

# Secret Clues to Pay Attention to Before Making that Offer on Your Next Home

Even new homes may have hidden problems. However, there are many clues to determine a house's overall quality before committing to a purchase. There are some of the following qualities that one might want to look for before committing a purchase:

- 1) The structure.** From a reasonably distant vantage point, look at the house. Do the walls appear to be plumb and flat? From inside, are any walls bowed or not square at corners? Do you have problems opening or closing doors or windows?
- 2) The roof.** Is the roof new or in good shape? Does it look neat and properly applied? How do the gutters look? Are tree branches rubbing the roof?
- 3) Water control.** Does the ground slope away from the base of the house? Will gutters, downspouts, and drainage pipes carry excess water away from the house...or into the basement? Is there any evidence of water damage?
- 4) Kitchen & bath fixtures.** Are sinks, toilets, and tubs quality fixtures? Do they work properly? Is the water pressure exceptional when you turn on the faucets and flush the toilet? Look under the sinks for water stains and ask about them if you see problems.
- 5) Details.** Do you see distinct signs of quality workmanship in the finishing details, such as moldings, tile work, hardware, and paint inside and out? Has the house been remodeled? Was it done by professionals and are there any warranties still in effect?
- 6) Water heater, plumbing.** Is the water heater gas or electric? Does the water heater have a drain pan and shut off device? What about a pressure regulator is it where you can see it?
- 7) Heating and Air Conditioning.** Where is the furnace or heater located, in the attic or garage, and what type is it heat pump (all Electric) or gas? Are any rooms not heated, what about the basement? Do registers look adequate for heating the spaces? Is the house air-conditioned, how?
- 8) Electrical system.** Are the number and locations of receptacles adequate to the needs of the house? Is the main circuit breaker marked at least "100 amps?" Are there covers missing on any receptacles? Do the fans wobble when they are turned on?
- 9) Fireplaces.** Do they have screens or glass doors (doors are more efficient)? What about dampers and log lighters? Is there a combustion vent that draws air from outside and a spark arrestor at the top of the chimney? Finding out when the last time the chimney was cleaned can give you a lot of information about how much care or use the chimney gets
- 10) Insulation.** Looking in the attic for insulation can be difficult during a walk through. Sometimes you can see in a crawlspace or attic to see levels of insulation.

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**Now that I have all this information do I still need a home inspection? Yes!**

- The Inspector will have unrestricted access to important components including: Attics, Crawlspace, Air conditioning and Furnace units, Electrical panels, roofs. Sheds, all doors and windows, vanities, shower and garages are also included in the report. We can test appliances like the dishwasher, ranges, disposal and Jacuzzi tubs.
- With a home inspection you can request the items you noticed (and the others that the inspector finds and documents in the report) to be put in an addendum.
- The inspector will act as an advocate for the buyer who doesn't have an interest in the sale of the house only in getting the important information about the condition of the home.
- The report is also a document that can be used as proof that the items were in working condition or repaired when the house is purchased. This becomes important if a warranty is provided with the home purchase.