



Hi Everyone,

You have not seen a newsletter from us recently because things have been really hectic. We have been busy working on our brand new website, a fabulous brochure, and creating various articles. Below is an article that I wrote for the Spring Lifestyle, Arts & Leisure Magazine Riverside Quarterly. We hope you enjoy it. We also invite you to visit www.s-i-design.ca to see what we've been up to. Enjoy!

HOME IMPROVEMENT

5

Tips to increase your home's value written by Sheila Doris



As the days get longer and the weather becomes warmer, if you are at all like me, the spring bug strikes... and you start to think about ideas to improve your home. I am often asked whether or not money spent renovating can be recouped in increased property value, and which projects increase value the most ??? The key factor in both cases, is to ensure that the renovations increase at least two of the three following elements: comfort, convenience, luxury. Both aesthetics and function should be improved with the work undertaken. Return on investment is tied to boosting the desirability of the property to potential buyers. In an established neighborhood -the character of an older building with the convenience of modern design is what everyone wants. Renovated Homes sell much better than those that are cheaper but require work... Few people want to go through the inconvenience of upgrading. If you are brave enough to do it--the investment does pay off !!!!

The following are the top renovation areas that increase home value – in order of importance. **1.**kitchens and bathrooms **2.**architectural elements such as windows, porches, skylights, staircases-front door & entries. **3.**Lifestyle features that: **Add comfort-** whirlpool tubs, fireplaces, heated floors, enlarged spaces, lighting **Add convenience** laundry or family rooms on a main /upper floor. extra storage, walk outs **Add luxury-** enlarged spaces, sauna, steam shower, body massage, skylights **4.**Materials & finishes- wood floors, granite counter-tops **5.**Landscaping- decks, patios, water features

1 Cost vs. Return on Investment

Adding an extra bathroom: brings quickest, and highest level of return... especially in a one bathroom home... A bathroom on each level is most desirable.



Updating a kitchen: the investment is returned completely in a short time- if reasonable quality items are used and the design is good.

Upgrading a bathroom : adding luxury features- separate shower, whirlpool bath.

Additions vs updating existing areas- more space usually adds more value... unless existing space is unusable as it is- i.e. unfinished basements...the cost of renovating is less than new construction so investment dollars are easier to recoup.

If you are not ready to mortgage your life, but want ideas for smaller scale projects to increase your home's value and aesthetics here are a few to consider...

2 Upgrade Lighting

New fixtures will add to your comfort in task areas. Replace standard ceiling fixtures with adjustable lights on a track to increase the flexibility & convenience of the light placement. Many small, attractive halogen fixtures are available and these little gems work well in Bedrooms, Family rooms, Bathrooms and walk- in closet.



In a narrow hallway use track lights angled to shine on both side walls to visually push them apart, making the space appear larger while showcasing your artwork.

Without changing furnishings , instant ambiance- the romantic dining kind, can be achieved with halogen flood bulbs. If china retailers sell their merchandise with punchy lighting, should your china be a star without a spotlight?

Consider up- lighting, from the floor or wall sconces for instant drama.Incorporate

hidden source lighting- behind coves or valences- in your décor and you can make cabinets appear to float or wash a ceiling with a luxurious soft glow.

Might you switch to halogen bulbs when you know that they contribute to a feeling of well-being ? The light is close the feeling of sunlight and, is less expensive than full spectrum bulbs, or trips to Florida in the winter.

3 Change a Window to a Bay / Bow Window

A bay or bow window will transform a room, and increase a home's curb appeal. Windows projecting out add more: Visual space, useable space, natural light. A half height window provides counter space that will ease a tight dining room. A full height one offers an extra sitting area for a pair of chairs.

A Bay can add a year round herb garden to a kitchen or a garden retreat/spa area to a bathroom. It can be a naturally lit display area and if south-facing it is a mini sunroom addition.

4 Add Built-In Cabinets and More Storage

Custom built-ins enhance environments and allow one to: Maximize space use. Minimize the impact of large TV's and entertainment equipment. Better Integrate storage within a space- they appear smaller than free standing pieces & can repeat existing architectural elements. Upgrade architectural features-add luxury, details- character

5 Add A Coat of Fresh Paint

If you have the bug to refurbish, but a shoestring budget, don't underestimate the impact of a coat of paint...and if the bug activates you to do it yourself... then the investment is minimal to rejuvenate a space. Updated, Co-Ordinate paint colours create a flow from room to room which: Creates harmony-promoting a feeling of well-being and comfort –rich colours add a sense of luxury. Light colours increase the sense of space. Makes a home feel larger-by eliminating strong contrasts that draw attention to the size of each space.

Now that you know your money will be wisely spent there is no reason to hold back.... get out the measuring tape and begin your plans... Happy Spring. -