

Steps to follow before buying an apartment or a flat ----

Buying a house or a unit of the house (apartment or flat) is one of the most important decisions and investments in one's life and fulfilment of a dream to many people, especially to those who have not any own dwelling in any urban area.

With the flourish of real estate business in the country, now there are so many builders are offering readymade house unit in most cities of Bangladesh with aesthetic design and polish living style over their competitors and buyers are sometimes become so confused in choosing right builders and right flat that inclines them to take a faulty decision or choose the apartment or flat that was not desired by them.

With this in mind, The Corporate Consultancy (TCC) has identified some steps which should be followed by a new house buyer before picking a flat or an apartment.

Here are suggested step-by-step approaches to take to pick an apartment:

1. Choose the area/location of living:

It is important to select the location where you desire to live in and while choosing the location of living, you should consider the amenities, physical infrastructure and reach to all the basic needs of necessity like Standard schools for children, Hospitals, kitchen market, and connectivity with the rest of the city area and availability of private and public transportations and also look for future connectivity and development plan of the government.

2. Get pre-approved your creditworthiness:

If you have to take a partial loan to pay off your builders or you want to buy the apartment by loan then before going to discuss with builders, you need to get your income and borrowing limit reviewed and conditionally approved by the financier. This will enable you to look for an apartment at or below that price level with a pre-assurance. And it will also help you to find which builders are on the list of financing banks because owing to a bad reputation, some banks do not offer loans to some builders.

3. Fixing the Budget:

Before selecting an apartment /flat/a unit of house wish to buy, the first point is to fix the budget that you would invest in because investing in a house is a long-term capital investment decision and its continuity depends on your savings, regular income flow/job security and other family expenditures. After you fix the budget, it will help to choose the right apartment within your budget, and such way your decision would be more sustainable.

4. Choose the right builder

After fixing your budget, selection of living location, and reviewing your borrowing capacity, now the turn of choosing builders among many others. Before choosing a single builder, we suggest a listing of two /three renowned builders in your selected location. As a home buyer, it is your responsibility to check if the builder has a good track record and also whether the developer has registered with REHAB. In doing so, you can visit some of their already handed over projects and can talk to residents of that projects and you can also talk to your financiers to know their timely completion of projects.

5. Check the legality and land record of the property

The land and construction approval of the property is very crucial. You have to conduct a thorough legal check of the Land Records and legal authorization of construction by the relevant authorities like RAJUK, CDA, etc. However, if you are taking a home loan, the concerned bank will validate your property.

6. Compare the market price:

Compare the quoted price of one builder with others within the same area so that you can bargain and find a genuine price quotation.

7. Measure the flat's carpet area properly

The price of the flat/apartment is calculated based on built-up area i.e. including shafts, elevator space, stairs, the thickness of walls, and others but the actual area of your flat will be within the walls of the respective flat which is called " Carpet Area" and this area can be 30% less than the built-up area.

For example, you have booked for a flat of 2000SFT flat with a builder in a single flat/per floor layout, and your actual inside area will be 1400SFT, and the rest 600SFT will be counted for shafts, elevator space, stairs, the thickness of walls. In some cases, when a floor is shared between two owners i.e. Per floor 2 flats then the price of the common spaces is shared between the two.

8. Choosing the floor of the flat, security and privacy

Apartment / flat is much safer at higher floors than lower floors but when you buy a flat at higher floors, fire safety can be an issue and a higher floor occupancy certificate should be obtained from the local fire office.

9. Know your neighbors

You can't often control who your neighbors are in an apartment complex but they have a big impact on your lifestyle. So, ask your builders about other owners of the apartment beside you and also of other flats and set up as many walkthroughs as possible before signing the contract and that way, you will have a much better chance about your flatmates and neighbors.

10. Consider the view and facing of flat

For better view consider higher floors and for facing consider north and east-facing flat.

11. Other facilities of the apartment complex

The number of lifts and staircases is also an important part of choosing flats. Ideally, there should be at least two or more lifts in each tower so that at least one lift is functional in case the other breaks down or requires a maintenance stop. In case of an emergency, lifts don't work so it also becomes important to check the staircases that should provide the convenience to walk and across floors easily.

12. Assess the requirements of flat area, number of bedrooms, bathrooms, and kitchen layout

Before finalizing the apartment size to buy, it is important to assess the present and future requirements in terms of bedrooms and bathrooms and other purposes. Ideal requirements will vary from family to family. If you plan to expand your family in the future then you should consider more bedrooms including to host guests and also using one bedroom as office space. And also consider the number of bathrooms according to your bedrooms and for common usage. The layout of the kitchen plays a role in the flat's decoration and use of the kitchen. Try to keep an open kitchen layout that will more comfortable in using and gathering.

13. Builder-Buyer Agreement

Now that you have concluded your research and the assessment of your requirements, you should now proceed to making the agreement with builders. Before signing the agreement, you need to understand all the clauses of the agreement especially to some points like compensation by the builders if apartment handover is delayed, any hidden and additional charges, walkout from the agreement if layout changed by the builders from their original advertisement, etc.

14. Last point to think if you are a service holder

Having said all the above points, the last thing you need to think of when buying a home is job security. So, before you make a 25-year commitment to a mortgage loan, make sure you are secure in your employment position or you have enough other income to meet the debt obligation.

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