

## FACT SHEET

### Frequently Asked Questions

## WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR BUILDING INSPECTION?

Building inspection can involve a wide range of considerations which frequently overlap and include commonly occurring defects.

Although as with most areas of the building industry there are Australian Standard guidelines in most practical situations questions relate to contract arrangements, materials and workmanship.

The following are typical areas for inspection:

### CONSTRUCTION (PROGRESS AND FINAL COMPLETION) INSPECTION

Ongoing building contract administration and building work inspection particularly at the stages of progress payments can be either part of the contract provisions or on an as required basis.

Documents including the Building Contract drawings and specification which are the basis of building approval are an important reference for building inspections during construction. The extent of detail contained on the drawings and in the specification can be of critical importance in obtaining the desired result. Inadequate contract documents are a false economy. The Building Contract is also an essential reference.

### PRE-PURCHASE INSPECTION

Completing a pre-purchase inspection is a significant responsibility for the person undertaking the assessment. Essentially the objective is to make sure as far as possible that the purchaser is not buying a property with significant defects particularly related to structure and services.

Because of the restricted visual access to many components it is necessary for the building's inspector to assess the structure and services by drawing on experience and indicators of related problems.

Pre-purchase and Problem inspections can include land development, building and alteration options having regard to planning and building legislation.

### PROBLEM INSPECTION

Specific building problem inspections generally commence with a broad assessment of the whole structure followed by a detailed review of a specific defect.

Problem inspections can include for example, structural movement, cracking, leaking wet areas such as bathrooms, salt and rising damp, roof leaking and general sub standard workmanship.

### DISPUTE INSPECTION

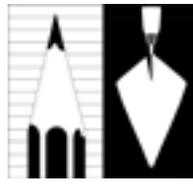
This type of inspection should start with an assessment of Contract Arrangements.

The inspector's report should provide a summary of the relevant contract provisions, the basis of the dispute and a specification for rectification.

Remedial action should not commence until all parties have agreed in writing on the approach and time frame. Unresolved disputes may result in mediation or court action.

### TYPICAL PROBLEM INSPECTION DEFECTS

- Contract arrangements
- Structural cracking



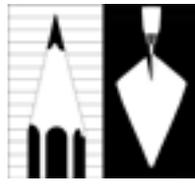
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- White ants
- Trees
- Sub floor venting
- Slab edge dampnes
- Heritage building
- Roof framing, leaking and box gutters
- Defective concrete including rusting reinforcing
- Paving
- Condensation
- Noise
- Specific trade defects
  - Demolition
  - Excavation and site works
  - Concrete
  - Steel work and masonry
  - Carpentry and joinery
  - Roofing and storm drains
  - Sanitary plumbing
  - Electrical and mechanical services
  - Plastering
  - Ceilings and wall linings
  - Tiling
  - Glazing
  - Painting
  - Floor coverings and wall coverings
  - Metal work
  - Furniture and equipment

#### **Dilapidation survey (assessment of a building condition prior to associated building work such as alterations to an adjacent structure)**

This form of inspection is utilized as a record of building condition to (for example) building work on an adjacent allotment which may in some way affect the structure of the building under inspection. The report can be utilized as a basis for compensation if damage occurs.



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#### **Schedule of condition inspection**

This form of inspection records the structural, architectural and services condition of a building. The report can be used (for example) as a basis for assessment of living conditions.

#### **Measurement and preparation of existing building plans**

This inspection documents to scale an existing building in plan, elevations and section on the site. The plans have a range of practical uses.

#### **Conservation inspection (heritage building)**

This type of inspection defines the condition of a heritage structure as a basis for preparing guidelines related to conservation, stabilizing and restoration.

#### **Maintenance survey inspection**

This form of inspection establishes the requirements for building maintenance including the extent, priority and timing of the required actions.

#### **Fire and flood damage assessment**

This form of inspection seeks to document the extent, nature and significance of damage resulting from (for example) fire or flood damage to a structure. The assessment can be the basis for repair documentation and completion of the required work.

#### **Defect assessment**

This form of inspection frequently relates to problems associated with new construction including causes, implications and repair.

#### **Post occupancy evaluation**

This form of inspection is directed towards assessment of the efficiency and adequacy of a building for its purpose in either first occupation of a new building or proposed occupation of an existing building.

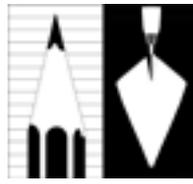
#### **Post construction approval**

Buildings constructed without the required approvals (such as planning approval or building approval) are frequently subjected to a council requirement that construction documentation is prepared and lodged for post construction approval.

Obtaining these approvals can be more difficult than completion before construction as it is not unusual for this type of building work to be contrary to planning or Building Code requirements. Councils have significant power including requiring demolition in the event that a post construction approval cannot be achieved.

#### **Town planning review (pre-purchase or development option assessment)**

Completion of a preliminary assessment related to planning requirements for a property can be undertaken before purchase or before decisions on a development proposal. Generally there are a range of options available for property development and it is prudent to undertake a broad assessment of possibilities.



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#### **Building cost estimates.**

This type of inspection is directed towards preliminary budget cost estimates related to building proposals.

#### **Specialist surveys including land, electrical, plumbing and mechanical services**

Questions concerning specific components of a site or building (such as for example site drainage) can be assessed where (for example) a specific problem related to one aspect of a proposal may determine the final approach.

#### **Building Code compliance**

Inspection of a new or old structure related to Building Code of Australia compliance (such as fire safety).