

Before Putting Your Home on the Market, Take Care of the 'Little' Things!

I show a lot of homes to a lot of buyers each week, and I'm shocked at some of the conditions I see, many of which could have been taken care of at little or no cost. Here's a list of the "Dirty Dozen." Do any of them ring a bell for you?

1. Windows need washing. No home should be put on the market without washing the windows inside and out. I've seen homes with great views, but the dirty windows left a bigger impression than the views!

2. Screens are damaged. With our strong winds and sun, window screens don't last forever. As they age, the damage from wind and sun really gets the attention of buyers, even more than those dirty windows. And replacing screen material is less expensive than you might think. I've taken mine to Ace Hardware and had them rescreened at low cost.

After rescreening your weather-beaten screens, I suggest removing and labeling them (with masking tape), and storing them in the basement or garage. Even if screens are not damaged, removing them is as effective as washing your windows.

3. The home is cluttered. We all have too much "stuff" in our homes, so selling your home is a great time to thin out your possessions. Rita and I aren't thinking of selling our home, but she's on a decluttering kick, which I love and support! Most things go to Goodwill or the Christian Action Guild or the Habitat ReStore. Others go on Nextdoor.com as giveaways or "for sale." (On a personal note, call or email me if you'd like some great wooden shelves which cost \$600 new but which we want to give away now that we have donated most of our books to a book drive.)

Some things, of course, go in the trash can or get added to our box

truck the next time we do a dump run for a client.

5. The yard needs clean-up. We all have bushes that need trimming or seasonal cutting back, or weeds in our gravel areas that need pulling or killing. This is especially important in the front yard, where they can make a bad first impression. If your yard needs a large-scale fall cleanup, I recommend the Vietnamese family which performs that service for Rita and me. It costs more, but it's worth it!

6. Wall-to-wall carpeting needs stretching. This is a task for which you need to hire a vendor, but nothing generates a bad impression quite like ripples in wall-to-wall carpeting. It will set you back a few hundred dollars, but it's money well spent. If the carpet itself is old and worn and terribly out of style, consider replacing it. The few thousand dollars you spend has a good payback in that your home will actually sell instead of sitting on the market turning off visitors! We recommend buying neutral color berber carpet.

7. The home is dark. A bright, well-lit home sells! I applaud you for replacing your incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs, but CFLs are obsolete now that LED bulbs are available and inexpensive. Last week I went to Batteries + Bulbs, and they were having a special on 60-watt equivalent LEDs. I left with 12 LED soft-white bulbs (same shape as traditional bulbs) for \$4! Even if you pay more at Lowe's or Home Depot, go ahead and splurge. I replaced all my home bulbs with LEDs, including the can lights in my vaulted ceilings. LEDs last forever, so it's nice to know I won't have to pull out my 8-foot ladder again anytime soon! Many LED bulbs are now dimma-

ble, too, unlike CFLs.

CFLs take a while to reach their full brightness, but LEDs are instant on. In my garage I'm replacing two 8-foot fluorescent fixtures (drawing 300 watts) with a couple 2' x 2' flush mount LED fixtures which draw 9.2 watts each and provide equivalent lighting. I splurged on a motion sensor, so every time I enter the garage, the lights turn on until five minutes after I leave. Sweet!

Also, open your drapes and shades to maximize sunlight.

8. There are too many personal things. This is rule #1 of staging a home for sale. Your family pictures, snapshots and refrigerator notes may make your house a home for you, but they create a distraction for visitors. Take them down.

9. There's too much furniture. I showed a home last Sunday where the furniture had been thinned — but it was crammed into the garage. We couldn't even enter the garage. Looking through the door, my buyer muttered "small garage." In fact it just *looked* small because it was so

full. (This is a basic principle of staging — a full closet, book shelves or whatever conveys a lack of space, whereas a partially full closet, etc., conveys abundant space.) The stuff that you know you'll take with you could go in a storage unit or into a POD. For the rest, see item #3 above. Note: I know a storage place that gives the first month free without requiring a contract, if they have vacancies.

10. The toilet lids are open. Closing your toilet lids is easy! It's good Feng Shui, too.

11. Plug-in odor devices are in use. Every time I see one of these, it makes me wonder what the seller is covering up. Smoke? Cat smell? The "pleasant" smell is also *unpleasant* to many, myself included, so why use them?

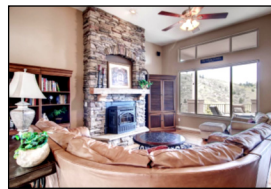
12. The alarm system is armed. Some showing instructions include disarming and re-arming an alarm system. Do you want buyers to think your street has a burglary problem? In most cases, it doesn't, so why raise the question?

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By JIM SMITH, Realtor®

Price Reduced on a Foothills Home on 11 Acres



This spectacular retreat at **26202 Golden Gate Canyon Road** is located just 6 miles or 13 minutes from Downtown Golden! The price was just reduced by over \$25,000 to **\$949,900**. As you walk through the front door you will be impressed with the vaulted ceilings, open floor plan, stone fireplaces, gourmet kitchen, modern lighting and amazing views out of every window. Enjoy the spacious master suite, complete with gas fireplace as well as the living room shown at left and a second living with fireplace currently utilized as a study. The gourmet kitchen features a six-burner gas stove, granite countertops and 12-ft ceilings. The finished basement is a great place to watch a movie in surround sound or walk out to enjoy the expansive views after fixing your bike in the workshop. Exterior features include a shooting range (could also be a great area for horses), multiple outbuildings and an old building site with two wells (not permitted). Words cannot describe this wonderful 11-acre property. Book a showing today and come take a look, you won't be disappointed. Take a narrated video tour (with drone video) at www.FoothillsHome.info. Listing agent Kristi Brunel (303-525-2520) will be holding it open this **Saturday, Oct. 26th, 11am to 2pm**. Special offer through November: Free one-year home warranty!

Sunset Review Recommends HOA Dispute Resolution Function

Advocates of homeowner rights (like myself) were disappointed when Gov. Polis vetoed the bill that would have retained licensing of Community Association Managers. Now, the Colorado Office of Policy, Research and Regulatory Reform (COPRRR) has released its 2019 Sunset Review Report concerning the HOA Information and Resource Center.

COPRRR recommended continuing the HOA Information and Resource Center through 2025 and directing the Center to implement a dispute resolution process for HOA complaints, which it lacks now. A bill to that effect would have to be passed and signed by Gov. Polis.



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