling, liability, and coordination demands onto you. For a full-gut project, this can quickly become an expensive and stressful endeavor.

What to look for when hiring a Woodland Hills general contractor

Hiring the right general contractor is as important as deciding on tile or countertops. When clients ask what they should look for when hiring a Woodland Hills general contractor, I encourage them to focus less on the sales pitch and more on verifiable information.

Licensing and insurance are non-negotiable. The contractor should have an active California contractor's license in the appropriate classification, general liability insurance, and workers' compensation coverage. You can verify licenses online with the Contractors State License Board.

Experience with your type of project matters. A contractor who only builds new construction may not be ideal for a surgical remodel in a tight Woodland Hills lot, and vice versa. Ask to see photos and, more importantly, to speak with past clients who did similar projects.

Communication style is another big clue. Does the contractor answer questions clearly, put things in writing, and explain trade-offs, or do they rush through details? Residential remodeling is full of decisions and surprises. You want someone who communicates well under pressure.

Signs of a trustworthy Woodland Hills general contractor include realistic timelines, detailed line-item estimates, clear explanations of allowances and exclusions, and a willingness to say "I do not know yet, but I will find out" when appropriate.

Key questions to ask a Woodland Hills general contractor before hiring

Here is a concise set of questions that usually separates solid professionals from risky picks:

1. How many projects like mine have you completed in Woodland Hills or nearby in the last few years, and can I speak to those clients?
2. Who will be on site daily, and how often will you personally visit the job?

3. How do you handle permits and inspections with the City of Los Angeles, and are permit fees included in your estimate?
4. What is your typical payment schedule, and how do you manage change orders if something unexpected comes up?
5. What is your process for protecting my home from dust, debris, and weather during construction?

Listen not just to the answers but to how directly and comfortably the contractor responds. Vague or defensive replies are a warning sign.

Can one Woodland Hills contractor handle both kitchen and bathroom remodeling?

Yes, many general contractors in Woodland Hills handle both kitchen and bathroom remodeling under one contract. In fact, bundling multiple rooms with one general contractor can be more efficient than hiring separate specialists, because plumbing, electrical, tile, and cabinetry trades overlap.

The key is to confirm that the contractor has repeatable systems for managing sequencing. For example, demo and rough plumbing may happen in several rooms at once, but finish work should be staggered so trades are not tripping over each other. The schedule and contract should clearly show how they plan to juggle multiple spaces in your home.

How to choose the best Woodland Hills general contractor for your budget and goals

There is no universal “best” contractor, only a best fit for your specific situation. If you are aiming for a cosmetic refresh with a tight budget, you want someone who is efficient, practical, and honest about where you can save without hurting future resale. If you plan a high-end full-gut remodel or custom home, you need a contractor comfortable working with architects, engineers, designers, and a more complex permitting pathway.

Ask yourself what matters most: speed, cost, quality, or a balance. You can usually have two of those in abundance, but rarely all three at once. Be candid with your contractor about priorities. For example, if you say you want the absolute lowest cost and also a magazine-ready kitchen completed in eight weeks, a good contractor will gently reset expectations.

Review the contract closely. It should spell out scope, materials standards, exclusions, allowances, payment schedule, warranty, and dispute resolution. If you do not understand a section, ask. Good contractors prefer informed clients, because surprises are what cause most conflicts.

Remodeling in Woodland Hills, whether cosmetic or full-gut, is a serious investment. Understanding realistic cost ranges, permit requirements, timelines, and what to look for in a contractor puts you in a stronger position from the first design meeting through the final walkthrough. When you match the right scope to your budget and hire a contractor who is transparent, licensed, and organized, your odds of a smooth and rewarding project rise dramatically.

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