

Viewing an Open House with Open Eyes



Remaining objective can be a difficult task when viewing an open house. It is easy to fall in love with a home's appearance, blind to problems that may make it unsuitable. While aesthetics can be an important consideration, it is necessary to look beyond window-dressing.

A qualified home inspector should be hired before purchasing a home, but there are areas that consumers can examine on their own. This will shorten your list of potential homes and reduce the likelihood that a home inspector will reject it as unsafe or unsuitable. Here are some considerations and common problem areas to look for when touring an open house:

General Upkeep

Much can be surmised from the general state of the home. Is the home clean? Are lawns left uncut? Are the walls chipped and in need of paint? If smaller chores have been ignored it may be an indication of a broader disregard for home maintenance.

Water Leaks

Check ceilings and drywall for stains, bulges and other signs of water damage. Water that works its way inside via a leaky roof or a cracked foundation can rot wood, create mildew and mold, destroy possessions and can be expensive to repair.

Does it Work?

Test lights, faucets, the heater, air conditioning, major appliances (that are to be included with the home) - even flush the toilets to ensure everything is working as it should.

Floors

As you walk across the floors be aware of "spongy" (soft or springy) sections. Excessive squeaking and uneven, bumpy floors may also be indicative of expensive forthcoming repairs.

Doors & Windows

Check that doors and windows fit snugly in their jambs and operate smoothly. Look for flaked paint and loose caulking. If the wood around windows and doors is not protected from moisture, it can rot away. Feel for drafts in these areas too.

Poor Drainage

On a wet day walk around the yard and look for areas where water collects. This can be an especially bad sign if there are soggy areas near the home's foundation.

Grout & Caulking

If the grout and caulking around bathroom and kitchen tiles is loose and crumbly, there is a good chance that water is finding its way into the wall or under the floor.

Structural

Although this is definitely an area where you want the services of a qualified home inspector, you can get an idea about possible structural problems if you see deep cracks in the foundations or loose mortar and bricks.

Miscellaneous Concerns

Naturally, one of the most important factors will be determining if the house suits your family's needs. If you do not want to replace all of your furniture, make sure it will fit into the rooms of the new house. This is difficult to do by eye, so be sure to bring a measuring tape. Also, take note of storage space. If you are moving from a home with large closets and a shed, make sure your new house is able to store an equivalent number of belongings.

To get more information on how Royal LePage and I can help you with the purchase of your new home, [contact me](#).