

Helping handy

Renovations that make a home sell-worthy

By MAX GROSS

THE classic wisdom about a big, splashy renovation is that it can boost the resale value of your home.

But in 2009, a renovation can be more like a requirement if you want to sell.

"I don't think you get that much more money for [your apartment with] a renovation," says Corcoran Group broker Karin Posvar-Picket, who is just finishing up her own 3½-month renovation, combining her apartment with the one next door. "The difference is you sell it."

This means taking a good look at your property and figuring out what needs work.

Given the huge swath of prewar apartments and townhouses

in the city, making sure your property doesn't look rundown is extremely important.

"Paint your apartment," advises Miriam Sirota of Brown Harris Stevens. "It makes a big difference. Anything that looks like it's cracked or peeling off or anything that looks schmutzy, you want to de-schmutzify."

Making sure other cosmetic features — say, the windows — are in good shape is likewise essential.

The kitchen and the bathroom have always been the traditional rooms to renovate, and that holds true even in this market.

"I put in cherrywood cabinets with a natural finish, granite countertops, a double oven and stainless-steel appliances," says Emilio Frederick II, who just finished a renovation on his \$1.45

million Sugar Hill townhouse that he's selling with Doug Booth of Barak Realty. Frederick's thinking is that he wants to give his classic 19th-century townhouse 2009 amenities.

In this vein, nice appliances still help a sale, according to Victoria Shtainer of Prudential Douglas Elliman. "A wine cooler, people walk in and notice right away."

But if prewar apartments suffer from a long, battered history, postwar apartments suffer from not enough of it.

"Putting up crown molding gives [a postwar apartment] character," says Posvar-Picket. "Putting in solid doors I think would also be good. In postwar apartments you see a lot of cheap, hollow doors . . . put in something solid."



MEASURING UP: Contractor Ray Romano updates a tired kitchen, which is necessary these days if you want your place to sell.