The Builder's Eye

A BUILDER'S EYE ON WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA REAL ESTATE

OCTOBER 2026 · CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP · WEXFORD · MARS · FOX CHAPEL · PINE TOWNSHIP · FRANKLIN PARK · MCCANDLESS · SEWICKLEY

THE OCTOBER ISSUE

Through a Builder's Eyes

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Inside 136 Morningside: what a builder catches that a buyer misses

Real numbers for Cranberry, Wexford, Mars & Fox Chapel

The renovation question worth asking before you spend a dollar



PRESENTED BY

Piatt Sotheby's International Realty

AUBRE STACKNICK

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Thinking about your next move? Let's talk.

CALENDLY.COM/ASTACKNICK/30MIN

THE BUILDER'S EYE STRATEGY

Every property evaluated the way a builder, renovator, and investor would.

CONSTRUCTION LITERACY

Condition, workmanship, and resale risk, read the way a builder reads them.

A COORDINATED NETWORK

Trusted inspectors, contractors, and pros, so you're never left to find help alone.

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READ IT ONLINE

Every issue lives at www.aubrestacknick.com, where the links in these pages are live. Questions about anything you read here go straight to 412-721-3496.

Most of what changes a home's value happens behind the walls.

I spent years building, renovating, and investing before I ever held a real estate license. That order matters. It means when I walk a property, I am not just looking at paint and staging. I am looking at what it cost to build, what it will cost to maintain, and whether the number on the sign matches what is actually there.

This magazine is built the same way. Real numbers from Cranberry, Wexford, Mars, and Fox Chapel. A full walkthrough of a home I sold this year, the kind of detail most buyers walk past. And because a business only works if the person running it has a life outside of it, a few pages that have nothing to do with real estate at all.

If something in here raises a question, call. That is what the number on the back cover is for.

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What 20 Years of Building Taught Me to Look For at 136 Morningside

A full walkthrough of a home I sold this year, the way I actually see it.

A finish is what you can see. A build is what it's sitting on top of.

AUBRE STACKNICK, ON 136 MORNINGSIDE

I sold 136 Morningside in Cranberry Township this year, and it's the kind of house that shows well in photos and still has more going on than photos can tell you. The listing photo shows a room. It doesn't show why the room works.

Start with the primary bathroom. Most builders default to the same layout: shower against one wall, tub against another. Whoever built this house moved the tub in front of the shower instead, a small change on a blueprint and a real one to live with. It changes how the light falls and how two people actually use the space at the same time. A buyer might just feel the bathroom is nicer than most. I can tell you why.

The mudroom is the detail I point out to every client who will listen. The washer and dryer aren't tucked in a basement or a hallway closet, they're built into the mudroom itself. For a family with a kid who plays hockey, that's not a design flourish, it's a parent who doesn't want a duffel bag full of gear tracked through the house before it reaches a washing machine. Gear comes off at the door and goes straight into the wash.

None of this is the kind of thing a listing description mentions. What I look for is whether the choices behind the finishes were made by someone solving a real problem for a real family, or by someone finishing a house to sell it fast. 136 Morningside was built by Infinity Custom Homes, and the detail held up at every turn I looked. That's not something I say about every house I walk through.



AUBRE STACKNICK, RIGHTS OWNED

What the Rest of the House Confirmed

The parts of a walkthrough that don't make it into a listing photo.

The mudroom washer and dryer sound like a small thing until you're the one hauling hockey gear through a house at nine at night.

AUBRE STACKNICK, ON 136 MORNINGSIDE

Walking a house like 136 Morningside is a reminder of what separates a home built well from one simply finished well. The two get confused constantly, and the confusion costs buyers real money.

A finish is what you can see: countertops, paint, a light fixture. A build is what those finishes sit on top of: framing, plumbing, drainage, the decisions nobody photographs until something goes wrong.

Here's what I actually do on a walkthrough. I open cabinet doors and check how they were installed. I look at where the laundry and mechanicals sit relative to how people actually live, and I look at transitions, where one material meets another, because sloppy transitions are where a rushed build shows itself first.

At 136 Morningside, those transitions held up. The fireplace chase, the mudroom plumbing, the bathroom reconfiguration, all of it read as a builder who thought about how a family actually uses a house.

That's the whole point of a builder's-eye evaluation, and why I run one on every property I represent. A buyer who only sees the finish is pricing the house on how it photographs. A buyer who understands the build is pricing what it actually is, and what it will cost to own five years from now.

If you're touring a home this fall, take five extra minutes and look past the staging. Open a few doors. Look at the corners. The house will tell you what it is, if you know where to look.

Days on Market, September 2026

Four towns, one number: how fast homes are actually selling.

46

CRANBERRY TOWNSHIP / 16066

Redfin, August 2026 closed sales

46

WEXFORD / 15090

Redfin, August 2026 closed sales

47

MARS / 16046

Redfin, August 2026 closed sales

48

FOX CHAPEL

Redfin, cross-checked with Realtor.com, August 2026 closed sales

Sale-to-list price: Cranberry 99.3%, Wexford 100.3%, Mars (ZIP 16046) 99.2%, Fox Chapel 97.2%. Approx. homes for sale now: Cranberry ~240, Wexford ~95, Mars ~110, Fox Chapel ~30. Market snapshot based on August 2026 closed-sale data and active public listing inventory as of September 16, 2026. Inventory changes daily and may vary by source and geographic boundaries. Mars is reported as ZIP 16046 rather than Mars Borough alone, which is too small a sample on its own.

What's your home worth in today's market? **calendly.com/astacknick/30min**

Look Beyond the Pretty

Cosmetic finish and real renovation quality are not the same thing.

Renovated gets used on almost every listing that has been touched in the last five years, and it tells you almost nothing. A house can be renovated well or renovated badly, and both get the same word on the listing sheet.

Here is the question I ask on every renovated property, whether I am representing the buyer or just walking it out of curiosity: was this renovation done to be lived in, or done to be sold? The two produce different houses.

A renovation done to be lived in usually starts behind the walls. New wiring where it needed updating. Plumbing brought up to current code, not just the fixtures swapped out. None of that shows up in a photo, and none of it gets asked about on a first showing, which is exactly why it gets skipped by renovators optimizing for a fast sale instead of a good house.

A renovation done to be sold usually starts with what a buyer will see in the first ninety seconds. New countertops. A fresh coat of paint in a popular neutral. All of that is genuinely nice to have, and none of it tells you what is happening behind the drywall.

The tell is usually in the transitions and the corners. Where a new floor meets an old one. Where fresh trim meets an original doorframe. A rushed cosmetic renovation shows its seams there, even when the centerpiece rooms look great. Open a cabinet door. Check whether it was installed level. These take five minutes and they tell you more than the countertops do.

None of this means walk away from a cosmetically renovated home. It means know what you are buying. A cosmetic renovation on a structurally sound house at the right price can be a smart purchase. The same renovation on a house with real problems underneath is an expensive mistake wearing a nice coat of paint.

Wondering about a specific renovation? **calendly.com/astacknick/30min**

The Questions That Separate a Good Flip From a Bad One

Five things to ask before you fall for the countertops.

Buyers rarely ask a seller's agent hard questions about a renovation, mostly because they don't know which questions matter. Here are the ones I tell clients to ask, whether they're working with me or someone else.

Who did the work, and are they still around? A renovation done by a licensed, insured contractor who is still in business locally is a different risk than one done by a flipper's rotating crew of subcontractors who scattered after the sale. If nobody can tell you who did the electrical, that is worth knowing before you write an offer.

Were permits pulled? This one gets skipped constantly, especially on smaller flips. Unpermitted work is not automatically bad work, but it means nobody with authority checked it, and it can become the buyer's problem to sort out later.

What is original, and what is new? A seller or their agent should be able to tell you this plainly. If a roof is original and everything else is new, that changes your near-term budget in a way the fresh paint does not.

Is an older home automatically a bad investment because it hasn't been touched? Not at all. An older home with original systems that have been maintained can be a better buy than a poorly renovated newer one. Maintained and original beats renovated and rushed every time.

How important is drainage, really? More than almost anything else on this list. Water is the thing that quietly destroys a house over years, not months, and it's almost never asked about on a showing.

Ask these before you fall for a kitchen. The kitchen will still be there after you've checked the rest.

Have a property you want a second set of eyes on? **calendly.com/astacknick/30min**

36 Hours, One Relocation, Multiple Offers

What actually happened when Josh and Kate needed to sell fast and sell right.

The Situation: Josh and Kate were relocating from Pennsylvania to North Carolina, coordinating a cross-country move while their home still needed to sell.

The Challenge: A sale that drags on during a relocation costs more than money, it costs the ability to plan the next move with confidence.

The Strategy: Priced and positioned correctly from day one, with marketing built to reach serious, ready buyers immediately.

The Result: Multiple offers within 36 hours of going live. When unexpected challenges came up on the way to closing, I worked through solutions the sellers hadn't considered on their own.

The Lesson: A relocation timeline doesn't leave room for a slow start. The first weekend a listing is live often decides the outcome.

IN THEIR WORDS

> Selling our home while coordinating a move to North Carolina felt overwhelming until Aubre took over. We received multiple offers within 36 hours, and when unexpected challenges threatened our closing, she developed solutions we never would have considered.

JOSH & KATE, LUXURY RELOCATION, PA TO NORTH CAROLINA

This testimonial is from a real client. Permission for this language was established through Aubre's existing printed materials. Results described are specific to this client's situation and are not a guarantee of any outcome.

Read more about how I approach a sale **calendly.com/astacknick/30min**

After buying and selling more than 50 properties over the past four decades, I can confidently say Aubre is our family's real estate professional. Her builder knowledge, strategic thinking, and patience helped us navigate changing builders and ultimately build the home we envisioned.

RANDY MORRIS, BUILDER & NEW CONSTRUCTION CLIENT

WHY WE KEEP SAYING THIS

Randy has been through more transactions than most people will see in three lifetimes. When someone who has bought and sold 50 properties tells you the builder's background is what made the difference, that is not a compliment. That is a professional telling you exactly why the approach works.



What an Investor Asks That a Homeowner Usually Doesn't

You don't have to become an investor to think like one.

The question isn't will I like this. It's will this hold or increase value relative to what it costs.

AUBRE STACKNICK

Most homeowners make decisions about their house the way a resident does: what do I want, what would make this more comfortable to live in. That's not wrong, but it's not the only lens worth using before a big renovation or sale decision.

An investor asks a different first question: not will I like this, but will this hold or increase value relative to what it costs. That single reframe changes almost every decision that follows.

Take a kitchen remodel. A resident asks what finishes they want. An investor asks what percentage of that spend comes back at resale in this specific market, and whether the same dollars would do more elsewhere in the house. Sometimes the answer is still the kitchen. Sometimes it's a drainage fix a resident would never prioritize over new cabinets, but that protects the foundation an investor knows is worth more than any finish.

None of this requires becoming a professional investor. It requires asking the investor's questions before making the resident's decision. The house is still the largest financial asset most people own, whether they think about it that way or not.



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One Renovation Decision, Worked Through

What the investor questions actually look like applied to a real choice.

Most buyers redo a basement finish they didn't choose themselves anyway.

AUBRE STACKNICK

Here's how this plays out on a decision I walk clients through often: whether to finish a basement before selling.

The resident's question is whether a finished basement would be nice to have. Almost always, yes, more usable square footage, a place for the kids.

The investor's questions are different. What does a comparable finished basement add to the sale price in this specific neighborhood, based on recent closed comps, not a national rule of thumb? What does the finish actually cost today? And what's the timeline, a finish that delays a listing into a slower season can cost more in carrying costs than it returns.

In a lot of cases, the math says finish it. In plenty of others, it says sell as-is and let the buyer finish it their way, since most buyers redo a basement they didn't choose themselves anyway.

The only way to know which situation you're in is to run the actual numbers for your actual house, not a generic rule, before you spend a dollar on the project.

Wexford, Through a Builder's Eyes

What 20+ years of construction background knows about buying here.

Wexford is one of the more established parts of my territory, with a mix of older, larger homes and newer, luxury construction built in among them. That mix is exactly where a builder's-eye read matters most, because two houses on the same street can be built to completely different standards depending on when and by whom they went up.

The larger, established homes here often have good bones and systems that need real attention. Foundations and framing on a well-built older home can outlast three renovations of a newer, rushed build. The question isn't age. It's maintenance history and original construction quality, which most listings don't tell you and most buyers don't think to ask about.

The newer construction mixed in requires its own read. New doesn't automatically mean better. Some of the newer builds in Wexford are genuinely well done. Others were built quickly to meet demand, and the difference shows up in the details: how trim meets a wall, how a basement was waterproofed, whether the grading actually moves water away from the foundation instead of toward it.

What I actually do for buyers looking in Wexford is look past the address and the year built, and evaluate the construction quality and condition directly. That's the only way to know what you're really buying, whether the home is from decades ago or newly built.

For Wexford right now: homes are moving at a median 46 days on market, with a 100.3% sale-to-list ratio, meaning well-prepared homes are regularly selling at or above asking. Roughly 95 homes are on the market at any given time. Approx. figures, based on August 2026 closed-sale data and September 2026 public listing inventory.

Curious what your Wexford home would do on the market? **calendly.com/astacknick/30min**



PHOTO: ANYA DUNES / PEXELS, FOR ILLUSTRATION

In Aubre's Kitchen

A simple arugula salad worth keeping on hand.

Arugula, olive oil, lemon juice, pine nuts, pepper. That's the whole list.

AUBRE STACKNICK

My go-to when I want something simple and good, no recipe card needed.

Ingredients

- A few large handfuls of arugula

Good olive oil

Fresh lemon juice

A handful of pine nuts

Cracked black pepper

To make it

Pile the arugula on a plate or in a bowl.

Drizzle with olive oil and fresh lemon juice, more of each than feels necessary.

Scatter the pine nuts over the top.

Finish with cracked pepper and toss right before serving.

To make it heartier

This salad is a base, not a fixed recipe. Add cherry tomatoes for color and acidity, a different nut if pine nuts aren't on hand, walnuts and almonds both work, or fresh fruit like sliced pear or pomegranate seeds in the fall. Add shaved Pecorino Romano for more of a meal. Goes with grilled chicken, fish, or good bread.



PHOTO: KARL SOLANO / PEXELS, FOR ILLUSTRATION

25 Years of Pilates

What two and a half decades on the reformer actually taught her.

Twenty-five years later, this is part of why I can still do this job.

AUBRE STACKNICK

Pilates has been part of my life for 25 years, which is kind of crazy to say out loud.

Joseph Pilates developed this method in the early 1900s, originally calling it Contrology. He built much of it while interning in England during World War I, rigging bed springs into resistance equipment to help injured soldiers regain strength and mobility, the earliest version of what became the reformer. It was never built as a fitness trend. It was built as rehabilitation, a way to rebuild control in a body that couldn't just push its way back to normal.

That history matters to me more than most people realize. I came to Pilates because of a bad car accident, layered on top of a genetic history of back and neck problems that was already working against me. Standard exercise made things worse, not better. Pilates was different. It didn't ask the body to power through. It asked it to move with control, to rebuild strength in the right places instead of compensating around the weak ones.

Twenty-five years later, I'm not exaggerating when I say Pilates is part of why I can still do this job. Real estate is more physical than people expect: walking properties for hours, climbing into attics and crawlspaces, standing through long days. A back and neck that could have sidelined me decades ago instead held up.

My reasons for showing up have changed over the years, sometimes getting stronger, sometimes stress relief, sometimes just an hour of breathing and being present. What hasn't changed is that it still challenges me. Consistency doesn't always mean doing the same thing perfectly. Sometimes it just means coming back to the thing that keeps you functioning. For me, that's been Pilates, for a quarter century now.

What's Happening Around Pittsburgh

Four real things worth putting on your calendar before the next issue.

01

Soergel Orchards Fall Festival, Wexford, through October 26

Apple and pumpkin picking, hayrides on weekends, kids' activities, and Friday Night Hayrides through the end of October.

02

Great Pumpkin Festival, Cranberry Township, October 23

5:30 to 7:30pm, a free evening with a pumpkin patch, decorating, games, and a movie under the stars.

03

Pittsburgh Zoo Pumpkin Glow Walk, last two weekends of October

Thousands of carved pumpkins lit up for a nighttime walk through the zoo.

04

Enchanted Lights, Freedom, opens November 27

A forty to fifty minute walk through illuminated woods, with campfires, hot chocolate, s'mores, and select dog-friendly nights.

05

Ross Township Farmers Market, through October 28

Wednesdays, 3 to 7pm. A good last-chance-of-the-season stop for local produce, just outside the immediate area but worth the drive.

Got a place you love that belongs on this list? **mailto:astacknick@piattsir.com**

Where I've Been, Where I'm Headed

Travel is a real part of how this business runs,
here's who I've connected with along the way.

01

Tulum, Mexico

Connected with Van and Amanda Starling, a husband-and-wife team, while there for work.

02

Banff, Alberta

Met up with Jennifer Schumacher, who works the Scottsdale, Arizona market.

03

Scottsdale, Arizona

Connected with Brian Coffey.

04

Las Vegas, Nevada

Time with Lacy Colson.

05

Next Up: Barcelona, Spain

Meeting with Anthula Mauriz. Barcelona & Costa Brava Sotheby's International Realty's office sits on Passeig de Gràcia, steps from Gaudí's Casa Batlló, worth knowing if you or someone you know is ever looking at property there.

Relocating, or know someone who is? **calendly.com/astacknick/30min**

NEXT STEP

You don't need a reason to call.

Here are a few of the ones that bring people to me most often.
You're thinking about selling and want a real read on what your home would do in today's market, not a guess.
You're looking to buy and want someone to walk a property with you before you fall for the finishes.
You're weighing a renovation and want to know whether it actually pays back before you spend the money.
You're relocating in or out of Western PA and need someone who can manage the details from a distance.
You inherited a property, or you're helping a parent think through downsizing, and you just want a clear-headed second opinion.
You're simply curious what your home is worth this year, with no plan to do anything about it yet.
None of these need a listing agreement or a commitment. The easiest way to start is to grab time directly on my calendar. No pressure, no sales pitch, just a conversation about what you're actually trying to figure out.

Prefer to call or email? My direct line is 412-721-3496, and I'm at astacknick@piattsir.com. I answer both personally.

Aubre

Aubre Stacknick
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ABOUT AUBRE

Builder. Renovator. Investor. Advisor.

Why the order matters.



AUBRE STACKNICK

I came to real estate through construction, not the other way around. More than 20 years across real estate, custom home building, renovation, design, and marketing, and that background shapes every transaction I'm part of. The order is deliberate: Builder, Renovator, Investor, Real Estate Advisor. Each perspective informs the next, and all four work together on every property I represent.

Most agents evaluate a home the way a buyer does: does it look good? I evaluate it the way a builder, renovator, and investor would: how was it built, what's behind the finish, what will it cost later, does the investment make sense. That's the Builder's Eye Strategy, and it's not a slogan. It's an actual evaluation I run on every property, whether I'm representing the buyer or the seller.

I work primarily across Cranberry Township, Wexford, Mars, Fox Chapel, Pine Township, Franklin Park, McCandless, and Sewickley, from $500,000 to $2 million, with luxury-level service at every price point. Through Piatt Sotheby's International Realty, I also work with relocation clients moving in or out of the region, backed by a global referral network.

The transaction ends. The relationship doesn't. That's not a tagline, it's how I actually work with clients, long after closing.

IN THEIR WORDS

> She provided guidance on what to get done to sell quickly. She held up her end of our agreed upon timelines and working together, we received multiple offers on our house the first day it was available to see.
>
> JESSIE VOLK, HOME SELLER

Testimonials are from real clients, permission established through Aubre's existing printed materials.

Work with a builder's-eye advisor **calendly.com/astacknick/30min**

The Builder's Eye

OCTOBER 2026

See the full picture. Understand your options. Make your move with confidence.

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