

Ten Things That I Look For Seeing A House For The First Time **A Realtors® Perspective**

1. Curb Appeal – How does the house look from the street? Has the landscaping been maintained? Are there mature trees that look like they are dieing or limbs that need to be trimmed? Is the grass 50 percent weeds? Where none of these things are major problems, it will take a lot of labor for a buyer to correct.
2. Roof and gutters – Does the roof look old? Are there shingles missing? Does the roof have more than one layer? Are the gutters coming apart from the gutter board? Do the downspouts direct water away from the house? The roof can be a major problem and very expensive to replace. Clogged gutters can cause mold and poor distribution of the water. When gutters overflow, the water may end up next to the house or in the basement.
3. Front door – The first thing everyone sees as they are entering the house. When I unlock and open the door for my buyers, I evaluate it. Do the locks work properly? Is the door easy to open or does it stick? I consider these things as first impressions. If the owner did not maintain the front door, what else didn't they maintain?
4. Carpet, paint and floors – This is essential stuff. Every house that is for sale today needs to have new or recently new carpet and it has to be a neutral color. It does not have to be expensive. It just needs to be clean and look good. The same goes for paint. It has to be neutral color and look good. In my opinion white is best. No reds, greens or purples. You would be surprised what I have seen. Any other floor in the house, whether it is tile, hardwood, vinyl or laminate must be clean and neutral. What a seller spends on paint, carpet and floors is not lost. It supports the list price. The idea is not to turn off the buyer with the essentials.
5. Kitchen – Are the kitchen counter and cabinets in good shape? Does the Lazy Susan work? Are all the drawers on their tracks? Is there good lighting? Are the appliances up to date? In some cases the kitchen is the most important part of the house.
6. Plumbing – Is there any water stains below the sinks and pipes? Does every facet work in the house? Do the toilets have water stains at the bases? These minor problems can be telltale signs of major problems.
7. Electrical – Do the light switches work? Does the doorbell work? Does the garbage disposal work? Is there any exposed electrical wiring in the house? Are there GFI (ground fault interrupters) outlets in the kitchen and baths?

8. Water spots on ceiling – A telltale sign of a previous or current leak. Every water spot needs to be explained. Was/is it a roof leak? Was there a bathtub overflowing on the second floor? Was there an internal leaking pipe?
9. Basement – Are there any signs of water intrusion? Is there a damp smell? For an unfinished basement, are there any cracks in the foundation? Does the basement have a sump pump?
10. Doors and windows – Do all the doors shut properly? Are there any doors out of alignment? Do any doors drag on the floor? Do the locking mechanisms work? Are there any cracked windows? Are any thermal seals broken in double pane windows? Are there any signs of water intrusion around the window sills?

I am not a contractor, carpenter, roofer, plumber or electrician. I am an experienced Realtor® that has seen hundreds of houses in my career. Experience is sometimes the best teacher. Although some of the items on the list could be potential problems, it is best to have a licensed inspector make that decision.

In many cases the above items can be very minor and can be fixed with a minimum of time and expense.

With so many houses on the market today it is not unusual for a buyer to find a few small things wrong with a house and say “next”. Half of the houses that are listed today will not sell because they were not in tip top condition.

Sellers take note...it is a wise decision to have a home inspection done before listing your home. It takes away all the surprises. Making sure that none of the above 10 items happen in your house can make your home sell faster and support your list price.

Experience isn't expensive...It's priceless!

Tim Lord