

Curb appeal - does it make a difference?



By [Steve Caradoc-Davies](#)

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Creating and maintaining the external features of a property can cost a considerable amount - not just in money, but also in time. Is the investment worth it, and does it make a difference when it comes to selling your property?



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I always liken the external features of a property – the garden and landscaping, and the appearance of the property from the street – as the clothing on a property.

When a property is dressed well, it will appeal. When the property isn't well dressed, the appeal will be significantly lower. It's much like dating (for those who can remember those days).

Irrespective of how “beautiful we were on the inside”, we wanted to ensure that we presented ourselves at our best. It's for that reason we took so much time to select the right outfit, ensure the hair (and makeup) was just right – so that we would catch the eye of the one we desired.

It's the same when it comes to marketing a property. The way a property is dressed – the curb appeal – plays a critical role in appealing to the emotions of potential buyers.

There are a number of features that will create instant appeal with potential purchasers – here are some that you would

want to pay attention to:

Mature trees: always a draw-card as they're not commonplace. If you have the luxury of mature trees on your property, make sure they're well maintained. Add some lighting to them – it creates a stunning effect for evening viewings.

Showpiece flower beds: make an effort at your entrance with a stunning flower bed. Ensure it's always perfectly maintained. It's the "wow" factor when visitors arrive, and the last thing they remember as they drive away.

External walling: with security being a national concern, ensure your walling is in a good state of repair and adds value in the eyes of the purchaser. The same applies to your entrance and driveway gates. The more secure your property appears, the more you will instil confidence in buyers.

External lighting: well-placed feature lighting can transform an otherwise boring curb into something spectacular. Make sure all your lights work, otherwise you will detract from the statement.

Grass and pavements – it's hard to beat the impact of a perfectly manicured lawn. Even with water shortages, you can ensure your grass is green with the right fertiliser and some effort. Where that's not possible, replace the grass with pavers, short grass shrubs, or chip stone. Weeds give the impression the property isn't well kept.

With the recent water shortages it's a challenge to keep your garden looking good. Consider replacing "thirsty" plants with indigenous plants that drink less.

If your property is on a sloping plot, then terrace your garden. It creates usable areas and is much more appealing.

Water features add a sense of tranquillity to your property. If you have a swimming pool, make sure it's sparkling – and if you have an underwater light, be sure it works and it's switched on for evening viewings.

The time spent on ensuring your curb appeal is strong will ensure that you receive strong buyer enquiry. You'll be appealing to the buyers' emotions – and that's the best thing you can do if you want their best offers.

And just as when you were dating – the effort you make up front is well worth the reward later.

ABOUT STEVE CARADOC-DAVIES

Steve Caradoc-Davies is Harcourts Platinum Principal. He has 25 years of real estate experience. Featuring in the Top 20 agents in the Group in South Africa for eight consecutive years, Caradoc-Davies now coaches and manages his team and has received international training. In July 2009 he was awarded the Property Association Young Lion Award - in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the property industry and acknowledgement as a future industry leader.

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