



Exteriors Associates Inc. transforms the exterior of your home. The company installs roofing, siding, seamless gutters and shutters with extreme professionalism, attending to every detail.

a little TLC goes a long way

By **Lindsey Getz**



A metal roof, such as this one from Global Home Improvement, Inc., is not only durable but can help keep energy costs down.

Though it's the first thing that people see when they look at a home, and not maintaining it can significantly bring down the value, many homeowners wind up ignoring the exterior of their home until it's too late.

The focus tends to be on a home's interior while ignoring things like the roof, siding or even something as simple as gutters. By not giving regular attention to these elements of a home's exterior, it could cost more time and money in the long run. Exterior experts agree preventative maintenance is the key to a beautiful and economical exterior.

"For instance, you should not wait until you have a leak to have your roof inspected," says Andrew Ferguson, senior project manager, Exteriors Associates. "Every other year you should have a professional come do a quick inspection."

Following are some other things to pay particular attention to when it comes to a home's exterior, as well as some options for updating that should be considered.

ROOFING MATERIALS

Keeping up with regular roof inspections is definitely important to ensure that any problems are fixed before they become larger. When it comes to materials, the National Roofing Contractors Association



Chapman Windows and Doors installed this SEMCO window and door combination unit to replace an old wood unit in the stone opening.



This Preservation High Performance siding, shown in bold autumn red, is available through Somerville Aluminum.

believes the popularity of metal roofing products has increased dramatically over the past decade as a result of the many benefits this product has to offer.

An increasing number of homeowners are opting for metal roofing over traditional wood shake shingles, explains Paul Kazlov, owner, Global Home Improvement, Inc. Metal roofing has greater longevity and a great source of protection against the elements.

“It also helps conserve your energy dollars because the insulating properties of metal result in lower heating and cooling costs,” he says. And it looks good, too.

“Metal roofing is also available in a wide variety of colors to complement your exterior paint or siding scheme.”

Of course, metal is just one of many available materials. Other options include asphalt shingles, clay tiles, rubber and others. With many materials to choose from, a professional contractor could offer insight into what works best for your particular home.

Additionally, homeowners may want to consider installing skylights in the roof. Natural lighting is not only appealing, but can help conserve electricity, says Ferguson. Solar tubes have become very popular. This is a tube with a light opening that you can bend to project the natural light into any room.

“It gives you enough natural light that you don’t have to turn the lights on in a room. A solar tube can also brighten up a dark hallway,” says Ferguson.

More homeowners are also asking about solar roofing options in a desire to make their home more eco-friendly and to fight global >>>

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This Preservation High Performance siding is shown in walnut with vintage wicker trim. Photo courtesy of Somerville Aluminum

warming. Solar photovoltaic panels are installed on the roof to convert sunlight into electricity. There is a lot to consider when installing solar panels, such as how much of your roof is shaded through the varying seasons or how much electricity you need to generate each month. These are important elements to discuss with a contractor, who specializes in solar panel roofing.

SIDING MATERIALS

The material you choose for siding will have the biggest impact on the look of your home. Vinyl siding has become one of the more popular materials for updating an exterior. Today, vinyl siding comes in colors that were not available before.

“Years ago, you couldn’t have dark grays, dark reds or dark blues because the heat build-up from the sun would fade it,” explains David Gropper, COO, Somerville Aluminum. “But the eco-friendly additives in today’s vinyl siding allows it to be available in a darker color palette.”

Vinyl siding is also very durable and will hold up to a variety of weather conditions. It’s also an energy-efficient option. “Vinyl siding now comes insulated,” says Gropper. “That means saving energy.”

Stucco, a cement mixture, is another option for siding. It can be applied directly to brick and concrete, or can be applied to a wood frame by being placed over top a lath which is a paper or wire mesh. Traditional stucco is a durable material that holds up well in wet



When seamless gutters are installed as one continuous piece, instead of in sections, they won't leak. These gutters are from Global Home Improvement, Inc.

conditions and is often found in mission- or Spanish-style homes.

Homeowners might also want to consider additional materials like brick, which can last for years without any needed repairs, or stone, which is virtually indestructible. Brick can be very expensive, however. Pre-cast stone veneers and facings are a new option that look genuine but are more affordable than real stone.

GUTTERS

The humble gutter is a much-needed, but much-ignored element of the home, Kazlov stresses. "Poorly functioning gutters can cause leaks in your roof, a soggy entrance to your home and a vulnerable foundation," he adds. "The truth is that gutters are one of the main means of protection for your home."

Cleaning out the gutters regularly is crucial. "It's important that the gutters are working properly, and shedding water off to the appropriate part of your property instead of allowing it to wind up in your basement," says Ferguson.

If the water is not being properly expelled far away from the home, then it's time to have a professional take a look, and possibly consider new gutters. Seamless gutters (as opposed to sectional) are a popular option today, because they are one continuous piece and won't leak at the seams like sectional gutters might. They are custom-made in materials, like aluminum, steel or copper, and must be installed by a contractor.

PAINTING

A fresh application of paint can instantly improve your home's curb appeal and give your home a brand new look. Color can be a real eye-catcher, and if you're looking to go with something out of the

ordinary, drive through surrounding neighborhoods to get ideas. Keep in mind what color your roofing material is, plus any brick or stone incorporated in the siding or front entrance, when selecting the right hue.

Preventative maintenance is also important if the home's exterior is painted, and it can save a lot of money in the long run. "Homeowners tend to think of paint in terms of fixing a problem," says Jason Volpe, owner, Jason's Painting. "If you give the home a fresh coat of paint every two or three years, it will cost you much less than waiting until there's a problem. It will keep the wood underneath the paint in good condition and prevent rotting."

WINDOWS

Windows not only add to the appearance of your home, but they also have a lot to do with insulation. "Windows pay for themselves because homeowners are able to build savings in energy costs for the life of the window," says Jim Reddecliff, president, Chapman Windows and Doors. In fact, federal tax credits for energy efficiency are available in 2009 and 2010 for qualifying windows at an amount of 30 percent of the cost, up to a maximum of \$1,500.

In terms of appearance, the decorative options are numerous, says Reddecliff. Homeowners may want to consider grilles in the windows to provide a traditional look of multiple panes. There are many types of grilles to choose from, including grilles between the glass, which provide the sectional look but make cleaning easy; or simulated divided light (SDL), which looks like divided panes of glass with grilles on the interior and exterior of the glass; or even removable grilles.

Homeowners will also have to choose between wood or vinyl

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windows. Many prefer the look of wood for its authenticity and beauty, though wood is more expensive and needs regular maintenance. Vinyl windows never need painting or sealing.

Don't forget to maintain the appearance of your front door, keeping it in tip-top shape as a welcoming entryway. There should be no peeling paint or dulled and scratched doorknobs. A multitude of styles, product materials and colors, as well as glass panel coordinates, are available to match or complement your home's design and suit your preference.



Chapman Windows and Doors installed this SEMCO bay window in place of a flat combination double-hung unit. The copper roof was also built on-site.

No matter what changes you make, updating your exterior adds value and longevity to your home. Take some time to speak with a professional about what you're looking to accomplish and how to achieve it. Be sure to check out all options, ask about guarantees and warranties and be open to new possibilities. Today's products are made with the latest technologies, updates and improvements. Your home's exterior will appreciate the extra attention and tender loving care!

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