



How to buy a home



Have you found a home you love but you're not sure what to do next? This guide will help you move forward.

Every property is different, but there are some standard rules you can follow that will help you make smart, informed decisions.

Stage 1: Discovery

Before you can jump into making an offer, you need to know what questions to ask the salesperson (or owner) selling the home. Start with:

Q: "What information is available? What documents do you have on file for this property?"

Some owners provide a lot of info up front, others leave it up to buyers to do their own research. Either way, it's important to ask what is available so you can judge what you'll need to source yourself.

The next question to ask is...

Q: "How can I buy this home? What is the process if I want to make an offer?"

Whatever selling method is being used, what you need to know, is: If you make an offer today, when will it be presented to the owner?

Most of the frustration that occurs during the buying process comes about through misunderstandings around time frames. Buyers expect an instant answer when they make an offer, but salespeople often have to follow a set process to allow any other interested parties time to make an offer as well, if they want to.

Get clear on the timelines **before** you submit your offer and don't be surprised if it takes a few days to get an answer.

Stage 2: Research

Now that you know how much time you have, you are ready for the research phase.

The number 1 question is, of course, **what to offer!**

Start by asking the salesperson if they have a price guide, then follow up with:

Q: "What other properties have sold in this area that are similar to this property?"

Comparing the property to recent nearby sales is the best way to ascertain value. Drive past those recent sales and see if you can find interior photos online. Get a feel for how they compare to the home you are looking at. Would you pay more or less for the home you are considering?

The market value of the property you are trying to buy will fall into a range. How high you offer in that range comes down to how much you like the home, and of course, what you can afford.

The next question to ask is...

Q: "What do I need to know about this property?"

Most houses have some sort of issue, like a small amount of unpermitted work, or some repairs that need to be made. Try and find out what these are early on, so you can make a plan or get appropriate advice. Keep in mind that some issues only come to light during the sale process, so be prepared that new information could become available at any time.

When should you involve your lawyer?

Right from the start. Don't skimp on good advice. Get your lawyer involved early and ask them to go over any information you have available - especially the offer document (before you sign it).

Stage 3: Sort your finances

You may already have pre-approved finance but it's important to get in touch with your bank or mortgage broker before you offer to confirm they are happy to lend against this particular property. Double-check how much they will let you borrow and whether you need to place clauses in your offer, like a valuation condition or finance confirmation.

Stage 4: Make your offer

Now comes the hardest part: Being patient.

Everyone wants an instant response when they are trying to buy a home. But if you don't get a clear answer from the owners straight away, or even after a few days, don't panic. Often, what this means is that the owner is considering your offer, and if they're considering your offer, that's a positive sign.

The best thing you can give an owner is time. If your offer is a bit lower than where they were hoping to sell the property originally, then it's not easy for an owner to just suddenly accept it straight away.

Sometimes they need a night or two to talk to family, to decide if your offer allows them to move on to their next stage in life.

In summary...

Stay safe out there. Get the right advice and ask the right questions.

Ready to make a move? Call us today to discuss your requirements. We are here to help.

Kerwin's Real Estate Agency

623 Bluff St, Beloit, WI 53511

608-365-7791

www.KerwinsAgency.com