

A Blueprint for Inspecting a Home to Purchase.

When in the mode of shopping for a home, buyers will visit an average of 10 homes before making a decision. In many cases the number is well above the average often climbing upwards to over 20 homes. The first instinct while visiting a home is formulating an emotional response to the home. This first flush appraisal has some merit considering the whole emotional nature of what “home” represents. However, strictly relying on this emotional point of view can easily result in missing out on a home that may actually fill the bill of what you really need in a new home.

Therefore, adopting a more systematic and disciplined approach to viewing a home in the little time spent on a first visit is well worth the effort. This means following a process that blends your emotional response with an objective appraisal of a home and its neighborhood.

The first stage of review is to concentrate on the design pattern of a home. Are the rooms positioned relative to each other to your liking? Follow the flow of a home by first spending time in the core of the home. This includes the likes of a living room, great room, dining area, kitchen and porch area where you will spend most of your wake time. Follow with a tour of the bedroom areas.

In conjunction with looking at the fundamental floor plan of a home take note of special design highlights. This might include unique windows providing special views, built-in entertainment walls or niches and room configurations that allow for creation of an in-law suite or home office.

Next, focus on features and finishes. This includes the cabinets, flooring, upgraded trim, lighting fixtures and appliances. However, don't get caught up with items that may be worn or not to your taste. Finish features can be easily replaced and updated. Modifications can become a budget consideration, but the requirement for changes to meet your needs should not necessarily remove a home from your finalist list.

The next stage is to move outside and take a look at the backyard and outdoor spaces. Again, changes may be easily accomplished so don't let a home slip away because you don't like a fence or patio deck.

The last home inspection step should be to go through the home again with a keen eye, inside and out, looking only for potential defects. This can include ceiling stains, flooring issues or cabinet damage caused by leaks. Look for substantial cracks of substance on walls and potential wood rot. This is also the stage where you should get a sense of the condition of the roof and HVAC system.

Finally, take a moment to seriously consider the neighborhood and location. If a home's placement does not accommodate your lifestyle needs and preferences, don't let your liking for a home result in what turns out to be a bad decision.

A truly objective review of homes you visit will inevitably lead to the understanding that finding a perfect home is elusive. But along the way there are likely to be homes that really do meet your needs. Overly concentrating on what are often superficial items such as paint colors or even less than desirable maintenance standards can cloud your appraisal of a home. Tempering emotional responses with an objective point of view will help lead to a successful home shopping mission.