



EXPERIENCE, EXPERTISE AND ENERGY!

### **Clue Into Maintenance Issues**

If you are considering investing in an Outer Banks vacation home then you need to know as much as possible about the structure that you are buying. Clues about the home's construction and maintenance history are there if you know where to look. The points below will help you quickly assess every home you see so that you can compare homes and minimize surprises down the road. Given all the points to consider, a systematic approach will allow you to ask the right questions and notice important details.

For sellers it is important to understand that prospective buyers will be using the following points to grade and rank your home. Most buyers are looking for homes in top condition and any defects become negotiating points or a reason to select another home.

To start, take a look at the big picture. It is important to begin your analysis of each home from a distance. Step across the street and look at the house to get the wide angle perspective. Start with the roof and check for missing or cupped shingles. Is the house straight or are there sags or tilts in the roof and walls? Where does the water go when it rains? Note any areas where the driveway or yard slope toward the house that may be a drainage problem.

### **Decide upfront what type of house you are able to manage and understand that premium homes sell at premium prices.**

Next, walk around the house and note the type and condition of the siding and paint. Vegetation and sand should not be touching the siding due to termites and rot concerns. The age, condition and construction of the decks is also important to note. By looking under the deck it is often possible to see the condition of the flashing which protects the house from water.

On the inside of the home, it is helpful to look at the ceilings and note water stains or repairs. If leaks are an issue, it may be evident on ceilings located below windows and exterior doors. Check around windows for signs of water intrusion.

Inside the home, also take note if the floor is not level. Floor coverings need regular maintenance or replacement. Carpet and hardwood condition should be noted. Look for large cracks in the sheetrock as well. A certain amount of settling is normal in homes with piling foundations and small cracks in sheetrock may be acceptable...its best to have a licensed home inspector make the final call.

### **Furniture condition should also be checked—don't forget to sit on the mattresses to judge their quality and remaining life.**

The final major area to consider in a home purchase is the outdoor equipment. The amount of rust, or lack thereof, on the outside heat pumps can give you an indication of its remaining lifespan. While inspecting the hot tub, look at the condition of the siding and the cover. This may provide a clue to the age and condition of the inner workings. If the hot tub is located on a deck make sure that the deck has been reinforced to handle the extra weight of the water. While looking over the pool area, check the condition of the concrete decking and the interior of the pool. If the pool has a liner look for rips and bubbles that may need repair.

Maintenance issues do not have to be overwhelming. Homes often fall in two categories—either they are in outstanding condition with continuous care by the owner or they are in average condition with a list of upgrades and maintenance that will be coming due soon. Decide upfront what type of house you are able to manage and understand that premium homes sell at premium prices. With the help of your REALTOR and home inspector you can make an informed decision on selecting a home before you become the owner. With your new understanding of potential maintenance issues, once you are an owner you will be able to keep your home in top shape for years to come adding to your enjoyment, increasing your rental bookings and maintaining the resale value.

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