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What to look for when SHOPPING FOR A HOUSE

- - Check List - -

ASK THESE QUESTIONS about any house you consider buying. You will also find this list handy when checking plans for a house you hope to build or remodel.

Each family's needs are different. It is unlikely that any one house will have all the features you want, especially if price is a factor. In the end, you are the one to decide what is most important to you.

For more information and bulletins on storage, kitchen planning, appliances, or financial and legal aspects of home buying, call your county Extension agent.

Older Houses

- Will changes required to meet your needs in an existing house cost more than buying or building a new one?
- Can you obtain a good house with more space for less money by remodeling a sound structure?

Location

- Is it zoned for a strictly residential district?
- Are there shopping centers, schools, churches, parks, and transportation nearby?
- Does the house conform to size and current market price of others in the neighborhood?
- Is the neighborhood in the path of commercial or industrial growth?
- If in a new area, are utilities available—water, sewer or septic tank with adequate drain field? Are streets and sidewalks complete? Is there fire and police protection?
- Is the street free from heavy traffic?
- Do the neighbors appear to be congenial?
- Are obnoxious industrial fumes or wastes in the direction of prevailing winds relative to the property?

Lot and orientation

- Is the house located on the lot to allow a private area on the protected side (not on the west) for a patio?
- Is amount of lawn to be mowed reasonable for you?
- Is driveway direct? Is there parking for guests near entrance? (A minimum of 35 feet allows two cars to be parked.)
- Is the house located on high part of lot for good drainage toward the street?
- Are there shade trees? Is the landscaping attractive?
- Do largest windows with protective overhang face south? If so, the house will get solar heat in winter and be cooler in summer.
- Is there both a pleasant view and feeling of privacy, especially in the living and dining areas?
- Do rooms have good light and ventilation?
- Are outside entrances protected from weather?

Design of house

- Is the style and type of construction acceptable to you? (Contemporary or traditional; 1 story, raised ranch house, 1½ story, 2 story, split level; basement, crawl space, or slab on grade.)
- Are there enough areas for sleeping for your family?
- Does it have a family room, den, patio, or are these important to you?
- Does the house look attractive?
- Do windows line up neatly on outside of house and appear pleasing in size and shape?
- Does the house have a minimum of jogs, breaks, and offsets?
- What is the total floor area in square feet (excluding garage and

basement)? What is the price per square foot (excluding garage and basement)?

- Is there waste space in the house?

Floor plan and traffic

- Are front and rear entrances convenient to the drive?
- Is there a covered connection between garage or carport and the kitchen?
- Are living, working, and sleeping areas properly zoned from each other?
- Is the kitchen readily accessible to both family room and patio?
- Is the living room near the patio?
- Are kitchen and living room free from cross traffic?
- Are stairways and halls wide enough? (Minimum width for halls, 3 feet, 4 inches. Stair risers should not be over 7½ inches high.)
- Is bathroom or lavatory easily reached from bedrooms and from play yard or patio?

Bedrooms

- Are bedrooms large enough? (At least 11 feet, 2 inches by 9 feet, 10 inches for room with double bed, and 10 feet, 4 inches by 15 feet, 8 inches for two twin beds.)
- Is there space for overnight guests?
- Is there enough wall and floor space in each bedroom for clearance around needed furniture? Will desks or play equipment be used in any rooms?
- Is closet space in each bedroom adequate for clothing and bedding? Closets should be at least 28 inches deep.
- Is there storage here or elsewhere for out-of-season clothing and bedding?
- Is there cross ventilation in each room?
- Are attic rooms properly insulated?



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Bathroom

- Does the house have enough bathrooms in proportion to size of family and number of bedrooms?
- Is bathroom partitioned for use by more than one person at a time?
- Is there storage for cleaning, medical, and linen supplies used in the bathroom?
- Is there proper light and ventilation?

Kitchen, other work areas

- Is the kitchen large enough and properly arranged for the number of people who will work there at one time?
- Is there storage space for supplies and small equipment which will be used here?
- Is there eating space in or close to the kitchen?
- Does the arrangement permit efficient meal preparation as outlined in Extension Circular 706, *What is a Good Kitchen?* (You can get this circular from your county Extension agent.)
- Are major appliances included, or is there space for them in the proper places?
- Is there a dishwasher or provision for one in the future?
- Is there a work area for laundering—washer, dryer, laundry tray, storage of soiled linen, ironing board, and sorting table?
- Is there storage for laundry supplies?
- Is space provided for a freezer?
- Are work areas well lighted both day and night?
- Can children's play be supervised from work areas?

Living and dining areas

- Is the living room large enough for comfortably seating your family and guests? (Width, 12 to 15 feet.) Does it have sufficient wall space for good arrangement of the furniture you would like to use?
- Is the living room located so that it is not necessary to pass through it to reach other rooms from the front entrance?
- Is there storage space for books, card tables, records, magazines, and newspapers in either the living room or family room?
- If there is a fireplace, is it located so that people can be seated facing and adjacent to the fireplace opening? Is there storage space for firewood nearby?

• Is the living room cheerful and bright, with at least two exposures? Avoid west exposure unless the view to west is particularly desirable.

• If there is a family room, can furniture be arranged to allow for dining, watching TV, for card games, or sitting in front of fireplace?

• Is there storage near the front entrance for guests' wraps?

• Is there a separate dining room, or do you feel that dining space in connection with family room or kitchen is sufficient?

Activity areas

• In accordance with your family needs, interests, and hobbies, is there an area in the house which might be used for:

- Writing, typing, study?
- Desk or office space for family business and records?
- Children's play, indoors and out?
- Hobbies and adult recreation?
- Sewing, mending, knitting?
- Storage of supplies for these activities and sports?

Utilities

• Is the electric service 240 volts and at least 100 amperes? (If house has electric heat, 150 to 200 amperes.)

• Are there at least a dozen individual electric circuits?

• Are there enough electric outlets properly located?

In kitchen and workshop—one double outlet for every 4 feet of linear wall space over work counters.

In dining, living, and sleeping areas—one double outlet for every 6 feet of linear wall space.

In hallways and patio—one double outlet for every 15 feet of linear wall space.

Special purpose outlets are needed for the range and clothes dryer, and separate outlets for dishwasher, waste disposer, wall clock, or other special equipment you desire.

• Are there enough switches so that you can light your way ahead of you?

• Is there adequate water supply and safe sewage disposal?

• Is water pressure adequate? If water pressure seems excessive, does the home have a pressure regulator?

• Is the water heater large enough for the family and the water-using appliances to be included?

• Is the water heater vented and located close to bath, kitchen, and laundry? Is there a hose bib drain for the tank? There should be an overflow pipe.

• Is there a good heating system, properly vented and adequate for keeping the entire house comfortable?

• Is the type of fuel economical in accordance with local rates?

Structure

• Is the foundation on solid ground or filled land?

• If floor is concrete, is there a vapor barrier beneath?

• If there is crawl space, does it have a vapor barrier and adequate ventilation?

• Is the floor covering in each room satisfactory from a maintenance standpoint?

• Will outside walls require periodic painting?

• Are inside walls finished for ease of maintenance?

• Is insulating glass or double glass used for large windows and storm sash on exposed sides? Are windows and doors weather stripped?

• Are walls, ceiling, and floor of the house insulated?

• Is the roof construction and material satisfactory from a maintenance standpoint?

• Is attic space adequately ventilated?

• Has soil been treated for termite control?

• Is deterioration evident where any wooden part of the structure comes in contact with the ground? (Wood siding should be at least 8 inches above grade.)

Miscellaneous

• Is there storage space for gardening equipment and supplies?

• Is the garage or carport adequate in size?

• Is the price of the house within your ability to pay?

• Do the taxes and maintenance costs seem reasonable? (Not over 3 to 4 percent annually.)

• Does the builder have a good reputation?

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