

## Which Projects Improve Values?

By ALEX MASON | Green Shoot Media

When it comes to home improvement and increasing your home value, not all projects are created equal.

To save time, money and get your full financial return on your investment, take some tips from the experts to do the job right.

### KITCHENS ARE A GO

Kitchen upgrades are one of the best home improvement strategies to get more bang for your selling buck. Tired old tiles can be replaced with granite countertops to give the kitchen a modern and contemporary feel. In addition, you may wish to add an island work station, if you have sufficient floor space, to increase your kitchen's utility.

Down with the drapery and in with clean vertical blinds to make the room pop with extra living space and a neutral appeal to the new prospective buyer.

Also, if you have a water heater tucked away in your kitchen or adjacent hallway, it is best to have the unit moved outside for safety in case of a hot water spill and to open up your kitchen for maximum storage space.

### SUMPTUOUS BATHROOMS

We might not spend a great deal of time in our bathrooms, however, when we do go there, it better be nice. Granite countertops, lighted vanity mirrors and expansive shelf space equal money in the bank when your home is going to market.

Try to keep the decor to a minimum to create a feeling of a larger living space. To add color without bringing in excessive items, you may opt for a stained glass window and high-end faucets for the finishing touch.



© FOTOLIA

Some home renovation projects will go further than others toward increasing your bottom line at the closing table. Knowing which projects to undertake is crucial.

ishing touch.

If you wish to enhance the tile work without breaking the bank, try a few selective tile pattern prints to add to your existing white or neutral tile color scheme. This solid and patterned tile blending is eye catching and conveys a sense of professionally decorated tile work while remodeling on a shoestring budget.

### ATTIC AND BASEMENT

Many homes appear to be in mint condition in the main living

spaces, but they may be lacking when it comes to extra rooms above and below the home.

If your attic is full of cobwebs or needs some organization, be sure to fix the problem and make this added space shine. Likewise, a basement in need of finishing can make or break a sale if the buyers intend to use the extra room for storage or recreation. Clear away the junk and apply a fresh coat of paint to bring your attic or basement up to par.

You may also wish to invest in some plastic storage containers or build a simple shelf to increase

the space and utility of the room.

### SWIMMING POOLS ARE RISKY

Many homeowners who reside in fair-weather states falsely believe that adding a swimming pool is an automatic selling tool. Nothing could be further from the truth.

When a home buyer hires an agent, the presence of a pool in the backyard is a green light for swimmers and a red light for cautious parents with young children.

### REAL ESTATE 101

#### Safety first

At a minimum, your home should be in safe condition before you sell it. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development offers a checklist to help determine the health of homes. To download the checklist, visit [http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/library/hhi/Healthy\\_Housing\\_CheckList.pdf](http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/library/hhi/Healthy_Housing_CheckList.pdf).

It's a 50-50 gamble that a buyer will appreciate your investment in a pool, so if you plan on selling your home, keep your money in your wallet and steer clear of this costly project.

Instead, spiffy up your backyard living space with colorful planters and a variety of flowers or perhaps drop in a cascading waterfall to relax outdoor guests.

Add sights and sounds to your garden to animate and bring out the best of your outside living space. Tinkling chimes, whirling garden pinwheels and pop art bird houses can turn an ordinary backyard into something special for pennies on the dollar out of your remodeling budget.

*Alex Mason is a former real estate agent and mortgage broker living in Los Angeles.*



© FOTOLIA

Some home renovation projects will go further than others toward increasing your bottom line at the closing table. Knowing which projects to undertake is crucial.

## Which Projects Improve Values?

By ALEX MASON | Green Shoot Media

When it comes to home improvement and increasing your home value, not all projects are created equal.

To save time, money and get your full financial return on your investment, take some tips from the experts to do the job right.

### KITCHENS ARE A GO

Kitchen upgrades are one of the best home improvement strategies to get more bang for your selling buck. Tired old tiles can be replaced with granite countertops to give the kitchen a modern and contemporary feel. In addition, you may wish to add an island work station, if you have sufficient floor space, to increase your kitchen's utility.

Down with the drapery and in with clean vertical blinds to make the room pop with extra living space and a neutral appeal to the new prospective buyer.

Also, if you have a water heater tucked away in your kitchen or adjacent hallway, it is best to have the unit moved outside for safety in case of a hot water spill and to open up your kitchen for maximum storage space.

### SUMPTUOUS BATHROOMS

We might not spend a great deal of time in our bathrooms, however, when we do go there, it better be nice. Granite countertops, lighted vanity mirrors and expansive shelf space equal money in the bank when your home is going to market.

Try to keep the decor to a minimum to create a feeling of a larger living space. To add color without bringing in excessive items, you may opt for a stained glass window

and high-end faucets for the finishing touch.

If you wish to enhance the tile work without breaking the bank, try a few selective tile pattern prints to add to your existing white or neutral tile color scheme. This solid and patterned tile blending is eye catching and conveys a sense of professionally decorated tile work while remodeling on a shoestring budget.

### ATTIC AND BASEMENT

Many homes appear to be in mint condition in the main living spaces, but they may be lacking when it comes to extra rooms above and below the home.

If your attic is full of cobwebs or needs some organization, be sure to fix the problem and make this added space shine. Likewise, a

basement in need of finishing can make or break a sale if the buyers intend to use the extra room for storage or recreation. Clear away the junk and apply a fresh coat of paint to bring your attic or basement up to par.

You may also wish to invest in some plastic storage containers or build a simple shelf to increase the space and utility of the room.

### SWIMMING POOLS ARE RISKY

Many homeowners who reside in fair-weather states falsely believe that adding a swimming pool is an automatic selling tool. Nothing could be further from the truth.

When a home buyer hires an agent, the presence of a pool in the backyard is a green light for swimmers and a red light for cautious

parents with young children. It's a 50-50 gamble that a buyer will appreciate your investment in a pool, so if you plan on selling your home, keep your money in your wallet and steer clear of this costly project.

Instead, spiffy up your backyard living space with colorful planters and a variety of flowers or perhaps drop in a cascading waterfall to relax outdoor guests.

Add sights and sounds to your garden to animate and bring out the best of your outside living space. Tinkling chimes, whirling garden pinwheels and pop art bird houses can turn an ordinary backyard into something special for pennies on the dollar out of your remodeling budget.

*Alex Mason is a former real estate agent and mortgage broker living in Los Angeles.*

#### REAL ESTATE 101



### Safety first

At a minimum, your home should be in safe condition before you sell it. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development offers a checklist to help determine the health of homes.

To download the checklist, visit [http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/library/hhi/Healthy\\_Housing\\_CheckList.pdf](http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/library/hhi/Healthy_Housing_CheckList.pdf).



#### HOMESWISE GLOSSARY

**Critical/non-critical repairs:** A needs assessor who is preparing a capital needs assessment identifies needed repairs as "critical" or "non-critical." Typically, critical repairs must be completed prior to initial/final closing of an FHA insured mortgage and/or RAD conversion. Typically, non-critical repairs must be completed within one year. However, there are some exceptions and a period longer than 12 months may be allowed, with HUD approval.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

# AD SPACE