

Fencing in your property's value

 By [Richard Gray](#)

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Security is a foremost concern for many if not most homeowners in South Africa today. Fences and walls surrounding properties have become a common feature today. What do they mean for a property's value and saleability?



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Fencing and walling for security purposes began in earnest in the 1980s, and gathered steam ever since. Worries about crimes affecting home spaces are real. For many buyers, a security fence or wall (not merely a boundary demarcator) is a non-negotiable.

Without one, many potential buyers will not consider a property, or alternatively will make offers reduced to factor in the cost of erecting one. This is rather like a mark-down that a buyer might demand for a structural problem that needs to be corrected. It is not unknown for buyers to delay moving into a newly-purchased property until their wall or fence has been completed.

It is also important for new buyers to check how their property is connected to that of their neighbours.

Not a significant selling point

It is unclear exactly how these security features affect properties' values. Arguably, while the lack of a wall or fence can detract from the value, the expectation that it is a necessary feature may not be a particularly significant selling point – and so a wall or fence as such will probably not greatly enhance the value.

However, careful thought in the choice of a security feature – a wall or a fence – and in the aesthetics around it can do a great deal to enhance the appeal of a property.

Should one choose a wall or a fence? Walls afford privacy, and offer interesting options for garden layout. A private world, with plenty of shade and with flowerbeds running along the base of the wall can be enormously attractive.

Deterrent effect

On the other hand, fences permit a view of the property from the outside – which some argue has a deterrent effect on housebreakers.

From a home value point of view, the security structures must blend into the overall appeal of the property. Indeed, architects have noticed that South Africa's cities – with their security consciousness – have created a distinct interpretation of urban attractiveness. Fences are somewhat easier in this regard, being inherently simpler and less imposing. More care needs to be taken with walls. They should ideally match the architectural style and colour of the property they surround.

Both fences and walls must be well maintained; they are among the features creating first impressions on buyers – saying that this is a property well worth investing in!

ABOUT RICHARD GRAY

Richard Gray is CEO of Harcourts Real Estate South Africa. He joined the group in September 2010. Gray brings extensive experience in IT, project management, corporate operations and financial services provision, having been CEO of mortgage originator Bond Choice, to the table. He believes that the key to the group's prospects are the strong brand, industry-leading value proposition, talented people, and the benefits of being part of a powerful international real estate group.

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