



CONTACT: Amy Florek
617-640-8134
amy@florekpr.com

TURNOVER TIPS: EXPERT IDEAS FOR BUDGET-CONSCIOUS, HIGH-IMPACT APARTMENT IMPROVEMENTS

CHARLOTTE, NC (Fall 2009) – When an apartment turns over, it is time to seize the day. It is the owner’s opportunity to not only make repairs, but improvements that can turn a run-of-the-mill rental into an apartment that outshines the rest.

“In today’s market, some strategic updates and upgrades can go a long way in helping to ensure a unit is rented – and for top dollar,” says Kate Hart, one of America’s top home stagers and owner of Hart & Associates Staging & Design in Philadelphia, PA.

To obtain a modern, spacious and upscale look that appeals to a wide range of renters and gives a great bang for the buck, Kate Hart offers some ideas for high-impact changes:

- **PAINT & CARPET:** Forgo a stark white paint color that will look dirty over time and use a creamy, warm neutral like Sherwin Williams Ivoire or Kilim Beige for a higher-end look. For carpet, a simple pin-dot or cut and loop style carpet will give your unit the look of a luxury property for less than a thicker plush. Opt for a light beige, sand or coffee color to coordinate with today’s on-trend colors.
- **KITCHEN & BATH:** Replace the hardware in the kitchen and bathroom. New drawer pulls and knobs add a lot of sparkle on a tight budget. Consider brushed nickel for a traditional look or chrome for a more contemporary unit.

In the bathroom, add a new light fixture over the vanity and reframe the existing plate glass mirror with a MirrorMate® frame (www.mirrormatecommercial.com) for an up-to-date, finished look. MirrorMate® frames come in over 40 styles and are custom cut to fit any mirror size. They’re an easy DIY project as they adhere directly to the mirror currently on the wall.

- **GOING GREEN:** Appeal to eco-conscious renters and reduce utility bills by going green. Select low VOC paints, install energy efficient halogen light bulbs, install a low-flow shower head and choose energy star rated appliances.



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- **THE “EXTRAS”:** Give renters the feeling of a high end, custom property by offering “extras” as incentives, such as the option to select an accent wall paint (that can be easily changed for the next tenant) or offer to install a closet system that will ensure tenants feel they have adequate storage.
- **STAGING:** Got a tight space or one that is currently unoccupied? Consider having the property professionally staged. Adding furniture to a space actually gives it more perspective and helps renters imagine how they can live in the space. Once the unit is leased the furniture can be moved to another unit or rented as a furnished residence. Local professional home stagers can be found by visiting the Real Estate Staging Association at www.realestatestagingassociation.com

“In the current economy, it’s important to have a long term view of improvements, as opposed to using them to add value for a flip,” adds Ariel Thomas Nessel of Nessel Development in Dallas, TX and a MirrorMate® customer.

Always “take maintenance savings and costs into account” when deciding how and where to spend makeover dollars. Something like a 2” faux wood blind may cost more upfront than a metal or vinyl mini-blind, but will look nicer, last longer and, as a result, likely provide a better return on the investment. Such updates and custom touches will help to upgrade the overall look of a unit, attracting tenants and keeping units rented.

ABOUT KATE HART

Kate Hart is a pioneer in the staging field, having helped hundreds of families and realtors prepare homes for sale through her Philadelphia-area company, Hart & Associates Staging & Design. Her design work has been featured in numerous books and national publications, as well as on The Fine Living Network, HGTV Radio and CNN Headline News. Hart was also recently recognized by the Real Estate Staging Association as “Staging Professional of the Year.”

ABOUT MIRRORMATE LLC

Headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, MirrorMate LLC was founded by Lisa Huntting, who invented the company’s flagship product, the MirrorMate® frame, as a design solution for the four bare mirrors in her own home. As the original and industry leader, MirrorMate® frames are patented in the U.S. with additional patents pending in the U.S. and Canada. In 2008, MirrorMate® expanded their offerings with Pizzazz® MirrorSquares®, a line of custom-framed mirror squares designed to hang in groupings – adding visual interest, and reflecting the homeowners’ individual décor and style. The Pizzazz® MirrorSquares® are available in over 35 frame styles. In 2009, MirrorMate® also launched a line of fully framed mirrors for commercial accounts, allowing for a cohesive look between new and renovated properties. The framed mirrors come in the same styles as the original retro-fit MirrorMate® frames and include vanity, full length and accent mirrors. For retail and wholesale information, as well as a MirrorMate® demonstration video, please visit www.mirrormate.com. For commercial information, please visit www.mirrormatecommercial.com

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