

Your house viewing checklist

Viewing houses can be overwhelming and you can also get caught up in the romance of it all. Here's a thorough checklist to ensure you've covered every nook and cranny before making that offer.

Let's start with the outside:

Windows and doors

- Do they open and close easily?
- Are they single/double/triple glazing?
- What is the condition of frames and glass?
- What is the security like – is it sufficient?

Garden

- How much work/maintenance is required?
- Is it overlooked?
- What direction does it face? (South-facing gets the most sun)
- Is it secure for pets?

Exterior brickwork

- What is the age of the property?
- What is the condition of the bricks, mortar and render?
- Are there any visible cracks or crumbling? Look for ivy/plant damage and or big trees close to the property that could have far reaching roots.
- Has the property been extended? Does it have the right planning permissions and consent to fire regulations etc.

Roof

- What is the condition of the tiles or slate?
- Are the chimneys straight?
- What condition are the drains, gutters and fascias (wooden section under roof)?

What lies inside:

The Interior

- Firstly, what feeling does it give you when you walk in?
- Check the location and quality of the light switches and plug sockets – if they look old you may need to factor in re-wiring into the budget.
- What is the condition of the décor? Is there a lot of work?
- Is the flooring level? Check for movement as this could mean rot and more cost?
- Check for damp/mould/condensation – often found in bathrooms and kitchens but also can appear behind large furniture which is flat against walls.
- Check for cracks in walls/ceiling – big enough to put the edge of a 10p in?
- One of the most important considerations is storage – what does it have? Is that enough?
Fireplaces – do chimneys work?

Bathroom & plumbing

- Bathroom/plumbing
- Do the taps work? – in bath, shower and sink?
- Does the toilet flush?
- How long does it take for hot water to come through?
- What is the water pressure like in shower? If low could this be improved?
- Is there a bath?
- Is there a shaver socket?

Your house viewing checklist

General

- What is the parking situation? Off street/on street/permit?
- Does the property have a burglar and fire alarms?
- What is the broadband speed in your area?
- What TV connections are available (Virgin, Sky, Freeview)
- What is the mobile phone coverage link for your network?
- Make note of where the boiler is position, its age and service history.
- What is the loft access and size? Has it been boarded/insulated?
- Is there scope for extending/renovating/ adding value?
- When was the consumer unit/fuse box last checked?
- Is the property in a conservation area or a listed building? This might affect whether you can make changes

Paperwork

- Check the energy performance certificate (EPC), which will help you understand the efficiency of your property and if there are any saving you could make.
- If you're buying in Scotland, check the home report
- Ensure you see the planning permission and sign-off documents for any work that's been done – including electrical.

Local Area

- What's the area like at rush hour, when the pubs close, at weekends and on weekdays? Visit at various times in the day.
- What public transport links are available?
- Are there any planned regeneration projects, improved transport links in the future?
- Have you tested the commute/school run during rush hour?
- What local shops and amenities are close by – is this enough? Not enough?
- Consider your neighbours? Ask the owner about them.

Viewing a flat

- Is it leasehold or freehold? If leasehold, how many years are left on the lease?
- What is the service charge?
- Who is responsible for the communal areas?
- What outdoor space is there and who is responsible for it?
- What services, eg drainage, are shared?
- Consider the noise from neighbours
- Is there a residents' committee?
- Will you need to contribute to a sinking fund?

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