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## Renovations You May Want to Reconsider

Custom renovations are often a great way to put your family's personal stamp on a home. However, you may want to rethink your plans if it means renovating to create something unique, like a built-in aquarium.

There is nothing wrong with transforming your home to reflect your family's style, but it is important to keep in mind that customizations do not always have a positive effect on the value of your home.

Consider these tips when renovating your home.

**Avoid extravagant personal touches.** Before choosing to install a Hollywood movie-themed room, or over or under-height countertops to accommodate tall or short family members, remember that personal touches can personally decrease the value of your home.

**Beware of changing a room's function.** The most common way to decrease the value of a home is to decrease the number of bedrooms. Consider future homeowners before you renovate and change the original function of any room.

**Think carefully about installing a pool.** If having a pool will please your entire family, then by all means, get one. But bear in mind a pool rarely adds monetary value to your home. Future buyers may view a pool as a chore, and parents with small children or pets may be hesitant to purchase a home with a pool due to safety concerns.



**Stay away from outdoor custom renos that will be seldom used.** In Canada, the majority of homeowners can only utilize the backyard for half the year. Costly additions such as outdoor kitchens or tennis courts may not deliver your intended return on investment.

**Think twice about customizing a garage for specific family members.** While specific family members may value a garage equipped with all the conveniences for a stay-at-home retreat, keep in mind that potential buyers may prefer a garage that can house a car or two, along with tools, garden and sports equipment.

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## Your Five-Year Home Renovation Plan

Like any good business plan, looking ahead and planning for home renovations will help you to stay on track - ensuring our home sells in any market, even if that's 15 to 25 years from now. The most effective way to fund home renovations is to establish an annual budget that will go toward future improvements. This way, you can accomplish regular upkeep and preserve your home's marketability.

Think of it as a five-year home renovation plan, to be reviewed annually and updated in the fourth year. Planning in this way will translate positively to your overall financial health.

### Cornerstones for developing your plan:

- Decide on the major renovations you foresee in the next five years, such as kitchen, bathroom(s), heating and air conditioning, windows and/or roof.
- Prioritize and establish rough budgets for each.

- Establish an automatic payroll deduction plan that arranges for a set amount each week to be deposited into a savings account or tax-free savings account.
- Review your priorities each year and adjust both your savings contribution and the list of projects.
- In the fourth year, re-write your plan for another five years.

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# Home Sales Achieve Another Monthly Record in April



The London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS® (LSTAR) announced another record month for residential sales in April, with a total of 1,220 homes sold, an increase of 14.2% over the same period last year. This represents the best results ever for April, since LSTAR began tracking sales data in 1978. "Since the beginning of the year, every month has achieved record sales. After the first four months, we're about 25 percent ahead in home sales compared to 2016", said the LSTAR President. "It just shows how desirable the region is, when you consider affordability, accessibility and lifestyle. London and St. Thomas have so many features that make them attractive destinations to live, work, raise families and retire. We've got farm-to-table restaurants, London Knights hockey, big-name concerts and culture, such as the North American Railway Hall of Fame and the Grand Theatre." "With this robust marketplace, it's a fantastic time to get in touch with a REALTOR®" said LSTAR President. May 2, 2017 - London & St. Thomas Association of REALTORS®.

## Breakdown of February Residential Sales

Type	Units Sold	Average Price
2 Storey	287	\$506,988
Bungalow	119	\$286,981
Ranch	114	\$429,585
Townhouse Condo	97	\$204,960
High Rise Apt. Condo	69	\$200,007

## 2017 Average Prices (YTD)

Type	Average Price	Increase from 2016
Detached	\$350,298	20.5%
Condo	\$229,524	16.6%
Total Residential	\$325,286	19.3%

St. Thomas also had a very healthy April, with a total of 97 homes sold, up 12.8% from the same time last year. The average price in St. Thomas was \$270,439 up 9.3% from the previous month.



## DE-CLUTTER FOR A CAUSE

National Garage Sale for Shelter!

Saturday, May 13th, 2017

Donate your unwanted, gently used items to our garage sale and you'll be helping women and children in our community safely escape violence.

100% of the proceeds go to a local women's shelter and to education and violence prevention programs in our community.

**342 Commissioners Rd. W.**  
**London & St. Thomas Association**  
**of REALTORS®**

(between Wharncliffe Rd. S. & Wonderland Rd. S.)

Small items can be dropped off to Royal LePage Triland Realty's South office located at 334 Wellington Rd. S. at Base Line Rd. E.

### Items needed:

Clothing (clean and gently used)	Accessories (bags, necklaces, belts, etc.)
Shoes (clean and gently used)	Furniture (side tables, bookcases, etc.)
Gently used Record, CDs or DVDs	Sporting goods
Small exercise equipment	Pictures / art work
Toys (gently used and unbroken)	Household knick-knacks
Working electronics	Tools
Books	Bikes

## 4 Great Tips

for De-cluttering Your Home

- 1 An ordered home brings inner calm.**  
Find serenity in your home by following the "one in, two out" rule - whenever you bring in an item, get rid of two.
- 2 One step at a time.**  
Start by tackling one room in your house. Spending time in that room once you have finished will feel so good, it will motivate you to do another!
- 3 One person's junk is another's treasure.**  
It's easier to get rid of things when you know that you'll be giving them to someone who can use them - donate to a charity.
- 4 Enlist your friends and family.**  
The more hands pitching in, the better. Get boxes and trash bags ready, and plan a trip to a charity to drop off donated items.

Thinking about selling your home? De-cluttering is an essential part of your preparation - it can attract more buyers and help you get the best price.

## Choosing the Right Perennials For Your Garden

Plants that grow and bloom over the spring and summer, become dormant over the winter and then return in spring from their established roots are known as perennials. These plants are often regarded as the easiest and most economical way to maintain a garden you can enjoy year after year. However, the initial outlay for perennials can be somewhat pricier than annuals or biennials, so it's important to choose your plants carefully.

Gardeners find their best success when they purchase and plant perennials that are appropriate to their particular climate, sun exposure and soil conditions. If you get these three factors right, achieving a lush perennial garden that offers years of low-maintenance enjoyment and adds value to your home, is well within your reach.

**Know your plant hardiness zone.** Canada is divided into roughly nine different planting hardiness zones, ranging from coldest to warmest. Refer to Canada's Agriculture Plant Hardiness Zones Map to help you identify your particular plant hardiness zone.

**Know your soil.** Most nursery-bought plants will label the ideal soil conditions for optimal growth. Some require well-drained soil to circumvent overwatering. Others require heavier soils to retain moisture. In addition, there are often considerations for acidity of the soil for particular plants, and it may be recommended that you add the appropriate organic material to augment your soil to a closer ideal. Consider purchasing a soil testing kit to start and ask your local garden centre for further guidance.

Know your level of sun exposure. Consider the level of sunlight your plants will receive throughout the day in the location you have chosen. Whether your garden is in full sun, partial sun, shade or full shade throughout the day, the perennial plants you choose will grow best when they match the level of sun required. [www.royallepage.ca](http://www.royallepage.ca)

