

Make the Most of a Showing

By ANNA CHANG-YEN | Green Shoot Media

A home showing is your chance to get a hands-on look at a home, so roll up your sleeves and do just that.

If you decide to make an offer, serious issues with the home should be noted by a home inspector, but the showing is your time to do your own due diligence.

Bring a pen and notepad and take detailed notes, including your favorite aspects of the home, as well as any potential issues. You will likely see quite a few homes during your search, so keeping track of them in written form will help you make a well-informed decision later.

BEFORE YOU GO

Do some homework before the showing. Read news articles about the area and research upcoming property tax increases or road development projects. Going into a showing with a good bit of information about the area will give you a full picture of the home and neighborhood.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Water damage: Look for water spots on walls or ceilings, including patches of new paint that may be covering up evidence of leaks.

Structural integrity: Take a close look at the walls and foundation, noting any large



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Taking good notes and being sure to check a home's major systems during a home showing can help give you a good picture of the home and make a good decision later.

cracks.

Storage space: Does the home have plenty of space to store your belongings? If not, you could end up paying for it later when you need to rent a self-storage unit.

Roof age: The listing should provide information about the age of the roof, but it's a good

idea to double check. Are there missing shingles or obvious stains? Replacing a roof is costly, so you'll definitely want to consider the condition of the roof when making an offer.

Repairs: Are there any items that obviously need repairs? Take detailed notes so you can price these repairs and factor

them into your offer. Likewise, if you know you'll want to replace outdated tile or upgrade kitchen appliances, take note of the pertinent measurements for pricing.

Plumbing issues: Turn on taps to be sure there are no obvious plumbing problems, such as drips after the tap is

REAL ESTATE 101

Staging Illusions

Bankrate.com warns buyers that home staging can be deceptive and urges them to look past the staging to the actual layout and condition of the home. Read more at <http://bit.ly/1Ux3wyJ>.

turned off, a water heater that's failing or slow-draining sinks. A home with issues such as these may not have received proper maintenance and preventive care.

Electrical issues: As with plumbing, turn on electrical fixtures to be sure they are working properly and there are no issues that will require costly fixes.

The area: Visit the area a few times at different times of day. Drive by in the evening to get a sense of whether or not the area becomes crowded with vehicles or seems unsafe at night. Stop by nearby parks and talk with your potential new neighbors.

Drive it: When you leave the home, map a route to the nearest grocery store, bank, school and other community services. This will give you a feel for what it would be like to live in the community.



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HOMESWISE GLOSSARY

Contingency: a condition that must be met as stated in the offer to purchase before a contract becomes legally binding.

Contract of sale: a contract between a purchaser and a seller of real property to convey a title after certain conditions.

SOURCE: Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions

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