

Renovate Your Home for Your Own Enjoyment, Not to Help It Sell Better

Sellers often ask whether they should renovate prior to putting their home on the market. The short answer is “no.” Unless you’re fixing an eyesore, you will be wasting your money.

So, what’s an “eyesore”? I use the term to define something that draws a buyer’s immediate attention in a negative way — a torn carpet, a damaged countertop, a broken window, a weathered and peeling front door, etc.

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By **JIM SMITH, Realtor®**

The closer an eyesore is to the home’s entrance, the more important it will be to fix. If the eyesore is in a far-flung bedroom or the basement, I’m less concerned, so long as the main part of the house is really attractive. By the time a buyer gets to that eyesore, they will either have fallen in love with the house or not. If they have fallen in love by then, the buyer’s response will be more forgiving — “Oh, that’s easy to fix.”

Eliminating eyesores is worth every penny. Other improvements, such as updating a bathroom or kitchen that’s *not* an eyesore, may return some or much of what you spend, but probably not all. On such improvements, consider the condition of the real estate market. If there’s a shortage of homes like yours — say, a ranch-style home in a desirable neighborhood — then you could probably minimize even the eyesore fixes. If your home will have lots of competition, fixing those eyesores becomes far more important. This is a topic on which you benefit from speaking with a Realtor, given our ready access to such data.

to sustainability, I hate to say it, but installing solar panels produces about the lowest return on investment when it comes to selling your home. You should only invest in solar if you intend to stay in your home for at least five years. You will get your return on investment from the reduced energy bills, not in a higher sale price for your home. In our case, we installed 10 kilowatts of solar at our home, but that was seven years ago, and we don’t plan to sell anytime soon. If you make the same decision, please *buy* solar instead of leasing. Selling a home with a leased solar system is not as attractive to buyers.

As stated in the headline, make improvements that you want to live with and enjoy, and make them *now*, not when you’re about to sell. It matters little to Rita and me whether

our wonderful new kitchen will return the \$40,000 we spent on renovating it, since we will have enjoyed it ourselves for many years. And if you know you’re going to sell eventually, but not soon, spend the money now and enjoy the improvement!

Some of the other improvements Rita and I made soon after buying our home and continue to appreciate over 7 years later include installing Solatubes (to bring sunlight into our windowless garage and laundry room) and an energy audit followed by weatherization improvements. We had acacia hardwood flooring installed, and retrofitted the south-facing windows with Low-E glass. A hybrid gas furnace/heat pump system heats and cools our home. We also installed a hot water recirculation line to provide instant hot water at all faucets.

Some Reflections on Our 4,800-Mile Tesla Road Trip

A couple weeks ago, I wrote about my 50th reunion at MIT. What I didn’t say in that column was that Rita and I drove there in our Tesla Model X. After the reunion, we drove north to visit my sister Susan in Maine, then into Canada to explore Quebec City. Returning from there, we drove past Toronto the morning after their NBA victory, noticing many “We the North” banners. Over a 16-day period, we drove 4,800 miles strictly on battery power, stopping at gas stations only to clean bugs off the windshield.

This was our second cross-country trip in the Model X. The first one was to Seattle a year ago. Four years ago we drove to Connecticut and back in a Tesla Model S.

People always ask whether it was hard finding charging stations. No, that’s never an issue in a Tesla, because when you put a destination in the navigation system, it identifies the Supercharger

locations along the route and directs you to them like any other destination and tells you how long to charge to reach the next one. These locations are usually adjacent to the highways you’d travel anyway, so it adds little distance to the trip, and the charging sessions are rarely over 50 minutes. Best of all, since we enjoy lifetime free supercharging, the electricity was free. The only cost of the trip was the wear on the tires, various tolls, food and lodging.

I used the Tesla’s self-driving feature constantly to maintain my desired speed and to stay in my chosen lane. Cruise control is automatic, slowing down based on the vehicle ahead of me and maintaining a safe separation. These features make driving far less tiring and far safer. The car would alert me if it didn’t sense my hand on the steering wheel for 30 seconds, which is a good safety feature. I wish you the same opportunity.

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How to Research Potential Listing Agents

FindDenverRealtors.com is a shortcut that I created to take you to the page on Denver’s MLS for searching agents by name. If you don’t find the agent you’re looking for right away, try entering only their last name, since they may use a nickname or have an initial you didn’t enter. When the agent’s name appears, [click on his/her name](#) to go to another web page where you can read his or her profile (assuming they created one) and see current and sold listings, unless they have none. [Click on their listings](#) to see how the agent described each home on the MLS. Did they list all the rooms, not just bedrooms and bathrooms, providing dimensions, or just enter the mandatory fields? *Keep in mind that the best indicator of how listing agents will serve you is how they have served previous sellers.*

Looking at those listings will answer the most important questions which you’d ask in person, but you won’t have to take their word — the truth is right there in front of you.

Broker Associate Carol Milan to Embark on African Mission



If you know Carol Milan, you may know that she is a registered nurse and that her husband, Kevin, is an Assistant Fire Chief with South Metro Fire Rescue, overseeing all firefighter training. In November they are embarking on an 11-day trip to Kenya with Africa Fire Mission, where Carol will work on the medical team, while Kevin handles training of the firefighters. Firefighter deaths in Africa are excessively high, largely due to lack of training. We are pleased to support Carol and Kevin in this humanitarian mission, and encourage your support too. The website for making donations is <https://provide-training-in-africa.everydayhero.com/us/milan-africa-fire-mission> or www.GoldenREblog.com.



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Send Your Request to Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com

Jim Smith

Broker/Owner

Golden Real Estate, Inc.

CALL OR TEXT: 303-525-1851

OFFICE PHONE: 303-302-3636

EMAIL: Jim@GoldenRealEstate.com

WEBSITE: www.GoldenRealEstate.com

ARCHIVES: www.JimSmithColumns.com

17695 South Golden Road, Golden 80401

