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> Property Inspection Checklist First Inspection

Building Inspection Checklist

Andrew B Mackintosh

Empowering our clients

With over 25 years of building inspection experience and having personally carried out over 20,000 building inspections, I have created these checklists to empower you when purchasing property. These checklists are designed to show you what to look for before signing a contract so you are in a better position to eliminate less desirable properties prior to contract stage.

Andrew

The checklists contained in this book are basic and not all encompassing. They are not designed to be used as a replacement for a professional building inspection. A qualified building inspector will evaluate literally thousands of additional components taking into consideration building code compliance, structural adequacy, health and safety issues and much more to provide you with a sound overview as to the true condition of the house.



BUILDING INSPECTOR CHECKLIST



The quality of building inspections and the accompanying report can vary significantly. Choosing the incorrect company could ultimately prove to be expensive and dangerous, therefore you need to ensure you're making the best decision by going through the Building Inspector Checklist.

Unfortunately, the building inspection industry is far from honest and, some inspection companies are affiliated with real estate agencies. This means they receive referrals or even commission and are more likely to overlook deficiencies in your property, to ensure they maintain their relationship with the real estate agency. Action Property Inspections are NOT affiliated with any real estate agencies and proudly 82% of business is referred from clients.

To safeguard against these types of companies, Action Property Inspections have created a comprehensive Building Inspector Checklist which includes questions to ask when speaking to home inspection companies.

YOUR INSPECTOR	ACTION	?
Is your inspector a fully licensed Building Inspector and fully licensed Builder? Request license numbers and check with the Building Services Authority www.bsa.qld.gov.au or 3225 2855. On site request to see the inspectors License and check the expiry date. The License must state "Completed Residential Inspection", if inspecting residential properties. Ensure the inspector on site actually works for the company and is not just a temporary sub contractor.	~	
Does the inspector carry full Professional Indemnity Insurance? It is very important to sight their "Certificate of Currency" for Professional Indemnity Insurance. Check the dates. Unfortunately, only 50% of the industry is currently insured as it is not a compulsory requirement. The insurance must be in the name of the inspector and business/company name.	~	
Does the inspector use the latest fault detection equipment eg thermal image scanning and moisture meters etc and up to date report writing technology?	\checkmark	



YOUR INSPECTOR	ACTION	?
Will the owner of the business undertake the inspection? Employees don't have the same vested interest in ensuring that the inspection is thorough. Worse still, many companies use subcontractors that come and go and are hard to track down if there is a problem.	~	
Is your inspector a member of the Queensland Master Builders Association and the Institute of Building Consultants?	\checkmark	
Does your inspector specialise in carrying out pre-purchase and litigation building inspections on a full-time basis?	\checkmark	
Are you entering into a Building Inspection Agreement with the company carrying out the inspection prior to the inspection being carried out? To comply with "Australian Standard AS 4349.1 - 2007 Inspection of Buildings Part 1: Pre- purchase inspections - Residential buildings" a Building Inspection Agreement between the client and inspector must be entered into prior to the inspection taking place. Anyone not offering you this is in breach of the current Australian Standard and therefore most likely jeopardising their insurance, if they have it.	✓	
Will the inspector physically get on the roof of both single and two storey dwellings and actually crawl through the entire roof? Most inspection companies limit their roof access to a maximum height of 3.6m (single story). Action Property Inspections will access a second story roof, provided it is safe to do so and we can gain access from our standard ladders.	~	
Will the inspector access all under floor areas and not just around the foundation entry door?	\checkmark	
Are you encouraged to be on site for the inspection?	\checkmark	
Is the report a Full Defect Report? A "structural only inspection" does not comply with the Australian Standards and unlike their name suggests, do not guarantee the structural integrity of the building inspected. There may be many items costing tens of thousands of dollars to repair that are not necessarily classed as structural. A "structural only inspection" will not disclose these. Only a Full Defect report truly complies with the Australian Standards.	✓	
Will I receive a detailed 40+ page building report unique to the home being purchased?	\checkmark	
Will the report advise not only what the fault is but what I need to do to rectify the fault and provide me with a time frame in which the fault needs to be repaired so I can plan future maintenance?	\checkmark	
Will the report include digital photographs of the actual faults in question? Many reports come with indicative photos which do not even relate to the property you are purchasing. Ensure that the photos in your report are of the house you are purchasing.	~	



YOUR INSPECTOR	ACTION	?
Does the report include a glossary of building terms used?	\checkmark	
Is the report written in layman's terms so that it can be easily understood by someone with no building experience?	\checkmark	
Will the report and photographs be guaranteed to be delivered via email the same evening the inspection is carried out? Beware of reports available at the time of the inspection. A legitimate inspection and report cannot be completed within the time frame. It would suggest that either a "tick and flick "or premanufactured report is being used. A further 1½ hours is spent in the office preparing the report.	~	
Does the inspector spend at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours on site to complete the building inspection alone? The pest inspection would require a similar time frame.	\checkmark	
Is there ongoing phone support after the inspection is completed?	\checkmark	
Is my inspector available after hours to assist with any further questions I may have?	~	
Does the inspector specialise in building inspections only? If a combined building/pest inspection is offered, that is one person carrying out both building and pest, be wary. The pest inspection process is entirely different from that undertaken in a building inspection and as per the Australian Standards must be separate from the building report. Only use experts that are experienced in their own field.	✓	
Can your Building Inspection company liaise with independent pest inspectors who utilise thermal image cameras, termatrac detection equipment, along with the traditional method of tapping all the skirtings and architraves?	~	
Can the pest inspection be carried out by a completely independent company at the same time as the building inspection?	~	
Is the company totally independent from all real estate agencies? That is no referrals are given or commissions paid, no affiliations whatsoever?	~	
Does your inspection company have a proven track record and has the company been operating since 1995?	~	



YOUR INSPECTOR	ACTION	?
Has the company consistently achieved awards being recognised for excellence in customer service, business ethics & professionalism?	\checkmark	
Does your inspection company adhere to a strict Code of Ethics?	\checkmark	
Is payment for the inspection NOT required before the inspection has even been completed?	\checkmark	
Is my inspector honest, down-to-earth, approachable and happy to listen to my concerns?	\checkmark	
Is this a company that prides themselves on professionalism and second to none customer service?	\checkmark	

Who does your pre-purchase inspection *matters*

Where do you get better service? The local butcher or the supermarket meat section? When a business is 100% independently owned, they know that providing you with excellence is what keeps their business thriving. We've been in business for over 25 years and most of our customers come directly from referrals from delighted customers. We make sure of it. You'll talk directly to the business owner, Andrew. Andrew has worked in pre-purchase inspections in Brisbane his whole life. He knows your suburb. He knows the hidden issues in your area. He knows about the agents - good, bad and downright dodgy. We offer you complete transparency and a report so thorough that it can help you bring the seller back to the negotiation table if something's wrong. The difference between Action Property Inspections and the others, could add up to hundreds of thousands of dollars.





What is your mindset?

Novice Mindset

"A building inspection is just part of the process."

"All building inspectors are the same."

"The negotiation finished when we signed the offer paperwork."

"We've negotiated as far as we can, the seller will NEVER reduce the price now."

"I don't want the bank to see too many problems on the building and pest. Our finance might fail."



"The building inspection is the key to purchase negotiations."

"The mark of a good building inspector is one that finds ALL the problems, not just the obvious ones."

"The negotiation starts when the pre-purchase inspection report comes in."

"If the seller won't reduce the price further based on new information, I need ALL the facts before I hand over my cash."

"I want to know the FULL cost of bringing this house up to my standards. Otherwise, I'll be trapped in a huge mortgage for the next 30 years."



PROPERTY INSPECTION CHECKLIST

First Inspection

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HOUSE

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Building Inspector Checklist	Property Inspection Checklist First Inspection	Questions to ask the agent, vendor and solicitor		erty Inspection Checklist ond Inspection	Final or Pre- Settlement Inspection Checklist	
	Property In Check	-		Firs	st Inspection	
	inspect an individual her it fulfils your basic consid		this initia	al inspection		
Property Ad	dress					

Public Transport		Recreation	_
Buses		Library	
Trains		Parks	
		Sports Club	
Schools		Gym	
Child Care		Pool	
Primary			
Secondary		Food & Entertainment	_
TAFE		Cafes	Ц
University		Restaurants	Ц
		Cinemas	Ц
Medical	_	Shopping Centres	Ц
Dentist	님	Service Stations	Ц
Doctor	Ц		
Hospital	Ц	Traffic & Area Noise	_
Medical Centre		Low	Ц
		Medium	Ц
Neighbouring Properties		High	



Overgrown

Well maintained

EXTERIOR	\checkmark	NOTES
Shed		
Swimming Pool		
Spa		
Barbecue		
Playground		
Outdoor Lighting		
Sprinkler System		
Water Tank		
Fenced		
Landscaped		
Garage		
Carport		
Solar Panels		

KITCHEN	\checkmark	NOTES
Oven Gas Electric		
Cook Top Gas Electric		
Dishwasher		
Rangehood		



LIVING AREAS	1	2	3	NOTES
Air conditioned				
Ceiling Fans				
Fireplace				
Floors Carpets Floorboards Tiles Vinyl Other 				
Phone Connection				
NBN				
TV Connection				
Smoke Detectors				
Flyscreens				
Security Screens				





BATHROOMS	1	2	3	4	NOTES
Bath					
Shower					
Spa Bath					
Vanity Wash Basin					
Exhaust Fan					
Heat Lamps					

BEDROOMS	1	2	3	4	5	NOTES
Built in wardrobes						
Air Conditioned						
Ceiling Fans						
Ensuite						
Floors Carpets Floorboards Tiles Vinyl Other						
Flyscreens						
Security Screens						
TV Connection						



QUESTIONS TO ASK THE AGENT, VENDOR AND SOLICITOR

FOR SALE





PROPERTY INSPECTION CHECKLIST

Second Inspection



Below is a brief list of some basic fundamental items that you could check to help ascertain whether there are any obvious flaws within the property before signing a contract.

Warning: This checklist is only very basic. A qualified building inspector will evaluate literally thousands of additional components taking into consideration building code compliance, structural adequacy, health and safety issues and much more to provide you with a sound overview as to the true condition of the house.

Remember, every house will have some faults. The question is, how severe are the faults and how many faults does the house have? Lastly, given the nature of the faults and the subsequent cost of the rectifications, are you paying the correct price for the property?

It is unlikely that you will have time to evaluate all the issues listed below during your second inspection however where possible checking these key components could determine whether this particular house is worthy of signing a contract. Should you proceed to signing the contract, don't forget to ensure that your contract stipulates that you can have a building and pest inspection. We would recommend that the building and pest inspection clause be 14 days to enable adequate evaluation of the inspection results.





Allotment

Poor Good

X



Paths and Driveway

Check for excessive cracking or movement to the driveway and surrounding paths. Excessive cracking or movement may indicate a reactive allotment prone to ground swell during rain and drought periods.



Fences

Check for decay, corrosion or excessive movement to the perimeter fences. Deteriorating fences can be costly to rectify and can involve hostile negotiations with some neighbours.



Surface Drainage

Does water flow down towards the house during rain periods? The surrounding allotment and paths should disperse water flow away from the house foundations. Investigate to establish whether any visible drains were noted around the house to capture water and take away from the house foundations.



Retaining Walls

Check retaining walls for signs of obvious cracking or outward movement. Allotment boundary retaining walls can be particularly difficult and costly to rectify.



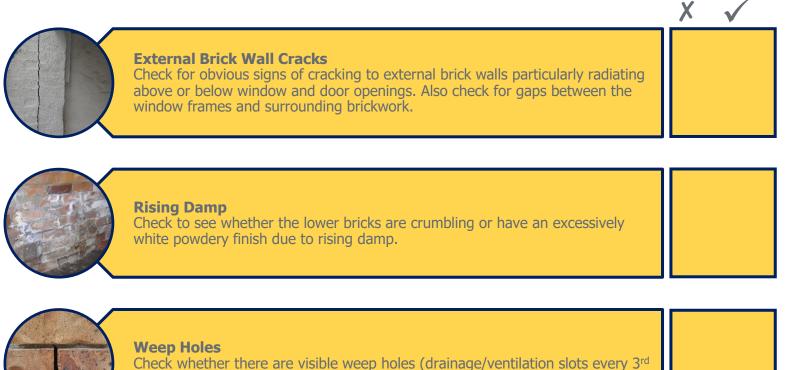
Surrounding Trees

Are there any large trees close to the house? Tree roots can impact on the stability of the house can cause drainage blockages.



House Exterior

Poor Good





or 4th brick.) to the external brick walls.

Bowing Walls Check for obvious signs of wall frame bowing, sagging or distortion. This may be particularly noticeable on long straight sections of wall or around window and door openings.



Decay Damage Check for obvious signs of decay damage or crude patching.



Paint Finish

Is the external paint blistering and deteriorating. It should be noted that older houses may have a lead based paint that is potentially hazardous when sanding back prior to repainting.



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Fascia and Eaves

Check for obvious signs of decay particularly to the internal and external corners of the timber fascias or water staining to the soffit linings. Signs of deterioration in these areas usually indicates water penetration issues due to either cracked or leaking roof tiles, damaged flashing or inadequate or damaged guttering.



Stairs Stair construction is fairly complex and involves many building code requirements and should only be evaluated by an experienced building inspector. Some obvious faults should however be checked where possible eg. is there any sign of decay to the handrail or stair structure? Do the stair treads feel secure and are the stairs easy to walk up and down.



Verandahs, Decks and Pergolas

Deck structures should only be evaluated by a qualified building inspector as incorrect evaluation could lead to collapse of the verandah structures or increased vulnerability during storm conditions. Some obvious faults that you may be able to determine are listed below.



Does the Verandah/patio structure move when you push against the roof or deck support posts?



Does be deck structure feel bouncy when you walk across it or jump on the deck?



Are there obvious signs of decay to the hand rails, decking, beams and posts etc?



Is there a gutter and downpipe to the Verandah roof?



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Underfloor Areas

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Timber Stumps

Are there obvious signs of decay to old timber stumps? Stumps in excess of 40 years of age will most likely require replacement in the near future.



Steel Stumps Is there evidence of rust to the bottom of steel support posts?



Concrete Stumps

Check for obvious signs of cracking (spalling damage) to the stumps as these stumps will require replacement depending on the level of cracking.



Decay

Check for signs of obvious water staining to the underside of bathroom and toilet floor areas as this may indicate leaking plumbing or a deteriorated waterproof membrane within the shower area.



Sagging Timber Beams etc

Where possible glance across the general subfloor area to see whether any timber components (bearers or joists) appear to be sagging or buckling downwards. This may indicate inadequate support or undersized timber used in the construction of the house or excessive load being incorrectly distributed to certain sections of the floor structure.



Roof Exterior

Poor Good



We would not recommend obtaining access to the roof exterior for obvious safety reasons and because you could potentially cause damage to the roof if you are unfamiliar with how to walk across a roof depending on its type of roof covering. Some obvious faults you may however be able to detect from ground level are:



Roof Sag

Where possible stand back and look at the roof for obvious signs of sagging or distortion. This may indicate a partial failure of the internal roof structure.



Rusty Gutters Look for obvious holes or evidence of water leaks from the surrounding gutters.



Antenna See whether you can see an external TV antenna.

Roof Interior

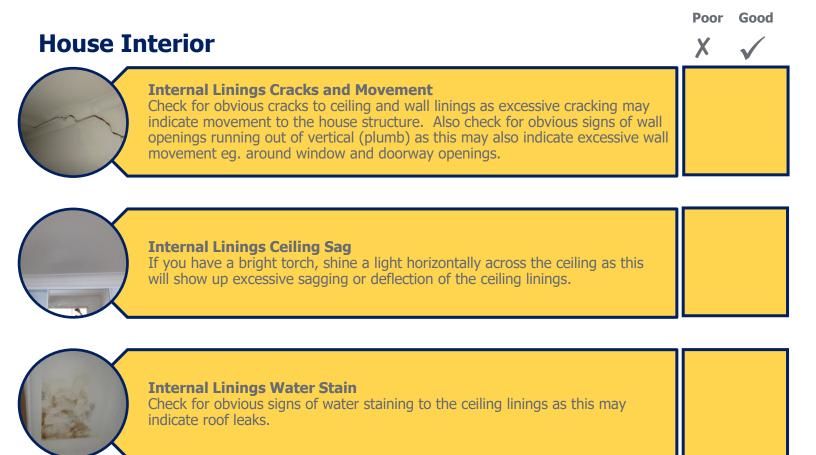
We would not recommend obtaining access to the roof interior for obvious safety reasons and because you could potentially cause damage to the roof if you are unfamiliar with how to walk through a roof. Some obvious issues you may however be able to detect should you be able to peer through the manhole opening are:



Sarking

Can you see silver foil (sometimes also blue or brown) across the top of the roof? This foil (sarking) is extremely beneficial on tiled roofs as it acts as an additional waterproof barrier during heavy rain conditions. Not to be confused with a thermal blanket which also incorporates a form of insulation backing.

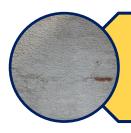






Movement - Floor Level, Uneven Floors

Whilst walking around the house see whether you can detect excessively uneven floor surfaces as this could indicate foundation movement or structural instability. This predominantly applies to suspended timber floor structures however can also apply to concrete slab on ground construction.



Floor Coverings Carpet

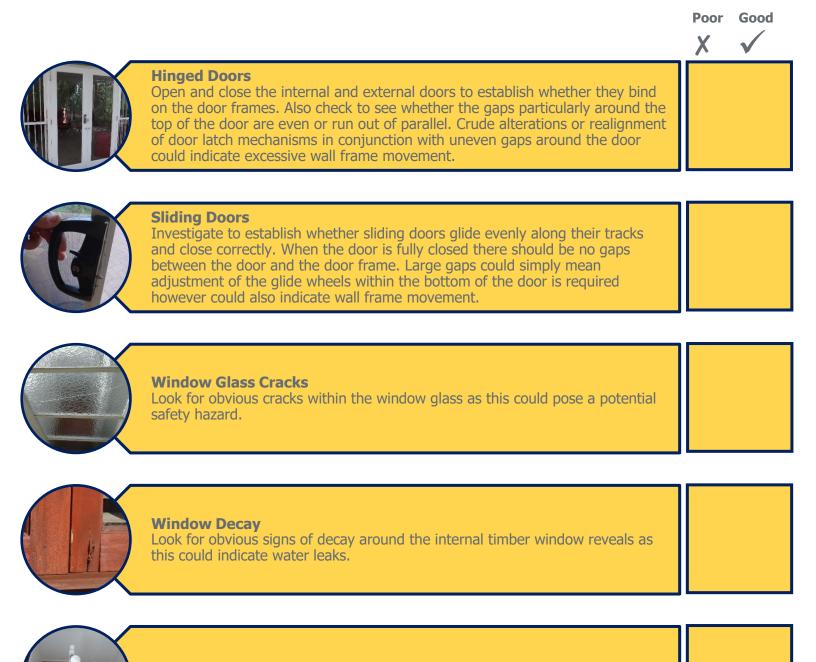
Pay particular attention to the condition of the carpets particularly around window and door openings as sunlight can cause considerable deterioration to carpets around glazing areas.



Floor Coverings Tiles

Whilst walking through the house monitor for excessive cracking to floor tile areas as this can indicate excessive movement to the concrete slab or timber floor structure below. Also listen for tiles that crackle under your feet or sound hollow (drummy) when walked upon. Many factors can contribute to tiles becoming drummy eg. rising moisture through the floor structure or poor preparation prior to laying the tiles.





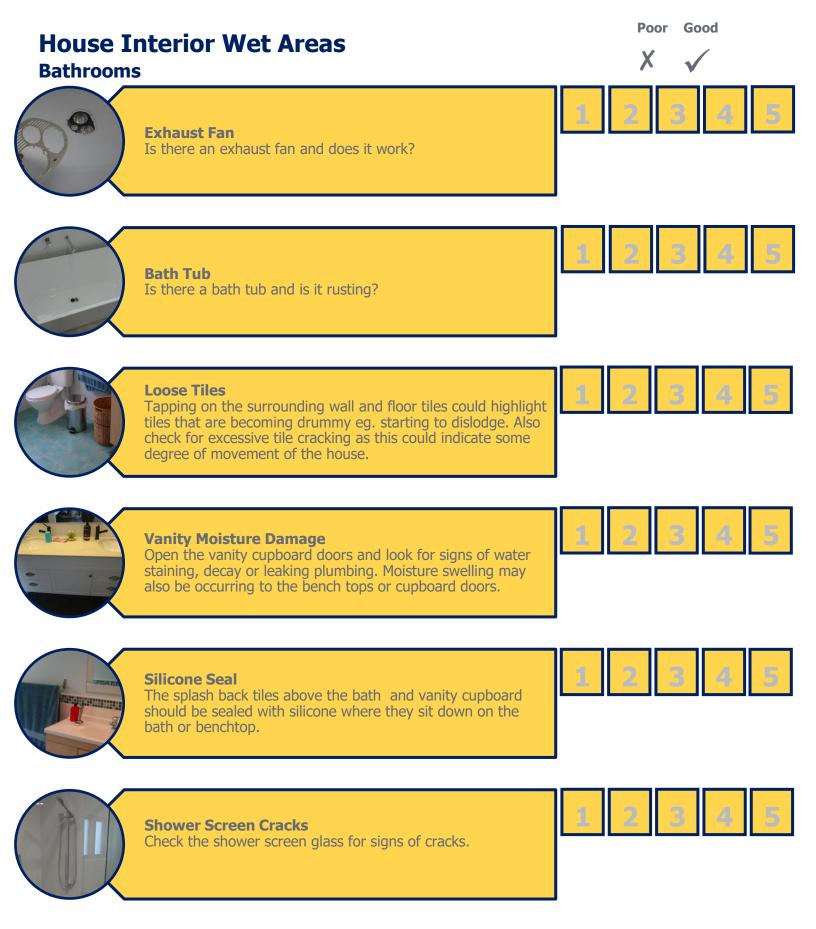
Stairs - Loose Handrails Check the hand rails to establish whether they feel secure and not loose.



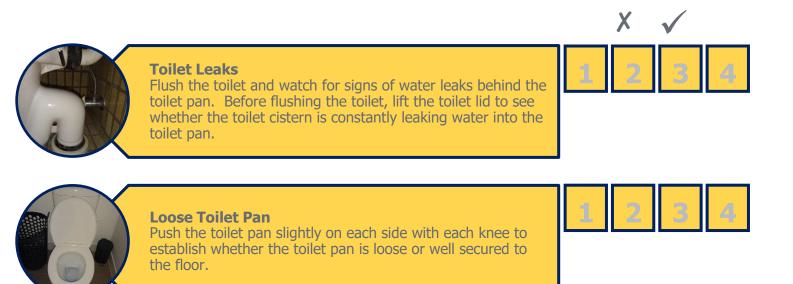
Stairs- Riser Heights Do the stairs feel easy to walk up and down eg. even/matching rise heights to each step etc

Note: As a general rule many spiral staircases do not comply with the building code and should be replaced.









Kitchen



Moisture Damage

Look for obvious signs of moisture swelling to the benchtop particularly around the sink or swelling to the cupboard doors. Also look inside under sink cupboard for obvious signs of plumbing leakage, water staining and decay.



Stove, Oven Test

Where possible turn on the stove to establish whether the elements are functioning and where possible turn on the oven and open the oven door to see whether it is operational.



Exhaust Fan

Is there an exhaust fan above the stove and does it appear to be ducted externally eg. stand outside to see whether there is an exhaust vent pipe projecting through the roof tiles above the kitchen or through the external wall.



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Poor Good

Laundry

	X	\checkmark
Wash Tub Rust Check for obvious signs of corrosion particularly around the base of the wash tub cabinet.		





Floor Drain

Is there a floor waste drain in the middle of the laundry floor? Although not always a requirement in the building code, it is certainly beneficial to have a floor drain should a washing machine hose burst.

Services

Electrical



Electrical Safety Switch

Where possible investigate to establish whether the house still retains its original wire fuses or whether circuit breakers have been installed. Also check to establish whether at least one safety switch has been installed (not to be confused with a circuit breaker).



Old Electrical Wiring

Where electrical wiring could be visually inspected, was it white, brown or black. White plastic coated wire usually indicates modern wiring whilst black, brown or cloth covered wiring is old and should ideally be replaced.



Plumbing

X



Hammer Noise

Turn the taps off sharply to establish whether there is any excessively loud hammer noises through the pipes.



Galvanised Pipes

If you can see the water supply pipes, are they copper or PVC or are they the old galvanised water pipes? Old galvanised pipes may have a limited life span and the water supply could be tainted due to internal corrosion.



Drainage

When the toilets are flushed, sink taps turned on or the shower put into operation, does the water flow drain away quickly or is there signs of a blockage?



Hot Water Unit

When checking the hot water unit does it appear to be very old or are there signs of corrosion or water leakage?

Gas



Mains or Bottle Gas Is it mains gas supply or is it bottle gas supply?



Termite Protection

Poor Good

X 🗸



Termite Barrier

Is there a sticker in the meter box indicating the type of termite protection and the date of installation? The pest inspector will be able to determine whether the termite barrier is still operational or out of date.

So you've completed the checklist and you feel confident in signing a contract. Remember this is only a very basic checklist. Don't forget to book a Full Defect Building Inspection for your protection as soon as possible.

Also, don't forget to take out an insurance policy on the house from the moment you sign the contract. Once the contract is signed you are responsible for the house and liable should disaster strike eg. fire damage etc.





FINAL OR PRE-SETTLEMENT INSPECTION CHECKLIST



Many buyers seem unaware that they are entitled to a final or pre-settlement inspection. Your estate agent may have forgotten to mention this to you.

A pre-settlement inspection is a must as you can ensure that no fixtures or fittings have been removed such as light fittings, window and floor coverings etc. You also want to make sure that the previous owner has not left behind any rubbish or unwanted furniture that you could be left with to remove and to ensure that nothing has been broken from when you signed the contract and the settlement date.

Final or Pre-settlement inspections are usually carried out a few days prior to the settlement date to allow time for problems to be solved. If the house is not found in the condition it was when you signed the contract or if fixtures or fittings were removed from the house, you would need to engage your solicitor to have this solved prior to settlement.





Property Inspection Checklist First Inspection Questions to ask the agent, vendor and solicitor

Property Inspection Checklist Second Inspection Final or Pre-Settlement Inspection Checklist

Some things to check on the final inspection

Light Fixtures	
Water Taps	
Ceiling Fans	
Stove/Cooktop/Oven	
Dishwasher	
Air conditioner (remote if applicable)	
Pool Pump	
Garage door (remote if applicable)	
TV Antenna	
Smoke Detectors	
Window & Door Locks	
Window Coverings (Blinds, curtains etc)	
Floor Coverings	
Rubbish bins (Present and in good condition)	
No unwanted items left by previous owners	



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Freecall **1800 642 465** Local **3201 2666** 7am to 7pm, 7 days



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