

OTTAWA Renovates

Greater Ottawa Home Builders' Association

Fall 2025

INSIDE:

**RenoTour
Parade of Homes**

**Financial Incentives for
Energy-Efficient Upgrades**

**Maintenance
Checklist for Fall**



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– Kelley & Gord, Civic Hospital Area

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



Jacob Kirst

RenoTour opens the doors to real homes across the city – full-home transformations, heritage restorations, aging-in-place upgrades and more – all renovated by professionals who lead with vision, care and technical expertise. It's an opportunity to see what's possible when exceptional design and construction come together.



A home renovation is never just about walls, finishes or square footage – it's about your life. At the Greater Ottawa Home Builders' Association (GOHBA), we believe the best renovations are rooted in trust, guided by thoughtful design, and built to stand the test of time. That belief has never been more important than it is today.

Across Ottawa, we're seeing homeowners make smarter, more intentional choices when it comes to how and why they renovate. It's no longer just about resale value or reacting to design trends. Today's renovations are about creating spaces that align with how families live now, and how they'll continue to live into the future.

That's where the RenoMark program, led by the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) and advocated by GOHBA, plays a vital role. RenoMark renovators commit to a strict code of conduct that includes proper licensing and insurance, clear contracts, ongoing education and a shared dedication to professionalism and accountability. When you choose a RenoMark renovator, you're choosing someone who values your trust as much as the finished product.

One of the best ways to experience this level of professionalism in action is through RenoTour, our annual parade of renovated homes, which is returning this October (see page 13). RenoTour opens the doors to real homes across the city – full-home transformations, heritage restorations, aging-in-place upgrades and more – all renovated by professionals who lead with vision, care and technical expertise. It's an opportunity to see what's possible when exceptional design and construction come together.

I'm continually inspired by the professionals in Ottawa who bring these renovations to life. Our community is fortunate to have such a diverse, talented group of renovators committed to raising the bar for quality, sustainability and design.

Right now, we're seeing clear trends that reflect what homeowners value most:

- Adaptive and multi-generational living is top of mind, especially with affordability pressures. Main-floor suites, secondary units and accessibility upgrades are helping homes evolve to support families through every stage of life.
- Energy efficiency and resilience are driving renovation decisions. From Net Zero Ready upgrades to protecting from extreme weather events, homeowners want homes that perform in all seasons and protect their investment long term.
- Kitchen renovations remain at the heart of the home: More than a functional workspace, today's kitchens continue to be gathering places, where families connect, unwind and create lasting memories.
- Preserving character: In mature neighbourhoods like the Glebe, Rockcliffe and Old Ottawa South, renovators are preserving heritage character while enhancing livability, performance and comfort.
- The power of design-build: Perhaps most importantly, there's a growing demand for design-build continuity (where a project is taken from concept to completion by a single firm), with fewer handoffs, clear communication and informed decisions made up front. Homeowners want to feel supported and confident every step of the way.

As Chair of GOHBA's Renovator's Council, I'm proud to represent professionals who rise to meet these needs with innovation, empathy and integrity.

If you're considering a renovation, take the time to explore your options. Look for the RenoMark symbol. Attend RenoTour this fall. And, most importantly, choose a renovator who listens first – because the best renovations don't start with a hammer.

They start with understanding. 🏡

Jacob Kirst is Chair of the GOHBA Renovator's Council and President of Lagois Design • Build • Renovate.

A modern kitchen interior featuring light wood cabinetry and a white countertop. A large potted plant with broad green leaves sits on the floor in the foreground. The kitchen includes open shelving with white dishes and a built-in wine rack. Sunlight streams in from a window on the left, casting shadows on the wall and floor.

The Right Way to Renovate

WHY YOU SHOULD WORK WITH
A RENOMARK RENOVATOR

By Sarah Caron



Planning a home renovation is exciting but it can also be overwhelming. Hiring the right contractor is key to a successful project, whether it's for a new kitchen, finishing your basement or updating your entire home.

Unfortunately, not all contractors operate with integrity. "Cash deals," vague contracts (or none at all) and poor workmanship can lead to costly mistakes and legal risks.

October is Renovation Month, making it the perfect time for the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) to encourage you to start your renovation right with RenoMark® — a national program run by the CHBA that helps homeowners identify professional renovators and contractors who are committed to quality workmanship and customer satisfaction. Locally, RenoMark contractors are trusted members of the Greater Ottawa Home Builders' Association who adhere to a strict code of ethics.

WHAT SETS RENOMARK CONTRACTORS APART?

RenoMark is not just another marketing tool. RenoMark contractors are dedicated to providing superior service and transparency. They abide by a rigorous code of conduct that prioritizes clear communication, proper documentation and adherence to safety and legal standards. From updating a bathroom to creating a secondary suite, projects of all sizes will benefit from:

Written contracts and warranties: RenoMark contractors are required to provide detailed, written contracts and a minimum two-year warranty.

Insurance and safety: They must carry at least \$2 million in liability insurance and ensure workplace safety for all subcontractors.

Licensing and permits: Members hold all necessary licences and permits, ensuring your renovation complies with local regulations.

Industry expertise: RenoMark professionals benefit from ongoing education and training, which helps them stay current with best practices and industry standards.

These requirements help reduce the risks often associated with renovation projects, such as unclear expectations, sub-standard work, delays or even disappearing contractors. Your home is likely your biggest investment; don't gamble with it by missing out on this extra layer of protection.

RENOVATE NOW WITH RENOMARK

Renovation Month is a timely reminder for homeowners to approach their projects thoughtfully. With rising costs and busy contractor schedules, starting early and choosing a qualified professional can make a significant difference. RenoMark contractors are equipped to help homeowners navigate the renovation process efficiently and responsibly.

When you choose a RenoMark contractor, you are choosing a professional committed to excellence. For more than 20 years, RenoMark has delivered peace of mind to homeowners across the Ottawa region. Find a verified contractor at Renomark.ca and start your renovation journey today. 🌱

Sarah Caron is the director of renovation services at the Canadian Home Builders' Association.

Why You Need an Emergency Preparedness Kit

By Patrick Langston, All Things Home

Tornadoes, floods, power outages, ice storms: The Ottawa area has experienced all in recent years.

An emergency preparedness kit could save your life or the lives of your loved ones during or after a disaster. Hard to argue with that.

But more than two-thirds of Canadians have not prepared for such an emergency, according to Statistics Canada.

If you're in that majority, here's what you need to know about having an emergency preparedness kit.

BEING READY

Severe storms, flooding, extended power outages, even a terrorism attack: these are among the potential emergency situations in Ontario flagged by the Government of Canada's Get Prepared organization. It says that while all levels of government are prepared for emergencies, a crisis strains official resources and it's up to individuals and families to do their part. That includes being self-reliant for up to 72 hours.

THE KIT

You can't be self-reliant in an emergency without the proper supplies. Those range from clean water and non-perishable food to a battery-operated or crank radio, extra cash and medication.

The Red Cross, among others, itemizes on its website what should be in your emergency kit (redcross.ca). The Red Cross also sells emergency preparedness kits for one or more people. A Basic Disaster Preparedness Kit for two people starts under \$150 and includes an emergency blanket, waterproof matches, first aid kit and more.

If you have pets, remember to include food and medication for them.

A purchased kit generally comes in a backpack or small bag for easy transportation if you need to leave your home. It's important to keep the kit in a readily accessible spot like a closet near your front door and for everyone in your family to know where it is.

A kit with expired medication or stale food isn't going to do you much good, so check and update your kit every six months.

Checking when you change the batteries in your smoke alarm is one way to ensure you don't forget.

MORE ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Have an emergency plan: Emergencies often occur when families aren't together, so you need a plan to ensure everyone is safe and connected. You can learn more at [Get Prepared on Canada.ca](http://GetPreparedOnCanada.ca).

People with disabilities and special needs: Mobility, service animals and other circumstances may need to be considered in emergency planning. Find out more at accessible.canada.ca.

Power outages, floods and general safety: Find more information on these topics, including how to protect your property against flooding, at canada.ca. 🌱

Patrick Langston is the co-founder of the housing information website AllThingsHome.ca and a veteran journalist. He has written widely about the Ottawa housing industry since 2008.

Preserving Character:

A MODERN APPROACH TO OTTAWA'S HISTORIC HOMES

By Casey Grey

The Ottawa region's rich history is being preserved and revitalized by a vibrant community of builders and craftsmen. A remarkable example of this dedication is the complete energy retrofit of a charming 1860s stone farmhouse by my company, The Conscious Builder. This

project serves as a powerful testament to how historical preservation and modern innovation can harmoniously coexist.

The challenge was immense: transforming a drafty, inefficient and uncomfortable old home into a healthy, high-performance dwelling without compromising its historic character. From the

outset, the team had to navigate significant structural issues, including a floor that sagged over seven inches and large cracks in the stone walls. Our carpenters worked closely with engineers and masons to meticulously repair structural cracks and level the floors, ensuring the building's integrity for centuries to come.

The Conscious Builder renovated this 1860s home, below and next page, vastly improving its energy.





The team's approach was guided by a deep respect for the building's original design. We carefully insulated from the inside to preserve the iconic exterior stone while also using a vapour-permeable air barrier, a key factor in the longevity of these old homes. We also added triple-glazed windows and an air-source heat pump and upgraded many other aspects of the home.

Even though the work was limited to the main floor and second floor, the farmhouse's energy consumption was reduced to less than one-third of its original use, and its airtightness improved by over 60 per cent. That is incredible considering the basement was left untouched, including leaving even the dirt floor for a future project.

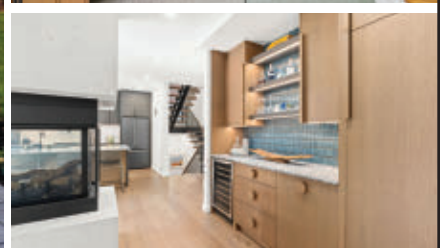
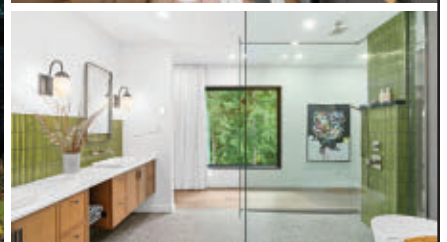
This project is more than just a renovation; it's an example of how Ottawa's heritage community is breathing new life into our

cherished historical buildings, ensuring they remain comfortable, efficient and healthy homes for generations to come. 🌱

Casey Grey is the founder of the award-winning sustainable building company The Conscious Builder and is also the host of The Conscious Builder Podcast and The Conscious Builder Show on YouTube. Watch a complete video about this project at TheConsciousBuilder.com/StoneFarmhouseRetrofit.



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A Different Kind of House Tour

EXPLORE THESE 7 STUNNING HOMES IN THE RENOTOUR PARADE OF HOMES

By Anita Murray, All Things Home

It's a house tour with a twist.

The annual RenoTour Parade of Homes returns October 19 offering seven fabulous homes to explore — in person. If there's a renovation in your future, this is a tour you do not want to miss.

Organized by the Greater Ottawa Home Builders' Association (GOHBA), the tour showcases several of Ottawa's top renovators, who are all part of RenoMark, a national program that identifies professional contractors who have signed on to the Canadian Home Builders' Association RenoMark renovators code of conduct that protects the homeowner.

This year's tour includes homes ranging from a compact 500-square-foot coach house and reimagined floor plans to a gutted bungalow rebuilt to be super energy efficient and an infill home with spectacular design details.

"Seeing a real renovation up close gives you a better sense of how a space can be transformed and often sparks ideas you might not have considered for your own home," says Jason Burggraaf, executive director of GOHBA. "It's an opportunity to experience the quality, creativity and attention to detail that professional renovators bring to their work. If you're planning a renovation, I encourage you to explore what's possible when you work with a trusted professional."

The tour is an opportunity to not only visit the homes to check out the workmanship and quality of top renovators, but a chance to ask them questions on site. It's a fantastic research tool as you plan your own renovation.

"It's like Pinterest come to life!" says Amanda Lyster of Amsted Design-Build, one of this year's participants. "And it's a chance to get a sense for several high-quality renovators

in the area. All in one shot you can meet some of the team, see their work on display and learn more about whether one of these companies is right for any upcoming projects you may have."

THIS YEAR'S PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE:

- Amsted Design-Build: whole-home transformation
- ARTium Design Build: reimagined main floor
- Lagois Design • Build • Renovate: kitchen and sunroom connection
- Ottawa General Contractors: two secondary dwelling units on the same street
- Revision Built: whole-home transformation
- RND Construction: custom infill home

Several of the homes are in and around the Westboro area, with another in Kanata and one in North Gower, making for easy travelling.

There is no charge for the one-day tour, although donations are being accepted for the Ottawa Food Bank (both food and money). The tour runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on October 19.

If you can't make it to the in-person event, there will be 3D virtual tours available afterwards at renotourparadeofhomes.ca.

For details, scan the QR code on this page or pick up a brochure at the GOHBA booth at the Ottawa Fall Home Show October 2-5 at the EY Centre.

See the following pages for highlights of the tour.

Anita Murray is the co-founder of the award-winning housing information website AllThingsHome.ca. The veteran journalist has covered the Ottawa housing industry since 2011.

If you go

What: RenoTour Parade of Homes

When: Sunday, October 19

Time: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (homes can be toured virtually after the event)

Where: Various homes in Ottawa

Cost: It's free, but donations will be accepted for The Food Bank

More information: RenoTourParadeofHomes.ca



Scan for details



Total Home Transformation

Amsted Design-Build

amsted.ca



This renovation is a total reinvention of an older Westboro house. By bringing in more light, optimizing the layout and embracing bold, contemporary design, a long-overlooked structure has been transformed inside and out into a stylish, future-ready gem with spaces thoughtfully reimagined to better suit the homeowners' lifestyle and make the most of a narrow footprint.

Among the changes, the main floor layout was reworked to create open-concept sightlines, a powder room, ensuite and laundry were added (upgrading the home from one to three bathrooms), upstairs bedrooms were reduced from three to two to create space for a walk-in closet, the ensuite and the laundry, and a mudroom-style back entry was created within a compact addition to add everyday function while respecting sight constraints.

This project is a great example of how older homes have tremendous potential and can be reimagined for modern needs.



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From Ordinary to Inspired

ARTium Design Build

artiumdesignbuild.com



An outdated 20-year-old kitchen was transformed into a luxurious, functional and expansive space. Widening the galley kitchen's opening to the front of the home created a better connection to the refreshed entryway. While a full open concept wasn't possible due to a load-bearing wall, larger doorways were achieved by reconfiguring building systems within an angled wall, making for a more welcoming kitchen entrance.

The opening at the back of the house was expanded, allowing for a large peninsula that seats four, removing the need for a dining table, which also allowed for full-height pantry cabinetry and a built-in storage bench under the window. Custom white oak veneer open shelving, herringbone backsplash tiles, champagne bronze fixtures and a white silgranit (a granite composite) sink replaced dated features.

Luxury vinyl plank flooring unified the main floor. The living room fireplace was modernized and a custom bar was added to the living room for entertaining. Each element works together to bring this from a lacklustre main floor to a modern, functional space to please the homeowners for years to come.



Seamless Living

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lagois.com



This renovation tells the story of a thoughtful transformation, turning a closed-off rear yard into a bright, functional extension of the home. By replacing a kitchen window with a full-view door and adding dining room windows, the main floor now glows with natural light and flows effortlessly into a new screened-in porch.

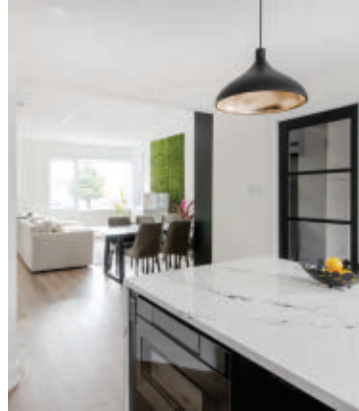
With skylights, timber accents (maintaining the home's 1931 architecture) and low maintenance materials, the porch offers a bug-free retreat for everyday living. Inside, a refreshed kitchen layout, custom millwork and refined finishes enhance functionality and warmth, while preserving the home's original charm and perfecting the art of living for the homeowners.



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This is more than just a renovation — it's a complete reinvention. Guided by principles of durability, health and energy efficiency, the home was stripped to its bones and rebuilt to exceed modern performance standards. Behind the sleek finishes lies a "perfect wall" assembly with four control layers, a fully excavated, waterproofed and insulated foundation, a "hot" double roof system, continuous exterior insulation, triple-glazed windows, fully electrified HVAC system and more — all to maximize comfort and energy efficiency.

Registered with NRCan as a Net Zero Ready Renovation case study, this home is both a showcase of sustainable design and a move-in-ready opportunity for the discerning buyer (construction is nearing completion). Experience this transformation up close: Feel the difference in air quality, hear the quiet and see the details that make this home built to last for generations.



Award Winning & Green

RND Construction
rndconstruction.ca



Winner of the Green Innovation Award in the Ottawa Housing Design Awards, this infill project is a thoughtfully designed home (designed by Ha2 Architecture + Design) and built on a narrow urban lot. Certified R-2000 and operating 57 per cent more energy efficient than code, this home showcases innovation, sustainability and elevated design. One of its most distinctive features is a residential elevator — offering both accessibility and modern convenience.

As you tour this home, you'll experience the exceptional quality and finishes that we can offer: a stunning kitchen, luxurious bathrooms, a striking staircase, unique fireplace detailing, a refined office and inviting outdoor living space. This home is a true reflection of high-performance building paired with refined design.





Living Large Coach Houses – Two Homes, One Street



This 500-sq.-ft. coach house by Ottawa General Contractors — designed as an Airbnb — makes the most of a small space without sacrificing livability, storage and esthetics.



Forging a new path with the city for secondary suites, this home above a detached garage by Ottawa General Contractors showcases a complete one-bedroom dwelling. 🏡



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BUILDING SKILLS. BUILDING COMMUNITY. BUILDING OTTAWA.

By Ana Patenaude

In today's rapidly evolving economy, a resilient and skilled workforce is essential for individual success and the vitality of our communities. At the YMCA of the National Capital Region (YMCA NCR), we believe strong communities are built by people with the tools, skills, and confidence to succeed. For decades, we've been more than a place for health and recreation — we've also been a hub where newcomers, job seekers, and equity-priority groups find pathways into meaningful work, including careers in the skilled trades. The YMCA NCR is proud to play a pivotal role in this transformation by helping individuals develop technical expertise, workplace readiness, and confidence to thrive. We work closely with employers, industry professionals, and community partners to ensure the people we support are prepared, motivated, and connected to opportunities that benefit both individuals and the community.

Through our Employment Services, we connect employers with skilled candidates across many sectors as the largest employment service provider in Eastern Ontario. By offering hiring support, guidance, and access to funding for targeted training, we help businesses build strong, skilled, and sustainable teams.

Our impact goes beyond training, with a commitment to inclusion and sustainability. We focus on supporting equity-priority populations, including women, youth, racialized individuals, and newcomers, ensuring that underrepresented groups have equitable access to opportunity. At the same time, we equip participants with skills in energy-efficient construction, green building practices, and sustainable home renovation. This dual focus meets employer needs and supports Ottawa's goals for greener infrastructure and more affordable housing.

Partnerships are at the heart of this work. Whether you are an employer

seeking skilled candidates, a contractor interested in sustainable solutions, or a community group exploring collaboration, working with the YMCA NCR means investing in Ottawa's future. Together, we can strengthen local industries, support economic growth, and build a community where everyone belongs.

"Strengthening Ottawa's workforce is at the heart of our mission," says Trevor McAlmont, CEO of the YMCA of the National Capital Region. "It reflects our values and guides everything we do, from training programs to employment support, helping people succeed and contribute to their communities."

The YMCA NCR is proud to be a trusted partner in shaping Ottawa's workforce and enriching its communities. We invite employers, industry leaders, and community partners to connect with us to explore opportunities for collaboration and build a more inclusive and sustainable future together. 🌱



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Financial Incentives are One More Reason to Opt for Energy Efficient Upgrades

By Patrick Langston, All Things Home

With the cost of heating and cooling our homes unlikely to go anywhere but up in the coming years and climate change quickening, residential energy efficiency is more critical than ever.

Fortunately, government programs can help defray the cost of reducing many homes' energy consumption and bills. Here are some to consider:

HOME RENOVATION SAVINGS PROGRAM

Introduced earlier this year and part of Ontario's 12-year, \$11-billion energy-efficiency plan, this program offers homeowners rebates of up to 30 per cent for an array of upgrades. The program, a partnership between Enbridge and Ontario's Save on Energy initiative, is open to households currently heating with propane, oil, wood or electricity (an earlier program was restricted to homes heated with electricity).

Rebates range from \$75 for smart thermostats and \$100 for a new window or door to as much as \$7,700 for insulation, \$10,000 for solar panels and battery storage, and \$7,500 for a cold-climate air-source heat pump or \$12,000 for a ground-source heat pump. There are also \$250 rebates for air sealing and \$500 for heat-pump water heaters. Some rebates require a home energy assessment, but there are rebates for that as well.

Rebate and loan programs can help make energy efficiency even more attractive.

Energy-efficient appliances are slated to be added to the program at a later date.

OIL TO HEAT PUMP AFFORDABILITY PROGRAM

This federal program provides up to \$10,000 for low- and median-income households switching from oil heating to a heat pump system. In Ontario, for example, a household of two people would qualify if their after-tax household income is \$89,125. The program's payment applies to both the purchase and installation of a heat pump, and the funding can be combined with additional financial assistance from other existing federal, provincial and utility programs.

CMHC ECO IMPROVEMENT

This initiative offers a partial premium refund of 25 per cent if you're insured by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and spending at least \$20,000 on energy-efficient renovations to your recently purchased home.

CANADA GREENER HOMES LOAN

While the popular Canada Greener Homes Grant program, which issued more than \$1 billion in retrofit grants, has been closed, homeowners can still take advantage of the loan program. It provides loans up to \$40,000 for homeowners to improve residential energy efficiency and comfort.

The loans are interest-free and repayable over 10 years. Up to 15 per cent of the loan is deliverable up front to help cover the deposit to a contractor for a retrofit.

ENERGY AFFORDABILITY PROGRAM

This Ontario program offers free support to income-eligible electricity consumers by helping them to better manage their monthly electricity costs and improve the comfort of their homes. Support services range from energy needs assessments to energy-efficient appliances like refrigerators and air conditioners and more. Homes heated by electricity may be eligible for an insulation upgrade or an air-source heat pump.

Eligibility is fairly broad, ranging from pre-tax household income (\$66,595 for two people) to those receiving the federal Guaranteed Income Supplement or enrolled in the Ontario Disability Support Program and others.

BETTER HOMES OTTAWA – LOAN PROGRAM

The City of Ottawa also supports home retrofits through this program. Eligibility is tied to income or other support programs like Ontario Works. Loans are available up to \$125,000, repayable over 20 years, for energy-efficiency retrofits and climate adaptation renovations.

Ottawa's loans can be combined with other energy-efficiency rebates, incentives and financing programs such as the Canada Greener Homes Loan.

Other financial assistance programs for energy-efficiency retrofits may be available now or in the future at the local, provincial and national level. Check Natural Resources Canada's Directory of Energy Efficiency Programs for Homes to stay up to date. 🌱

Patrick Langston is the co-founder of the housing information website AllThingsHome.ca and a veteran journalist. He has written widely about the Ottawa housing industry since 2008.

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Your Fall Maintenance Checklist

By Patrick Langston, All Things Home

Fall maintenance not only keeps your home looking great, it helps control repair costs, aids in getting top dollar when you sell and even gives a leg up to Mother Nature. Here are eight must-do fall tasks:

#1 THE BIRDS AND THE BEES

When tidying up the yard, leave the dead flowers and some fallen leaves. They provide food for birds and shelter for pollinators. Some sheltering insects are especially treasured by chickadees, nuthatches and other birds.

Taking care of fall chores now will save you headaches over the winter.

#2 GUTTER GUNK

Waterlogged debris like leaves and twigs in your gutters can create a frozen mess that stops melting ice and snow from running down the drainpipes and away from your home. Worse, ice in the gutters can work its way back up under the shingles, causing leaks inside your home. If cleaning the gutters yourself, follow ladder safety rules.

#3 FROZEN FAUCETS

To avoid a burst pipe, drain your exterior faucets by turning off the supply from inside and then draining the pipe first from outside and then from inside (you should find a drain fitting on the basement pipe that allows you to empty water still standing in the pipe to the faucet). Keep the faucet open when draining from the inside to avoid a vacuum and leave it open for the winter.

#4 TREE CARE

Removing dead and damaged limbs or large branches overhanging your roof can prevent accidents when trees get coated with heavy ice and snow.

#5 GLEAMING GLASS

Why waste money on commercial glass cleaners to remove the summer's accumulation of dust and grime? A splash of vinegar and a couple of drops of dish detergent in a bucket of warm water work just as well.

#6 GARAGE DOOR TLC

A tune-up now means your garage door will operate correctly when winter descends. Lubricate moving parts, check safety features like the automatic reverse function, tighten bolts and ensure weatherstripping is shipshape. YouTube is a good source of DIY videos.

#7 STAYING TOASTY WARM

If you haven't already done so, get your heating system inspected, clean your furnace humidifier and replace the HVAC filters (your owner's manual or YouTube will help with this). A heating system that hasn't been maintained won't perform properly and could break down on the coldest night of the year.

#8 CUPPA JOE

You'll need a coffee break during all these maintenance tasks but remember: a coffee maker can be a hotbed of bacteria. Check your owner's manual or search online for instructions on making sure your coffee maker is germ-free and giving you the best brew possible. 🌱

Patrick Langston is the co-founder of the housing information website AllThingsHome.ca and a veteran journalist. He has written widely about the Ottawa housing industry since 2008.

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How to Select Replacement Windows

By Roy Nandram



Traditionally, a window was simply an opening in a wall, roof or door that allowed light, sound and air to enter or leave and let you see outside. Today's windows are complex architectural features that provide:

- Protection against wind, rain and snow.
- Insulation in the exterior envelope (winter and summer).
- A visual connection to the exterior.
- Ventilation when required.
- Solar heat gain in the winter to reduce heating costs.
- A decrease in solar heat gain in summer to lower cooling costs.
- Egress in some cases.
- Protection against bugs and intruders.

Choosing the right replacement windows can feel overwhelming, especially with so many options available. Because windows are a major investment, it's important to understand what to look for and how to make the best decision for your home and climate.

In Ottawa's climate, high-performance, Energy Star-rated windows are essential. Features such as triple glazing, low U-values (measuring how well a window prevents heat from escaping)

and appropriate SHGC (solar heat gain coefficient) ratings can significantly improve your home's energy efficiency. Since windows and doors account for up to 25 per cent of a home's heat loss, full replacement with certified models is often more effective than retrofitting.

Energy Star-certified windows, doors and sliding doors offer many benefits: they reduce drafts, increase interior comfort and minimize condensation. These models can also lower energy bills and improve year-round indoor temperature control.

Proper installation is just as important as the window itself. A Canadian standard – CAN/CSA-A440.4 – outlines best practices for installing windows, doors and skylights. Following this standard ensures better long-term performance, energy efficiency and durability.

Be sure to hire a professional window installer, who can recommend different SHGC-rated windows based on the orientation of your home. And ask about available rebates and incentives. For example, Ontario's Save on Energy – Home Renovation Program provides additional rebates – such as \$100 per rough opening – depending on your heating system. Visit natural-resources.canada.ca or saveonenergy.ca for details.

Like cars, windows are assembled from multiple components sourced from different suppliers. A typical window includes a frame, glass, hardware and seals. The overall quality depends on the performance of each part.

To choose energy-efficient windows, familiarize yourself with these key terms:

U-value: Measures how well a window keeps heat inside. Lower values (0.20–1.20 BTU/hr. x ft² x °F (or metric equivalent)) mean better insulation.

SHGC (solar heat gain coefficient): Measures how much solar energy the glass lets in. A lower SHGC is better for cooling in summer; a higher SHGC can help in winter.

ER (energy rating): A Canadian performance score combining U-value, SHGC and air leakage. Higher numbers mean better efficiency.

Also consider condensation resistance, air leakage, visible light transmission and frame materials.

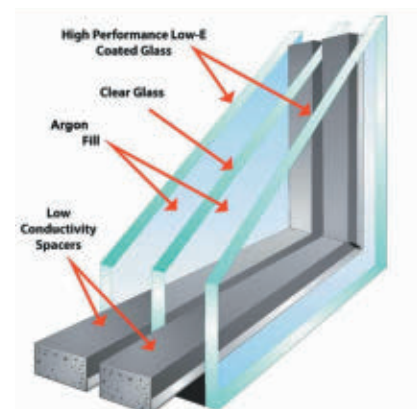
Window replacement is an important project with long-term benefits. For best results, consult with an industry professional who can assess your home, explain product choices and help you plan the most cost-effective solution. 🌱

Roy Nandram is president of RND Construction.

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Today's windows are a complex architectural feature in your home.
Project: RND Construction



Components of a tripled glazed window.



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Are You Getting the Most Out of Your Home?

By Lindsay Haley



Renovations are all about unlocking potential. If you're planning a future project, now's the perfect time to ask: could your home be doing more? More for your family, more for your future, and maybe even more for your financial goals. One option more homeowners are starting to consider is additional dwelling units — or ADUs.

Zoning in Ottawa now allows most residential properties to include up to three units. That means the idea of adding a fully self-contained living space isn't just possible, it's encouraged. And while many homeowners assume this would dramatically alter their home's footprint, the reality is often much simpler. In fact, many ADUs already exist quietly in Ottawa.

ADUs can take a number of forms, depending on your property and layout. The most common is a basement suite, which makes use of existing space and can often be added with minimal exterior

impact. Others may choose to convert or build above a detached garage, add a side or rear addition with its own entrance, or construct a coach house in the backyard. Each approach has its own considerations for access, light, privacy and design — but all can provide a fully independent unit with kitchen, bathroom and living space.

What makes ADUs so powerful is their flexibility. They allow aging parents to stay close while maintaining independence. They give adult children a chance to live affordably and autonomously. They generate income and help offset rising costs. They add lasting value to the property. Whether used as a multi-generational suite or a long-term rental, ADUs create meaningful space in ways that respond directly to real-life needs.

At a time when housing demand is high and space is at a premium, ADUs also serve a bigger purpose. They increase density in a gentle, sustainable way — adding much-needed housing within established neighbourhoods, without altering their character. Detached coach

houses, for example, are permitted on many properties, as long as they're located in the rear yard and meet privacy and glazing requirements. It's a smart way to make better use of the infrastructure we already have, while contributing to the city's evolving housing needs.

Of course, adding a unit takes planning. Separate kitchens, private entrances, fire and sound separation and zoning considerations all come into play. But none of it is out of reach. Government grants, low-interest loans and updated policies are helping homeowners move forward with confidence.

ADUs may not be right for every home — but they're absolutely worth a closer look. If you're already planning a renovation, now is the time to explore what your property can do.

Because with the right plan, that unused space could be the most valuable part of your home. 🌱

Lindsay Haley is the director of construction at Amsted Design-Build.

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