

Study Shows Garage Door Appearance Impacts Home's Sale Value

by ARA

The garage door may not be the first item you think of dressing up when you're putting your house up for sale, but realtors say it's worth giving it some attention. The list price on this home increased nearly 3 percent when standard garage doors were replaced by carriage house doors that enhanced the home's charming Craftsman style. It's the single largest moving part on a home and if it faces the street, it plays a large part in the overall appearance," says Marty Dewald, a real estate veteran with a 17-year track record as a top agent for ReMax Unlimited in southwest Ohio. "Curb appeal is a critical factor in selling a home. If a prospective buyer doesn't like the view from the street, chances are he won't waste time going inside." In a new study fielded by Stratamark Research and garage door manufacturer Clopay Building Products, 300 realtors nationwide were surveyed to determine if garage door appearance made a difference in the listing price they would assign to a house. Nearly all of the agents interviewed agreed that a new garage door enhances curb appeal and 75 percent believes it adds value to a home. In fact, most realtors have recommended that a homeowner replace their garage door when listing their house for sale because of the condition of the door -- either it was broken, in bad condition or rotted. Nearly half said appearance was a big reason because the age or style of the door detracted from the home's curb appeal. When it comes to adding value to a home's list price, the right garage door does make a difference. Clopay showed realtors before and after images of several different homes featuring a variety of garage door styles ranging in price from inexpensive to high-end. Respondents were asked to assign a selling price to each of the houses and were alerted that the only difference in the photos of each house was the garage door. Depending on the style of the door, and how it fit in with the architectural style of the house, realtors increased the list price anywhere from one to four percent. On a \$350,000 home, that's an increase of somewhere between \$3,500 and \$14,000 just because of the garage door. The increase was determined by using the spread between the average estimated selling price of each house with a basic garage door (Before) and the average estimated selling price of that same house with various styles of replacement doors (After). "That doesn't mean that a home has to have a designer garage door" the door just has to enhance the overall appearance," adds Dewald. "However, homeowners should choose a model that fits the look and price point of their home to get the best return on investment." The average price for a new garage door ranges from \$700 to \$5,000 depending on the size of the door and the material it's made from. The most popular look in garage doors right now is the carriage-house style door. The doors look like old-fashioned swing-out doors but function like modern roll-up doors with an electric garage door opener. The choices for design, color and materials are virtually endless. "Many homeowners favor the high-end look of wood carriage-house style doors, but they don't want the upkeep or the price tag that comes with them," says Pat Lohse, vice president of residential marketing for Clopay. "Manufacturers now are introducing less-expensive, low-maintenance versions in steel with layered, wood-grain composite overlays or embossed patterns. Unlike wood, a steel carriage house door is easier to maintain, resisting both fading and rot due to exposure." If the vintage look doesn't work with the style of your home, no problem. Another solution is to select a classic style raised panel steel or a carved wood panel door and customize it with decorative windows. For more contemporary architecture, consider the sleek-looking aluminum and glass doors now available, such as Clopay's Avante Collection. Going Shopping Lohse offers this advice on the factors to consider when selecting a new garage door.

- * Budget. Like everything, budget dictates options. Garage doors range in price from a few hundred to several thousand dollars depending on the size, materials and design you choose. Even if you have a small budget you can still get a great looking door that is going to enhance the look of the house.
- * Design. Think of the garage as an extension of the home's theme, not an afterthought. Let the home's architectural style, the shape and size of the windows and entry doors, and exterior design details influence the design of the garage door. It's a good idea to visit dealer showrooms and review manufacturer Web sites to get a sense of the options available. Many companies offer doors pre-designed to match specific architectural styles, which can make the selection process easier.
- * Insulation. Doors can be insulated or non-insulated. If the garage is attached to the house you'll want an insulated door. This will help reduce utility bills -- a popular selling point with prospective buyers. If you live in a mild climate or have a detached garage that will only be used to park the car, you can opt for a less expensive, non-insulated door.
- * Upkeep. Maintenance is

another consideration. Steel doors are very durable and virtually maintenance-free, but some people prefer the warmth and character of wood and the limitless design options. Depending on the climate and exposure, wood doors will need to be painted or stained every few years. For more information about garage door design options and a free Idea and Inspirations book, log onto www.clopaydoor.com.

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