

Want to Boost Your Home's Appeal? What You Should & Shouldn't Spend Money On

With our ongoing seller's market in which right-priced homes sell quickly and often for more than the listing price, do you really need to beautify your home to help it sell better?

The short answer is "Yes." But don't get carried away. The agents at Golden Real Estate like to tell sellers that they should only address certain cosmetic issues and what we call "eye-sores." Investing in popular big-dollar improvements or updates isn't likely to return you more than they cost to implement.

Let's talk cosmetic fixes first. For sure, you'll want to wash the windows and clean your window wells. In the process, you'll be removing the window screens. Clean and label them and store them in your basement or garage. Don't reinstall them until you are under contract. They detract from the views out your windows even if the screens themselves are clean.

Curb appeal (aka first impres-

sion) is, of course, highly important. If you have a lawn, you can make it greener pretty quickly with one or two Lawn Doctor visits. If your bushes or trees are overgrown, consider having them trimmed. How does your front porch look? If it's looking worn, an investment in fresh paint or stain will pay dividends. Ditto for that wooden deck in the back.

Speaking of the wooden porch and deck, let's move on to a discussion of eyesores. An "eyesore" is anything that draws negative attention by the prospective buyer. Rotted and/or broken boards on your porch or deck definitely fit our definition of an eyesore!

Inside your home, there are several potential eyesores that I advise sellers to address. Let's look at walls, floors, windows and countertops.

If there is damage to the walls, fix it. Our handyman (available only to clients) is an expert at drywall repair, including matching texture.

Touch-up and repainting may be called for. Our free staging consultant may advise you specifically about your walls. My current seller in Golden thought their red kitchen should be repainted to a neutral color. I said no, and we still had a bidding war.

Plush and berber carpeting in good condition does not need to be replaced, but if there are ripples in it, it should be stretched, which is an easy and affordable fix. Older shag carpets should, in most cases, be replaced. Wall-to-wall carpeting is one of the more affordable improvements.

If the carpeting is covering hardwood floors in good condition, I'd suggest removing the carpet and refinishing the hardwood if it needs it. Hardwood floors that are already exposed but noticeably worn should also be refinished.

Is there hardwood under that old wall-to-wall carpeting? One way to find out is to pull up the far corner of the carpet in a closet. You can push the carpet back down onto the tack strip and no one will be able to tell you had pulled it up.

If you have old single-pane windows, it's tempting to replace them, and that might be a good strategy in a buyer's market, but not in our current seller's market. In this market, people will buy a home with old windows if it is priced right. I'd want to see them in person before making a final suggestion.

What about countertops? Replacing an old Formica countertops with slab granite, Corian, Silestone, concrete or other popular materials would be very expensive, and I don't recommend it unless the Formica is chipped or scarred and therefore an "eyesore." There's a company Granite Transformations (www.GraniteTransformations.com) that does a remarkable job of covering an existing countertop in place with a granite-based slurry that makes it look like slab granite. I haven't tried it myself, but I've seen

homes with their work and was quite impressed.

Window coverings are another cheap fix that can make a big difference. I recently installed cellular blinds I purchased at Home Depot which have no strings — just push up or pull down. You have probably seen them and love them as Rita and I do. They are cut to width (I suggest 1/2 inch narrower than the opening) and come in different lengths. Prices are quite reasonable, and I installed eight of them in my house in just an hour or so with nothing more than an electric screw driver.

Bathrooms offer some potential dressing up. First of all, clean the grout in your tub/shower. Consider a new shower curtain. Other suggestions might arise from a personal visit.

One of my favorite affordable improvements in my current home and the one before was to install sun tunnels in dark areas such as a windowless garage or laundry room, or that dark corridor in the middle of your house. A brand name you've probably heard of is Solatube, but we purchased Velux sun tunnels for our houses. They come in 10, 14 and 22-inch diameters because the joists in your ceiling and roof are either 12, 16 or 24 inches on center. The cost fully installed for ours was well under \$1,000 each — so much better and less prone to leakage or hail damage than a rectangular skylight. Look into installing sun tunnels for your own pleasure, not just to brighten up your home for selling. The more light you can bring into your home the more appealing it will be.

My broker associates and I are happy to walk through your house with you, even if you aren't immediately ready to sell your home, to make suggestions regarding things to fix or leave alone. Our phone numbers are listed below. Call me or one of them for a free consultation.

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By **JIM SMITH, Realtor®**

2-BR Lakewood Condo Just Listed by Ty Scrable

This two-bedroom condo at **1723 Robb Street #9** is in an excellent location, with easy access to I-70 and 6th Avenue Expressway, under 15 minutes to Denver and even closer to Golden. There are many stores and amenities within walking distance. The well kept common area includes a seasonal swimming pool. The unit has an updated kitchen and new flooring throughout. These units have been selling quickly, so make sure to book your showing soon by calling your agent or **Ty Scrable** at **720-281-6783**. You can find more interior and exterior pictures at www.LakewoodCondo.info. **Open Sunday, Sept. 25th, 11 am to 1 pm.**



Just Listed: Golden Bungalow w/ Carriage House



This 1939 stone bungalow at **711 Iowa St.** in Golden is shown on public records at 990 square feet, 2 bedrooms and 1 full bath with the same size basement, but that doesn't reflect a 13'x14' addition containing a modern kitchen and the extra bedroom and bathroom in the fully finished

basement. It also doesn't reflect the 496-sq.ft. carriage house with 1 bedroom and a 3/4 bath barely visible to the left and beyond the main house in this picture. Currently this property is a rental, drawing income from both the main house and the carriage house, but both long-term tenants are month-to-month, so you could live in one or the other. Although there is no garage, there is substantial off-street and off-alley parking with room to build as big a garage as you might desire in the back. All-in-all, this listing provides a rare opportunity. See more pictures and take a narrated video tour at www.NorthGoldenHome.com. Listed by **Ty Scrable, 720-281-6783**, it will be open **Saturday, 10 to 2**. Or call for a private showing.



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