

What Defines a Bedroom? Neither the Real Estate Commission nor MLS Will Say

As a broker, I get to decide what constitutes a bedroom. We get no guidance or rules about that from either our MLS (REcolorado) or from the Colorado Real Estate Commission.

The featured listing below is a good example. When my seller purchased the condo in April 2017, it was advertised as a 2-bedroom unit, which is what the county assessor calls it. But that "second bedroom" has no window and no closet, measures only 9' by 10', and has double glass French doors between it and the kitchen area.

I could not in good conscience market that condo as anything other than a one-bedroom unit with a study.

I could "get away with" marketing the study as a "non-conforming" bedroom, but there are no definitions for that term, either. The term "non-conforming" is most often used for basement bedrooms which don't have egress windows, although I've only used it when, for example, there was no bathroom on the same level or no door giving the room privacy.

On the other hand, I have seen basements listed as having a bedroom when the only door to that bedroom was the door at the top of the stairs. The most outlandish example I can recall was when an open loft overlooking the living room was listed as a bedroom, perhaps because there was a closet — but the nearest bathroom was downstairs.

I don't sense any interest on the part of the MLS (on whose Rules & Regulations Committee I have sat

Reader Comment on Last Week's Article About Racism & Zoning

Your article was very interesting and timely as we must be reminded of our country's systemic racist policies that contribute to the discord we experience today. I have a couple of other examples.

First, the FHA was the driver for much of the single family homes constructed in suburbia during the '50s and '60s. Its underwriting policies in the early days, mandated that "the neighborhood be homogeneous (segregated), with that homogeneity preferably assured through racist restrictive covenants, for which the FHA helpfully supplied forms," according to Michael Carliner, Development of Federal Homeownership Policy, as quoted on page 96 of *Concrete Eco-*

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By JIM SMITH, Realtor®

for over a decade) or the Colorado Real Estate Commission (to which I've applied for appointment) to come up with a definition of "bedroom." As with other terms such as "raised ranch" or "garden level," it's left to the managing brokers (like me) or the listing agents themselves to decide how to describe the homes they market, and it's up to buyers to make their own decisions to buy a home, irrespective of how it has been described on the MLS.

So, for what it's worth, here's *my* definition of a bedroom: It must have walls (no open lofts!), a window to the outdoors, its own door to common space, a 3/4 or full bathroom on the same level, and, optionally, a closet. The window does not have to qualify as an egress window. The closet is optional only if the room is big enough to allow for a piece of furniture (a wardrobe or armoire) that can serve as a closet. It has to be big enough to support a bed and dresser without being crowded (at least 9' by 12' or about 100 square feet).

It's a judgment call as to whether a room without all those criteria should be called a "non-conforming" bedroom. I do take stock of whether the county assessor calls it a bedroom, but, as I said, the assessor called the study in my condo listing at right a bedroom, probably because the builder called it that on their plans. (Builders, like brokers, have their own ways of seeing things, and no one is there to contradict them.)

Buyers ask to see a listing based on its description in the MLS, and *nomics* by Cohen and DeLong in 2016 .

In addition, I've read, but cannot remember the source, that the VA lending policies were similar. As a consequence, black GIs returning home, could only get loans for properties located in black communities (inner city residences) and thus were not able to build up the equity in their homes like the white GIs who were able to buy new homes on the large lots in suburbia.

This "homogenous neighborhood" requirement in federal lending practices prevented the mixing of the races in modern America, contributing to the racial divide we experience to this day. —Michael Nosler

I've had a buyer get really annoyed when we went to see a 3-bedroom home (which was their minimum requirement) only to discover it was a 2-bedroom home. I shared that buyer's annoyance in the feedback I provided, but that listing continued to claim three bedrooms.

Some brokerages contribute to the problem of inaccurate property descriptions by not allowing broker associates to enter and manage the MLS data for their own listings. That's not how Golden Real Estate operates. As managing broker, I want my broker associates to enter their own listings on the MLS, and I usually will look at those listings and give my feedback or make changes directly on the MLS, which I'm able to do as their managing broker.

We have an office policy of providing maximum (not just accurate) information on each listing. That means entering data in all applicable MLS fields and not just the mandatory ones. Many optional fields are quite important, not just useful, to buyers. These include each room's dimensions and a general description of each room. A quick check of 71 current listings in Lakewood showed that only 13 of them included room dimensions and descriptions. A couple of them only listed bedrooms and bathrooms, not

living rooms, kitchens, and other rooms. That's because you can no longer just indicate the number of bedrooms and bathrooms, you must list each of them and the floor they are on, but you don't need to enter dimensions or descriptions.

To me, describing the rooms is just as important as the "public remarks," which is that one paragraph which you read on all the consumer websites to which each listing is populated (Zillow, Redfin, etc.). In describing each room, we like to list the floor covering (hardwood, tile, etc.) plus things like the view out the window, coved ceiling, ceiling fan, walk-in closet(s), access to deck or patio, fireplace (gas or wood), en suite bathroom, wainscoting, and more. Sellers deserve no less.

Real Estate Magazine Names Jim Smith a Real Estate "Influencer"

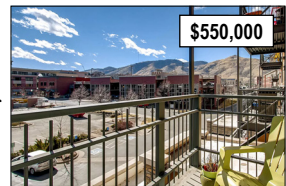
RISMedia, the national real estate news service which publishes *Real Estate* magazine, has named Golden Real Estate broker/owner Jim Smith a 2021 "Real Estate Newsmaker" in the category of "Influencer." It's in recognition of him publishing this real estate column in multiple newspapers for nearly two decades.

Feb. Green Home of the Month

This month's featured "green home" is a solar-powered home on Lookout Mtn. See GreenHomeoftheMonth.com.

Price Reduced on Millstone Condo on Clear Creek

Downtown Golden is a great place to live, and this condo building at **640 11th Street** is as close as you'd want to be — backing to Clear Creek and just one block from Washington Avenue. The balcony of this condo (**Unit 203**) has a view of Lookout Mountain and the "M" on Mt. Zion, plus the Castle Rock formation on South Table Mountain. All the year-round excitement of Golden is within walking distance but not outside your window. If you have an electric car, there's free charging in the public garage across from the building's entrance and 8 other free charging stations within 4 blocks. Hiking trails are also a short walk away, up North & South Table Mountain as well as Mt. Zion, Lookout Mountain and Mt. Galbraith Open Space Park. Inside, this is a low maintenance condo with slab granite countertops, stainless steel appliances, and low energy costs. Watch the new narrated video tour at www.GoldenCondo.info, then call your agent or **Jim Smith** at 303-525-1851 to set a private showing.



\$550,000



Every article in this ad is also posted at GoldenREblog.com

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