

## **Home Improvements that Aren't Worth It**

### **Cost – And Recouping It**

Just because you can afford that backyard swimming pool and tennis court doesn't necessarily mean you should jump into the idea without taking a closer look. If you intend to sell your home at any point in the future – and most of us do – then you'll want to consider how that extra pool changes things. The homes in your neighborhood are probably much alike and have a fairly static range of prices; your home, without improvements, likely falls within that same range, making it a good choice for a potential buyer in the future. However, if you add a pool, a tennis court, a gazebo, and a water fountain – you've just greatly increased your home's value. While this is generally a good thing, if your home is much more expensive than those around it, you may have some trouble trying to sell it when the time comes. A good rule of thumb is to add the cost of your home improvements to your house's current value (which can be estimated with a CMA – a competitive market analysis). If the total is more than a fourth higher than the homes around you, you may end up struggling to sell your home – or you may be forced to write off the costs of the improvements you made as non-recoverable.

### **Architecture – Extravagant or Mundane?**

Both inside and outside your house, you have a good sight of the architecture that categorizes it. A-frame, ranch, colonial? Excellent. But if you'd like to alter certain features of that architecture – well. Keep in mind that, if and when you put your home on the market, you'll need to find a buyer who shares your likes and dislikes of that architecture – someone who will enjoy the changes you made, rather than seek a more “normal” home. Feel free to add a huge chandelier to the dining room or cover the entire house with pink stucco – it is, after all, your home. Just keep in mind the fact that, someday, there will be buyers touring your home and wondering why it's pink in a neighborhood of modern, classy, fairly anonymous houses. A possible compromise between personal style and resale value is the best idea – rather than redoing the entire house in violet, why not just add violet accents, such as shutters or carpeting? Also, you can always go with your own enjoyment and replace the modifications with more mundane features before you sell.

### **Landscaping – Green-ify the House**

First of all, landscaping does add a great deal to a house – to its value, to its appearance, and to its general “feel” when you first see it. A potential buyer's first impression will be of the outside of your house – the siding or paint, and then the trees, bushes, flowers, and the lawn itself. A genuine gardener will be able to beautify a lawn to make any house look absolutely stunning. However, again keep in mind what a buyer will see and want. As much as that rose hedge appeals to your eyes, the next person who owns your home may not want the high-maintenance features. Landscaping is, admittedly, the most widely-accepted form of improving your home's value and appearance – most buyers won't mind a lovely flowerbed or a few strategically-placed outdoor spotlights. Just remember that it costs money to maintain that natural beauty – the potential buyers who tour your property certainly won't forget.