Does Your House Have Good Bones?

***By Susan Mogren***
Over the years, clients and potential homebuyers turn to realtors for help determining if a particular house has the potential to meet their needs. They want to know if the house has "good bones". We've all heard the term, but what does it actually mean?

 Our definition is a house that has the basic framework necessary to meet the needs and desire of our clients. The key features are: solid and well built, good flow, open space, character and natural light.

 **Quality construction** - A house with good bones is well-built. I "walk" a building looking for fundamental structural problems. How does it feel? Does it bounce or list, or does it "feel" solid? Are things tight? When I go to the basement, I look along the bottoms of the floor joists. Do they seem to be in a flat plane or do they sag in the middle of their span? Are the joists notched into the sill or resting on their full depth? Can you see cracks between the ends and the sill or are they still tight? When looking down along the foundation wall, does it look plumb or is it listing outward? When outside the building and stepping back looking at it, do the walls have bows or are they straight? Does the house lean to one side or the other? Does the roof or the front porch sag? Are there sways to the roof or is it in one plane?

**Solid infrastructure** - It's relatively simple to replace aging roofing shingles or update plumbing fixtures, but it is far more complicated if the basic infrastructure of the home is lacking. If the foundation, roof, heating, plumbing and electrical systems are in good shape, renovations become much easier. Consult your contractor.

**Good floor plan**– Is there good flow between frequently used rooms? Are rooms arranged logically?  Look at how traffic travels through the house as a whole. You can renovate to make particular rooms more livable, but it is far more costly and complex to make fundamental changes because the entire home’s floor plan just does not work.
If a floor plan feels awkward, try to envision the space with walls moved, or taken down entirely. Are the rooms disjointed and tiny? Can you create a sense of a sense of spaciousness without changing the footprint of the house? Consult your contractor.

**Well-proportioned rooms –**Are the home’s rooms a useful size and shape, or can they be easily changed? It is often possible to move walls and open up spaces relatively easily. Removing walls, adding a beam and creating an open a floor plan can make a separate kitchen, dining room and living room into a great entertainment area or family space. On the other hand, sometimes there are fundamental problems that are not easy to correct. Consult your contractor.

**Character --**Houses with good bones have a personality. Do they looked cookie cutter stamped out by a developer? Sometimes even the quirkiest architectural detail can be used to advantage to create a fascinating focal point.

**Natural light –**A sunny, airy home feels happier and more spacious, but don’t automatically give up on a house because it is dark. Consider small changes that could bring in more light. We’ve added skylights, transom windows and even cut openings in walls and floors to help light spread throughout a home. Consult your contractor.

Contact me to arrange an appointment! Susan@DoorbellRealty.com or 508-269-7677