

BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS

BEFORE YOU BUY A PROPERTY, DO THE GROUNDWORK FIRST – WITH A PROPER INSPECTION.

When you set out to buy a house, you usually ensure you look at the property from every angle. But some buyers forget to check every corner and crevice – including those under a property – and it is these that can come back to haunt you when cracks begin to appear in the building later on.

The best way to ensure a home is sound and fit for living in is by doing a thorough building inspection through a qualified inspector. A good inspection will pick up any defects, weaknesses, dampness and damage (such as that from water or termites), and determine if it's worthwhile going ahead and purchasing the home. The problems may be as slight as partially completed gutters or as severe as rotten stumps, but having everything down on paper will educate you on the full condition of the building and prepare you for any maintenance costs down the track.

“A building inspection is vital,” says Rodney Mead from Blue Print, which specialises in pre-purchase home inspections. “You need to know what you're buying, and that means every part of the house. People look at the exterior without realising there may be drastic issues underneath the house.”

Mead, who is so thorough he often has real estate agents complaining that he's too meticulous (and then asking him to do their friend's homes), advises that buyers should always commission an inspection before committing themselves.



“Even things as simple as doors not opening or closely properly spell trouble. Leaking shower drains can easily damage floorboards, and stump problems can lead to total instability. It's a small price to pay when your investment is so big.”



BUILDING INSPECTION TIPS

- 1 Do a basic inspection – check that doors and windows close and open as they should and that all plumbing works, including the toilet.
2. Check the drainage around the house. Is the sub-floor (the dirt under the house) wet?
3. Watch gardens close to the walls of a house. Constant watering or growth may cause structural problems with the foundations later. Tree trunks can also be a problem, especially near driveways.
4. Look for things like rising damp on brickwork areas, and also flaking paintwork. Inside a home, you can easily see dampness by the appearance of black spots on walls and ceilings. Other signs include carpet rotting near skirting boards. Look out for freshly painted walls. They may be covering the problem.
5. Look out for structural movement, such as signs of cracking in the external and internal walls.