

The inspection of Doors & Windows

Henry Liu CPBC 53115 Canada Association of Home and Property Inspectors of BC

The inspection of doors and windows does not take too much time but it cannot be neglectable. Doors and windows not only offer the security and comfort to the inhabitants but also enhance the aesthetic to the property. We can still look for the proof for the uneven settlement of the building through the tightness of the doors and windows closing and opening.



Generally neither exterior nor interior doors show many poor conditions which are

too tight or loose, unlocked in the worse scenario. Figure 1, this happened on the door to balcony of a high rise building which we inspected in downtown Vancouver a couple of weeks ago. The owner may not really care about this but no buyers will be happy to this inconvenience if they just take over the property.

By contrast, window is easy to cause trouble on buildings and often shows a lot conditions which could be old and energy costly, hard to open and close, hermetic seal leaking. The single pane windows are always found when we inspect the 50s and 60s buildings. Their energy efficiency and insulation capacity are not as good as double panes. The difference will come out on the gas bills from the same size buildings. Also, the single pane windows are susceptible to condensate damage on sash, window sill and corner. Even no water intrusion into wall system the growing mold would rot window structure and is a health hazard in long run. To lower the room temperature and improve the ventilation is a remedy to the above condition. Update to double panes is suggested to save energy although it is not cheap. There are a lot of old buildings which have changed windows. The buyers should ask the relevant documents for the warranty or guaranty. The stiff and deflected windows are not unusual during the inspections. If this is an individual, the service is not hard to do. Once this is universal on the building, the uneven settlement is very suspicious. Of course, we have to verify it from other phenomena. This is not an easy conclusion.

It is a dilemma when there is a foggy window caused by hermetic seal leaking which is quite common during the inspection. Figure 3, this is not a major issue but annoying. Theoretically this can be fixed but not easy. The other option is to change a new one. The easy way for buyers may leave the trouble for home owner to fix. We could find water stain on window sill and frame. It is generally caused by the deflection of the window. We always ask clients to inquire home owners because they should have known more than us.

We paid more attention on window flashing when we inspect the exterior. Many old or unprofessional renovated windows do not have proper flashing which has to be inspected and caulked every year. The new buildings are much better under the new code requirement but not 100%. Figure 3 when we inspected a brand new house in Vancouver Westside, we found 2 pcs of window trims stacked on top of it. The transitions from siding to trim and from trim to window are addressed with proper flashing. But we have to question the joint of 2 trims. The water may get into the joint in our long raining season. Even though the water would not intrude into the wall structure, the trim easily got rotten. Caulking and painting are the only way to keep it in good condition.