

# Arvada Softens Its Attitude Toward Unpermitted Work in Homes for Sale

One of the most important material facts that must be disclosed when selling a home is whether any work was done without the required permits. Often the answer is "yes." Finished basements are the most common example of work done without a permit by or for homeowners.

Until last year, it was not particularly risky to list such a home — or to buy it. But that all changed last year after a disgruntled real estate broker turned in about

30 Arvada listings which advertised finished basements that weren't shown in public records.

Initially, this produced an over-reaction from the City of Arvada, which sent letters to the homeowners saying that any sale of their home was prohibited until the home was brought to code through after-the-fact permitting.

Shortly after that happened, I

represented a buyer in the purchase of an Arvada home with unpermitted work (including the basement), and we seriously considered shopping elsewhere because of the risk it created.

Well, all that may be history soon, thanks to ongoing negotiation between the Jefferson County Association of Realtors and Arvada officials. Not only does the city appear willing not to interfere with pending transactions, but there are

indications that it may come up with policies which allow older homes to be grandfathered on, for example, the lack of egress windows when a basement is finished.

In a recent study session, Arvada's City Council agreed to adopt an administrative rule requiring a written complaint to be filed in order to take action if the property in question is for sale. More-

over, should the seller decline to give permission to an inspector to enter his home, a note would be put in the file for that address and no other action would be taken. The City Council also agreed in the study session to amend the code/policies to require only "reasonable" adherence to the code.

These are stunning developments. Realtors, including me, had prepared for the worst after Arvada's initial response to this issue and feared that other cities would follow suit, but the end result may be a genuine improvement in an area of great uncertainty for home buyers and sellers.

Celebration, however, would be premature, since the changes agreed to in the study session now have to go through first and second reading at forthcoming regular sessions of the City Council. If you have an opinion on this topic, you might want to voice it during upcoming Council meetings.

## This Week's Featured New Listing:

### Nice Home at Arvada's Meadowlake Park

Meadowlake is arguably Arvada's cutest neighborhood lake park. The residents of the Meadowlake West subdivision, where this home is located, enjoy walking their dogs or pushing their strollers along the ½-mile-long pedestrian path which circles the lake with benches every hundred yards or so. You'll see a fly fisherman on the video tour I shot this Monday for its website. This home is on the cul-de-sac just a fly-casting away from the entrance shown above. It is a tri-level with 1,753 sq. ft. of living space plus an oversized 2-car garage. There are three bedrooms, three updated baths (no half baths), an updated kitchen, and a two-level wood deck leading to the oversized fenced yard, which includes a large vegetable garden. Address: 6273 Yank Ct.



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By **JIM SMITH,**  
Realtor®

**GOLDEN REAL ESTATE**  
*Serving the West Metro Area*

**Jim Smith**  
Broker/Owner



**Golden Real Estate, Inc.**  
DIRECT: 303-525-1851  
EMAIL: [Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com](mailto:Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com)  
17695 South Golden Road, Golden 80401  
WEBSITE: [www.GoldenRealEstate.com](http://www.GoldenRealEstate.com)

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