

# Preparing Your Home For Sale

When preparing your house for sale, make those changes that will repay you the most money for the least expense and work. Walk around the outside and inside of your home and make notes of whatever needs to be repaired, replaced, updated, cleaned or removed. In our Fort Worth area market with many homes priced less than \$150,000, few major renovations are cost effective. In fact, sellers can easily spend more money changing their homes than they can recover in the increased sales price.

## Cosmetic Repairs

Cosmetic repairs are very important for getting the best price for your home. Painting is usually the most cost effective change a seller can make, especially if they can do the work themselves. What color should you paint your home? Neutral is best. Pick a color that will not clash with any furnishings or décor and will allow the buyers to imagine your house decorated to their tastes. If you recently redecorated your home with the latest decorator colors and your home looks like a beautiful model home with pretty furnishings, do not repaint at this time. Your home may sell quickly for a good price, but if you must sell your house without the furnishings, you will probably need to consider repainting. Relocation companies have vacant houses repainted in neutral colors as one of their marketing strategies.

Look for other cosmetic repairs in your home. Is the front door and the trim freshly painted and clean? Do the kitchen cabinets need refinishing or repainting? Do the bathrooms need new grout around the tile? Is there outdated wallpaper that should be removed? What is the condition of the flooring? Often the cost of replacing carpet is justified by the higher selling price the home will bring with the new flooring. Sometimes a professional cleaning and stretching can do wonders to improve a carpet's appearance. If you can't decide whether or not to replace your carpet, you can negotiate and pay for new carpet at closing if the carpet becomes an issue. This plan has several advantages: the carpet will be installed after you move out, which saves you the inconvenience of having to move all of your furniture for the carpet layers, and the buyer may choose not to have new carpet and use the money for closing costs or to negotiate a lower sales price.

## Outside Appearance

If buyers don't like your home from the outside, they probably won't even want to go inside. Wood siding and trim should have fresh paint. Choose a color that goes well with the neighborhood. Steps and walkways should be safe and clean. Yards should be mowed and trees and bushes should be trimmed. Remove dead trees and shrubs. Trees that hang on the roof or vines that go up the house allow termites to enter



Alliance Properties  
120 W McLeroy  
Saginaw, TX 76179



(817) 683-9282



Web Site: [kathleenwheeler.com](http://kathleenwheeler.com)

Email: [kwheeler@kathleenwheeler.com](mailto:kwheeler@kathleenwheeler.com)

# Preparing Your Home For Sale

and these plants must be trimmed. Flowerbeds should be free of weeds, and blooming flowers add a lovely touch. Why not buy some annual flowers to add color and vibrancy? Pay special attention to the appearance of the front door and the entry way to your home. Polish the door fixture so it gleams, and repaint or refinish the front door if it needs it. Does the porch light work? Is it clean?

## Cleanliness

Clean sells. Most of us are much too busy to be meticulous housekeepers, but a house that is really clean can mean money in your pocket, having a dirty house can be an expensive mistake when your home is for sale. When we had to sell our home in Kansas to move to Texas, I cleaned like I had never cleaned before. I carefully scrubbed the baseboards, oiled all the kitchen cabinets with Old English, removed all of the plastic electrical plates and washed them in the dishwasher, cleaned the heating and air conditioning vents, washed the windows, drapes, light fixtures, and removed mineral deposits from chrome bathroom and kitchen fixtures with white vinegar. I believe the cleanliness helped us sell for a better price.

Be sure your house smells good or does not smell. Be careful of pet odors. Think about the aroma of the food you are cooking when potential buyers are scheduled to see your home. Cook the cabbage another night. Keep bathrooms sparkling, check the dirty laundry, dump the trash, and be sure the kitchen is free of dirty dishes in the sink or old onions or potatoes in the cupboard. You may want to invest in a way to make your home smell nice. Many lovely smelling candles are available, but I worry when they are burning and the owner is not home. Other air fresheners are safer.

Houses where the owners have smoked present special challenges. Repainting, installing new carpet, cleaning the air ducts and washing all other surfaces will eliminate most of the smell of smoke. When owners go to all of the work and expense to rid their home of smoke residue prior to marketing their home, they often wisely decide to smoke outside while their house is for sale or sell their home as a vacant house. Nonsmokers often say they do not even want to walk through a house where they smell smoke.

## Clutter

The houses that sell the fastest and for the best price look like model homes. Everything in the house adds to the appeal of the home, and there's nothing extra to be a distraction. When selling your home, less is more. Too much furniture and too much clutter in a room distract the buyer and make the room look smaller. You want the buyers to be mentally moving in their possessions, not be fascinated by



Alliance Properties  
120 W McLeroy  
Saginaw, TX 76179



(817) 683-9282



Web Site: [kathleenwheeler.com](http://kathleenwheeler.com)

Email: [kwheeler@kathleenwheeler.com](mailto:kwheeler@kathleenwheeler.com)

# Preparing Your Home For Sale

yours! The best strategy is to get items out of the house by having a garage sale, calling your favorite charity for pick up, or storing them in a storage unit until you move. Getting the clutter out of the house will allow you to vacuum, dust, and clean floors more easily for that super clean look!

## Home Inspection and Repairs

A great way to market your home for top dollar is to have a home inspection prior to putting it on the market. With the prelisting home inspection you can make the repairs or identify them and factor them in the price. You have greatly reduced the chance of nasty surprises coming up after the buyer's inspection. Unexpected repairs can mean money you hadn't planned to spend or complete renegotiation of the price by a savvy buyer during the option period. Knowing about repairs in advance can make for win/win negotiations, especially if one party can easily make the repairs and the other would need to hire the work done by an expensive professional.

Certain repairs will require special attention. In order to get a mortgage, a buyer will need to purchase a home that qualifies for homeowner's insurance. The most common problem occurs if the house has a damaged roof. If the seller has collected insurance money to repair or replace the roof but didn't make the repairs, the seller must disclose this information on the required Seller's Disclosure and will probably need to fix or replace the roof. Loans made through FHA and VA will have certain requirements based on the findings of the FHA or VA appraisal that includes a short home inspection. The most common problems in my market are peeling paint and rotten wood that must be repaired to meet FHA requirements.

Even little repairs can make a difference. Have you tried your front door lock lately? A front door that will not lock or unlock properly gives a negative first impression to a potential buyer and is especially disastrous if the customer is unable to enter your home to see it. Closet door that come off of the track, handles that are loose on cabinets, faucets that drip, and light switches that do not work are other examples of small items that send a strong message to a potential buyer about the condition of your home.

By taking care of repairs and carefully preparing your home for sale, you can ask the highest price for your home that comparable sales in your neighborhood will allow and have a real chance of receiving a good offer. Your diligent planning, hard work, and expense will usually be rewarded. For more information or a free, no obligation consultation about preparing your home for sale, please call me.



Alliance Properties  
120 W McLeroy  
Saginaw, TX 76179



(817) 683-9282

Web Site: [kathleenwheeler.com](http://kathleenwheeler.com)

Email: [kwheeler@kathleenwheeler.com](mailto:kwheeler@kathleenwheeler.com)