

PROJECT HOME

SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2020 | qconline.com | SECTION C

PROJECTS TO TACKLE LATER THIS SUMMER

GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

When the weather is warm, consider catching up on outdoor maintenance projects. Late summer is a good time to tackle many of these jobs and be sure your home is ready to weather the winter.

1. Check driveways, walkways and paths for cracks, loose pavers and settling. Heat and humidity can be hard on them during summer months. Fill small cracks yourself, but contact a local pro to help remedy any bigger issues you notice.
2. Check your trees, shrubs and plants for any issues. Remove dead limbs and pull out dead shrubs. Address any brown patches in the lawn.
3. Check windows for missing caulk and leaks. Open all windows and inspect the frames and seals. Wash windows and screens.
4. Late summer is a good time to prepare your pool gear for storage in the fall and winter. Deflate inflatable toys, wash out face masks and be sure everything is put away dry.
5. Inspect siding and other coverings for any needed repairs. If you plan to repaint, tackle any prep work, such as repairs and sanding, before adding a new coat of paint.
6. Check your deck or patio for any needed repairs. If your deck needs to be resealed, now is the time. It will be better prepared for harsh winter conditions. Give the porch a good cleaning with a water hose.
7. Inspect your roof to be sure it is in shape to face the winter.
8. Check rain gutters. Late summer storms can put them to the test, so the time is now to be sure they are in good shape.
9. Have your chimney inspected to be sure it's operating properly. This will give you time to complete any needed repairs before the weather turns cold and you need it to be functional.
10. Clean the grill. If you've given your grill a workout during the summer months, it's a good idea to wash the grates and clean out the pit. Wipe down the outside.



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UPGRADE

before you sell your home



When selling your home, an outdated design scheme can be the difference between making the deal and dropping your asking price to sell.

If you're not familiar with what's trending and out of style, it's difficult to know which improvements are necessary. Certain renovations can boost the value of a home for sale and streamline the process of receiving offers and ultimately selling.

Working with a real estate expert is a beneficial way to discover which updates your home requires. Their knowledge of the local market is a great asset that provides a better perspective regarding the factors home buyers look for when buying.

You can usually find a qualified agent by asking for word-of-mouth referrals from your peers who have previously worked with the expert.

Lose the paneling

Dark wood paneling was a prevalent trend in the 1960s and '70s, but today the covering can make a home appear ancient. How to handle renovating your walls depends on the type of material used.

If it consists of real wood, it can often hold value to homebuyers who appreciate the natural durability. In

this case, consider bleaching the paneling or applying a fresh coat of paint to liven it up.

On the other hand, if the panels are made of cheap faux wood material, you should replace it with dry-wall.

Popcorn ceilings

A textured ceiling can be found in many homes around the country but is often avoided by house hunters. The trouble with eradicating the material and applying a smooth layer is that the process is expensive, messy and may pose health risks.

In the past, the spray-on substance contained asbestos before it was banned in 1977 by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. If you attempt to renovate a ceiling in an older home, take the proper safety precautions before exposing yourself to this dangerous material.

Replace carpet

Carpet is difficult to keep clean, requires constant maintenance and will become matted or faded over time. Homeowners are replacing it with real hardwood, life-proof vinyl options or ceramic tiles on the main floor.

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Small updates make big difference

GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

If you're committed to updating your space, but your budget restricts major renovations, minor upgrades can create a significant difference. Small changes, like adding new lighting fixtures or brightening a room with a fresh coat of paint, can alter the ambiance of the entire home. Check out some other affordable ways to spruce up an area without breaking the bank.

Updating the bathroom

The bathroom is a pivotal space for renovations as you spend significant time in it when getting ready and guests use it privately. A first step to an upgrade is giving it a thorough cleaning. After scrubbing the walls, sinks and shower, analyze the room for outdated fixtures. A new vanity can be equipped with updated faucets and light fixtures to add a modern touch to any bathroom. For more extreme measures, consider putting in tile in the shower and around counter surfaces. After a little research, the job can be performed by even an amateur DIY homeowner. Other minimal updates that can make a big difference include new cabinet knobs, a new toilet seat cover and LED lighting.

Wallpaper borders

Wallpaper has long been a thing of the past after being all the rage in prior years. Today, most choose to simply paint their walls and trim. However, modern wallpaper is making a comeback because of intricate patterns and easy-to-install and removable options. Incorporate some flair on your walls by adding a bold wallpaper design. Choose one wall to become an accent wall by covering it with a daring wallpaper pattern.

Create living space outdoors

If you find yourself needing more room to entertain inside, consider building a patio space outdoors. The job can be cheap to create by installing affordable pavers upon sand. Consider finding inexpensive or even free furniture at various outlets like online marketplaces. Try your hand at restoring used furnishings to give your backyard oasis your personality. Dangling string lights, a fire pit and attractive cushions will also enhance the area.





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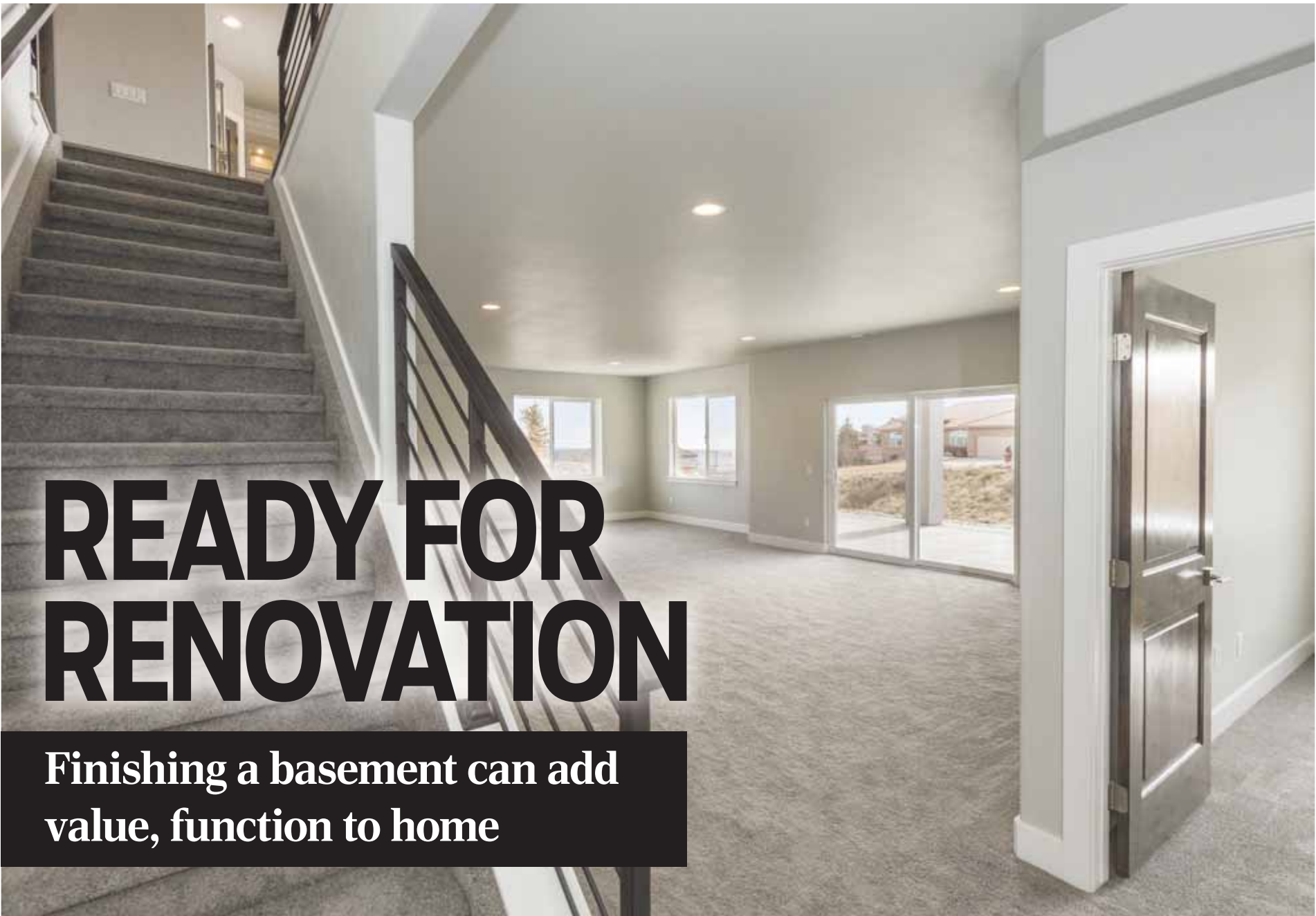
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READY FOR RENOVATION

Finishing a basement can add value, function to home

GREEN SHOOT MEDIA

Are you considering a major basement renovation in the future? If so, plan for an expensive overhaul, as the experts at Home Advisor suggest the average final price ranges between \$6,500 and \$18,500.

Fortunately, the return on investment can be as high as 69%, making it a valuable process if you plan to sell the home later.

If your basement is mainly used for storage, you may be missing out on serious living space. When determining how to decorate or renovate the room, you

should first consider how you plan to use the extra area.

The lower level of a home is perfect for family game nights, social gatherings and can even make a suitable gym. Check out some other useful ways to make the space your own from Better Homes and Gardens.

Include a bed and bath

A basement bedroom with working plumbing makes an exceptional guest room or sleeping area for children as they grow and ask for more privacy. When choosing a style of bed to purchase, con-

sider how much space you have downstairs and try to leave ample room for other furnishings and necessities.

You should consult local regulations about specific codes regarding your new room as some laws require an emergency exit through a door or window.

Add doors and windows

This process should almost always be left to a professional, as during the installation, window wells must be dug to include below-ground windows. However, the addition of natural light will enhance your experience in the new space.

Perhaps, the area will be used as a home office. Ensuring it is well-lit can produce better productivity.

Good lighting

If the costs of adding windows is not feasible, you should still consider equipping the basement with quality lighting to give it a calming effect. Recessed can lights can make a great aesthetic when showcasing artwork or bookshelves.

LED lamps or track lights around the perimeter of the basement can eliminate shadows in corners to brighten each area of the room.



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Things to consider when CHOOSING AN AC UNIT

GREEN SHOOT MEDIA
If your home doesn't have central air conditioning, a room unit can help cool things off. There are many available models to meet various needs, so you'll need to do some research to pick the right option for your needs.

New features
An EnergyStar-certified room air conditioner can cost less than \$75 per year to operate, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, with new variable speed technology saving more energy than in the past. EnergyStar-certified units include more sealing material around the opening than other models, to better keep cold air in.

There are even models available with smart home-type features that allow the user to turn them on and off remotely, set temperature schedules and get information about how efficiently the unit is operating. Many units also are capable of "smart grid" features, allowing them to be cycled on and off by the power company to provide savings to the customer and conserve energy during peak demand.

Sizing
The cooling capacity of room air conditioners is measured using British Thermal Units. Depending on the size of your room, your unit will

need a minimum BTU rating. For example, a 200-square-foot room will require a unit with a minimum 6,000 BTU rating, while a 500-square-foot room will need 12,000 BTUs. Additional factors to consider in the calculations include whether the room tends to be sunny or shaded, as well as how many people typically use the room and how the room is used. View the EPA's sizing guide at bit.ly/2V10BUA for tips on measuring the room and to calculate which size unit you need.

Ductless systems
A ductless air conditioning unit is a wall-mounted unit that uses an outdoor compressor. They are very efficient and less prone to air leakage, according to HGTV.com, and buying an EnergyStar-certified model can save 30% on cooling costs. Some models also can provide heat, as well.

Ductless AC units are, however, considerably more expensive than window units, making them a long-term investment for which you'll have to wait to see a return in the form of lower energy bills. They also require monthly filter maintenance.

Ductless units are recommended for small new additions to a house or for adding AC to a house where none exists. This is because even with the added cost for the units, it still can be less expensive than running ductwork.



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