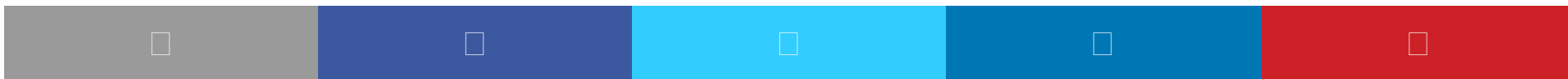




SELL

## Lessons From Listing Photos: An Outdated Texas Jewel Shines After Major Makeover

By Whitney Coy | Jan 23, 2020





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*It doesn't matter how perfect your home is—if your [listing photos](#) don't stand out, potential buyers won't come by to take a look. In our series "Lessons From Listing Photos," we dissect the smart updates sellers have made to their homes, and how their listing pictures highlight the home's best assets.*

They say everything is bigger in Texas, and this massive [5,000-square-foot home](#) is no exception. Built in 1970, it was once a sparkling gem in the center of a still-prestigious west Houston neighborhood, but the interiors didn't age well over the years. As you'll see from the before pictures below, it's the type of home anyone would walk into and say, "Bless your heart." Clearly, it was high time to bring this beauty up to date.

Renovating this home would be a daunting task for anyone, but the most recent sellers were game—and this clearly wasn't their first rodeo. They bought the property in September 2018, and sold it a year later for about \$600,000 over the price they paid.

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So what did they do to help modernize this Southern manse? And more important, how can you have the same success with your own home?

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When asked to identify which renovations and decor choices made all the difference, our experts obliged. Here's what they had to say.

## Before: Sitting area



*There's way too much going on in this room.* | realtor.com

## After: Sitting area

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Now you can really enjoy the space of this sitting area. | realtor.com

It won't take you long to figure out what changed in the sitting room—and these renovations vaulted it forward three decades.

"The marble columns served to provide more of an obstacle than any sort of enhancement," says interior designer **S.A. "Sam" Jernigan** of **Renaissance Design Consultations**. "The room now exudes lightness."

The absence of those bulky columns may be the first thing that strikes you, but that's not the only major change this room has experienced.

"Removing carpet and **replacing it with hardwood** is a must if your home is competing with pricey, new construction. Buyers don't want carpet, especially on the first floor of the home," says interior designer and home staging expert **Jill Hosking-Cartland**, of Hosking Interiors.

Home staging expert **Lori Matzke** also says changing the paint makes a huge difference.

"While the before photo certainly feels homey, too many colors distract from the features of the space," she explains. "The crisp, white walls really help

## Before: Parlor



*In a word? Yikes.* | [realtor.com](https://www.realtor.com)

## After: Parlor





*Now this room is airy and chic. | realtor.com*

This parlor is a huge room with a lot going on—and according to our experts, that's exactly the problem.

Matzke says the old room had so much furniture, its intended use was confusing.

"The updates in the after photo not only brought in more light and created a much more open layout, but they also defined the space, leaving no doubt in potential buyers' mind exactly how this area should be used," she says.

"This layout utilizes the amount of square footage better and brings attention to the focal points: the fireplace and the view," says Hosking-Cartland.

"More seating makes the room feel cozier, while removing the mantel and doors makes the room look larger. Painting out stained woodwork contributes to the more modern feel of the room."

## Before: Master bedroom



*This master bedroom was nothing special. | realtor.com*

## After: Master bedroom



Now the master bedroom is an oasis of calm. | realtor.com

Jernigan calls the original version of the master bedroom "very tired-looking," and she's not wrong.

"The master bedroom is one of the most important rooms in the home to a buyer. After all, the occupants of this room will be paying the mortgage," says Hosking-Cartland. "With its taste-specific bedding, dated furnishings, and patterned wall-to-wall carpet, the before photo of this room in no way communicates serenity or retreat, the two things most buyers want in their next master bedroom."

But the overhauled master bedroom showcases some great decor decisions: a neutral color scheme, comfortable furniture, modernized fireplace, and inviting seating area.

## Before: Kitchen





*Dark brown finishes date the kitchen. | realtor.com*

## **After: Kitchen**



*The contrast in colors makes the kitchen look luxurious. | realtor.com*

The kitchen before was spacious, but that's not enough to make it what home buyers are looking for.

"The face-lift performed on this kitchen makes it look 30 years younger," says Matzke. "The 'before' was fine, but very dark, gloomy, and dated. [Brightening up the cabinets](#) and replacing the countertops make it feel younger and brighter. But what really took this kitchen over the top were the updated light fixtures. They make this kitchen feel a lot more special and luxe."

Hosking-Cartland says an updated kitchen is a must when you're trying to compete with other homes on the market.

"Updating the finishes, flooring, and lighting in this important room goes a long way to communicate to a buyer that your home has been well cared for and maintained," she says.



## Before: Dining room



*This dining room looks a tad too personalized. | realtor.com*

## After: Dining room





*The refined decor brings the dining room into this decade. | realtor.com*

"The decor in the 'before' photo did make this room feel a little tired, too personal, and dated," says Matzke. Those are things that can make it difficult for a buyer to picture themselves living in your home.

"Buyers love light, bright rooms, and in this dining room it was smart to remove the curtains to let in more light," says Hosking-Cartland. "It also brings attention to the architectural focal point, which is the large bank of windows. Changing the wall color to a light neutral and adding artificial light at eye level also contribute to the room appearing brighter, especially for [night showings](#)."

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