

Buying a House?

5 Quick

Building

Inspections

You can do

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## 5 QUICK BUILDING INSPECTIONS YOU CAN DO.

### BACKGROUND

This guide is to help you recognize some basic building faults that could influence how you approach a buying decision for the house you are looking at. If you follow on with the inspection pointers covered in our soon to be released e-book “Preliminary Home Inspections” it will help you make important decisions on how or if you proceed with the purchase. By this I mean; do you pay for a Professional Inspection, or do you cross the house off the list, because there are too many problems?

This guide does not overcome the necessity of a Professional Inspection, it only empowers you with some additional knowledge. If, having done a Preliminary Inspection, you decide you would like to continue with negotiations to buy the house, you **MUST** get an Inspection done by a Professional Inspector. This will comply with one of the assurances required by your Loan Provider and will give you additional information about the house, that you do not have the skills to discover.

Also keep in mind, purchase contracts usually give you a specific amount of time to complete your house inspections, so if you decide to proceed with purchase negotiations, make a booking with a Professional Inspector quickly, so you don't exceed the contract window for completing **ALL** the necessary inspections, which also includes a Pest Inspection.

When you are house hunting and have found a house you are interested in, there are a number of things you can do that could help you make some important decisions about the house **BEFORE** you commit to an offer.

But who am I and what qualifies me to advise you on what to look for?

Well, I have been ‘hands on’ in the building industry for many years and have been involved in, worked with and consulted to the Real Estate Industry, mostly in the renovation, repair and maintenance of Tenanted properties. I have bought, renovated and sold a number of homes and I am a real estate investor. I have always undertaken my own Building Inspections and unfortunately, have frequently found significant issues

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helping home buyers with their home purchases.

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overlooked by other Inspectors. Friends and clients have often requested opinions on homes they are thinking of purchasing hence the development of the e-book.

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### INTRODUCTON

Once you have found a couple or more houses that you are really interested in, a follow up visit will allow you to refresh your memory and make sure you are still happy with your selection. It also allows you to conduct a more detailed inspection of the house to see if there are any problems that might burn a hole in your budget. This inspection could also help you eliminate some houses you were previously interested in and plan your offer strategy on the houses that still meet your needs.

These 5 quick tips are extracts from our new e-book “Preliminary Home Inspections” and will show you some areas to watch out for in houses you might be interested in. What you may find will help you confirm that further inspections will be necessary.

For the comprehensive inspection guidelines look out for the release of “Preliminary Home Inspections” from [www.homehuntingtips.com](http://www.homehuntingtips.com).

You need to approach this exercise with respect to the existing owner, remember you are NOT a Professional Building Inspector, so what you find may be of no concern at all, but could also be something the owner is un-aware of, so tread cautiously.

Where do you start?

First let the Realtor and the Owner know you would like to do a Follow up Inspection and conduct a Preliminary Building Inspection before you organise a Professional Building Inspection.

You should receive a good response from the Realtor and the Owner, since this confirms your interest in the property; you are starting to take the next step in the buying cycle.

The things you may find with these tips could overcome the necessity for a full Professional Inspection with its’ associated fees, particularly if you locate several problems. So approaching this the right way with the Realtor and the Owner could save you bit of money or maybe a whole pile!

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Depending on what you find, the process can assist you by introducing areas that can encourage a good negotiating position if you still want to buy the house. But remember, as I said previously, you are NOT a Professional Inspector so treat what ever you find carefully.

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### SOME OUTSIDE CHECKS

1. While you walk around the outside of the house look at the paving and pathways, are they level or are they starting to sink and move. Some times this is not a major problem and is easily rectified, but if you see pathways collapsing like the one in the photo, you know there is big trouble.





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The first indications of problems could be seen when one walked onto the property, this section is outside the garage.



This is a fairly extreme example of what can go wrong and it is unlikely that you will encounter problems to this level of severity.

This particular house had been constructed on piles driven through un-compacted fill, so the problem goes much further than what is outwardly apparent. Before making any buying decisions on a house with these sorts of problems, you must get an opinion from a Professional Engineer, because you may be buying a house that requires demolition.

Another cause of distorted and damaged paths can be tree roots, so look around and see if there are any large or invasive trees growing too close to the house. If there are, consider the costs of getting them removed by professionals.

2. Another good area to explore is under the house if it is built off the ground. What you need to do is look up to the underside of the floor, particularly any areas where you see plumbing coming through the floor. These areas will be beneath the bathrooms, laundry and kitchen and can provide some important signs that could indicate costly rectification work in the future.

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These stains and marks are classic indications of water seepage coming through the floor of the bathroom. Touch the timber and see if it feels damp or does it have an obviously wet and glossy look to it? With this example, the waterproofing has broken down, the timber is starting to rot and the only way to fix this is to rip up the bathroom floor, which effectively means demolishing the whole bathroom and start again. Bathrooms are expensive rooms to renovate, so if you decide to take this on add the cost to your budget and make some major changes to any offers you are thinking of making.

3. Patios Roofs and Decks come in all shapes and sizes. Sometimes these are built by the home owner and the quality of construction can be dubious. They can be fairly easy to remove but costly to replace.

Having a good outdoor entertaining area is an important part of today's lifestyle, so you don't want to overlook possible problems and suddenly find you cannot afford to replace it, when you find it is unusable. These structures are frequently built to provide shade to help cool the house, so by removing the structure and not rebuilding could make the house hot and uncomfortable to live in.



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Rotting timber, no gutter, the roof is too flat and the fibreglass roofing is badly deteriorated, but even in this condition, it is still providing good shade to the back of the house. There is probably not much salvageable, so get a quote to replace it and add the cost to your budget.

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### A COUPLE OF INSIDE CHECKS

4. One of the most significant things you should look for inside any house are signs of damp. Damp generates mould and mould spores are a significant health hazard, particularly to the lungs of young children and anyone with respiratory problems, particularly asthma.

A good place to start is inside any cupboard that backs onto a bathroom or en-suite. Look low down near the floor and use your nose as well, if a cupboard smells dank and mouldy - it is!



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An empty cupboard makes life easier to spot these areas, but if you have to move a few things to check the walls, do so, but ask first and explain what you are doing. If the owner objects, become suspicious.

Signs like these are indicators of some significant waterproofing problems and may also highlight leaking pipes. If it is leaking pipes, this can be easy to confirm if you can get under the house, you should find the dripping water.



Same cupboard, but the other end and high. Very obvious damp stains but being high, a different source, probably from the roof. This house had a flat roof so it was impossible to access the roof space to investigate further.

It can also be worth looking at the edge of the carpet where it touches the wall or skirting board backing onto the bath or shower. If there is any discolouration to the edge of the carpet, this may indicate waterproofing problems. Another quick way of

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confirming this is with a piece of stiff cardboard. Insert it between the carpet and the skirting board and push it down as far as you can to the floor. Now run it sideways along the carpet edge. If it comes out damp and discoloured, you know you have a problem.

5. When you have a look at the bathrooms; check the tiles in the shower and around the edge of the bath. Look for grout falling out or missing, then using your knuckle, gently tap the tiles and listen, they should sound dull and solid, if the sound changes and you get a crisper hollow sound, this usually indicates the tile adhesive breaking down, I don't think I need to tell you what this means.... A bathroom renovation!

But then again, if you had found the leaks under the bathroom floor like the ones I showed you previously, you knew the renovation was required, so the tile adhesive breaking down just means that stripping out the bathroom is going to be easier!

I hope you find these tips useful, they are checks anyone can do and require no great expertise, but can quickly give you some indication of possible problems that are good to know about BEFORE you think of putting in an offer.

If you would like to find out about many more inspections and investigations you can easily do, purchase and download "Preliminary Home Inspections" from [www.homehuntingtips.com](http://www.homehuntingtips.com) and save yourself a considerable amount on Professional Inspection fees, because you find the problems and cross the house off your list. But NOTE: The information provided will not overcome the necessity of a Professional Inspection when you finally find the house you want, but it will help you get there.