

TRIAD HOMES

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TIPS FROM THE PROS

A checklist for buying green

Q: How should a prospective homebuyer interested in a home with energy-saving features conduct a search?

A: Let's take a tour of a home and find out what you need to look for.

- **Framing and foundation:** In a new home, ask the builder if the foundation and framing have been sealed. An energy-efficient home begins even before the insulation is installed. By being sure the framing has been well sealed to the foundation and at connection points, a first barrier to energy efficiency is under way.

- **Heating and air conditioning (HVAC):** Make sure the unit is correctly sized for the home. A unit that is too large can cause moisture buildup, and one that is too small will run longer than necessary. A detailed analysis of the home, its placement on the lot, windows and other factors can provide for just the right system.

- **Ductwork:** All ducts should be free from twists, kinks and loops. This will assure you of correct movement of air throughout the home. Bedrooms should have air returns, so when a door is shut, the room will not become too hot or too cold.

- **Windows:** Windows need to be as energy efficient as possible. Materials surrounding the windows should resist heat transfer and reduce the sun's glare.

- **Insulation:** Properly installed, insulation will keep the home cooler in summer and warmer in winter. It also has the job of controlling sound in the home.

- **Appliances:** Look for the Energy Star label. These appliances are designed to use less water, electricity and gas.

- **Home placement:** A home facing south will capture solar gain in winter, and with proper overhangs, shade the home in summer.

- **Landscaping:** Well-placed shrubs and trees can block wind and filter the summer sun, making your home more energy efficient.

- **Lighting:** High-efficiency Light Emitting Diode (LED) or Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFL) will save money and energy.

The search should also start with a builder or Realtor who holds a designation such as Certified Green Professional, EcoBroker or Realtor Green. These professional certifications provide instruction on understanding energy-saving components and sustainability in the home and support green building practices.



About our contributor

Judy Barber holds designations as a Graduate of the Realtor Institute, and she is a Certified Green Professional and EcoBroker. Barber is managing broker with Southern Evergreen Real Estate in Greensboro. She may be reached at 457-0969.

Tips from the Pros features tips on issues of interest to homeowners. Local professionals are encouraged to participate. Contact Heather L. Modlin at 373-7144 or e-mail heather.modlin@news-record.com.

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