

# “Please don’t ask me to ‘downsize’”

Shirley Wyatt of Fothergill Wyatt Estate Agents encourages seeing downsizing in a different light and presents this issue’s feature property as one example you may be considering downsizing from, or ‘resizing, as Shirley prefers

Leading for the age when working full time may soon come to an end gives life to a range of mixed emotions. Glad that the end is in sight, retirement brings enthusiasm about what will get you out of bed in the morning, excitement at the prospect of finally having the time to do all those projects, and maybe welcome a more leisurely pace of life.

My family home of 29 years represents a lifetime of memories cosseted between sizable walls. Stuffed full of things-to-do when we retire and an overflow of clutter acquired over the years, and hidden away in drawers and cupboards, in the garage, attic and shed are treasured trinkets of family experiences. The children have grown and left some time ago and we two happily chug along in this huge space. Then, suddenly, friends and family started using the D-word.

My head tells me of course there are many sensible reasons why we don’t need all this space: reduced bills, reduced workload of keeping and maintaining the house, and we don’t need all the clutter. It’s possible to release cash to be able to travel, buy a new kitchen, or invest for real old age. But please don’t ask me to downsize!

We don’t need the extra bedrooms and running costs but we do still want the downstairs space. We aren’t old. We still want all the family and friends to come and eat, play, stay and celebrate special times in our home. We want the grandchildren to come and mooch and do what children do having enough space to do it in without falling over them or feeling you’re constantly tidying up to prevent an accident waiting to happen. We still want a big kitchen, the craft room, the man den, and the shed. We are not

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ready to surrender all our living space and carefully collected clutter that defines us.

Well, we found the solution – it wasn’t easy, but a little less painful. When most would say we have ‘downsized’, we say we have ‘resized’. The house we now live in is smaller; as are the bills and maintenance costs. Fewer bedrooms, same size garden and room to create the downstairs living space we want. It’s a different shape and style and enough money has been released to be able to create a new comfortable home that can still embrace friendly invasions. The beautiful Edwardian hot property featured in this issue is a good example of a home that someone may consider ‘resizing’ from.

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## Here are our tips for ‘resizing’

**Before going to market:** Take advice about key maintenance/repairs and do what is necessary – you will recover costs through being able to sell for a better price

**Start de-cluttering** as soon as you can – it can be an emotional rollercoaster. The process of deciding what you need, want and *really* need may take some time and a couple of stages to ease the pain of letting go

**Accept any offers** that come your way; help with tidying, repairs, packing – it really does take longer than you think

**Find out all the extra costs** in advance so it doesn’t come as a shock – repairs, cleaning and gardening, solicitors (fees for selling and buying), estate agent (a good one is worth every penny), stamp duty, removals, surveyor

**If you can’t face:**

- ◆ eBay, get a youngster to do it for you
- ◆ another trip to the charity shop, they will collect it for you
- ◆ another trip to the tip, pay someone to do it for you

**When you’re ready to go to market:** Sign up for reputable estate agents’ mailing lists – you get priority notifications of new properties coming on the market

**Pay for someone** to do a deep clean just before you put your house on the market

**Tidy the garden** (one ton of fresh gravel direct from the merchant isn’t expensive and gives a fresh and neat look to the pathways and borders)

**Clear all surfaces** of ‘stuff’ before viewings (they don’t look in cupboards); add fresh flowers;

don’t cook food with smells that linger beforehand

**About your new home:** Be selective about whose advice you ask for – it’s emotional and it helps to have someone who can look objectively rather than expressing a view of what they think you should move in to

**As soon as** you have a move date, book removals and get the boxes for packing straight away – *it takes longer than you think*

**Once completion date** is agreed get started on change-of-address paperwork, driving licence and car registration, bank, workplace, pension(s), council tax, electoral roll etc.

**Book post office** redirection well in advance.

**Investigate setting up** a new bank account (or two if your sale goes well) to house the equity released from your property to be sure you are covered by the FSCS and to give yourself time to decide exactly what you want to do with it

**Anticipate what needs** to be done immediately in the new house to make it work for you i.e. fitting washing machines, broadband, phone, and utilities – book contractors in advance so you can get settled as soon as possible

**Find out, in advance,** about rubbish collection and recycling – you might want to book a skip – a lot of rubbish gets generated by the move

**The best advice** our solicitor gave us was; once you know where the Christmas tree will go you will know you have found the right home

## Featured Property

Guilford Road, Stoneygate  
£525,000



A stunning example of a three storey five bedroom ‘Arts and Crafts’ semi-detached Edwardian home in the popular leafy suburb of Stoneygate. Having undergone an extensive project of empathetic refurbishment by the current owners, the property offers spacious accommodation throughout. To the ground floor are two reception rooms, a recently fitted kitchen, large breakfast room with utility and WC. To the first floor is an en suite master bedroom, two double bedrooms and a bathroom with separate WC and to the second floor two further double bedrooms and a shower room.

EPC rating: E

- Semi-detached Edwardian property
- Arts and Crafts design
- Five double bedrooms
- Three bathrooms
- Large living and dining room
- Kitchen with breakfast room and utility
- Lawned rear garden
- Close to popular schooling and amenities
- Good access to city centre and train links
- Sought after leafy suburb