



Hello, Madison Place Homeowners. I would like to introduce myself. My name is Karen Putney and I am the current Architectural Committee chairperson and I must confess -- I am an HGTV addict. I've had this problem for a very long time and it feels good to finally confess. For those of you who may not know, HGTV is the popular cable network, Home and Garden TV (Comcast channel 47). This is my favorite reality TV which consumes most of my TV viewing. There is no cure and I'm quite happy being addicted to shows "Curb Appeal", "Get It Sold", and "Designed to Sell", among many others. The constant theme of these shows is: simple, inexpensive changes can have a big impact on how a homeowner's property is viewed by a potential buyer. The simplest and least expensive concepts are: 1) remove the clutter, 2) depersonalize your space so the homeowner can "see" themselves in your home, and 3) everything must be extremely clean. These concepts don't cost a lot of money but will make a big impact immediately.

I hope we can all agree that Madison Place is a wonderful place to live; a little oasis surrounded by great restaurants and shopping and very near downtown, the Medical Center, Rice University, Greenway Plaza, and the Galleria. I imagine everyone is very interested in keeping home values as high as possible. And I'd think everyone will agree that living in a small community, we need to respect our neighbors. If everyone would take a few minutes to view their property, front and back, with an objective but critical view, I think we'd all agree each of us could make some minor changes that would make Madison Place even more beautiful.

Early last month, every homeowner received the one page (front/back) Madison Place Resident Guidelines. If you did not receive a copy, or didn't keep your copy and would like another, there are extra guidelines available at the Courtesy desk. Late last month, a number of neighbors received a letter from KRJ Management's B.J. Utley, our property management company, which documented non-compliances to the Madison Place Resident Guidelines. If you received a letter, please realize you are not alone.

Many letters dealt with such easily fixable things like unsightly dead potted plants in the front and back common areas. This is the easiest thing to fix -- simply move the pots to your patio area. Other instances dealt with yard art in the common areas (front and back). This is another easy fix. Please move all such items to your patio. You may decorate your patio to express your personal style, but the common areas are on view to all residents and prospective buyers. The old saying "you only get one chance to make a great first impression" is so true. Please respect your neighbors by removing all out-of-season wreaths, yard art, bird feeders, dog dishes, flags (U.S. flag is fine), broken, old furniture, etc. If you question what should be removed and what can stay in place, ask yourself this question: "Did I place the object there?" If the answer is yes, chances are good the item needs to be removed.

If you received a letter requiring property repairs, keep in mind you still need to submit an Architectural Request form. The committee is very willing to work with you. You may call me if you have questions about the Architectural request process or feel the need to complain.

OK, I confess again. I didn't get a letter from the management company, but my front unit is not as clean as it should be. I don't have yard art, dead plants, old broken furniture, etc. But my problem is.....I have dust collecting on my porch light and there is some sort of a slight green streak on the front porch and the mailbox looks really dirty and old. Wow, I feel better already with my confession. I now resolve to apply the HGTV concepts for great curb appeal to my own unit and will clean the front door, the light, and the porch until it shines. I may even invest in a new plain, neutral color door mat and submit an architectural request form for a new mailbox from Bering's, which I have been eyeing.

I challenge every homeowner to take a long hard, objective look at your own property and ask yourself, "what can I do that will make my home look wonderful and improve the value of our very special community"? It won't take much time or money and the results will benefit everyone.

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