

Charlottesville Real Estate's Unlikely New Player: **Amazon.com**

Amazon has invaded the realm of real estate—but you couldn't say it's happening in a big way.

It's happening in a tiny way.

Last week the improbable news arrived that the web's 400-pound gorilla had made its first foray into the realm of real estate. Since Charlottesville real estate (like all real estate) is by definition local, its very nature would seem to preclude the buying and selling of homes as a mail order enterprise. But since Amazon.com has succeeded in other industries where failure had been assumed (high-end fashion, for instance), could local Charlottesville real estate soon be monopolized by a tsunami of Amazon Prime home sales? At least it warranted some looking into!

It turned out that Charlottesville real estate was not likely to be overcome anytime soon. The Amazon listings that showed up are hard to find, and not likely to tempt many Charlottesville home shoppers. The few listings were only searchable when you entered "tiny homes"—and the few homes being offered were sandwiched in between how-to books about designing and building very small cabins.

(Here, a note for Charlottesville residents who aren't familiar with the "tiny homes" phenomenon...they are what the name says: structures smaller than 400 square feet...although some can be as microscopic as 80 square feet, most are in the 300-350 range).

You may not find too many tiny homes in Charlottesville though the original Belmont Bungalows of the 1920s and 30s closely fit the bill when it comes to size, but the movement is nation-wide. And the concept is not as far-fetched as it might seem. Anyone who has taken weeks-long vacations in campers or lived for any stretch of time on a pleasure boat knows that you *can* reduce your living space to a slender minimum if you plan carefully.

Back to Amazon. The lead-off listing was a pre-fab tiny home converted from a shipping container. Like any good Charlottesville real estate listing, the details pointed out key selling points (in this case, the shipping container was new). Price was a thrifty \$36,000, which would be even more thrifty if the "\$0.00 estimated tax" turns out to be accurate. The customer reviews were mixed, with one in particular naming a possible sticking point: meeting Virginia and Charlottesville building codes. Additionally, Amazon Prime members who revel in their free delivery perk were bound to be disappointed: the tiny home wasn't eligible (they'd have to pony up another \$3,754 in shipping fees).

If your own Charlottesville home buying or selling requirements are greater than the tiny home square footage limit, we're here to lend a hand. Let's talk about getting you in your new home today!



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SETH BATTON

REALTOR, ABR®, e-PRO®, GREEN®

Born and raised in the Shenandoah Valley of Central Virginia, I love everything outdoors. Most of my free time is spent hiking, rock climbing, playing water sports, or cooking out on the back deck with friends. As a child, my parents built me with the core values of a southern gentleman. Trust starts with honesty and honesty builds integrity. I'm a technology guru! One of my favorite hobbies is restoring old homes in depressed neighborhoods to meet the needs of our generation today. My mission is to build a career worth having, a business worth owning, and a life worth living. Being GREEN® is more than just the resource efficiency of your home. It's a lifestyle choice! Let's discuss how to minimize your carbon footprint in everyday life by simplifying your daily commute, decreasing your household energy costs, and boosting the efficiency and sustainability of your daily routine!

I'm an Accredited Buyer's Representative (ABR®) with the National Association of Realtors. Which means I have extensive training to help walk you through the home buying process from start to finish. From lenders and home inspectors to mortgage agents and closing companies, together we will find the best home for your family's needs!

As an e-PRO®, I can show your home to over 500 million visitors today. And you don't even need to vacuum! Curb appeal isn't just about looking good from the street. It's about looking good from the digital highway!

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