



Top Reasons Why Good Houses Don't Sell

From Janet Wickell, Your Guide to Home Buying / Selling.

Home Buying and Selling Essentials

Home sellers sometimes wait and wait for offers to come in, not understanding why their houses aren't of interest to home buyers. While there are many reasons why houses don't sell, overpricing tops the list, and is the first thing you should consider if your home is sitting on the market while others around it are changing owners.

Overpricing is common, but there are plenty of homes that buyers pass on for other reasons. If you're a home seller, it's time to determine why the house hasn't sold—then make changes that will help move it.

If you're a home buyer, look for these homes—owners who have been waiting for awhile *might* be ready to listen to offers.

Four Reasons Why Good Houses Don't Sell

1. A Horrible Photo in the MLS

You might be surprised how many buyers say NO! to houses simply because of terrible photos in ads or Multiple Listing Service handouts. It's even more amazing that agents let them do it, but it's a fact.

Good photos are not always easy to get. Houses aren't built on lots with thought to future photo opportunities (maybe they should be). The sun isn't always in an ideal position for the photo. The agent might not be capable of taking a good picture.

Home buyer rule number one is to ignore a bad photo and focus on the features mentioned in printed information.

2. Some Houses are Just Plain Dirty

Some sellers don't bother to clean a house before they list it, and if they don't clean, they sure won't freshen up the paint or put away their clutter. Buyers usually think dirty houses are in need of repair, when all they often require is some thorough TLC.

After a few turned-off buyers, agents hesitate to show dirty houses. You get the picture, no showings = a long time on the market. Buyers looking for a deal can sometimes find the perfect house lurking behind clutter and grime.

3. The Curb Appeal is the Pits

Buyers like to do drive-bys. Imagine driving by a house that's for sale and finding that the yard hasn't been mowed recently or that it's grown up in weeds. Or discovering that the home's color is just one shade shy of outshining the sun.

If the home's curb appeal is terrible, the majority of buyers won't make an appointment to go inside. Don't fall into that trap if you're looking for a deal. Try to imagine how the house *could* look with a few changes.

4. It's Always Worked for the Sellers

We are creatures of habit. The old vinyl on the kitchen floor has worked for the sellers for a long time, so why won't it work for you? The dated light fixtures are just fine, too, and they wouldn't *think* of replacing the orange shag carpeting in the family room.

You might find a home by simply being willing to do cosmetic updates, because most buyers are not—they want a house in move-in condition.

A willingness to take renovation a step further opens up even more opportunities.

- Bring down a wall to expand small rooms
- Cut a large pass-through from the dining room to the kitchen for a more contemporary look
- Turn a screened porch into a sunroom
- Add gas logs to a house with no fireplace
- Make the master bathroom a relaxing retreat

Some of the houses you see will indeed need true repairs, so be on the lookout. Read disclosure statements carefully and plan to hire a qualified home inspector to take a good look at the property if you decide to buy. You probably already know your comfort level and which updates you might not feel ready to tackle on your own.

Does it make sense to pay someone else to do the work for you? That depends on your budget and the projected value of the house once the updates are accomplished. Stay aware of costs vs. market value, especially if you aren't sure you will live in the house for at least three to five years. If you decide to sell the house, you want to be as sure as possible that you can recover your investment.

Start Looking

Your real estate agent can probably search for properties by the number of days they've been on the market. Ask to see information about properties that have been for sale for six months or longer. Make appointments to see a few of that batch.

Brainstorm the what-ifs—how would you change the house? You'll be surprised at the ideas you come up with once you look past a home's current condition and open your mind to its potential.

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[Buying a Home with Good Resale Potential](#)

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