

Negotiating for Furnishings

When sellers have great furnishings, such as a state-of-the-art refrigerator, buyers want them. It's common for certain appliances to be included in a home sale, but then again, the seller might intend to take them.

Therefore, sellers often spell out whether appliances stay or go ahead of time. Other items, from built-ins to light fixtures, can cause confusion if a buyer expects them to stay — and makes an offer with those things in mind — while the seller fully intends to pack them up. Here's how to navigate an often-touchy subject, according to Trulia.

HOW WOULD A BUYER GO ABOUT OBTAINING FURNITURE THAT ISN'T A FIXTURE?

If, as a buyer, you spot furniture or stand-alone fixtures that you really want, simply include those items in your offer. "Make it so that these nonrealty items are left with the home at no additional charge to you," said Jeff Knox, a real estate agent based in



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REAL ESTATE 101

Negotiating Strategies

As a seller, you probably won't want to accept a potential buyer's initial bid on your home if it's below your asking price, according to Investopedia. So it helps to have some ready techniques when it's time to negotiate. Check out these strategies at bit.ly/3xxu4HP.

Texas. Another option is to wait and use those items as a negotiation tool if the seller counters your offer. "Accept their counter if they throw in [fill in the blank]," said Janine Acquafredda, a Brooklyn, New York, agent. "Just make sure the items are included in the purchase contract, and make sure to do a final walk-through before closing to be

sure that the items were, in fact, left behind."

WHAT IF THE SELLER WANTS TO LEAVE FURNITURE AND FREE-STANDING FIXTURES?

Sometimes sellers don't want to move big items across town, let alone cross-country, so they might prefer that the buyer keep them — but not

necessarily for free. After all, you might want to recoup some of the costs of that baby grand piano, but you might not want to incur the expense of hauling it to your new place. "Do not ever advertise that you are willing to sell or leave any items with the home until you agree to a price on the home during contract negotiations," Knox said. Make the

home transaction and the furniture transaction two separate deals. After you've sold the home and signed the contract, "You can then offer other items to the buyer at an additional price."

HOW DO FINISHES APPLY?

Home finishes refer to decor — how the home looks when it's decorated. Paint is considered a finish, for example, but paint color obviously stays with the walls. Although sellers don't take finishes with them, buyers might be able to negotiate a lower purchase price if they'll need to repaint a neon-green living room or replace cracked tile countertops. On the other hand, buyers need to be careful not to be fooled by an older home with brand-new, pretty finishes. Those new finishes could be masking less obvious problems, such as cracks in the foundation or water stains on the ceiling from a leaky roof.

Ultimately, sellers and buyers should avoid assumptions. Put all items of interest or concern to you in the purchase agreement. "Most issues about personal property, furniture, or fixtures can be resolved by being upfront, asking for what you want, and being open to reaching an agreeable solution," says Kellie Tinnin, a Realtor in New Mexico.



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IF THE SELLER WANTS TO LEAVE FURNITURE AND FIXTURES

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HOMESWISE GLOSSARY

Nehemiah: An FHA-insured government loan helps low-income home buyers with down payment assistance. SOURCE: MLS.com

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