

# Uplifting a Tired Property

## *Reduce Voids, Increase Profits*

At Maidenscott Properties we have leased many properties from landlords who are struggling to make their properties work and with every one we have taken, we have filled them within 2 months of leasing and continue to run them as successful HMOs. We run on very few voids due to the quality of our rooms and our service. What we have done and how we have done it starts with the initial uplift and this can be done on a small budget and in a short space of time. The one thing you need is the commitment to do it properly and complete the process.

### **Stage 1 - Feature walls and touching up**

Feature walls do amazing things to rooms. They add character, highlight features and can actually lighten a room. They also add a comforting feel to a bedroom and help a potential tenant visualise themselves living there - key to filling rooms!

I always tend to go for the second darkest level of colour and go for rich colours. I tend to use Johnstones paint from a specialist paint store. I find that this brand goes on well but is really reasonably priced and leaves a lovely finish. Yellows usually require several coats whereas greens and greys don't so much which obviously impacts the price.



A really good money saving tip is that if you have a small amount of paint left in two tins, try mixing them and using the newly created colour to paint your last wall. You do have the problem of not being able to touch up as it's your unique colour but it's a great way to save money on a project by using up the otherwise wasted leftover paint. My experience is that I tend to use around 2.5 litres for one standard double bedroom feature room which costs me around £15.



## Stage 2 - Match walls to soft furnishings



A splash of colour on the walls is the backdrop to the rest of the room but cushions, throws and small finishing items soften the look of the room and give a lived in comforting feel. I start with dressing the bed, usually in white bedding with a throw and cushions that either matches or offsets the wall colour. Alternatively I use a patterned bedding but if so, I'm a lot more careful about not over-dressing the rest of the room. Your finish needs to be a clean fresh look that allows a potential tenant to imagine living in the room but not to over-dress and give a cluttered look. The tenant needs to imagine their own items in the room and there needs to be space for this.

On top of the bedding I always hang a picture above the bed, a lamp on a bedside table and at least a plant and an extra item such as a small candle holder or a heart. B&M is my go-to place for these items (they also sell Johnstones paint but you'll pay slightly more per 2.5litres compared to paint trade shops or Johnstones online). I have broken down the cost for this on page \_\_\_\_\_.



## Stage 3 - Clean Everything!



To pay professional cleaners to clean an average 5-bed HMO would cost me at least £200 and that's in the North where prices are less. This is going to put a big dent in your budget so if you're up to it, get your hands dirty and get stuck in. I also tend to employ cheap labour where I can - my university-poor kids love the opportunity to get paid £10 an hour and have the energy to work really hard and do at least as good a job as the professional cleaners that I employ when time doesn't allow. Budget for the professionals but if you can save some money when other people are available - jump at it!

I ensure that absolutely everything is cleaned. Inside of cupboards, wardrobes, woodwork, behind furniture, behind beds windows, doors etc. Bathrooms and kitchens are especially important and want to be sparkling. Potential tenants are a lot happier to see a slightly chipped sink unit than a dirty toilet. And yes, they almost always look inside the toilet! Start at one end of the house and scrub, clean, polish and Hoover every inch until you reach the other.

I can't make this point enough. So many properties that I've viewed are just simply not clean and for me it is about the biggest turn off there can be. An unclean room suggests a landlord that doesn't care and reminds a potential tenant of the people that lived in that room before, not what you want them to be thinking about! It destroys the ability of the viewer to imagine themselves in the room and gives the impression of sloppiness. If a tenant does go ahead with the room it may not be the ideal tenant that you're looking for.



## Stage 4 - Photographs



I am a big believer in professional photographs selling a property. The latest iphones can take excellent quality photographs but they cannot dictate the angle of the shot and what the items included in the shot. My photographer has created the most beautiful of images by merging 3 photographs taken from the same angle but with differing exposures or foregrounding a shot with an ornament, door handle or book.

The final results have sold my rooms so many times over and the initial cost has been swamped by the lack of voids due to the speed at which I attract new tenants.

I book my photographer a couple of weeks in advance and it takes around half a day to photograph a 6 bed HMO. The charge is in the region of £200 and I would suggest it is one of the most important stages of the project.



### ***Cost breakdown - 6 bed HMO example***

Paint feature walls in all 6 rooms and living room space	£105 (6x£15)
Paint brushes and rollers	£25
Full clean of property	£200
New bedding, throws, cushions	£180 (6x£30)
Lamps, plants, ornaments	£180 (6x£30)
Cleaning materials	£10
Professional photographer	£195
<b>TOTAL COST</b>	<b>£895</b>

## Final Thoughts

My experience is that by following these steps my rooms are viewed more and are rented faster than any other landlord I know in my area. If you scroll through Spareroom it is clear that very few landlords follow this train of thought or take the time to get their properties looking the best. Any people don't want to rent a dark, drab looking room in a house where they don't know anyone and quite possibly in an area that is new to them. Moving can be a scary process and you want your adverts to say that you care about the home that you are providing to your tenants and that they will be happy in your rooms. The little things that you spend time over say a lot about you as a landlord and all of these conscious and unconscious thoughts will be going through the head of the potential tenant trawling through rooms on Spareroom. Follow these steps and yours is a lot more likely to be the one that they stop on and feel relieved at finding.

***To book a free 30 minute telephone consultation, go to [www.maidenscottproperties.co.uk](http://www.maidenscottproperties.co.uk).***

***We'd be happy to talk through your current situation, best steps forward and how we can help if required.***



## **Kate Roxburgh - Director, Maidenscott Properties Ltd.**



Every individual deserves the right to a safe and comfortable place to live and the ability to explore their purpose in life and the best way to live it . As a teacher, mentor and property developer I am passionate about helping people achieve this.

Maidenscott Properties is centred around providing excellent homes to excellent people and in helping other landlords and investors do the same. Improving the standard of rental properties provides a better tenant experience and reduces voids and increases profits for the landlord. This creates business that benefits everyone.

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