

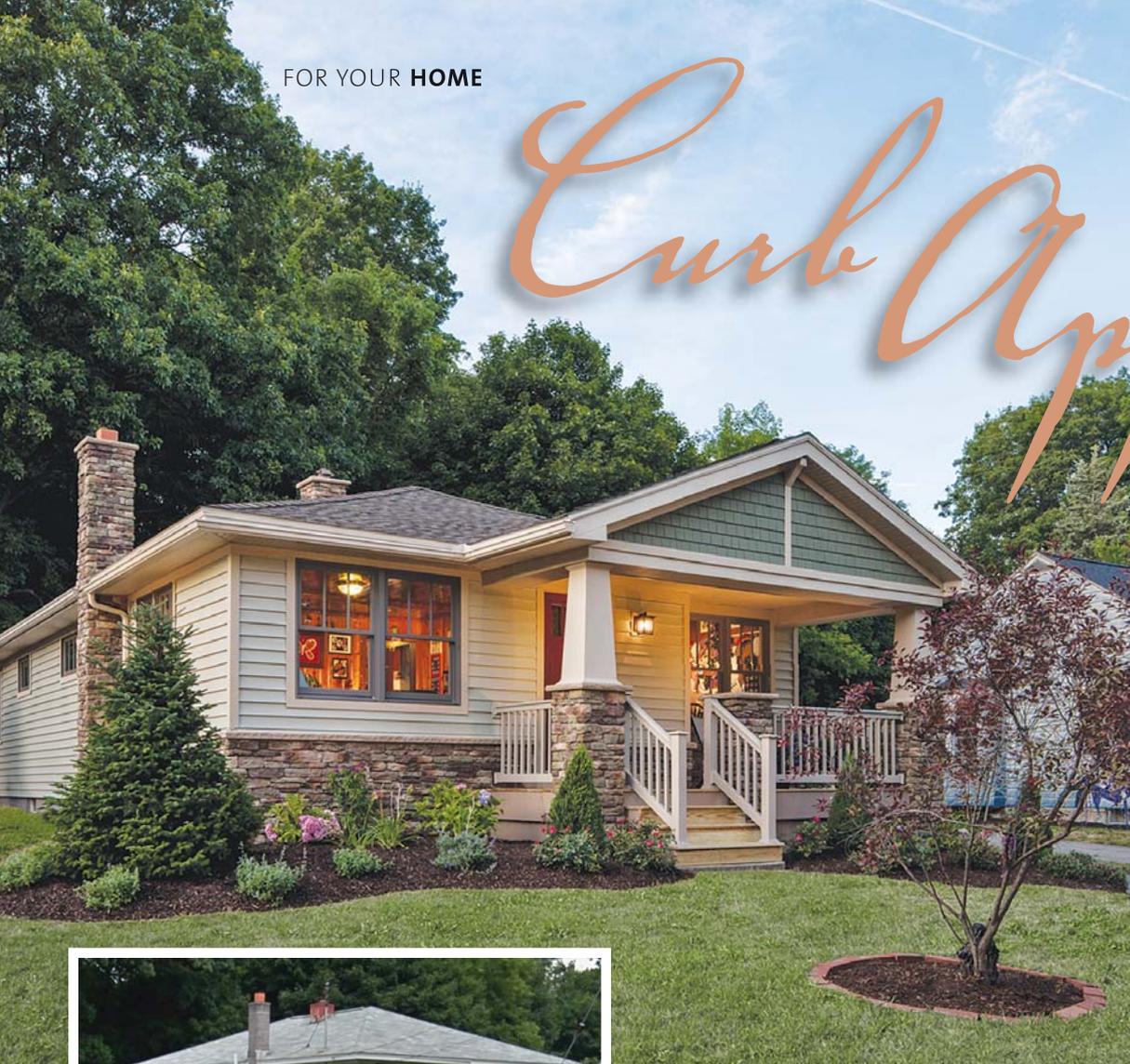
FOR YOUR HOME

Curb Appeal

*Going from
inspiration to
transformation*

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PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF
VINYL SIDING INSTITUTE



If you live in one of the many Charlotte neighborhoods built in the 1950s, '60s, '70s, and '80s, your house is probably showing its age, both in looks and functionality. You could repaint, caulk seams, or re-point the brick ... swap out the windows or replace the door ... even landscape. Unfortunately, those four walls (or more in many instances) will still convey same-ol' same ol' from the curb. But they don't have to. Residing can transform a home's look in ways you don't expect.

It took me by surprise walking the floor of the International Builder Show earlier this year. IBS is an enormous exhibition for industry manufacturers and suppliers to showcase their latest offerings. The big trend this year was in exterior building products. Siding, trim, and soffit don't sound sexy, but when you put them all together — when you mix materials, incorporate a variety of shapes, use rich colors to

accentuate windows and doors or the whole house — the synergies are spectacular.

Companies are fabricating stone veneers, faux brick, window trim, door surrounds, shutters, rail-

ings, columns, and corner posts — all to complement tradition vinyl siding profiles. Most have online design tools to let consumers mix and match materials on model homes — some will even let you upload

a photo of your own home. (Search “siding visualizer” for a list of sites.)

Whether you're online or in a showroom, check out different profiles — even traditional clapboard or lap siding comes in a variety of widths (the width is often referred to as “a reveal”). You wouldn't normally think of a few extra inches as making much of a difference, but a 6-inch or 7-inch reveal



and accessories to accent details specific to the architectural style of the home.

A couple of cautionary points before you're headlong into your next remodeling project:

(vs. the 4-inch hollow back popular a decade ago) not only looks like wood but lays on the wall more like wood and casts a shadow just as wood ... would.

Another transformative idea: forego horizontal siding and think vertical. Board & batten can give a distinctive look to the entire wall or break it up with cedar shakes or scallop-shaped profiles.

When it comes to picking colors (especially those guaranteed to retain their vibrancy for a lifetime), endless choices can be stress-inducing. Thankfully, there's an app for that, too. Experts from the Color Marketing Group (the international association for color design professionals) have been collaborating with the exterior products industry, so now homeowners can shop vinyl siding in a huge variety of solid and variegated colors. Apps and other online tools also allow homeowners to mix and match trim

There's a reason why the vinyl siding industry is manufacturing a huge portfolio of exterior products. No one else is or can (save a skillful carpenter). PVC can be extruded to create any number of profiles, but also molded for trim. Depending on the architectural style of your home (or the home you want to create), there are numerous trim requirements (every window, every corner, the molding, etc.). These products match — not just in color, but also finish and texture. Fiber cement, while also mimicking the look of wood, is sold much like lumber: planks and boards from which corner posts, window trim, and door surrounds are constructed. Or, as is most often the case, purchased as a pre-fabricated PVC product.

Sure, these products can be used in combination with PVC, just don't expect them to match exactly.

From minor cosmetics to major renovations, no matter the age or type of house, whatever your budget, looking to sell or just make your neighbors jealous, there are many ways to transform your house into something spectacular. Remember, the outside walls — while being the home's first line of defense against Mother Nature — are not structural. Like reupholstering your living room furniture, re-siding the exterior can give you a whole new look. For information visit charlottesideswithvinyl.org. *

Watch “For Your Home” on WTVI, PBS Saturdays 10:30am, on Create TV Tuesdays and Thursdays at 11:00am and 5:30pm or online at foryourhome.com.



Facts about vinyl siding

- Vinyl siding, including insulated siding, is made from polyvinyl chloride (PVC), which is derived from salt and natural gas, and is engineered for optimum stability, while remaining lightweight and flexible to make it more durable.
- Vinyl siding withstanding high winds (certified to up to 110 mph) and resists the weathering effects of heat, cold, and moisture, properly installed certified vinyl siding will retain its great looks, guaranteed.
- It's the only exterior cladding with a product-certification program administered by an independent, accredited quality-control agency that ensures products and colors meet or exceed industry standards; and a certified installer program with validation by an independent, third-party administrator to ensure that installers demonstrate knowledge of industry-accepted application techniques.
- Insulated siding is vinyl siding on which manufacturer-installed rigid foam plastic insulation is laminated or otherwise permanently attached. It provides all the beauty, durability, and sustainability of vinyl siding, with the added benefit of improved energy efficiency.



Easy fixes for a fresh look

If you're not ready for a complete makeover, try some of these simple, low-cost projects that can do wonders to improve your home's curb appeal.

Make a great first impression

As the welcoming point of your home, a beautiful front door enhances your home's curb appeal and appearance. Try painting your door in a vibrant color. Or add moldings or accent paint in contrast to its current color. At the very least, make sure it is clean, especially if it has glass, and around the knob and fixtures.

Check the hardware

Metal fixtures can become dull and tarnished over the years without you even noticing. Dingy hinges, knobs, light fixtures, wall-mounted mailboxes, and house numbers can often be cleaned with hot, soapy water or a little lemon juice. Of course, if the fixtures are out of date, mis-matched, or no amount of elbow grease can help, it's time to head for the hardware store.

Let there be light

The welcome glow of outdoor lighting – next to or above the front door, on a post in the front yard, uplighting trees, and along the outline your front walk – will provide safety and security while enhancing the aesthetics of your home.

Add shutters or accent trim

Shutters and trim offer an extra touch of affordable beauty. Shutters can also control light and ventilation, and provide additional security. New composite materials, such as vinyl and PVC resins, make trim details durable and low maintenance.

Hold on – railings might need work

Porch and stoop railings and spindles present another area where you can add accent colors to improve your overall look. If your railings are past their prime, replace them with colorful, low maintenance materials such as vinyl or PVC.

Don't forget the garage

Garage doors take up a fair amount of the front view of most houses, but are often relegated to plain, boring white or beige paint. Have some fun with a color that complements the house, or paint the frames in attention-grabbing hues. If the door is old and in need of extensive repair, new doors come in a variety of materials and come in styles from old fashioned swing doors to carriage house style to contemporary.