



Sunday Column

By Grant Lopez, 2019 Chairman

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Looking at homes for sale? Avoid these mistakes

If you're looking for a reason *not* to buy a home, you'll probably find one. Maybe the den is painted in the school colors of your most-despised college team. Or the granite counter in the kitchen has a foot-long crack. Perhaps the otherwise fantastic house has only two and a half baths rather than three full bathrooms you desire.

Before you decide undesirable features like these are deal killers, take a moment to consider them. Not every shortcoming in a property should disqualify it.

How big a deal is it?

Take the den with the rival college's colors on the wall; it's not hard or expensive to repaint it a more agreeable color. Turning that half bath into a full bath takes considerably more time and money. The crack in the counter may warrant further investigation. Is it the result of dropped object ... or a shifting foundation?

The point is to figure out whether an objectionable aspect of the property is a minor annoyance or a serious deficiency that means you should move on to the next house for sale. A Texas Realtor can assist you in assessing these situations and help you sort through your options.

What about stuff you can't see?

There's more to a property than meets the eye. That's why most people pay for a professional inspection of a home they're considering buying before proceeding with the purchase. An inspector will almost certainly find at least a few items—perhaps more than a few—to call to your attention. Like the negative features you noted in your own observations, these unwanted surprises will range in degree of seriousness. Installing a new electrical outlet is often cheap; fixing a chimney pulling away from the house usually is not.

You may decide to hire an expert to further investigate problems identified in the inspection report. For example, a structural engineer can offer a more detailed opinion of a foundation's condition. You also can get repair quotes on conditions you think must be fixed. That knowledge will help you make an informed decision on how to proceed.

Is there any problem that can't be fixed?

While it's not helpful to use a hair trigger to disqualify properties, the opposite attitude—that no obstacle is insurmountable—can also put you in a bind. If you've decided to buy a property where you can "age in place," you should probably pass on the multilevel house that's amazing in every other respect.

A REALTOR® can help you make sense of all this, pointing out important timing issues of inspections and option periods, helping you with negotiations and sifting through all the information you receive on a property.

For more information on buying, selling, or leasing your home visit SABOR.com and use a San Antonio area REALTOR®.

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