

REAL ESTATE

Thinking about remodeling a newly purchased home?

Why pre-purchase home consultations make 'cents'

By **JOSH BAKER**

Despite the Washington area's extended snowy winter bringing a chilling effect to the start of the residential housing market, experts are reporting that pent up demand is expected to lead to increased competition for those seeking to make a home purchase in the coming months.

According to a recent report by the National Association of Realtors, the change in seasons and a boost in inventory will help change the current sales trend even with rates on the rise.

When area homebuyers are faced with limited inventory and competitive bid situations, they may not always be able to purchase a home that perfectly fits their needs. Many often consider buying with significant home renovations in mind.

However, buyers interested in remodeling a newly purchased home may not

realize that they should consider getting a "pre-purchase" consultation typically offered at no cost by some area remodelers. This type of consultation, typically conducted before an offer is made or following a home inspection, can save you thousands of dollars in unknown problems and also arm you with important negotiation information.

At BOWA for example, our design experts review complex home inspection reports and help translate complex information to inform homeowners if the home is structurally and mechanically sound. Our team also regularly meets homebuyers at the property to evaluate whether a renovation or addition can:

- Fit within the guidelines of regulatory restrictions, property line restrictions or covenants, which may ultimately affect your decision;
- Accomplish your goals for the property;
- Be achieved given structural limitations;
- Address water issues or hazardous materials, such as lead and asbestos;

- Be constructed within your budget goals.

Having a home expert review a property in advance of purchase can help identify overlooked potential and challenges, while also allaying concerns. To the average house hunter, certain problems may seem insurmountable, but may actually be fixable.

In Potomac, for example, we evaluated a home with four inches of standing water in the basement. After identifying the source, we were able to arm the client with the information they needed to purchase the house at a discount knowing that this issue could be resolved easily during the renovation they already had planned.

Our design experts also offer creative solutions for addressing needs within the existing footprint of the home, such as whether you need an addition for an extra bedroom or an office or just need to reorganize and make better use of the existing space.

Not able to do all of your dream renovations at once? BOWA also helps clients

create master plans with phases that coordinate together. For example, a client may do a kitchen renovation this year, while planning an outdoor renovation with gas grill for next year. Knowing this in advance, we can run the outdoor gas line during the kitchen project, and avoid disturbing the inside of the home the following year. A solid master plan also helps to ensure that a current project will not impede a future project.

In the end, involving home experts early in your home purchase process can add up to peace of mind, significant cost savings and most importantly, happy homeowners, for many years to come.

JOSH BAKER is the founder and co-chair of BOWA, an award-winning design and construction company specializing in luxury renovations, remodels and additions in the greater Washington, D.C. area. BOWA has more than 25 years of experience and has been honored with 170 local and national awards. For more information, visit bowa.com or call 703-734-9050.