

ABOUT US

Specialists in East Bay properties for over 50 years

Berkeley Hills Realty is a firm that goes back more than half a century. We specialize in East Bay properties because we live here, and we have for a long time. We look out for our clients' interests. With new people entering the real estate business every day, finding an experienced company with ethical, knowledgeable agents is very important—especially when buying or selling your own home.



As real estate firms go, Berkeley Hills is a medium-sized company, and we like it that way. We're not a big national firm with 300 offices, agents working out of cubicles, and a bottom-line mentality. We are a select group of exceptional agents, and we're known as one of the East Bay's finest and most reputable companies. And we can say with confidence and pride that we have one of the most dedicated support staffs around.

Founded as Berkeley Realty, the firm became Berkeley Hills Realty in 1980 and now has more than fifty years of experience with residential properties in Oakland, Berkeley, Albany, Kensington, Piedmont, El Cerrito, Richmond, and Emeryville. For more information, call us at 510.524.9888 or visit our website at www.berkhills.com.

Berkeley Hills Realty



OUR PHILOSOPHY

The client comes first, period



At Berkeley Hills, we think there is nothing more important than each client's satisfaction. Simply put, this means treating our clients with integrity and putting their interests first, from beginning to end.

Buying or selling a house is a complex, stressful process. We carefully coach our clients on what to expect and help guide them through the maze of details and decisions. And when they reach their goal, we don't disappear.

*If our clients
have questions,
we answer
them.*

*If details need
to be settled,
we settle them.*

Berkeley Hills is not the kind of high-pressure company where once the agent closes a deal, it's on to the next one. If our clients have questions, we answer them. If details need to be settled, we settle them.

We are motivated by what is best for our clients, not by commissions. We believe that bringing honesty, diligence, and intelligent representation to every transaction is good from both a human and a business perspective. When we serve clients well, we feel good about the work we do, our clients are happy, and they refer their friends to us. More than 80 percent of our clients come from referrals. And the original clients return—sometimes decades later—when it's time to move on to a different house. Many of our current clients are old friends, and our reputation is built on these relationships.

THE AREAS WE SERVE

We're East Bay Specialists

We specialize in properties throughout the East Bay: bungalows and gracious homes in Oakland, Albany, and Berkeley; architectural gems in Piedmont; live/work lofts in Emeryville; condos in Point Richmond; Montclair hideaways; El Cerrito view homes; and apartment buildings in the flatlands.

Our firm was originally founded in Berkeley, and we have kept the Berkeley name out of respect for a half-century of tradition. But over time, we have grown in both scope and experience. Today, there is no limit to what we will do for our clients.



*We serve
Berkeley,
Albany,
Kensington,
El Cerrito,
Richmond,
Oakland,
Piedmont,
Emeryville,
Alameda,
Lamorinda,
Alameda
County,
Contra Costa
County and the
surrounding
areas.*

TECHNOLOGY JOINS TRADITION

Traditional expertise meets today's technology

Berkeley Hills Realty has been in business for decades, but we're as modern as the come. We use the Internet and other technology extensively. On www.berkhills.com, we showcase our listings and you can access properties throughout the area and the country. Our site also provides valuable resources and information for every step in the process of buying or selling a home.



Buyers can use this site to read our agent profiles, learn about various East Bay communities, and evaluate their schools and transportation options. You can research houses by price and neighborhood, even calculate mortgage payments. If you like you can be automatically alerted by email when a house that meets your specifications comes on the market. For the tech-savvy, we also supply RSS feeds.

For **Sellers**, the Berkeley Hills website is an ideal place to promote listings as it provides details and pictures of properties, and sometimes even photo tours. This information is not just passively listed on our site; we actively broadcast the news of your listing. You'll see our web address all over town in ads, signs, cards and flyers. Behind the scenes we also maintain a locally respected direct marketing email campaign. Through this campaign we can market your home directly into the inbox on the personal computers of active area agents. Beyond the technology associated with our namesake, we also utilize a broad spectrum of available internet resources. For instance, we fully optimize our listings on Realtor.com and we can post a home for sale on Craig's List.

In addition **Home Spun**, at www.berkhills.blogspot.com, is dedicated to cultivating community by encouraging visitors to participate in dialogue about issues that effect home ownership.

www.berkhills.com

*Our website
is an ideal place
to promote
listings with
details, pictures,
and photo tours.*

OUR AGENTS

Experienced, knowledgeable, accessible



In these days of constant buyouts and takeovers by the big corporate firms and franchises, Berkeley Hills Realty has remained a strong, independent force in the East Bay market. And we are the ideal size to provide extraordinary service and coverage. As a team of fewer than 20 agents, we take pride in providing our clients with the kind of care, attention, support, and results we would want for ourselves and our own families.

Berkeley Hills agents have been in the business for years—an average of almost two decades each, in fact. As a result, we are experts in our local market and in negotiating contracts for our clients. We provide a level of personal service seldom found in today's real estate marketplace.

We take pride in providing our clients with the kind of care, attention, support, and results we would want for ourselves and our own families.

GIVING TO THE COMMUNITY

We're involved, because we live here

Berkeley Hills Realty is a locally-owned company that is involved in and cares deeply about our community and our environment. We live and raise our families here, and we feel a responsibility to give back to the East Bay and to California. As a company, we donate a portion of each transaction commission to our Charitable Contribution Fund. Below is a list of some of the dedicated organizations the fund helps support.

Women's Daytime Drop-In Center
Senior Nutrition Program
Amigos de las Americas
Bay Area Community Resources
AIDS Ride
Bayview Walk for Sight
Berkeley Opera
Friends of the Kensington Library
Berkeley Repertory Theater
Marine Mammal Institute
Contra Costa Civic Theater
Bay Area Ridge Trail
Skateboard Park
Lance Armstrong Foundation
Rebuilding Together
Sloan-Kettering Institute
Thousand Oaks Park
Washington School PTA
Albany Little League
El Cerrito Swim Team
West Contra Costa Education Fund
Young Musicians Program
Alameda Co. Community Food Bank
Cornell School, Albany
Richmond School Scholastic Fund

Homeless Fund of the Berkeley
Association of Realtors
Berkeley High School Jazz Band
Global Relief
Youth Enrichment Services
Albany Education Fund
Wilson School, Richmond
East Bay Conservation Corps
Friends of the Fountain
Children's Hospital, Oakland
Breast Cancer Walk
Harvest for the Hungry
El Cerrito Playground
Berkeley Education Foundation
American Cancer Society
West Coast Children's Center
Claremont Canyon Conservancy
Berkeley Partners for Parks
Marin School, Albany
Solano Avenue Association
Mothers Against Drunk Driving
Nature Conservancy
Thousand Oaks School
Oral Lee Brown Foundation, Oakland
Parks for Tots

Community Support



SELLING YOUR HOME

*Service that covers
all the details,
large and small*

Selling a home can be a long, complex, and often stressful process. We handle the complexity—and most of the stress—by carefully tracking the elements of the sale.



Selling a house involves six main steps:

1. Preparing the house to make it attractive and appealing to buyers.
2. Completing the necessary disclosures and collateral documents prior to marketing.
3. Establishing the asking price by carefully assessing the market and researching comparable sales in the area.
4. Marketing for maximum exposure to both realtors and the general public.
5. Evaluating offers and negotiating the transaction.
6. Follow-through during the inspection and escrow periods to the close.

Berkeley Hills will consult with you on every aspect of the selling process, including advice on how to best present the property and position yourself to get the best possible price. Our expertise and negotiation skills are at your disposal throughout the transaction, to ensure that your interests are fully represented.

The Selling Process



THE SALE: FROM START TO FINISH

Managing the Sale of Your Home



The sale of your home or property can be complex. This chart can help you see where you and your agent are in the sales process.

MANAGING THE TRANSACTION

We walk you through the sale, one step at a time

Buying or selling a house can feel overwhelming at times, especially if you have never done it before or if it's been years since you have. There always seems to be one more step to take, one more paper to sign. You can count on us to help you through every stage in the process.

We will consult with you on the most appropriate way to handle offers. When purchase contracts are negotiated, we keep you informed each step of the way. During the selling process, we will:

- Keep you up-to-date on current market activity and other listings and sales in neighboring areas.
- Network with agents who are representing buyers for a home like yours.
- Provide input on current financing changes that could affect the strength of an offer.
- Set and explain guidelines before presentations.
- Review offers with you, and explain their terms.
- Ensure that the buyer is financially qualified, and that the contract terms are honored.
- Make sure all disclosure laws and ordinances are complied with.
- Ensure that all parties in the transaction are treated fairly and with honest consideration.

“Your quality of service and attention to detail amazed us. Thanks for everything.”

—R. G. & J. K.,
Berkeley

WHEN AN OFFER IS ACCEPTED

We follow up during escrow

Escrow is the most continuously active period of the selling process. During escrow, we will work closely with all the parties involved: seller, buyer, agent, escrow officer, loan officers, appraisers, and contractors. Our task is to:

- Eliminate title problems early in the process, to avoid closing delays.
- Be sure that both seller and buyer get copies of all documents pertinent to the transaction.
- Make sure all contingencies are met and removed within the time limits provided (or negotiate extensions as needed).
- Ensure that the buyer's deposit is placed in escrow and is increased, if called for in the contract.
- Keep current on all inspections performed at the property and inform the seller of their results. Coordinate with the buyer's agent as necessary.
- Coordinate corrective work as agreed in the contract.
- Stay in contact with the escrow officer to be sure all paperwork (loan and insurance documents, payoff demands, etc.) is processed on time.
- Review closing costs. Coordinate the signing of closing documents and attend the signing whenever possible.
- Coordinate the closing and move-in dates so they are as convenient as possible for both parties.
- Coordinate delivery of the proceeds.

“From our first meeting, I felt complete confidence in your ability and your integrity; you more than justified that trust.”

—M. W., El Cerrito

WHO PAYS WHAT

The Seller

The seller can generally expect to pay for:

- Real estate commission
- Document preparation fee for deed
- County transfer tax and half of the city transfer tax
- Loan reconveyance fees
- Payoff of all loans in seller's name
- Termite inspection (termite repairs are negotiable)
- Zone disclosure and tax data reports
- Home warranty (negotiable)
- Judgments, liens, etc. against the seller
- Recording charges for all documents in seller's name
- Property tax proration as of C.O.E.
- Delinquent property taxes
- Bonds or assessments, if any
- Notary fees
- Unpaid Homeowners' Association dues, if applicable



WHO PAYS WHAT

The Buyer

The buyer can generally expect to pay for:

- Title insurance premiums
- Escrow fee
- Document preparation at title company
- Notary fees
- Recording charges for all documents in buyer's name
- Property tax proration as of C.O.E.
- Half of the city transfer tax
- New loan charges
- Interest on new loan
- One year of homeowner's insurance prepaid
- Inspection fees
- Termite repairs (sometimes negotiable)
- Home warranty (negotiable)
- Homeowners' Association transfer fee, if applicable



MARKETING

Berkeley Hills is one of the best marketers in the business

Once a house is ready for the market, our job is to spread the news—to get the word out to as many real estate professionals and potential buyers as possible. The steps we take to generate the most visits to the property by the most qualified buyers include some or all of the following:



- Place a “For Sale” sign on the property.
- Enter the listing in the computerized Multiple Listing Service (MLS).
- Post the listing on appropriate websites such as www.realtor.com (National Association of Realtors); the MLS website (database for local brokers only); www.homesekers.com (HomeSeekers); and, of course, our own site www.berkhills.com.
- Advertise the property in appropriate media outlets.
- Network with other agents about your property.
- Prepare a flyer detailing the home’s features and amenities.
- Preview your home for selected agents by appointment.
- Hold a “brokers’ open house” for real estate professionals.
- With your approval, install a lockbox to make it easy for agents to show the property.
- With your approval, hold Sunday open houses for the general public.
- If time permits, mail an announcement of the first open house to people in your neighborhood.
- Show the house to buyers by appointment.
- Prepare packets with information and disclosure documents for interested buyers and their agents.

Spreading the Word



SALES STRATEGY

Choosing the right price for your home



When selling a house, setting the right price is key, so experience and knowledge of the market are essential. At Berkeley Hills we are always tracking and exchanging information about prices. We study comparable listings, check on sale prices, and talk with other agents.

We constantly visit houses as they come on the market. When our agents go out on brokers' tours, they see as many houses as possible, not just the ones for which they might have clients. Because if a new client calls—or a current client comes across a house with unexpected appeal—we want to have facts and suggestions at our fingertips.

Pricing is both an art and a science, because no two properties are exactly alike. There are differences in location, finishes, landscaping, light, and privacy, to name a few. After assembling all the comparables and hard data, the artistic part of the process comes into play. That is where our agents' experience is most valuable.

*Pricing is
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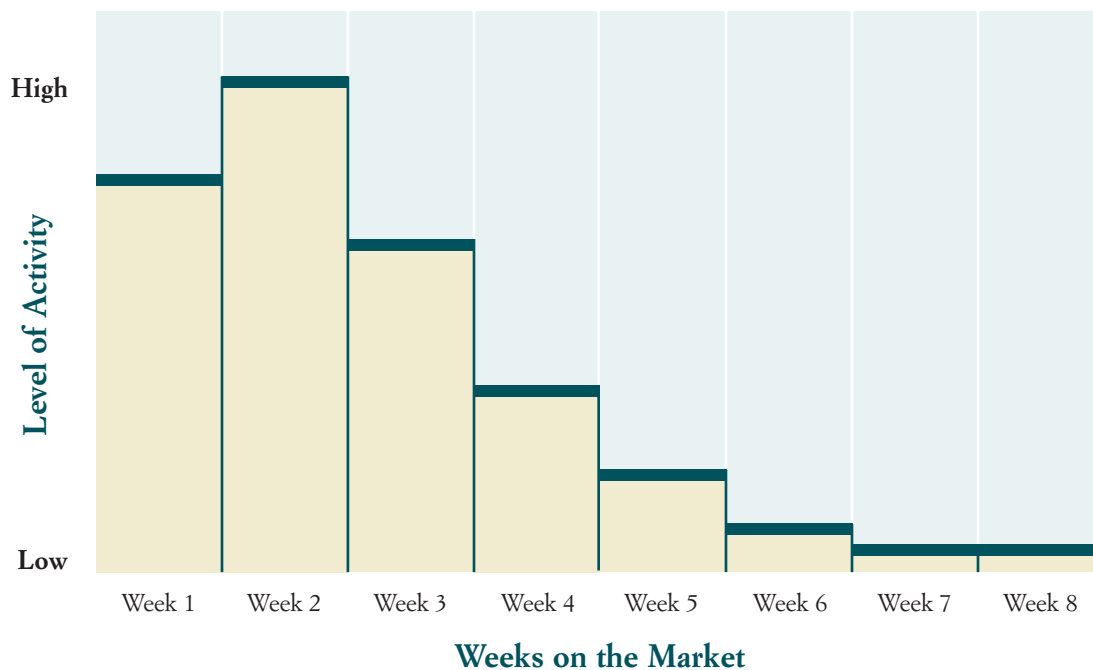
SALES STRATEGY

It is vital to price the property at a level that will generate as much interest from buyers as possible, while being neither underpriced nor overpriced. Typically, you will get the most money for your property early in the marketing process. When the house is fresh on the market, the largest number of potential buyers will come to see it, which means that competition among those buyers will be at its peak.

The longer the property sits on the market, the more “stale” it becomes. Fewer people come to see it, they make less attractive offers, and ultimately you get less for the property than if it were priced correctly in the first place.

If you have a million-dollar-plus house, or one that is unique in some distinctive way, pricing is even more important, because the pool of potential buyers is smaller. We will help you choose a listing price that is best for your house in the current market.

Typically, you will get the most money for your property early in the marketing process.



PRICING YOUR HOUSE

Factors that affect the value of your home in today's market

Location

- Location is the single most important factor in determining the value of your home.

Competition

- Prospective buyers compare your property to competing properties.
- Buyers will perceive value based on properties that have sold or are available in the area.

Timing

- Property values are affected by the state of the current real estate market.
- As the market cannot be altered by individual sales, a flexible marketing plan should be developed that takes into account current market conditions and the particular features of the property.

Condition

- The condition of the property affects the price and speed of the sale.
- As prospective buyers often make purchases based on emotion, first impressions are very important.
- When your house looks its best, buyers' perception of its value will be maximized.

Price

- Pricing your home properly from the beginning is an important factor in determining how long it will take to sell.



PRESENTING YOUR HOUSE

Getting buyers to linger and dream

As the saying goes, you never get a second chance to make a first impression. Because first impressions are lasting, it's important to make your house appealing, so people will want to come back. The trick is to get visitors to linger in the house, to let them imagine themselves living in it.

There are dozens of small and large steps involved in presenting a house for sale. Ideally, your house will be in perfect, move-in condition, but that is not always practical or possible. Some houses are sold "as is" or as "fixer-uppers," with little cosmetic improvement. Minor flaws can detract from home value, however, and "staging" a property will often help produce a better sale price. We will be glad to consult with you regarding presentation strategies.

When preparing your house to look its best, you may find the suggestions on the accompanying **Presenting Your House** list helpful. But don't feel that you have to do all of this yourself. If you need a good painter, for example, or a plumber, gardener, or window washer, we will be happy to refer you to excellent people in the area.



Showing to Advantage



PRESENTING YOUR HOUSE

Outdoors:

- Lawns are most attractive if they are neat and mowed. Colorful flowers are always a plus. Replace dead plants and keep shrubs pruned.
- Clear driveway and steps of debris.
- Apply fresh paint as needed, with special attention to the entry area. Replace damaged bricks or wood siding.
- If you have a pool, be sure it is scrubbed and clean. Keep the patio area neat and yard furniture in good repair.

Garage:

- Store or discard anything you don't need. Clean floor and tidy shelves.

Living Areas:

- Drapes and carpets should be clean.
- Paint or touch up as needed.
- Electrical systems and plumbing should be in good working order.
- Replace any burned-out light bulbs.
- Wash windows inside and out.
- Fix any loose knobs, sticky doors, and the like.
- Clear out clutter, including extra furniture, to maximize the sense of space.

Bathrooms:

- Renew the caulking around tubs and showers if needed.
- Clean or replace the shower curtain.
- Repair leaky faucets.
- Make this room really sparkle.

Closets:

- Be sure closet lights work and clothes are neatly hung.
- Store shoes or other loose items in boxes on the shelves.

Kitchen:

- Replace counter tile or grout as needed.
- Clean the oven and wax the floor.
- Sinks should be clean and shiny.

THE MAGIC OF STAGING

The secrets of showing a house to its best advantage



One of the most effective steps in preparing a house for market is *staging*. True to its theatrical heritage, staging in real estate means making your house look its best when put before that most critical of audiences, the buyer. Staging typically pays for itself in higher sales prices.

Staging starts with the basics: removing old furniture, carpets, and draperies, and improving the landscaping. But it goes far beyond that. The challenge is to create an atmosphere, to create spaces that buyers will want to live in.

Staging may involve supplementing or removing existing furniture and art, or furnishing entire rooms. The challenge might be to make small rooms seem larger, large rooms feel cozy, or dark rooms look brighter. So stagers sometimes remove doors, dot the floors with lamps, and increase the wattage of bulbs. They may remove furniture to create a sense of space, or bring in special pieces to accent the house's charm.

Setting the Stage

*Staging lets
buyers see
possibilities.*



THE MAGIC OF STAGING

If it isn't practical to remove a boring sofa, for example, stagers will strategically place attractive pillows on it. They will hang art on the walls and decorate the kitchen. Is the back yard uninteresting? A stager might use a wall of potted plants to turn it into a beautiful garden—and hide an ugly fence in the process.



Increasing the wattage of the lighting can make small rooms seem bigger, and dark rooms look brighter.

Whether it involves furniture or *feng shui*, good staging has a powerful subliminal effect on buyers. Entering a well-staged house gives you a feeling of order and calm. At bottom, staging is like makeup. Makeup can't change a person's worth or character, but it can accent their best features. In the same way, staging brings out a house's inherent charm. It's a worthwhile investment, because a well-staged house almost always attracts higher offers.

ADVERTISING & PROMOTION

We promote your home until it is sold

Berkeley Hills will enter your property into the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) computer system. This gets the word out immediately to real estate professionals, who are the most direct link to serious, qualified buyers. We also post it on our



website, www.berkhills.com, and create a customized advertising campaign for each property. For example, we advertise in the following outlets as appropriate:

- *San Francisco Chronicle*
- *Berkeley Voice*
- *Contra Costa Times*
- *Montclarion*
- *Piedmonter*
- *Albany – El Cerrito Journal*
- *Daily Cal*
- *Real Estate San Francisco*
- *Real Estate Ad Review*

Newspaper and magazine ads are not the only media we use. Depending on the property, we will create a special flyer or send a targeted mailing to neighbors, agents, or other potentially interested parties.

The point is to get the word out to the most appropriate audience, with the highest likelihood of reaching that special buyer.

Marketing Portfolio



SELLER'S ESTIMATED NET PROCEEDS

Date: _____

Seller _____ Address _____

SALES PRICE	\$ _____
Estimated 1st Loan Balance	\$ _____
Interest	\$ _____
Prepayment Penalty	\$ _____
Estimated 2nd Loan Balance	\$ _____
Interest	\$ _____
Prepayment Penalty	\$ _____
Reconveyance Fees	\$ _____
Selling Commission	\$ _____
City Transfer Tax	\$ _____
Albany: \$11.50/\$1000; Richmond & El Cerrito: \$7/\$1000; Piedmont: \$13/\$1000; Oakland & Berkeley: \$15/\$1000	
County Transfer Tax (Doc. Stamps: \$1.10/\$1000)	\$ _____
Document Preparation Fees	\$ _____
Property Taxes (Pro-rated)	\$ _____
Drawing, Recording & Notary Fees	\$ _____
Natural Hazards Disclosure	\$ _____
California Tax Data Report	\$ _____
Home Warranty	\$ _____
Homeowners' Association Fees	\$ _____
Termite Inspection Report/Repairs	\$ _____
RECO (If Berkeley; Maximum 0.75% of Sales Price)	\$ _____
Albany Sewer Lateral Inspection/Repairs	\$ _____
Other City Point of Sale Ordinances	\$ _____
Buyer's Closing Costs/Credits	\$ _____
California Withholding (3 1/3%), if applicable	\$ _____
Other	\$ _____
Estimated Total Charges	\$ _____
Seller's Estimated Proceeds (Sales Price—Estimated Total Charges)	\$ _____

Property Taxes

First Installment: Due 11/1 / Delinquent 12/10	Second Installment: Due 2/1 / Delinquent 4/10
[JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC]	[JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN]