First-Home Buyer Pre-Purchase Inspection Checklist

A practical, easy-to-use checklist for Auckland home buyers

Important: This checklist is for general education only and does not replace a professional pre-purchase building inspection. A standard building inspection is visual and non-invasive. It cannot confirm hidden framing, concealed moisture, structural capacity, weathertightness performance, council compliance, or legal matters.

Cozy Building Compliance provides visual, non-invasive pre-purchase building inspections across Auckland.

LBP Builder | BOINZ Accredited Building Surveyor
Auckland Building Inspections

Request a Pre-Purchase Inspection Quote Send the property address or listing link to check availability.	**Ask for a Sample Report** See the report style, photo detail and recommendation format before booking.

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How to use this checklist

Use this at an open home, private viewing, or while reviewing a listing. Tick only items that you can safely and reasonably observe. Do not climb onto unsafe areas, enter unsafe roof or subfloor spaces, move heavy furniture, or open concealed building elements.

If visible risk indicators are observed, consider arranging a professional pre-purchase building inspection before making a final purchase decision.

Property details

Property address / suburb	
Listing link / agent	
Viewing date	
Questions to ask	

Quick open-home priorities

- ☐ Check visible exterior condition, gutters, downpipes, cladding clearances and surface drainage.
- ☐ Look for visible staining, moisture indicators, poor ventilation or signs of previous leakage.
- ☐ Ask whether roof space, subfloor, garage, sleepout and exterior areas can be accessed during inspection.
- ☐ If unsure, arrange a professional pre-purchase inspection before making a final purchase decision.

Exterior and Site Checklist

Look for visible or obvious signs only, from safe available access points and where visible or accessible.

Roof exterior

- ☐ Roof exterior, roof edges and flashings visible from safe ground level or accessible areas.
- ☐ Visible signs of ageing, rust, moss build-up, loose materials, damage or poor drainage.
- ☐ Areas that may require a roofing contractor to review further.

Note: *Roof areas may not always be fully accessible. Inspection is generally from safe available access points only.*

Gutters, downpipes and visible drainage

- ☐ Gutters and downpipes visible, with no obvious overflow marks, blockage, rusting or leakage.
- ☐ Downpipes discharging to visible drainage points where observable.
- ☐ Obvious signs of blockage, leakage, overflow or poor discharge.

Note: *Drainage systems are not usually fully tested during a standard visual building inspection. Concealed drainage condition and performance cannot be confirmed from a visual inspection alone.*

Cladding and exterior walls

- ☐ Visible cladding condition, clearances to paving or ground, cracks, swelling, impact damage or deterioration.
- ☐ Cladding close to garden soil, paving, decks or areas where moisture may be trapped.
- ☐ Open junctions, failed coatings, penetrations or details that may require further review.

Note: *Some cladding issues may require further invasive investigation or specialist assessment to confirm the extent of any hidden damage.*

Exterior and Site Checklist - continued

Windows and exterior joinery

- ☐ Visible sealant, flashings, staining, timber decay, cracking or moisture-risk details around windows and doors.
- ☐ Windows appear reasonably maintained from visible areas.
- ☐ Visible areas where water may enter or be trapped.

Note: *Hidden framing around windows cannot be confirmed during a visual, non-invasive inspection.*

Decks, stairs and balconies

- ☐ Visible signs of decay, movement, loose fixings or poor maintenance.
- ☐ Handrails and balustrades showing visible signs of looseness, movement, deterioration or poor maintenance.
- ☐ Water draining away from the building where visible.

Note: *This checklist and a standard visual inspection do not confirm structural capacity. Where movement, decay, corrosion or safety concerns are observed, further assessment by a suitably qualified builder or structural engineer may be required.*

Ground levels and surface drainage

- ☐ Surface drainage, paths, driveways, retaining areas and ground levels around the house.
- ☐ Ground sloping towards the house, or garden beds, paving or soil close to cladding.
- ☐ Subfloor vents visible and clear where applicable.

Note: *Poor surface drainage or high ground levels can increase moisture risk and may require further assessment.*

Interior Rooms and Wet Areas

These items help buyers recognise common visible indicators. They do not confirm hidden defects or specialist system performance.

Ceilings and walls

- ☐ Visible stains, cracks, sagging, bubbling paint, uneven surfaces or unusual distortion.
- ☐ Signs of previous water damage around ceilings, walls, corners, skirtings or lower wall areas.
- ☐ Areas that may require further moisture investigation.

Note: *A visual inspection can identify visible signs, but it cannot confirm hidden damage inside walls or ceilings.*

Bathrooms and wet areas

- ☐ Signs of leaking, soft flooring, poor sealant, swelling or moisture staining.
- ☐ Ventilation provided and visible mould, condensation or poor airflow indicators noted.
- ☐ Shower, vanity, toilet and wet-area junctions checked for visible leakage or moisture-risk signs.

Note: *Bathrooms and wet areas are common areas where further moisture assessment may be recommended.*

Kitchen and laundry areas

- ☐ Signs of leaks around sinks, cabinetry, appliances or plumbing connections.
- ☐ Swollen, damaged or stained surfaces around plumbing or wet-use areas.
- ☐ Ventilation or extraction present where relevant.

Note: *Plumbing performance and concealed pipework are not fully assessed during a standard visual inspection.*

Floors

- ☐ Floors uneven, bouncy, sloping or creaking.
- ☐ Signs of moisture-related damage or visible deterioration to flooring or internal joinery.
- ☐ Areas covered by furniture, rugs, appliances or stored items that may limit inspection.

Note: *Floor structure may not be fully visible unless suitable subfloor access is available.*

Windows and ventilation

- ☐ Where safely and reasonably accessible, tested windows appear to open and close.
- ☐ Visible condensation, mould, poor airflow, staining or moisture damage around sills and frames.
- ☐ Heating, ventilation and general maintenance issues noted where visible.

Note: *Ventilation and internal moisture conditions are visually assessed only and may require further assessment by a suitably qualified specialist where concerns are identified.*

General maintenance concerns

- ☐ Obvious maintenance items that may require attention after purchase.
- ☐ Areas with visible deterioration, poor workmanship or incomplete repairs.
- ☐ Issues that may affect buyer confidence or require quote follow-up.

Note: *Maintenance observations should be considered alongside the full inspection report and any specialist advice where recommended.*

Access and Limitation Checks

A professional inspector can only report on areas that are safely and reasonably accessible at the time of inspection. Access restrictions should be recorded because they may affect how much confidence can be placed on visible observations.

- ☐ Roof areas that cannot be safely accessed or viewed from safe available access points.
- ☐ Roof space access available, safe and not blocked by stored items or insulation.
- ☐ Subfloor access available, safe and not restricted by low clearance, water, debris or hazards.
- ☐ Wall cavities and concealed framing cannot be viewed without invasive investigation.
- ☐ Furniture, stored goods, curtains, rugs, appliances or floor coverings may limit inspection of some areas.
- ☐ Locked rooms, tenant areas, garage, sleepout or outbuildings may require re-inspection or further assessment.
- ☐ Services and systems may require specialist testing beyond a standard visual inspection.

A pre-purchase building inspection is visual and non-invasive. It does not involve destructive testing, removal of linings, dismantling of components, specialist engineering assessment, legal advice, council compliance confirmation, or confirmation of concealed areas.

Moisture and Weathertightness Risk Indicators

Visible moisture-related indicators do not automatically confirm hidden damage. They may indicate areas where further inspection, monitoring, trade assessment, or invasive investigation may be appropriate.

- ☐ Visible staining around windows, doors, ceilings, wall linings, skirtings or lower wall areas.
- ☐ Noticeable musty smell, condensation, mould-like staining or poor airflow.
- ☐ Cracked sealant, failed coatings, open junctions or exposed penetrations visible externally.
- ☐ Cladding close to paving, garden soil, deck surfaces or areas that may hold moisture.
- ☐ Blocked gutters, poor downpipe discharge or surface water falling toward the house.
- ☐ Moisture readings may be useful in selected risk areas during a professional inspection.

Questions to Ask Before Making an Offer

- ☐ Are there any known leaks, moisture issues or previous remedial works?
- ☐ Are there council records, consent documents or LIM information for additions or alterations?
- ☐ Has any recent building work, roofing, cladding, deck or bathroom work been completed?
- ☐ Are there warranties, producer statements, maintenance records or specialist reports available?
- ☐ Can roof space, subfloor, garage, sleepout and exterior areas be accessed during inspection?
- ☐ Can the offer include a building inspection condition if you are not buying unconditionally?

When to Arrange a Professional Inspection

Consider booking a professional pre-purchase building inspection when you are seriously considering a property, preparing an offer, reviewing a conditional agreement, or deciding whether to continue with an auction property.

- ☐ First-home buyer wants a clearer understanding before making an offer.
- ☐ Property is going to auction and the buyer wants pre-auction due diligence.
- ☐ Visible moisture indicators, drainage issues, cladding concerns or maintenance concerns are noticed.
- ☐ Buyer wants a written photo report to discuss with lawyer, broker or family.
- ☐ Property has additions, decks, wet areas, older materials or limited access areas.
- ☐ Buyer wants to understand inspection limitations and possible further specialist checks.

Further Assessment May Be Needed

A building inspector may recommend further assessment where an observed issue appears to require specialist review or where the source, extent or significance cannot be confirmed within the scope of a visual, non-invasive inspection.

- ☐ Roofing contractor assessment.
- ☐ Licensed building practitioner or suitably qualified builder review.
- ☐ Licensed plumber or drainlayer assessment.
- ☐ Registered electrician assessment.
- ☐ Moisture investigation or weathertightness specialist review.
- ☐ Structural engineer review.
- ☐ Council property file / consent review by the buyer, lawyer, council or other appropriate advisor.

Important Disclaimer

This checklist is for general education only and does not replace a professional pre-purchase building inspection. A building inspection is visual and non-invasive and should be completed by a suitably qualified inspector before purchase decisions are made.

This checklist does not confirm code compliance, structural adequacy, weathertightness performance, hidden defects, council consent status or specialist system performance. Where concerns are identified, further assessment by an appropriate qualified specialist may be recommended.

Need a Practical Pre-Purchase Building Inspection in Auckland?

Cozy Building Compliance provides visual, non-invasive pre-purchase building inspections to help buyers better understand the observed condition of a property before purchase.

Request a quote, ask for a sample report, or send us the property address or listing link for inspection availability.

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Quick Publishing Note

Use this PDF as the downloadable checklist for the 14-day organic test. The main CTA should remain: Request the Free Checklist. The secondary CTA should remain: Ask for a Sample Report.

Prepared by Cozy Building Compliance Ltd. General guidance only. Not legal, engineering, council compliance, or specialist weathertightness advice.