

# marketview



Spring is here, so give your home kerb appeal. Cheryl Markosky talks to the experts

First impressions are all-important, says Mayow Short of Savills Battersea. "Often, purchasers drive by a property before viewing and a well-presented home is more likely to entice them in."

Short's three top tips to improve kerb appeal of a property are: a fresh coat of paint for the front door, clearing the approach of weeds or rubbish, and sprucing up windows with regular cleans and matching shutters, curtains or blinds.

Becky Munday of Gareth James (GJM) Property in Peckham suggests buying flowers for photos and viewings. "Lilies are good, as you can get 14 days out of them."

She also recommends organising window boxes, buying new towels (greying ones dangled about won't look good), ironing bed sheets (for the photographer's visit, if nothing else) and asking the agent's photographer to come back when the rain's stopped for the best front exterior shot.

"Don't waste money on a new bathroom or kitchen, as your taste is unlikely to be the same as your buyer's. Buyers like to think they'll add value by changing these things and can be put off by show-home conditions," Munday adds.

Creating a tidy path with slate chips can really make your home stand out, says Gary Howorth of Foxtons Putney. "Also, remember to keep bins out of sight."

His colleague James Redington from Foxtons Balham says it's important to consider the market you're trying to attract. "A young professional may want something very low-maintenance, whereas a young family looks for a well-kept garden. My top tip is to keep it simple and neutral."

Henry Sherwood of The Buying Agents says the best way to add value is to create less work for the new owner. "Most handymen charge around £20 an hour. It's worth getting someone to do work if you don't have time yourself."

And don't paint your house if others on the street are natural brick. Try to hide defects ("the surveyor will pick up on them") and don't waste money on fancy accessories if the basics are not in order first, adds Sherwood.

"Walk the route of your potential buyer towards the property," advises Caroline Takla at The Collection LLP. "Are hedges trimmed, lawns cut and windows cleaned? These are key considerations often missed by sellers who've focused their efforts on internal housekeeping instead."

Takla sums up: "Create an inviting impression from the outset and buyers will be full of high hopes for what's about to be revealed inside."