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Redesigned to Sell

by **Lisa Dawson** in **Living**

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From a housing perspective, Frisco is still in its adolescence. With the average age of a home here being 15 years, the growth of the housing market is certainly strong, however some residences are starting to show their age. It's no wonder home renovation and design projects – from kitchens and home offices to front doors and backyard pools – are popular. According to the City of Frisco's Development Services Department, about 3,900 permits for home remodeling projects and additions (including roofs) are submitted annually.

Homeowners choose to undertake renovations for a variety of reasons. It can be that as design trends and aesthetics change and evolve, people desire a fresh, new look for their places. Others may be looking for options to better suit their current lifestyle needs, whether that is increasing or improving a home office space or designing outdoor living areas. Renovations can also boost a home's value when it is time to sell.

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John Todd, owner of Elite Remodeling in Frisco, has been helping area homeowners remodel and renovate their houses for more than 20 years. The company, which features a team of certified designers, construction and project managers, has been named Remodeler of the Year multiple times by the Dallas Builders Association and has received other industry awards and recognitions.

Todd says the pandemic altered the way many view their homes. "More time at home has changed the way people live. Before the pandemic, homeowners primarily looked to fix cosmetics issues like flooring and kitchen cabinets. Now, they're really focusing on more functional issues," he says, adding that decorating styles have also changed as design trends have moved toward the "modern farmhouse" aesthetic as well as favoring lighter hues. "Fifteen years ago, the trend was more dark woods and heavy textures. Today, it's more about open, fresh and inviting areas."

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It's not just a home's interior spaces that matter: Improved curb appeal and other outdoor spaces are also on trend.

Heather and Eric Appel purchased their Frisco home three years ago and knew they wanted to renovate their back yard to increase its functionality and make it a more inviting space. "We knew we wanted to renovate the existing pool and needed more usable space for our two young children," Heather Appel says.

The Appels worked with Tal Thevenot, president and principal designer at Carrollton-based AquaTerra Outdoors, which specializes in designing outdoor spaces. The project included removing the existing pool and building a new one as well as adding a spa, a water feature, an outdoor kitchen, installing decking and landscaping. "We spend a lot of time outdoors," Heather says. "Our kids play outside, (we) entertain and enjoy swimming and sitting by the pool. It just made the home that much better for us."

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Thevenot says the Appels' project was an extensive backyard renovation. "Through our early design-inspiration discussions, we learned that Heather and Eric loved Charleston (South Carolina) and the rich history and beautiful historic architecture. From that birthed the name for this project, 'Charleston Charm,' and we used that along with the natural creek view to start our creative process. We also learned the Appels love the outdoors, entertaining and wanted a diverse, four-season outdoor environment that extended their everyday living into their back yard."

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Thevenot says he's noticed a trend in expanding outdoor experiences. His team completes approximately 40 renovations and 50 new-construction projects each year. "We are designing outdoor environments to reflect the architecture and interior spaces of a home and minimizing boundaries between interior and exterior."

Improving curb appeal – by way of a home's front door – is important, especially when a house is on the market. Mika Crenshaw, owner of Freedom Iron Doors in Carrollton, says custom-designed front doors can significantly improve a home's aesthetics and value.

"A custom door really elevates the look of a home," she says. "It's something that makes people stop and take notice when driving by the house." It may also increase safety. "Once a thief sees an iron door, they just move on," she says.

When it comes to remodeling projects, Todd with Elite Remodeling, says he often begins by asking homeowners how long they plan to remain in their home. "If their plan is to sell in a few years, then the goal is likely not to spend too much," he explains. "But, if they are planning to be in their home for the next 10 to 15 years, then the project usually changes a little. The homeowner wants to stay ... especially after they've undergone all the work."

Todd says some of the most-requested renovation projects are kitchens and bathrooms.

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"If the home's kitchen hasn't been updated in the last 15 years or so, it's probably due." He says many projects include updating tile backsplashes, refinishing or installing new cabinets, replacing countertops and expanding islands. "The kitchen is the most social place in your home, and it's where people hang out. Whether you're staying in your home or getting ready to sell, the kitchen is really the heart of the home."

If selling is part of the plan, home staging can be an important step after listing a home on the market. Beth Puterbaugh, owner of Divine Staging and Redesign in Frisco, says staging a home can help it sell faster.

Having a home staged is more important than ever since most people initially see homes for the first time via online listings. "First impressions are everything," Puterbaugh says. "Getting a home ready for photography and showings is going to give sellers a competitive advantage. Home inventory is very limited right now, so you need to be doing everything you can to stand out among the competition."

Puterbaugh adds that staging is an ideal first step in the moving process as it can help clients begin to remove small, personal items and collectibles that needn't be featured in marketing photos. "When you live in your home, you have lots of things ... that don't need to be in real estate photos," she says. "The staging process helps you pack those things away and gives you a head start on moving."

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Frisco homeowners attempting to sell their abodes in the current red-hot real estate market may garner more attention from potential buyers and ultimately secure a better sales price by completing a variety of large and small improvements to their homes.

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The Museum of the American Railroad plans to host the “Pullman Rising: A Pullman History Symposium,” from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. April 2 at the Nack Theater, 6711 Oak St., in Frisco.





Once a household word, “Pullman” was synonymous with luxury travel as The Pullman Company manufactured and staffed sleeping cars for nearly every overnight train in North America. In addition to the “Palace” rail cars, the company also made history through one of the first planned industrial communities and one of the nation’s worst labor disputes.

While Pullman’s cars crisscrossed the continent, a quiet revolution was taking place: African American Pullman Porters were raising their own standards of living, which gave rise to the black middle class.

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For the symposium, the museum has assembled a panel of guest speakers including Rich Luckin, a documentary filmmaker who has produced multiple programs about the nation’s most famous passenger trains and stations; and Melissa Johnson, a Collin College history professor who has vast knowledge of the Pullman Company. Topics slated to be covered during the event will include George Pullman's company town, sleeping car manufacturing and operations and the role of porters.



Admission to the symposium is \$24 per person and includes lunch and refreshments. Additional information is available at historictrains.org.

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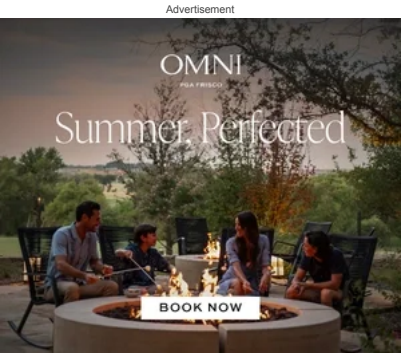
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