

Choosing the Wrong Home Inspector Can Really Mess With Your Purchase

After nearly a decade in this business, I have learned the value of having a good inspector to recommend to my buyers.

A poorly trained or incompetent inspector can mislead a buyer into terminating a contract over an issue that may not even exist. This happened just last month when the buyer's inspector claimed that the foundation and basement slab in one of my listings was

cracked and heaving. I had to call in engineer Tom Stroud, who wrote an opinion that there were no problems with either. This convinced the buyer to bring in his own engineer who verified that the inspector was completely wrong, and I salvaged the contract.

Colorado is one of the few states where home inspectors are not registered or regulated. Literally anyone can claim to be a qualified inspector, when that may, in fact,

be far from the case.

I asked my preferred inspector, Jim Camp of Metropolitan Home

Inspections, to write up some guidelines for helping buyers and their agents to select a good inspector. That document is posted on my website, www.JimSmithColumns.com. I have also posted a document from engineer Tom Stroud, explaining some areas in which inspectors can misread structural issues such as in the case mentioned above.

Buyers usually depend on the agent representing them in a transaction to recommend a good inspector. If your agent has enough experience — say 40 or more transactions in which he/she represented the buyer — she can probably recommend a good inspector. But, just to be sure, ask your agent why she recommends that inspector, and whether it is based on

prior inspections of high quality.

Even an experienced inspector can make mistakes, of course. I had an interesting example of that this past week. I have a listing where the garage door has a big gap between it and the floor on both sides, but is touching the concrete in the middle. The inspector claimed, quite logically, that the garage floor was settling on each side. I called in a mud-jacking contractor to raise the sides, but he said, no, the sides weren't settling, so the middle must be heaving.

Well, it turned out that both were wrong. My handyman, Mark, convinced me that, in fact, the 50-year-old wooden garage door was sagging in the middle and that the floor was actually level. Quite unexpectedly, we ended up solving the problem by replacing the garage door!

Lessons like this contribute over time to our collective expertise.

This Week's Featured New Listing

Updated 4-Bedroom Home in Heritage Dells

This 2,895-sq.-ft. home is located at 200 Kimball Ave. in the Heritage Dells subdivision west of Heritage Road near the Apex Open Space trailhead. You won't find any home in this 1980's subdivision that is better maintained or has better upgrades. The sellers take pride in minimizing their carbon footprint, and a list of this home's sustainable features is posted on its web page. Although it has no solar PV or solar thermal system, its average year-round utility bill is only \$75 per month. They even grow their own vegetables in their backyard garden. Inside, the home has IceStone countertops which look like slab granite, but are made from recycled glass and concrete. Showings begin with an Open House Sunday, 1-4.



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