



# Jane Graydon

Sales Representative

 /SOLDbyJaneRLP  
 /JANEGraydon - Professional Real Estate Services

## 519-872-9096



[soldbyjane@royallepage.ca](mailto:soldbyjane@royallepage.ca)  
[www.soldbyjane.ca](http://www.soldbyjane.ca)

## Green Decorating: Bringing History Home

When an old building, a house, hotel, church or commercial space, gets demolished or renovated, there are companies that go in before the wrecking ball to save interesting or useful elements. They search for items such as windows, doors, hardware, stair parts, lighting, fencing, lumber, ceiling tiles, fireplace mantels, bathtubs, flooring and more.

Whether you live in a quaint century home, a huge modern loft or a tiny condo, using architectural salvage in your home is an affordable way to add originality, history and to be more earth-friendly when you decorate or renovate your space.

### Here are a few ideas to add some character to your home:

1. Replace generic doorknobs with lovely brass, porcelain or cut glass knobs.
2. Reclaimed wood flooring is a great low-cost alternative for new hardwood flooring.
3. Replace the bathtub in your modern space with a deep, elegant clawfoot soaker.

4. Install a row of crystal doorknobs in the bathroom to hang towels, or use them as drapery tie-backs.
5. Install antique stained glass or leaded glass windows into non-load-bearing internal walls to allow the light to shine through.



Salvaged items can be found at architectural salvaged stores, estate auctions, discount flea markets, garage sales and other sources of used goods. Call your local historical restoration or preservation society or shop online.

[www.rfpnetwork.com](http://www.rfpnetwork.com)

## Hidden Space Storage Solutions

It seems that no matter what size home you have, you always want more storage space. Most people think of basements and attics for storage but there are creative ways to increase storage in unused space throughout your home. Here are some common home features with game-changing storage potential.

### Staircase:

Step up your storage by creating closet space under your staircase. You can also turn each step into a drawer to maximize every inch of space.

### Bay Window:

Adding a flip-top lid to a bay window creates space that can store larger items. If you are looking for more organization, add compartments to keep your items neat and tidy.

### Lift-up Bed Frame:

Lift-up bed frames have improved over the years and are now more comfortable to operate. If you aren't sold on the lift-up, you can also find frames with drawers on both sides that have comparable storage.

### Coffee Table:

Coffee tables with hidden storage are growing in popularity as people move into smaller spaces. You'll find lots of beautiful options in many styles at your local furniture stores or online.

### Cupboard:

You have to look up to find the hidden potential in your cupboards. A simple storage solution is to add a shelf or two to double or triple available storage.



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# A Historic Year for Real Estate in 2017 Home Sales Exceed 11,000 for the first time

The London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS® (LSTAR) announced 2017 marked a historic year for residential real estate, with home sales surpassing 11,000 for the first time since LSTAR began tracking data in 1978. In 2017, a total of 11,203 homes were sold, up 8.0% from 2016. Residential sales across the region in 2017 is definitely one for the record books,” said the 2017 LSTAR President. “Looking back, we saw it all last year. London and St. Thomas achieved so many ‘firsts’, from six consecutive months of record sales to robust out-of-town interest. The real estate activity very much echoed the positive momentum most of the country experienced throughout the year.”

January 3, 2018 - London and St. Thomas Association of REALTORS®.



## Breakdown of December Residential Sales

Year-to-date	December 2017	December 2016
Sales Activity	405	-18.8
Dollar Volume	\$133,378,853	-4.8
New Listings	398	-5.0
Active Listings	981	-24.9
Sales to New Listings Ratio	101.8	119.1
Months of Inventory	2.4	2.6
Average Price	\$329,331	17.3

Type	December 2017	December 2016
London CMA (includes St. Thomas & Surrounding Area)	405	-18.8
City of London	298	-7.5
London North	80	-14.0
London East	100	-16.0
London South	118	7.3
St. Thomas	26	-48.0
Strathroy	12	0.0
Middlesex County	26	-23.5
Elgin County	22	-46.3

*Economic Impacts of MLS® System Home Sales and Purchases in Canada and the Provinces, Altus Group Consulting, 2013.*

## Light Up Your Basement's Potential

A few changes to lighting can transform a dark basement into a bright and beautiful space.

Opt for lighting choices that highlight the best features of your recreation space and take the focus off the less attractive ones. There are three main types of lighting to enhance ambiance throughout:

### Soft and Soothing Lighting:

Table, lights, standard lamps, wall lights and valance lights can be used to wash walls in light, creating more flattering glows, while minimizing any flaws. Dimmer switches are a great options and can provide added flexibility to the lighting experience.

### Task Lighting:

This will help you to concentrate in those areas where you need light for specific purposes, such as game tables or reading.

Angled lighting, halogen spotlights and reading lamps are some examples of task lighting.

### Dramatic Lighting:

Use dramatic lighting to accentuate specific features in the basement. Artwork and architectural features can pop out with the right lighting. Adding a spotlight to an accent you love can make it a focal point in the room.



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## Slow Cooker Chicken & Wild Rice Soup

### Ingredients:

- 1-1/2 lbs boneless skinless chicken breast
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 6 c chicken stock
- 1 c wild rice
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 carrots, peeled and diced
- 3 stalks celery, diced
- 1/2 tsp dried thyme
- 1/2 tsp dried rosemary
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 lb cremini mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 1/4 c unsalted butter
- 1/4 c all-purpose flour
- 1 c milk
- 1 c half and half
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley



### Directions:

1. Season chicken with salt and pepper, to taste. Place chicken into a 6-qt. slow cooker.
2. Stir in chicken stock, wild rice, garlic, onion, carrots, celery, thyme, rosemary and bay leaves; season with salt and pepper, to taste. Cover and cook on low heat for 6-8 hours. Add mushrooms during the last 30 minutes of cooking time.
3. Remove chicken from the slow cooker and shred, using two forks.
4. Melt butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Whisk flour until lightly browned, about 1 minute. Whisk in milk and half and half, about 4-5 minutes; season with salt and pepper, to taste.
5. Stir chicken and milk mixture into the slow cooker. If the soup is too thick, add more half and half as needed until desired consistency is reached.
6. Serve immediately, garnish with parsley, if desired.

<https://damndelicious.net/2016/12/09/slow-cooker-chicken-wild-rice-soup/>