

Inspection Checklist

Buying the family home is usually the biggest investment anyone makes. Yet too many people commit themselves to the purchase without enough care.

Here are some tips on what to look for at an open inspection:



The garden



- Check the condition of fences and gates, especially posts and rails, for rot and deterioration.
- Look for large trees too close to the house. These could cause structural subsidence.
- Look for evidence of water run-off from the garden flowing or ponding underneath the house. This could cause excessive damp conditions.

Outside walls



- Check for rotting timber such as doors, windows and verandah posts.
- Check the condition of mortar between the bricks. Eroding mortar should be cleaned out and recapped by a bricklayer. Different coloured mortar may indicate a repaired wall.
- Look for buckled, badly fitted or water stained eaves. These may be an indication of roof or gutter problems.

Internal walls



- Look for cracks and general movement.
- Inspect brick walls for signs of dampness e.g. paint and wallpaper lifting, rotting skirting or architraves, white or brownish deposits.
- Check doors for jamming.
- Look for water stains and mould growth which could indicate excessive condensation or roof leaks.

Floors



- Timber floors – lightly jump on the floor at regular intervals. This may indicate rotten floorboards, looseness or borer infestation.
- Concrete floors – look for dampness such as lifting tiles and rotten or stained carpet.

Windows and ventilation



- Make sure windows can be opened and check for broken glass panes. Sash cords in older windows may need replacing.
- Check for excessive condensation and mould growth on windows and walls.
- Try to locate the source of musty smells.

Renovations/ extensions



- If the house has recently been renovated or extended, check with the local council to ensure that a building permit was obtained. Illegal alterations could become your responsibility if you buy the property, especially if they contravene building regulations.

Electrical systems



- Check light switches and power points work and are in good condition.
- Look for signs of burns around switches, fittings and fuses,

Roof



- A sound roof is essential. Look for broken tiles and ridge caps.
- Are iron sheets securely fixed and in good condition?
- Are gutters free from rust and holes?

Plumbing



- Check taps, hand basins, toilets, etc for cracks or leaks.
- Test the water pressure by turning on several taps simultaneously to see if there is any appreciable pressure drop.
- Look for damp ground in the vicinity of the drains. Cracks or leaks in pipes could cause this.
- Check for dampness and soft soil where downpipes meet the ground. They may not have been connected to stormwater.

General



- Examine the house for appropriate room layout, orientation to the sun, views, relation to neighbours, traffic noise, etc.