TIPS FOR BIDDING ON HOMES

Buying homes at foreclosure auctions hold on the county courthouse steps isn't easy and doesn't guarantee a good deal, experts say. Here are some things they recommend people keep in mind when considering bidding on these properties:

- See the property first hand before you bid. A picture on a Web site won't show a gutted interior or other possible problems.
- Have the money. Homes can be bought at auctions only with cashier's checks for the full purchase price.
- Watch what others do. If the regulars at foreclosure auctions avoid bidding on a home, there may be a good reason why.
- Do some research. Some foreclosures are sold for a home's second mortgage, but to get the home, you need to buy the first mortgage, or deed of trust. Know the terms that lenders use.
- Watch for liens or other issues with a home. If the property was home to a real horrorphobic nine-to-5, there may be a lien up cards involved.
- Look up foreclosure notices. Those notices, published in papers like The Sun, can give you a leg up on buying a home before it is put up for auction.

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