

She's on the Money.



Home ● Inspection Checklist

1. Look around. Carefully.

Put your valuer goggles on and look straight past the styling and imported furnishings. Imagine the place empty. Does it suit your essential criteria or offer something new? Are there things that don't quite suit, but which you could make work or are there dealbreakers? Here is a list of things to look out for:

- **WALLS** – look for any stains or cracks, peeling paint or bubbles in the ceilings and walls. They could indicate a leaky pipe or water ingress (coming in from outside). Also, advance Hot tip: look out for freshly painted walls. While that might just be a freshen up, it could also be to hide damage. Be wary.
- **FLOORS** – boughing, sagging or creaking floorboards or gaps in the floorboards, lifting edges on the lino, chipped tiles, unevenly spongy, springy, wet and/or stained carpets. These may indicate the whole house needs restumping or be simply an indication of a gracefully ageing beauty. Either way, best to get them professionally reviewed.
- **DOORS AND WINDOWS** – open and shut every single one. Completely. Do they close smoothly or get stuck? If the latter, look more closely – is the timber swollen at the edges? Is there a gap between the door/window and its frame (top, bottom, sides)? Creaking much? These could all indicate water leaks and poor insulation, not to mention being a security hazard.
- **CUPBOARDS** – check how these operate and the storage inside. A good clue as to how well the vendor (if the place isn't tenanted) looks after the place, is how tidy they keep their cupboards. Yes, this can feel pervy. No, it's not bad to do.
- **FEEL AROUND** – poke your head into wardrobes and understairs cupboards and run your fingers across their ceilings, floors and sides. Is there any mould, mildew or residual damp?
- **USE YOUR NOSE** – you might not be able to see or feel it, but your nose can be a pretty reliable indicator of something funky going on behind the walls or beneath the floor. Don't ignore bad or off smells; have your building and pest inspector look into them more thoroughly.
- **BATHROOMS AND LAUNDRY** – if ever you're going to have water problems, it will be in, around and under tiling. You'd be shocked at the extent of poor or damaged waterproofing out there – it's enough to get mushrooms growing up and through your grout (believe me, I've been there). While mould and mildew may indicate problems, you'll really need professional meters to test for problems here.

- **STORAGE** – what storage is there in the kitchen, bedrooms, study, garage, garden shed, etc. Is there enough for you and your enviable collection of (insert favourite vice here)?
- **GARDENS/OUTDOOR** – how well maintained are the gardens and outdoor spaces? Once again, a well-kept garden can be the sign of a well-kept home.
- **EXTERIOR WALLS AND FOOTINGS** – look for flaking, bubbling or lifting paint where the wall meets the ground, this can indicate rising damp. Ensure that there is clearance between the foundations and garden beds which are a breeding ground for hungry wood-eating pests like termites.
- **STAND OUTSIDE** – for a while and have a good listen. Is it noisy, what's the traffic like? Get nosy – who are your neighbours? Is there a school or day care or other social centre that might create a lot of noise at certain times of the day? How about industrial machinery, cars, motorbikes or other loud engines?
- **TAKE IN THE VIEW** – get a good idea of the direction in which the place faces and how much light and warmth it receives. If possible, come back (or at least drive past) at a few different times of the day so you can get a well-rounded idea of the changing conditions.
- **ASK TO OPERATE** – if the place has a gas heater or air-conditioning or any other mod-cons installed, ask to get them turned on and operating. If the agent says no and you're keen to move forward, insist on testing these during your pest and building inspection. Show the result. Show the win. Show them why it mattered.

2. Speak to the neighbours.

The best people to speak to about the property you're looking at purchasing are the neighbours. Is there any loud construction nearby, or any other factors that could impact your enjoyment of the property? Is the strata scheme poorly run? It pays, literally, to ask. Don't worry about feeling awkward – just go for it!