



01/05/2007

## What Are You Looking for in a Home? Part I

You have finally saved up enough for that down payment. Now you are ready to go out and find the perfect home to buy. But do you really know what you are looking for? Making a list of your most desirable home features before you go out shopping may save you lots of time and headaches. If you are married or buying the house with someone else, it is also a good idea to compile a joint list of the most important home elements, as your ideas may differ. This is the first part of an article series that help you decide which features are most important to you. In this article, we explore the space and design of the house.

First consider the house itself. The amount of square footage is important and should be tailored to your lifestyle and family needs. While you may be limited by your price range, you should still try to determine how much room is not enough and how much is too much. Similarly, you need to decide how many bedrooms you are looking for. Do you expect to be adding on to your family in the next few years? Do you anticipate taking in an aging parent in the near future? Is it important to have an extra bedroom for guests?

Consider the number of bathrooms in the home. If you have several children, are they going to be able to comfortably share one bathroom? Do you need a guest bathroom? Do you need several showers in the home?

Are you less concerned about the number of bedrooms and bathrooms and more concerned with the overall layout and openness of the floor plan? How will traffic flow through the house? Is it important to you to have a large area to host parties? Some people prefer the formality of separate living, family, and dining rooms; others prefer the openness of a great room. How about personal space? Do you need a home that has rooms where you can find some peace and shut out the noise from the rest of the home? How about storage space? How much closet room do you need? Are you open to renting a storage unit if the home does not have enough storage area?

In many regions of the country, you may have the option of getting a home with a basement. This could provide plenty of extra storage. Is it important to you that the basement already be finished? Could you save money by finishing it yourself?

Once you have determined which aspects will make up your perfect home, take that list with you to each home you view. Make a checklist of the features each home has. After you have compared the amenities and highlights of all the homes, your home buying should be much easier! Look for the next part of this article that will help you consider which amenities are important to you and what condition you expect the home to be in.