

## **Be realistic about old home inspection findings.**

One of the most difficult things buyers face as they sift through the myriad of inspection findings on an older home is trying to decide what's important. Personally, I like to use what I call the "70-20-10" approach. Simply put, 70% of the inspection findings document extraneous data, 20% report minor conditions and 10% are important. For example, consider a 1930 home: About 70% of the report will describe the various components of the home, make disclosures about items that don't meet current standards, such as stairs with a short rise and run, and provide suggestions for improvements and maintenance. So is it reasonable to negotiate over these old house items and try to bring the home to current standards? Realistically, and in my opinion, generally not. It's a 1930 house and it is what it is.

In the 20% of minor conditions, common issues are cosmetic defects like a chipped sink. We all like to believe everybody will treat us fairly, but the sad truth is that if a home inspector doesn't document that chipped sink, it's a sure bet that someday he will be buying a new one. Again, is it worth negotiating over? Most times, probably not.

Lastly are the 10% of findings which really are important. These are things like health and safety issues, high dollar repairs and possible hidden conditions which could be expensive to repair. In older homes these commonly include electrical issues, pest and rot issues and health and safety issues related to homeowner remodels.

In the end, the true art of home inspecting is using one's training, background and experience to help people to understand what's really important. As a buyer, thoroughly interview potential inspectors and don't use fees as your sole criteria. The time you spend interviewing can mean the difference between having a 90 minute "whiz bang" inspection and surprises when you move in, or a clear understanding about the condition of the home you're buying and what really matters.

Larry Stamp AD BS RREI  
Cameo Home Inspection Services  
Olympia, WA