

Spring HOME



SHERRY HAMILTON / GAZETTE-JOURNAL

The exterior of the McDaniell house at Flat Iron in Gloucester has undergone a transformation since Tusnee McDaniell purchased it in 2016. At that time, it was hidden by extensive undergrowth, the paint was peeling, the windows were broken, and the porch was sagging. Contractors are now working on restoring the interior. In right photo, Tusnee and Kerry McDaniell, center, are diligently working to restore the home, which dates from 1850, and to turn it into a family gathering place. Painting contractor Michael Roghelia, left, and general contractor John Jefferson, right, have put in many hours of labor working on the home.

Old Gloucester farmhouse being lovingly restored

BY SHERRY HAMILTON

Tusnee McDaniell of Gloucester grew up one of 10 children in a small house in her home country of Thailand. All the children slept in the same room, on mats on the floor. In the morning, they rose, rolled up their mats and

put them away, and used that same room for all of the other activities the family engaged in during the day. Home ownership means something to McDaniell. She believes in taking care of a home, cherishing its past, and restoring its usefulness if it's fallen on hard times. And

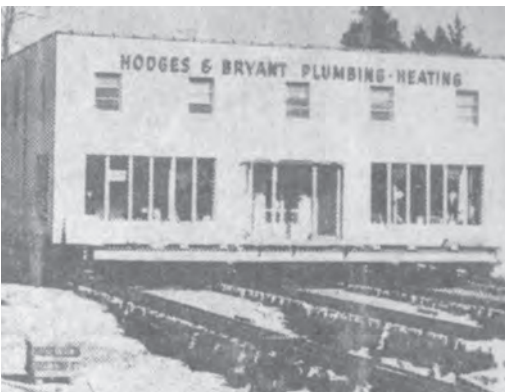
that's exactly what she's doing with an old farmhouse she bought several years ago on Flat Iron Road. McDaniell said she purchased the land in 2016 on the advice of her real estate agent and had no idea there was even a house on the property. The surrounding wood-

land had overtaken it, hiding it from ready view. When she discovered the two-story home, paint peeling, windows broken, and in various stages of disrepair, she decided to fix it up and turn it into a gathering place for her extended family to come together on special occasions.

"It's a really solid house," she said during a recent walk through the rooms. "It has a lot of history. That's why I want to save it." McDaniell's husband, Kerry McDaniell, pointed out the interlocking tin roof that was installed on the home sometime in the 1880s, saying the roof

was what saved the house. "It's in amazingly good shape," he said. "You don't find a piece of property like this very often. It's a project." Tusnee McDaniell said she began the project by having the land around it cleared and

SEE HOME RESTORATION, PAGE 2C



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A view from the north bedroom on the second floor of the McDaniel house shows the McDaniels standing on the large upstairs landing, with Kerry looking down into the front yard and Tusnee examining the south bedroom. The new wide beams at the top of the wall were installed by contractor John Jefferson to raise the roof and provide more headroom. The original doors, which will be repainted and reinstalled, are only around 6'2" tall. Modern doors are typically 6'8" tall.

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HOME RESTORATION

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1C)

dividing it into two parcels facing two different roads. She plans for her son, who lives in Gloucester, to build a second home at the site someday. She said her two daughters, one living in Irvington and the other in Newport News, will be able to visit, stay in the family house, and have fun together

as a family.

"It's a nice place," she said. "It's beautiful, with a lot of animals. A lot of birds. It's peaceful."

The first task McDaniel took on was to have the exterior of the house repaired and painted and to replace all of the windows with modern ones.

Contractor John Jefferson jacked up the sagging back

portion of the home and rebuilt the front porch, which had a lot of rotten timbers. He replaced all 22 windows, repaired holes in the floor, and raised the roof a foot to provide adequate headroom in the upstairs bedrooms.

"I came to patch a couple of rotten holes," said Jeffer-

SEE HOME RESTORATION, PAGE 3C

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The railings on the staircase, both downstairs and upstairs, were all stolen from the house in 2020, along with plywood and other building materials that were being kept at the site, said owner Tusnee McDaniel. The lath-and-plaster construction of the walls can still be seen in the wall of the north parlor, adjacent to the stairs. Rather than rising directly in front of the front door, shown at left, the staircase rises from the landing adjacent to the kitchen at the rear of the house. The work area of the kitchen, shown at right, will be small, as befits a home that will only be used on special occasions.

HOME RESTORATION

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2C)
son, “and I’ve been here ever since.”

After demolition of interior walls and removal of kitchen cabinets, Jefferson began to replace cabinets and modernize the kitchen.

Painter Michael Roghelia sanded and painted the entire exterior of the home, then started on the interior doors and door jambs. Bobby Allsbrook of E.T. Lawson was there the day of the walk-through to talk about HVAC and plumbing for the structure. The house will get all-new electric, as well.

At the time of the walk-through, the house had been gutted, and the original rough, full-sized, hand-cut 2x4s were all visible. McDaniel pointed out the hardwood floors and the wide heart pine boards on the sides of the stairway.

“Old houses are beautiful,” she said. “Why tear it down?”

“The whole house was built with heart pine except the hardwood floors,” said Jefferson. “It’s all solid underneath.”

But nature did have its way to some extent. The under-



This undated photo, courtesy of Larry Brown, shows members of the Brown family at the Flat Iron home place, built in 1850 and now being renovated by Tusnee and Kerry McDaniel.

sides of the roof boards in the attic were widely bespattered

with spots where mud daubers and wasps had built hundreds of nests over the years. There were so many that McDaniel had to hire a contractor just to remove them all.

“It’s amazing how this house survived,” she said.

The original section of the house was a two-up, two-down structure, with a large central hall and a stairway downstairs and a large parlor on either side, each with a fireplace. A later addition on the back of the main structure houses the kitchen, a storage room, and a future bathroom.

At the top of the stairs is a large landing flanked by two large bedrooms, each with its own fireplace. A hall off the back of the landing leads to a third bedroom and a future bathroom and storage space above the kitchen. All the rooms are spacious and bright.

Jefferson said stainless steel liners have been installed in the chimneys, and he’ll be repairing and stabilizing the brick to make sure it lasts. After the HVAC, plumbing, and electrical are completed, he said he’ll install sheetrock on some interior walls and ship-lap on others.

“We still have a long way to go,” said Tusnee McDaniel. “But you need to keep the history. Without history to show how people lived, we have nothing.”

History of the McDaniel house
The McDaniel house was built in 1850 by Smith W. Brown and his son, Henry W. Brown, a timber merchant, who were the great-great-grandfather and great-grandfather, respectively, of Larry Brown of Susan.

Larry Brown said that family records show the men living with General William Booth Taliaferro at Dunham-Massie in Ware Neck in 1850 while the

house was under construction. The two had sold their property in Middlesex and purchased 160+ acres in Ware Neck—land that now houses Brent & Becky’s Bulbs, Flat Iron Crossroads, and other properties in the vicinity.

Among the family businesses that arose at Flat Iron was a wheelwright and blacksmith’s shop owned by Wilbur Brown, a brother of Larry Brown’s grandfather. That business eventually moved across the road and became a lawnmower sales and repair shop owned by James Strigle Jr., who operated it into the early 1980s.

Brown’s grandfather, born in 1891, was raised in the family home, along with 11 brothers and sisters. He and his twin sister were the youngest of the dozen siblings, and they lived at the house until the 1930s. By then, steam engines, railroads and motorized boats had changed the ways in which people lived, and when the Great Depression descended on the nation, the family sold everything and moved to Newport News, chasing a better life.

A later resident of the home was Red Metzger, who lived there for about a decade from the 1970s to the 1980s and operated a garage in the building that now houses the entertainment venue Flat Iron Crossroads.



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Painting contractor Michael Roghelia, left, and general contractor John Jefferson warm themselves by a kerosene stove in the south parlor of the McDaniel project as they prepare to launch into another day of work. Such features as the bead-board ceiling in this room have been retained whenever possible. All four of the front rooms in the McDaniel house have chimneys, as shown below in the ground floor’s north parlor. Stainless steel stove pipes have been inserted and the contractor is stabilizing the brickwork to make sure the chimneys remain usable.



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Siding comes in a variety of materials, and homeowners can explore the pros, cons and affordability of each.

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Siding materials to consider for your home

(METRO) Exterior renovations consistently top the list of projects that offer maximum return on investment, according to Remodeling magazine's annual "Cost vs. Value Report." Siding replacement is a popular exterior renovation and one that can completely transform the look of a home.

Siding comes in a variety of materials, and homeowners can explore the pros, cons and affordability of each to make the most informed decision when replacing their existing siding. Factors to consider apart from price include durability, maintenance and aesthetics.

Vinyl

Vinyl siding is one of the most popular siding materials in North America. That popularity is perhaps due to the relatively low cost of vinyl siding replacement, which Forbes Home estimates is between \$6,150 and \$15,900 to install for a 2,000-square-foot home. A wide array of color options

as well as weatherproof protection makes vinyl siding worthy of consideration.

PVC, which is what vinyl siding is comprised of, also is quite fire-resistant. Potential pitfalls of vinyl are that it can fade more quickly than other siding materials and is sensitive to excess UV exposure.

Engineered materials

Engineered materials cost more than vinyl but are considered very durable. They can be advantageous in damp climates or ones where insects are problematic. LP SmartSide® is a type of engineered hardwood that is very durable, so much so that a 50-year warranty often is offered for the product, according to First American Roofing

& Siding. This material can be painted if homeowners desire a change of color down the line. This siding costs around \$2.50 to \$4.50 per square foot for siding and all trim accessories with an additional installation cost of \$5.50 to \$12 per square foot. The product is made of wooden strands that have been coated with wax for moisture resistance. A special zinc-based solution is added to protect against rot and insect infestation.

A similar product, HardiePlank®, is engineered from a blend of cement, wood fibers, fine sand and water. It is similar in price point to the SmartSide and offers resistance to rot and insects. HardiePlank also can be repainted.

Engineered products can be more expensive to install and generally are not DIY renovations, which may deter homeowners working on tight budgets.

Wood siding

Wood is one of the oldest siding materials. It can be stained or painted and comes in a variety of styles, from boards to shingles. It is a popular choice in historical homes or ones with classic, architectural details.

It is important to note that wood is a combustible material that can be susceptible to water and insect damage. It also needs to be maintained continuously to look its best. This makes wood siding a true commitment on the part of homeowners. The cost is midrange between vinyl and engineered sidings.

Metal

Those interested in one of the most energy efficient options in siding can look no further than metal siding. Metal is not just for roofing. According to Colonial Contracting, Inc., metal siding creates a uniquely modern appearance and comes in a variety of styles that complement homes.

Unlike fiber, wood or vinyl products, metal siding reflects the sun's rays and keeps interior temperatures cooler in the summer, a boon in hot climates but maybe not the most insulating option for cold climates. One potential pitfall is the possibility of rust, which would make metal siding a less ideal choice for those who live near the ocean. The cost of metal siding is comparable to other siding products, at around \$10 per square foot.

These are a few of the siding options homeowners can investigate if they are re-vamping the exteriors of their homes.



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How to prepare your soil for spring planting

(METRO) Spring is a season of rejuvenation, and perhaps nowhere is that rebirth more noticeable than in the yard. Each spring, grass begins to grow again as inviting landscapes beckon people outdoors.

Extra sunlight and rising temperatures make spring a great time to plant flowers, grasses and trees. To ensure successful planting, homeowners must take steps to prepare the soil. Healthy soil can provide the ideal conditions for roots to take hold, helping plants establish themselves before potentially harsh summer conditions arrive.

Preparing soil might seem like an extensive job, but a simple approach may be all that is necessary to create conditions that promote plant growth this spring.

—Clean up the previous months' mess. Whether homeowners live in regions marked by year-round warmth or places where winter typically features heavy snowfall, it is a good idea to clean up an area prior to spring planting. Fallen leaves, rocks, grass clippings and other debris can contribute to compacted soil that makes it hard for plants to establish strong, healthy root systems. Clear away any debris prior to planting before taking the next step in your soil preparation routine;

—Loosen the soil. Once debris has been cleared away, loosen the soil. Depending on the size of the area where you will be planting, you may need to invest in tools like a shovel, spade, spading fork and/or a lawn edger. If you are planting in a small area, such as a deck planter box that still has soil from last year's planting inside it, you can either clean the box and replace the soil entirely or dig around with a handheld trowel, cultivator and/or weeder. It is important to loosen all of the soil around where you will ultimately plant prior to planting to ensure water can reach the roots and help them establish themselves once planting is completed, and

—Test and, if necessary, amend the soil. A simple pH test can help determine the acidity or alkalinity of the soil. This is an important step as soil that is too acidic



METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS, INC.

Preparing soil might seem like an extensive job, but a simple approach may be all that is necessary to create conditions that promote plant growth this spring.

or alkaline can decrease the availability of nutrients the plants will need to thrive. In addition to conducting a pH test, which can be purchased at little cost at a local home improvement store, homeowners can contact their local Cooperative Extension Service to test their soil quality. These tests will reveal soil pH, but also can shed light on the texture of the

soil and other components. Once the test is conducted, the local Cooperative Extension Service may recommend amendments to improve the nutritional quality of the soil so new plants can thrive.

Soil conditions go a long way toward determining if new plants will thrive. Preparing the soil prior to spring planting can ensure a successful season.

Grant funds available to help with septic repair/replacement

Low-income homeowners who live on the Middle Peninsula might be eligible to receive financial assistance to repair or replace their well and septic systems thanks to available grant funding administered by the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission.

The MPPDC allocation of \$195,000 for these efforts comes as part of the Commonwealth's funding from the American Rescue Plan Act. Qualified applicants are eligible for a 100 percent grant up to a soft cap of \$40,000. Projects that exceed that cost may require further review and approval by the Virginia Department of Health Septic and Well Assistance Program.

Homeowners eligible for grant funds must be at or below 200 percent of federal poverty guidelines. For a one-person household, that level is at or below \$27,180; for a two-person household, that number is at or below \$36,420. Eligible income levels can be found on the Septic and Well Funding Assistance Owner Interest Form that must be completed prior to receiving funding approval.

"For many homeowners in our community, a septic system is often the most expensive thing they own, next to their home itself," said MPPDC executive director Lewie Lawrence. "Providing grant funding to qualified homeowners in our community supports our residents while also contributing to the health, welfare and safety of residents on the Middle Peninsula."

SWAP funds cannot be used to make interior improvements to the home. They can be used for onsite sewage system installation and to cover costs for well replacements and connection to public water and any costs of testing of the new well as well as other

associated costs related to that installation. Virginia Department of Health SWAP funds do not have a cap on the funds available per type of system.

SWAP covers the cost of repairing or replacing failing septic systems; replacing straight pipes and privies; installing conventional system repairs, alternative system repairs, or sewer connections; replacing inadequate private wells and drinking water supplies; properly abandoning unused wells; and, installing replacement wells or public water connections.

For the purposes of SWAP, inadequate private drinking water supplies are considered any of the following:

- Replacement of a dry well;
- Replacement of a well that is documented to exceed maximum contaminant level or other health standards;
- Replacement of bored wells;
- Replacement of wells installed prior to any regulatory requirements related to the Private Well Regulations established in 1990;
- Replacement of a well in poor condition that is potentially under surface water influence;

—Replacement of a well that is required to be abandoned in order to permit a sewage system repair under SWAP, or a developed drinking water supply (e.g., spring or cistern) that is not a private well for an existing home, or

—Replacement of developed private drinking water supply when access to private drinking water is no longer available to an existing home.

Contractors who perform work must hold a Class A, B, or C Contractor's License from the Virginia Department of Professional or Occupational Regulation as well as additional certifications and qualifications. While the MPPDC is administering funds for the community, the Three Rivers Health District issues construction and operation permits for septic and well repairs.

Visit VDH's Septic and Well Assistance Program website at www.vdh.virginia.gov/environmental-health/swap to learn more about eligibility and income requirements for SWAP funds. Contact information for Three Rivers Health District local health departments can be found at www.vdh.virginia.gov/three-rivers/health-departments.

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Investigate hidden costs of DIY projects and renovating your home before you start.

Some hidden costs of Do It Yourself projects

(METRO) The home renovation industry is booming, and that is reflected in the cost to upgrade a home. According to Home Guide, remodeling a kitchen costs \$25,000 on av-

erage and a bathroom renovation runs around \$10,000. Though rates fluctuate depending on a host of variables, renovations can cost \$15 to \$60 per square foot de-

pending on the project.

The average homeowner wants to save as much money as possible when renovating their home. Many think doing much of the work themselves is the easiest way to keep costs low. What some homeowners may not realize is that DIY can be costly and prove a big hassle in the long run. The following are some hidden costs of DIY and renovating in general.

Time

DIY projects are a major drain on free time. Homeowners taking the DIY route typically work on weekends or after work. Few people can take off and devote their undivided attention to a remodel like a contractor can. Time is a valuable resource that is not renewable. Therefore, think of a DIY project in terms of what it would equal in lost wages. Because homeowners are not professionals, a DIY project may take double the time it would take a contractor. It may be worth it to simply hire it out.

Mistakes

Many resources are available to help DIY enthusiasts work on a project, but there are still tricks and techniques learned after years on the job. DIYers may damage their homes by taking shortcuts or not understanding how to do a job properly. A plumbing mistake, for example, may lead to flooding that damages another room in the home. And such mistakes may not be covered by homeowners' insurance policies.

Fines

Permits are required for many home improvement projects. Forgetting to obtain permits or not realizing one may be necessary could subject you to hefty fines and/or force the job to be redone so it is up to code. Professionals likely know the rules regarding permits and often include the cost of acquiring permits in an estimate.

Remediation

It is only after opening up walls or removing floors that you may discover issues you did not anticipate, such as termite damage or mold. These unforeseen factors can drive up the overall costs of a project.

Disposal

Removing old building materials or gutting a room is part of many renovations. Chances are this refuse simply cannot be left at the curb for trash pickup. As a DIYer, you may not factor the costs for a dumpster or the time and money required to haul debris to a recycling or landfill center.

Tools

DIYers may have to purchase tools as they engage in new projects. These expenses can add up and negate the savings of doing some of the work yourself.

DIY projects may initially seem like a way to save money, but weekend warriors should calculate the hidden costs associated with DIY renovations before deciding to do some work on their own.

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It is vital that pups have a dog-friendly yard in which to play.

How to make your backyard safe for dogs

(METRO) Dogs, particularly puppies, can be full of boundless energy. Channeling that energy into exercise with long walks or play sessions can help stem dogs' propensity to get into trouble around the house as they burn off extra

adrenaline. Pets who don't have an energy outlet may chew off-limits objects or get into other mischief.

According to the American Kennel Club, the amount of exercise a dog needs depends on the animal's age and breed. For example, border collies or Siberian huskies may require much more exercise than English bulldogs, simply because the former are working breeds.

Pet owners with large backyards often find those outdoor spots are ideal for when their dogs get the "zoomies," something that tends to be a daily occurrence. Letting their dogs run around yards, whether on their own or chasing tossed tennis balls, is an ideal way to provide exercise and tire out pups. In such scenarios, it is vital that pups have a dog-friendly yard in which to play.

Use safe lawn care products
An expanse of grass is the perfect place to frolic or enjoy some sunbathing—for

people or pets. But contact with chemically treated lawns can cause a number of health issues for dogs, such as allergies or intestinal upset.

Switching to native grasses can reduce the need to use chemicals to get lush lawns. When supplementation is needed, homeowners can switch to organic products or natural compost as safer alternatives than chemical-based products.

Fence off the yard
Off-leash running and bounding through the yard will make any dog smile. However, a fence is a must-have to ensure a dog does not become an escape artist. Be sure the fence is high enough so that the pup cannot jump over it. Burying chicken wire in the dirt beneath the lower edge of the fence also can help prevent dogs who like to dig from exiting by crawling underneath the fence.

Consider installing a lock on the fence gate so that no one

can wander in and surprise the dog, which may startle the animal and prompt it to defend the property. A lock also helps prevent dog theft.

Keep the yard tidy
Maintaining a clean yard also is key to safety. Inspect the yard regularly to make sure nothing is around that can prove harmful, whether its poison ivy, felled branches or broken fence panels. Also, keep shrubs and grass trimmed to reduce flea and tick populations on the property.

Avoid poisonous plants
Certain plants can be dangerous if they are consumed by curious pups. Chrysanthemums, peonies, irises and hydrangeas are some plants that can be poisonous. For a full

list of poisonous plants, visit the ASPCA website.

Keep an eye on animals
Dogs can spend some untended time in the yard, but check in from time to time. Should wildlife get into the yard, dogs may get hurt by tussles or bites. Birds of prey, such as owls, hawks and even vultures, may attack small dogs in a yard. According to Pat Silvosky, director of the Milford Nature Center in Kansas, some birds can be territorial. While they might not view a dog as an easy meal, they could swoop down and attack to defend territory. The same may occur with other wild animals.

A dog-friendly yard may require a little effort to create, but it is worth a little sweat equity to keep pups safe.



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METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS, INC.

There are many quick and easy, not to mention, less expensive, ways to give a kitchen a new look.

Quick and easy ways to give your kitchen a new look

(METRO) Kitchens are often described as the busiest rooms in a home. They are where meals are prepared and tend to be go-to gathering spots on holiday get-togethers and during other events when homeowners host family and friends.

With so much time spent in

the kitchen, it is easy to see how homeowners might grow a little bored by these rooms. The cost of a kitchen remodel will not be cheap, as the home improvement resource Angi has noted that the typical cost of such a project in the United States is between \$13,000 and \$38,000. Angi estimates even indicate that a high-end remodel could cost homeowners as much as \$61,000.

That is beyond many homeowners' budgets. But the good news is that there are many quick and easy, not to mention, less expensive, ways to give a kitchen a new look.

—Repaint and restyle the cabinets. Cabinet space is an undeniably precious commodity in a kitchen, especially as more and more homeowners embrace their inner chef and cook more complicated meals at home. After all, the more expansive a home chef's culinary repertoire, the more space that person needs to store all the tools of the cooking trade. A full cabinet replacement is unnecessary if the cabinets are still functional and not overcrowded, so repainting them can be a great way to give the kitchen a new look while keeping costs reasonable. During the painting project, homeowners can install new cabinet knobs and/or drawer pulls to freshen up the style of the cabinets even further.

—Install under-cabinet lighting. Another inexpensive way to give a kitchen a new look is to install under-cabinet lighting. Under-cabinet lighting serves both an aesthetic and practical purpose. From a purely aesthetic standpoint, under-cabinet lighting

can make a kitchen feel more warm and keep the kitchen illuminated when meals are not being prepared and homeowners do not need overhead lights on but still want to be able to navigate the kitchen safely. During meal prep, under-cabinet lighting can illuminate counters so it is easier to chop, peel and perform other prep tasks;

—Replace existing backsplash. Replacing backsplash is another simple, inexpensive and effective way to give a kitchen a new feel. Homeowners can opt for something neutral that will not upset their existing décor or go with a bolder backsplash that immediately draws the attention of anyone who enters the room. This simple job can be done by the average do-it-yourselfer and the cost of new backsplash will not break the bank, and

—Replace existing seating. Whether you have an island countertop with bar stools or a breakfast nook with cushioned seats, replacing the seating is a budget-friendly job that can create a new look when entering the room. Countertop bar stools come in many styles, so giving this area of the kitchen a new feel can be as simple as shifting from classic, high-back stools to more modern swivel stools with a chrome base. For the

breakfast nook, replacing a light-colored bench cushion with a bolder alternative can instantly transform the look of the space. Kitchen remodels can break the bank. But there is a host of budget-friendly ways for cost-conscious homeowners to revitalize these popular spaces in their homes.

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from the Gloucester Gazette, 1919

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METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS, INC.

Various smaller renovations can provide a lot of bang for homeowners' bucks.

Small renovations that can make a big impact

(METRO) Home renovations provide a host of benefits. Such projects can increase resale value and improve on the safety, aesthetics and functionality of a home.

Some homeowners may employ the mantra, "go big or go home," when they embark on home improvements, thinking that only the largest renovations produce noticeable change. But that is not the case. Various smaller renovations can provide a lot of bang for homeowners' bucks as well.

—Countertops (and hardware): A complete kitchen overhaul may stretch some homeowners' budgets. However, replacing an older countertop for a new material can provide the facelift a kitchen

needs. And while changing the cabinets may be homeowners' ultimate goal, swapping hardware in dated finishes for newer handles and pulls can provide low-cost appeal.

—Paint: Painting a space is an inexpensive improvement that adds maximum impact. Paint can transform dark and drab rooms into bright and airy oases. Paint also can be used to create an accent wall or cozy nooks. Homeowners also can showcase their personalities with their choice of paint colors;

—Lighting: Homeowners should not underestimate what a change in lighting can do. When rooms or exterior spaces are illuminated, they take on entirely new looks. It is worth it to invest in new

lighting, whether it is a dramatic hanging light over the dining room table or task lighting in dim spaces;

—Weatherproofing: Improving windows, doors, weather-

stripping and insulation in a home can offer visual appeal and help homeowners save money. The initial investment may be significant, but those costs will pay off in energy savings. According to One Main Financial, space heating is the largest energy expense the average American homeowner has, accounting for around 45 percent of all energy costs;

—Mudroom: Turn an entryway into a more functional space with the addition of cabinets, benches or custom-designed storage options that perfectly fit the area. Cubbies and cabinets can corral shoes, umbrellas, hats, bags and much more, and

—Accent updates: Any space, whether it is inside or outside a home, can get a fresh look with new decorative accents. Invest in new throw pillows and even slipcovers for living room sofas. Use new tile or paint the brick on a fireplace in a den, then update the mantel with decorative displays. Purchase wall art that can bring different colors into a room. Change the cushions on deck furniture and buy color-coordinated

ed planters.

These subtle changes will not cost as much as full-scale

renovations, but they can still help homeowners transform their homes.



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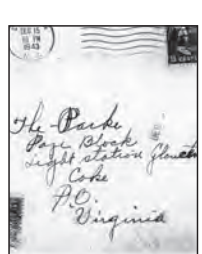
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Finding the best way to add space to your home

**BY IVY STROUD
STROUD ARCHITECTS**

Deciding on the right way to expand your home can be difficult. It is important to understand what is involved in the design and construction process, and what affect your decision has on project costs. Your best bet would be to involve the services of a li-

censed architect to help you better understand the considerations to make and the best solution for your particular needs.

At some point in our lives, many of us outgrow our homes. That might be because there's a baby on the way or younger kids that now need their own rooms. It may be because the house is

older and was not built with a true master suite. Whatever the reason, you are left with managing the little space you have, moving to a new home or expanding your current one.

If expanding is your choice, there are three options to consider, which includes "digging down," "building out" or "building up." All three op-

tions come with their own advantages and disadvantages.

Digging Down

Images of dank, dark and stale basements are from a bygone era. Instead, clever designs and high-end finishes can create a cozy, intimate and safe atmosphere for family and friends to gather.

For homeowners, this offers an opportunity to create

or transform a basement into a practical living space. This can be especially valuable for a home on a small lot where space is at a premium. From playrooms to home cinemas, bedrooms to offices and home gyms to your very own bar, the options for this space are endless.

To make this happen, construction crews will need

to dig around the property, which can disturb flowerbeds, outdoor play areas and patios. However, this could be an opportunity for you to build back better by creating an extra living space and your dream backyard simultaneously.

A challenge of digging down

SEE **ADDING MORE SPACE**, PAGE 11C



Fears about fertilizing are often unfounded and can be overcome with some basic knowledge of the process.

METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS, INC.

Lawn fertilizer basics

(METRO) Spring marks the return of lawn and garden season. Lawns often bear the brunt of winter's wrath, so spring is a great time to nurse them back to health, and fertilizing can be an essential component of that process.

Fertilizing a lawn can be intimidating. An array of fertilizers, with each seemingly designed to address a different issue, can make homeowners' heads spin when visiting their local lawn and garden center.

However, fertilizing is a very simple task that any homeowner can tackle. In fact, fears about fertilizing are often unfounded and can be overcome with some basic knowledge of the process.

—Identify which type of grass is in the yard. The home improvement experts at HGTV note that turfgrass is divided into two categories: cool-season grass and warm-season grass. A local lawn and garden

center can help homeowners identify which type of grass is in their yard, and this often depends on location. Identifying which type of grass is in the lawn is important because that will indicate when to fertilize. Cool-season grasses are typically best fertilized in early spring, while warm-season lawns can benefit from an application just before especially warm temperatures arrive;

—Survey the lawn to identify which spreader to use. A

small yard or a thriving lawn with only a few bald or unsightly patches may not need a full application of fertilizer. In such instances, a hand spreader can suffice. For larger lawns and areas, a broadcast spreader is the ideal option. Spreaders have multiple settings, and the fertilizer package will indicate which setting to utilize when using the product;

—Test the soil prior to purchasing fertilizer. Soil tests

can be purchased at most home improvement stores and lawn and garden centers, and they can help homeowners determine which fertilizer will most benefit their lawns;

—Water the lawn prior to fertilizing. Such an approach ensures the soil is ready to accept the fertilizer once it is applied, and

—Follow the instructions carefully. Detailed instructions are typically provided

on fertilizer product packaging. Once homeowners have identified and purchased the product they need, they can simply follow the instructions on the packaging, including how and when to water after application, which can make fertilizing less intimidating.

Fertilizing in spring can help a lawn recover from the previous summer and winter, ensuring it is lush and green when summer entertaining season arrives.

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ADDING MORE SPACE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10C)

is bringing in natural light and air flow to a subterranean space. Any good architect, design-build firm or construction company will be able to offer solutions that work with your site specifics. They will also ensure that the space is properly waterproofed and that the existing house is properly supported while the basement is constructed.

Your new basement should be finished to be cohesive with the rest of the house and the stair that connects the new area should be carefully planned and located.

Key advantages of digging down include, maintaining privacy from close neighbors, creating secondary spaces you do not wish to have on the main floor, retaining your yard space and having bonus square footage.

Disadvantages of digging down include, beginning an expensive and complex project, needing extensive waterproofing and shoring, having less natural light and ventilation, and digging up the yard.

Building Out

If you have enough yard space and would like to leave most of your home untouched, building out is a great choice. This new area of your home can be created without needing to affect much of the existing house. It is easier than digging down or building up as you will not have to deal with adding a staircase. With good architectural planning and design, you can create extra space for your master suite while leaving important rooms, like the living space, intact.

Building out can also change the look of your home from the exterior and improve curb appeal. Unlike building up or down, building out involves taking up a portion of the existing yard space. While homeowners will have to deal with this trade-off, building out is the most affordable option.

Advantages of building out include, avoiding major structural changes to the existing home, having easy accessibility, not needing to add a staircase, being able to create more space for some rooms while leaving the others untouched and enjoying cost savings.

Drawbacks of this option include, taking up yard space and potentially missing scenic views.

Building Up

Growing families need more space, which makes the idea of building up an attractive option for many homeowners. By taking your home to the next level, you can increase the square footage of the property while preserving the backyard space.

A new second story addition to your home is a great choice as it maintains yard space, offers more natural light and ventilation and better views. This option also allows you to significantly change the look of the home with massing, rooflines and materials.

Once you have hired a licensed architect or other design professional, the first

SEE ADDING MORE SPACE, PAGE 12C

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ADDING MORE SPACE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11C)

step to building up is having your hired expert create drawings of the existing house. Most existing homes were not engineered to support a second story and meet today's strict code requirements. As such, your contractor will need to open walls and floors to structurally reinforce the existing home and prepare it to support the new story.

Finding the right spot for a new staircase is also a must. Adding a staircase might involve partially remodeling the existing floor, which results in additional costs.

If you love your location and building up seems to be your best option, hire a licensed architect and general contractor to help make it happen.

Advantages of building up include, adding more value to your home, creating better lighting and views, and maintaining yard space. However, building out means more significant structural upgrades, typically requiring extensive work on the main floor, and is expensive.

Ultimately, whether you are trying to build up, out or down, these modifications all come with a price. Your decision on which option is best is often determined by your budget, location and needs.

Regardless of which option you prefer, the first step is to find a licensed professional who can assemble the appropriate project team and guide you through the entire process.

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