



# SCHAEFER NEWS

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## Repair VS Replace

During the course of a home inspection, damage or deteriorated items are often observed. The greater the deficiency, the more likely it is that the buyer will ask the seller to incur the cost for remedying the condition. Of course all sales transactions are not the same and often enough, due to the details of the sale, the buyer willing proceeds with the purchase, knowing that he or she will be the ones paying for the remedy, therefore the information in this article can be of benefit to both buyers and sellers. It can also be of benefit to Realtors in advising their clients in how to deal with these issues.

First lets address this topic from a seller's view point, as if any significant deficiency will be their responsibility to resolve. What is the most economical way to deal with deteriorated or damaged home components? First assess your house as if you were a buyer. Do this before you even have a potential buyer or even before you put your home on the market. What would you find unacceptable if you were purchasing your home. Remember, you have to look at it without all the fond memories that you may have



acquired that make you love your home. Once you have listed the potential items that are likely to either turn off potential buyers or cause them to require you to fix a problem, you have to ask one question, "if you were the buyer, would you want that item repaired or replaced?" Statistics show that most home buyers prefer to have significantly deficient items replaced and not repaired. Why is it important to know this? In most cases, repairing an item is less expensive than replacing it. Therefore, if something can be repaired and it is done before the home goes on the market, it is unlikely to become an issue to prospective buyers and therefore you have saved the difference between repair and replacement costs.

There is now one more question that needs to be asked once you find something that is damaged. Is it beyond repair or not? Of course some things are unfixable and trying to repair them could cost you more money in the long run then just buying new. There is however certain home repairs that are possible that at first glance may appear so bad as to make one dismiss the idea of trying repair. There are products on the market today that claim to do amazing things and in this article we are going to illustrate a couple of them.

As a policy, we do not

endorse any specific products nor can we judge any individuals skill in performing some of these repairs. Therefore, look at this article as an introduction to other possibilities of addressing home deficiencies. Then do additional research into the the best products to use and their methods of application to determine if they are the best solution for you.

On the market today there are products for repairing damaged or rotted wood. "Liquid Wood" is a product that applied to rotted or damaged wood penetrates into the wood, reinforces and hardens rotted wood. After which, "Wood Epox" can be added to fill in rotted out areas (see photos). Who would have considered that the window components in theses photos could be restored to useable condition? The same products can be applied for decayed decorative trim and even support columns rotted out at the base.

*As far as the laws of mathematics refer to reality, they are not certain; and as far as they are certain, they do not refer to reality.*

**Albert Einstein**

There are also concrete restoration materials for items like steps and walk repair as well as foundation cracks. Perspective buyers may drive right by a home with steps in the condition of the first photo, thinking it may reflect the condition of the rest of the home's components; however if they saw steps like in the last photo, it could change their entire perspective. There are things to consider. Some of these restorations may take skill that is beyond some homeowners.



Steel restoration products can be handy for repairing rusted support columns in basements and crawl spaces, as well as metal step railings and fences.



As anyone selling a home can see, there may be solutions to resolving deficiencies in the home without the typically greater price of buying new, and if this is done before the home is on the market or before a home inspection, they may never be an issue. But what about the buyer's point of view? We will not address the issue as to whether a buyer finding a deficiency should ask for replacement or settle for repair. This advice is better answered by Realtors or Lawyers. The benefit of knowing the option of repair versus replacement to the buyer comes in most handy when the buyer knowingly and willingly purchases a home with deficiencies, having the plan of dealing with them themselves. If you were a purchaser, you might feel better about accepting a home with similar deficiencies as seen in the photos above if you knew there may be other options than the possible greater cost of replacing them.

#### **OTHER REPAIR SUGGESTIONS:**

Over the years we have had several newsletters that deal with repairing household components or systems and you can view them on our web site ([www.mhschaefer.com](http://www.mhschaefer.com)) on the "Technical Archive" page. You will find the following topics.

- ◆ Squeak repair (floors and stairs)
- ◆ Plaster repair
- ◆ Floor Stains
- ◆ Wet basements
- ◆ Shower power (cleaning shower heads for better pressure)

If there is another topic you would like us to research and add to our web site, please let us know by emailing, [mhschaefer@snet.net](mailto:mhschaefer@snet.net)

#### **GETTING READY FOR A FIRST HOME INSPECTION?**

If you have never been through the home inspection process before and would like to be more prepared for the experience, please visit our web site. We offer two sections on our web site that may be beneficial. See our "Frequently Asked Questions" page. It has the seven questions we are asked most by new home buyers. You can also take a virtual home inspection tour on our web site. This section brings you through the steps of the home inspection from beginning to end. It will show you a variety of conditions with photos from antique homes to new construction. Each section describes what the home inspector is looking for. This tour is one of the best ways we know for a person to come prepared with the proper perspective of what their home inspection will entail. Therefore, you will feel more confident in how to digest all the information that may tend to overwhelm a more unprepared buyer.