

Homes need new coats, too: Fresh coat of paint or stain can bump up home value

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Huge difference: A coat of paint, especially when it's done right, can help boost the value of a home that's on the market. Time for a new spring coat

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Special to the Union Leader

NEW ENGLAND weather -- from frigid winters to steaming summers -- causes wear and tear on a home's exterior. Professional painters and a slew of popular do-it-yourself guides and websites recommend that homeowners refresh their home's exterior with new paint or stain every five to seven years. Not only will a well-prepared surface and high quality product protect the exterior siding, the work should pay off with higher resale value for home sellers.

In Center Harbor, professional painting contractor Shane Halsey of Shane Halsey Painting(www.shanehalseypainting.com) foresees a busy season as the snow finally recedes and homeowners are booking jobs. He said the long winter didn't necessarily cause more damage to exteriors -- it's the range of temperatures, heat and direct sunlight that can cause wear and tear on a home's finish. Halsey experienced first hand the financial benefits of repainting a home he owned in Laconia inside and out.

"A good paint job, a nice one, makes a huge difference," he said, adding that a home he purchased in Laconia in 1999 yielded a 60 percent return after he repainted the exterior and interior. "Painting the house is a good investment. It protects the house and makes it look better."

Products

Paint or stain? A solid stain is a popular choice for Lakes Region homes in the Adirondack style, or those with cedar siding or shakes, said Halsey. Stains allow the wood's grain and texture to show through. Halsey uses high-quality paints and stain products such as Sikksens, Sherman Williams, and Benjamin Moore. A homeowner may

choose a stain for the exterior siding, then a contrasting paint color for the trim or architectural features.

“Normally, stains will be oil-based (like Sikkens), but new latex stains work well, too. Paint products have evolved. Many do not require primers,” he said. And with higher quality comes higher prices – with some products running \$60 per gallon, he said. “But they last longer. It’s worth the money. If you try to do the job with cheaper paint, you make it up with higher labor costs.”

DIY or hire out?

Whether to hire a paint contractor or attempt an exterior paint job using family and friends depends a lot on skill level, time and safety considerations. Halsey said tackling small jobs like painting a shed, a porch or a room is fine for most homeowners. But he has seen others who start out tackling an exterior paint job then become overwhelmed.

“I see that all the time. People start out doing it themselves. Obviously you can go online or on YouTube for advice,” he said, adding that once homeowners realize the potential safety issues with working from high ladders, and the time involved for not only application, but preparation, they choose to hire out.

“People realize the job will take all summer ... then decide its better to relax, get it professionally done and enjoy it.”

Preparation

A good paint or stain job requires a thorough cleaning. Most painters power-wash the exterior after first applying a cleaning solution with bleach to get rid of mildew and mold.

“The key to a big paint job is taking the time to prep the surface. If you don’t, the paint won’t last or stick,” Halsey recommends. Surfaces are usually sprayed and washed on rainy days, then given a couple days to dry. With a paint job, the surfaces are scraped, sanded, cleaned of dust then caulked.

More detailed preparation may be required depending upon the condition of the wood or siding. JG Painting in Portsmouth recommends removing or replacing rotted or damaged wood on the siding the trim.

Additional information is available on paint manufacturer’s websites, such as www.benjaminmoore.com.

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