



2009 Housing Survey Comments from Duke Homeowners

The following are comments from Duke homeowners in the Duke community who responded to our annual housing survey. The comments are divided into four sections:

- Real Estate Agents and Companies
- Moving Services
- Buying a Home and Financing
- Neighborhoods

Real Estate Agents and Companies

Coldwell Banker

“Candy McClain, HPW realty, is a good real estate agent. She's lived in Durham her whole life.”

“Howard Perry and Walston, [on] Chapel Hill Rd, Durham office is a great viable agent to use for rental properties.”

“I went through Maggie Considine at Coldwell HPW. She was extremely helpful, and listened to me regarding my needs.”

“I went with Larry Pulley as a realtor. He's with Coldwell Banker and he's a great guy. I'd suggest him to any grad student.”

“Stan Walters at CBW&M is a superb agent who is so helpful to new students. He has been around here a long time and can handle anything that comes up.”

Fonville Morisey

“FM Realty [Fonville Morisey] has by far the best website for searching listings. I used their site even though I was not working with them.”

“Chuck Zinger from Fonville Morisey is great...he helped me and many of my MDPHD friends. His number is 919-971-8889.”

“Fonville Morisey is a good real estate company.”



Fonville Morisey continued

“Had excellent experience with Chuck Zinger, from Fonville Morisey. He has had a lot of experience helping graduate/professional students find homes.”

“My real estate agent was Colin Moody with Fonville Morisey, and I thought he was great.”

“I used Fonville Morisey to purchase my home and I had a good experience overall.”

“I used Jordan Lee with Fonville Morisey. He was very helpful.”

“Our agent, Jane Lee, at Fonville Morisey was great!

“Robbie Davis at Fonville Morisey realty is a great real estate agent!”

“I had great help from real estate agent Robbie Davis at Fonville Morisey”.

“Toni Kemble at Fonville Morisey was very helpful as my agent in getting my condo.”

Other Agents/Companies

“Be careful about picking a real estate agent. I went with Don Lancaster and he was not good.”

“Dan Milam, Real Estate Attorney, very good.”

“I don't recommend the agent Tony Craver...”

“Stephanie Cornette at Prudential Carolinas realty has helped us buy two and sell one home and is delightful to work with. Phone: (919) 313-1501 Mobile: 919-452-2425 E-mail: stephanie.cornette@pruysu.com”

“I really enjoy owning a home in Durham. North Carolina requires buyer's agents to be advocates for the buyer. We had a good experience with Better Homes Carolina. They are local and the agent lives in my new neighborhood!”

“James Heinrich is a fantastic real estate agent.”

“Love Pam Wardell at Allen Tate, 919-414-3432.”



Other Agents/Companies continued

“My real estate agent was fantastic. Her name is Paula Walls and she runs the Paula Walls Prudential Real Estate Team in Durham. They cover the entire Triangle area, and have an abundance of knowledge about the area schools, safety and surrounding areas in general. They are very nice people and helped my wife and I tremendously.”

“Our realtor was Rick Hardy with Keller Williams Realty.”

“Susan Hertz of Prudential Real Estate was my realtor, and she was amazing.”

“Tammy Brooks with the Marie Austin Realty was great.”

“Maxine Miller from Carolina Realty Max is a great agent, very flexible and helpful for first time buyers.”

“We had a great experience using My Dog Tess.”

“We worked with Kara Hart from Terra Nova realty and were thrilled with her services.”

“We worked with the realtors Mike and Sharon Freenor when we bought our home in 2007. They were very helpful. We lived about 3 hours away and they assisted us both from afar as well as when we could come into town to look at houses.”

“We used Lisa Ellis as our real estate agent. She is great.”

General Suggestions

“Don't be afraid to 'fire' your buyers agent. If he/she is only taking you to see houses just above your price range, its a good idea to look for someone else who values your interests.”



Moving Companies

“JE Ladd & Son is a great moving company.”

“Moving company to avoid: 2 Men and a Truck.”

“TROSAs (Triangle Options for Substance Abusers) has a wonderful moving service and you get to contribute to a great cause at the same time. They will move you from out of state.”

“Triangle Residents Overcoming Substance Abuse (TROSAs) offers great affordable moving services.”

“TROSAs is a wonderful group to use for moving.”

“Trosas is great for moving!”



Buying a Home and Financing

“Be sure to go to the Durham Police Department Website and look at the Crime Mapper. It will give you an insight as to what kind of neighborhood you are moving into”

“Use the Durham police website to map crime rates in areas you're thinking about renting or buying a property.”

“Make sure you check out the online Durham Crime Mapper before deciding on a neighborhood!”

“I encourage students to sign up for their neighborhood email lists. The Durham inter-neighborhood council (INC) has a good list of neighborhood association websites (NAs are different from HOAs). <http://www.durham-inc.org>. Look under 'About INC' and Neighborhoods.”

“Neighborhoods with stronger associations tend to be more stable. Ask your real estate agent what the neighborhood association is like, and if the don't know ask neighbors. Notice that I said neighborhood association, and not homeowner's association. There is a big difference. You don't need an area with a HOA, but a NA is a big help.”

“Buying a house is a good deal if the student will be here for >4 years or so - students should be encouraged to look at buying townhomes (which are cheaper north of campus compared to south of campus).”

“Durham is an extremely affordable city, and real estate near campus is relatively cheap. Per month, my partner and I pay about \$200 more on our mortgage than we would on rent for a comparable place. Durham is awash in beautiful old homes than need owners.”

“Purchasing aside, I am surprised at how many graduate and professional students live in apartments when beautiful housing near campus is more convenient and as economical.”

“Good time to be a first-time home-buyer especially for incoming PhD students: Government incentives, low interest rates, affordable housing, good investment.”

“I live 2 miles from West campus, and I bike commute exclusively. This is a significant benefit because it is cheaper than buying a parking pass and actually faster door-to-door because I don't have to spend the time parking/walking to work. I highly recommend bike commuting and choosing a house that facilitates this.”



Buying a Home and Financing continued

“Getting a loan as a student was unnecessarily difficult, because the banks did not consider my stipend as a graduate student to be a real pay check, even though I was more than able to cover the payments. The explanation I got from the broker was that because I did not have a 'real job,' I could lose the stipend at any moment. In the end, this was settled by getting a letter from my PI and a substantial down payment. For the most part, it seemed to be an issue of communicating to the banks that I had a steady income in a way that they could understand.”

“I would advise looking into the Durham Land Trust. They provide affordable housing options for those who are looking to buy, but do not have a large income. They also offer some lovely rental homes.”

“If you are planning to be in the area for 2 years or more, purchasing a home can be an excellent investment. The market is good for buyers right now and the tax benefits are fantastic. Even if the house does not appreciate greatly, you can still get benefit from the gained equity when you sell it.”

“There are plenty of safe neighborhoods with reasonably priced housing. Right now there are many houses on the market for relatively low asking prices.”

“It is quite easy for a graduate student to be able to buy a house in this area. However I would recommend renting for a few months to get to know different places first.”

“I tried renting out my extra bedroom by posting an ad on Duke's Community Housing website. I never got any responses... so I would recommend craigslist instead.”



Neighborhoods

Apex/Cary

“I have lived in Apex since 2004. Exceptional schools. A large variety of housing types and price ranges. The drive to campus can range from 20 to 45 minutes depending on where you live.”

“The Cary/Apex area is a great area to look at when thinking of purchasing a home, especially if you a young couple or have children.”

Chapel Hill

“I live in Chapel Hill. You definitely get more bang for your buck in Durham but if you're thinking about raising children while you're in school and can afford to live in Chapel Hill the schools are much better and your property will hold its value more so than in Durham. It's a lovely little town and contrary to popular belief, no one will run you out of town for being a blue devil ;).”

Durham - American Village

“American Village is a great neighborhood for any Duke Grad students or young faculty. It's super convenient.”

Durham - Beech Hill

“Beech Hill is a very nice neighborhood for those looking to purchase a townhome. The majority of it was constructed in the late 1980's but the places are still in great shape. This area off of Pickett Rd. is a very nice area and accessible to all you need on 15/501.”

Durham – Brightleaf at The Park

“I live in Brightleaf at the Park. It is a large, new subdivision off of Hwy 70 in Durham (about 3 miles from Wake County line). It's the perfect location for my husband and I, because he works in North Raleigh. Prices start at around \$200,000 for new construction. There is a nice community center, a gym, a half-olympic pool, tennis courts, and nature trails.”

Durham - Forest Hills

“We live in Rockwood / Forest Hills. It's a great neighborhood with two parks for kids or walking a dog, 8 minutes to Duke, 25 min to airport, 20 min to UNC, 3 min to downtown Durham. Housing is more affordable in Rockwood than the rest of Forest Hills.”



Neighborhoods continued

Durham - Hope Valley Farms

“Hope Valley Farms is a nice area...close commute to Duke and is one of the safer neighborhoods.”

“Hope Valley Farms is conveniently located between Duke and Chapel Hill.”

Durham - Northgate

“Northgate Park is great: it's within biking distance of Duke but much more affordable than neighborhoods immediately adjacent to campus.”

“We live in Northgate Park and love it.”

Durham - Old West Durham

“I live in Old West Durham. It's a nice neighborhood. A little run down in areas, but it's safe and it's getting better every year.”

“We live in Old West Durham, and I would recommend this neighborhood to professional and graduate students - it is a wonderful supporting community.”

“Old West Durham and Watts Hillandale are great neighborhoods for Duke students/employees.”

Durham - Parkwood

“I live in Parkwood and love the neighborhood, but wish the commute was shorter.”

Durham - Pickett Park

“The location is great. I live in Pickett Park and it is less than 10 min from west campus.”

Durham - Tuscaloosa-Lakewood

“We love living in the Tuscaloosa-Lakewood neighborhood.
<http://www.tlnadurham.org/>”

“We live in the Tuscaloosa-Lakewood neighborhood and love it. Quiet, friendly, active, and relatively affordable.”



Neighborhoods continued

“I live in the Lakewood area. Although it seems the real estate market is crashing, my home continues to go up in value. If you are going to be in Durham for at least 2 years, I highly recommend buying!”

Durham - South/East

“My wife and I purchased a home in South East Durham, outside of the ring of expensive real estate immediately surrounding campus, near the 15-501 or the 40. This made sense because we were not concerned about schools and the like, the house was inexpensive (\$84,000) yet still in a quiet, safe neighborhood. I am able to pay the mortgage on my stipend and we have avoided all but one small school loan. Some sacrifices in terms of commuting convenience have paid large dividends for us.”

“I found many affordable houses in East Durham, toward Brier Creek.”

“I recommend buying in south Durham for best proximity to campus, safety, and resale value.”

“[I] really like the area where I live near old South Square--movies, restaurants, easy access to Chapel Hill and Durham, all very affordable.”

Durham - Southwest

“Southwest Durham is a great place to buy.”

“Southwest Durham is a safe bet for things to do and a good choice of developments”

“Buying in Southwest Durham is good for the individuals looking to move in 5 or less years. The houses are newer and turn over quickly because of the desirable amenities of the area (close to Southpoint, Chapel Hill, Research Triangle Park (RTP), I-40, etc) and house features (open floor plans).”

Durham - Summer Meadows

“Summer Meadows in north Durham: cheap, safe, and somewhat close.”



Neighborhoods continued

Durham - Walltown

“I live on Sedgefield St. in the Walltown neighborhood north of East Campus. Recently, there were a number of criminal problems in the neighborhood, and the Duke Campus police were kind enough to lend a hand to the neighborhood and Durham police. Those of us in Walltown, both those affiliated with Duke (staff and students) and those who are not connected to the university really appreciate the efforts of the campus police to help patrol the neighborhood.”

Durham - Watts Hillandale

“I live in Watts Hillandale and would encourage students to consider Durham's urban neighborhoods. These neighborhoods are eclectic with a mix of income, races and ethnicities. To me, that's what makes Durham great.”

“Old West Durham and Watts Hillandale are great neighborhoods for Duke students/employees.”

Durham - Woodcroft

“The Woodcroft area is a good place to live.”