

Checklist: Researching the property

Property address: _____

Neighbourhood

Notes:

Amenities

Does the area have all the amenities you need such as schools, shops and access to public transport?

Neighbouring houses

Are they tidy - check the garage, trees and lawns? How many cars do they have and do they park on their property or the street – will there be room for your car and visitors?

Different times

Arrange to visit the property during the day and at night, both on a weekday and weekend to check noise, traffic and sun on the property at different times. Check out what is happening at the neighbouring properties – there may be a business next door that wasn't obvious at first.

Zoning

Contact the local council to ask if there has been any recent rezoning or if any is planned.

Planned developments

Ask the local council whether there are any new developments planned or approved in the area, such as a new subdivision, a new road or changes to a neighbouring property.

The property

Roof and chimney

Look at what the roof is made of and find out what you would need to do to maintain it. Look for any damage to the chimney.

Foundations or piles

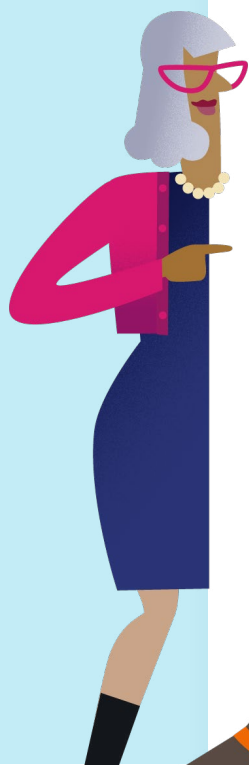
Are they in good condition?

Retaining walls

Are there any signs of damage? Does the wall have council consent? Is there a bank that may need a retaining wall in the future?

Wiring

Are there any signs of electrical issues such as scorch marks on plugs, frayed wires, flickering lights or an old fusebox?



Water pipes

Are there any signs of leaks, water pooling, dampness under the house or Dux Quest piping?

Insulation

Does the property have insulation in the ceiling and under the floor? Are the walls insulated too?

Renovations

Check that any renovations have consent from the local council, if required, and that they have subsequently received Code Compliance Certificates. Look for mould, soft flooring, poor quality workmanship or materials.

Decks

Check for rotting timber or materials. Does the deck feel secure to walk on? If possible, check under the deck. Research whether the deck would have needed consent from the local council, and if so whether it has consent.

Trees

Are any trees protected? Are any of them interfering with power lines, or overhanging the house, or are the roots disturbing the paths or drains?

Fences

Check the condition of the fences, check that they're correctly located on the boundary line.

Drainage

Is the house on a slope where water can flow onto the property? Are there any signs of water pooling on the property that may indicate poor drainage, such as a soggy, soft lawn?

Unit title properties

Look at the long term maintenance plan (LTMP) for the complex to see what future maintenance is planned. Ask if there's any major maintenance due and whether there are funds to complete it.

Doing your homework

Title search

We recommend you ask your lawyer to search the certificate of title and provide you with a title report.

Council files

Check the LIM, and property file at the council.

- Make sure the plan for the house matches the current layout of the house, and if it doesn't, that any changes have the necessary consent.
- Look at the rates owed, and whether there are any loans owed to the council, for example, some councils will have schemes for insulating homes that are paid back through rates
- Check the zoning – is the property in a residential zone? In a flood zone?



Valuation

Establish what you believe the home is worth. You could check online sites, but you will have more certainty with an independent valuation. See what other similar properties are selling for and how this compares.

Body corporates

Make sure you receive the pre-contract disclosure (Form 18).

Check the body corporate rules. If you have a pet, check that it is allowed. See how the body corporate is managed. Ask for the minutes and a copy of the financial reports and budgets.

Leaky buildings

Look inside the property

Look for any signs that indicate water has got in, and any smell of dampness.

Look at the exterior of the property

Look at the cladding, joinery, any penetrations in the cladding, pergolas, windows, flat roofs and enclosed balconies or decks that may cause issues.

Building inspection report

We recommend you get an independent building inspection report.

Problem building materials

Dux Quest piping

Look for black, grey or brown piping printed with 'Dux Quest' in white lettering

Weatherside

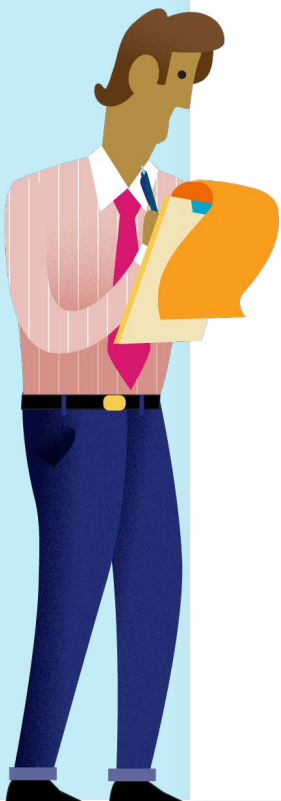
Weatherside is a cladding material that looks a lot like fibre cement. It is a product that was withdrawn from the market in the 1980s because it frequently failed, letting water in. If it looks like Weatherside, get an expert to look at it.

Asbestos

Look for textured ceilings, asbestos cement and vinyl flooring from the 1970s and 1980s.

Building inspection report

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Natural hazards

Natural hazards

Check how natural hazards could impact the property. Is the property in a flood zone or fire area? Is the area prone to earthquakes or landslides? Check how you could reduce the risk of damage to buildings and land.

Buying after an earthquake

Get the property inspected by a structural engineer or independent property inspector. Check with EQC about any claims made on the property, and ask the seller for information about any private insurance claims.

If the property has an EQC claim

Get a copy of the original EQC scope of works. Check local council files on the property to ensure any building or construction work has appropriate consents and Code Compliance Certificates and ask your lawyer to review these too.

If EQC has paid out a claim on the property, it is important to find out what has happened to the payment, and whether it was used to make repairs to the property.