

# Preparing parents' home for sale

*Thomas in Hopkinton writes:* My brothers and sister and I inherited our parents' home and are trying to sell it. We haven't even put it on the market yet and there are already battles going on about what work should be done to the house before it goes up for sale. Two of us feel the house needs renovation to make it marketable and the others don't want to spend any money. The house is a 1950s ranch and hasn't changed much since my parents originally moved in. I don't want to push my brothers to spend money, but I don't want the house to sit on the market either. What do you think we should do?

Thomas, Kudos to you for trying to keep the peace. It's understandable that selling your parents' home is difficult for everyone involved. To get an objective view of what's needed to sell the home, check out the competition. Ask your listing agent to show you and your siblings a few homes on the market that are similar to your parents' house and see how they compare. (Or if you don't all live in the area you could view the properties online). Seeing what homes buyers will be comparing your parents' home against might help sway your brothers to spend a bit of money to prepare the house for sale.

If they do agree to some changes, settle on a budget with them ahead of time so they have assurances that costs won't get out of control. To keep costs to a minimum, focus on relatively inexpensive changes that will give you the best bang for the buck. Here are five

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ABOUT BUYING OR SELLING A HOME?



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Hi, my name is Leslie Mann, a real estate blogger. I write about the latest estate agent tips, real estate news, and more. Contact me at hopkinton@wickedlocal.com

updates that can have a big impact.

1. Start with the kitchen. Kitchens are often the focal point of the house for homebuyers. If the floor is the original linoleum, consider replacing it. This can make a huge difference in how the kitchen looks. It doesn't have to be anything expensive, just something with a fresh, clean look.

If the appliances are in need of replacing, check out one of the nearby outlet stores or online classifieds to see what deals you can find. I've often seen brand new appliances listed on sites like Craigslist or Freecycle to anyone willing to pick them up.

2. If there are hardwood floors underneath the carpets, remove the carpets and sand and finish the floors. This is something you can do yourself in just a few days. All you need is a hammer, a small pry bar, and pliers to remove the carpet tacks; a shop vacuum for cleanup; a sander (available at many rental stores); and floor stain/polyurethane and

paintbrushes. (Note: Wear a mask while you're working to avoid breathing in dust or other particulate from the carpet.)

It's tough work but it will make the home show significantly better for far less money than it would cost to replace the carpets. And it'll be more desirable, since hardwood floors appeal to a wider number of homebuyers.

3. Strip the wallpaper and paint in soft, neutral colors. Most homebuyers cringe at the idea of removing wallpaper. Getting this done for them will make the home look much more updated and avoid a common obstacle to selling.

4. Paint bathroom tile. Often bathrooms from the 1950s have colored tile. Instead of replacing the tile, check into getting the tile painted. Many companies professionally paint tiles for less money and hassle than it would cost to rip and replace them.

5. Have the home staged. Many real estate agents offer complimentary home staging consultations. Often they can give you free or inexpensive tips to make the home show at its best.

I wish you and your family the best of luck.

Do you have a real estate question? Contact our real estate blogger Leslie Mann, c/o Hopkinton Crier, 33 New York Ave, Framingham, MA 01701 or realestatequeries@yahoo.com. She'd be glad to answer your confidential questions here. Follow her at <http://blogs.wickedlocal.com/onthemove>.

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