



This 1925 Colonial at 87 Lake Avenue in Greenwich, listed at \$1,495,000, oozes charm, thanks to its arched portico and cheery window boxes.

Love at First Sight

A HOME'S CURB APPEAL CAN MAKE A GREAT FIRST IMPRESSION ON BUYERS. THESE TIPS FROM THE PROS WILL HELP YOU CREATE THAT WOW FACTOR.

You always want your home to look beautiful—especially when it's on the market. That's when it becomes crucial for your property to have what's known as curb appeal. "Traditionally, curb appeal is defined as the attractiveness of a property for sale, and its surroundings, when viewed from the street," says Maggie Bridge, manager of sales and marketing for Sam Bridge Nursery & Greenhouses in Greenwich, CT. "But to me, it's a feeling. Does that first look take your breath away, make you say, 'Wow,' or even, 'Yuck'?"

Those initial feelings on the part of buyers can, in turn, have a significant impact on your prospects of a speedy and lucrative sale. "It may set the tone for value, or lack thereof, as well as their interest in pursuing the home," explains Maura McSpedon, a licensed real estate salesperson with Douglas Elliman in Chappaqua, NY. Will MacDonald, general manager of Davenport Contracting and

Home in Stamford, CT, adds: "Having a well-maintained exterior will give prospective buyers confidence that the internal systems, such as heating and air conditioning, are also being properly serviced."

MAXIMIZE YOUR PROPERTY'S POTENTIAL

- **Refresh the façade.** Fresh exterior paint is a major draw for prospective buyers, says Edward Mortimer, a broker associate with Sotheby's International Realty in Greenwich. He advises if the existing lighting looks tired or outdated, update that too.

- **Add a few focal points.** "A general contractor can help you be creative in adding visual sophistication to the exterior of your home," says MacDonald. "There are many new products, especially non-wood products, that can be used to add some focal points—window trim, shutters, adding a portico to the front entrance."

- **Repave the driveway or bring in fresh gravel if needed,** recommends McSpedon. "Make sure the walkways are in good shape as well, along with any fencing," she says.

- **Set up a shed to hide everyday clutter,** suggests MacDonald.

- **Power wash the roof to clean off moss,** McSpedon adds, since many rooftops are highly visible, especially from a street view.

- **Wash (or replace) windows.** "These must be pristine if you want to create any value to the property via curb appeal," observes Steve Archino, an agent with Sotheby's International Realty in Greenwich.

- **Update your plantings.** A great landscape alone "can typically add an extra 5 to 12 percent to your home's original value," Bridge explains. "It's always good to stick with whites and silvers, unless you have a white house—then go for pastels," says Carolyn Chiodo, on-site sales consultant for Nielsen's

HOME

Florist in Darien, CT. “Whites you see at night and they pop next to a boxwood.” Her favorites include sun petunias, lantana, New Guinea impatiens and silver licorice. “For a conservative look, Algerian ivy is great.” Says Bridge: “When in doubt, go for simplicity. Pick only a few colors and run with them for maximum impact. Having full color at the door in planters, hanging baskets or even window boxes can add a feeling of welcome, and simple but elegant foundation plantings can help the outside of a home feel finished.”

- **Clean and declutter.** Put away all your kids’ yard toys, advises McSpedon. It will be easier for people to imagine making use of the green space.

- **Make sure your mailbox is in good shape.** Not only should it be new, or look new, it should complement the style of your home, Mortimer explains.

- **Give your door some pizzazz.** Try painting it a bright color, if it’s in keeping with your home, or investing in a custom-designed and -built door; perhaps something in a natural wood finish with an intricate detail, says Mortimer. It’ll make buyers want to open that door—and potentially be wowed by the rest of your home.

COMMON CURB-APPEAL MISTAKES

- **Refusing to pay for exterior upgrades.** “You can’t sell a home if you can’t get buyers in the front door,” warns Archino.

- **Doing an incomplete job.** “Don’t repaint your exterior but then leave overgrown landscaping along your foundation, or a dirty or broken walkway,” says Mortimer. “Make everything as neat and clean as possible and part of a well-integrated plan.”

- **Planting exceptionally large, upright evergreens next to either side of your front door.** “Eventually they take over and end up detracting from the beauty of your home,” Bridge explains. “They can make your front door look heavy and unwelcoming.”

- **Failing to match your neighborhood aesthetic.** “You don’t want to make your home appear as the ‘oddball’ of the block,” MacDonald shares.

- **Completely blocking your property from the street.** “It only works for exceptionally large properties,” Bridge says.

CURB-APPEAL ANALYSIS



35 MORGAN AVE., GREENWICH, CT
\$1,275,000

This home sports a friendly, beach house style façade created by using cedar siding, says listing agent Steve Archino of Sotheby’s International Realty in Greenwich, CT. A gleaming white picket fence beckons passersby. “The marble chip driveway stands out from the two adjoining properties,” he adds. Symmetrical awning windows flood the home with light.



568 BEDFORD RD., PLEASANTVILLE, NY
\$1,149,000

“Locals know the ‘stone home’ because they have walked or driven by it so many times—it’s a standout house,” says listing agent Maura McSpedon of Douglas Elliman, in Chappaqua, NY. Abundant, cheerful plantings in the front and along a retaining wall add charm, as do the adjacent shade garden and stone-covered portico and side porch.