

Your peace of mind is worth a second look!



Around the house with DoubleCheck Inspections Inc. Sidings

As qualified registered home inspectors try to view the exterior of a home from all sides. From one direction everything may seem fine and from the other deficiencies may be noticed. Sidings come in a multitude of shapes, colours and materials. Some of the more common types of sidings are vinyl, hardboard, brick and aluminum. Older and not so common sidings would be board and batten, stone, insul-brick and cement asbestos board.

The construction industry movement from one type of siding to another is based basically on cost of installation. The less costly the material and ease of install is the prime reason for the change in materials. Another key driving point is insurance. Insul-brick is basically rolled tarpaper. When unrolled, insul-brick has the appearance of brick. It was a cheap and easy item to install. The installation of insul-brick is quick and low cost however it is now considered a fire hazard and no longer installed on homes. Registered home inspectors are always on the lookout for deficiencies in all types of siding. If we find insul-brick then it is our job to point this out to the customer as a fire hazard, insurance concern and indicate that it will probably need to be replaced. Another product that is not longer used is cement asbestos board. If the registered home inspector finds cement asbestos board then the purchaser will need to decide if it is worth it to go ahead with the purchase or not. The cost can be significant due to possible contamination to air and soil.

Masonry materials show movement in the footing or the foundation of the building. Weak areas, i.e. basement window openings commonly have cracks. Some cracks can be followed up through the brick or stone wall. The cracks are an indication of structural movement. As home inspectors we need to find out if the crack is creating a more serious problem such as leaking. Building leaks can be attributed to tree activity which in turn can cause foundation problems. A leak could be found by the registered inspector with the use of thermographic equipment. Infrared thermographic equipment is sensitive to temperature differences so a water leak should be a different temperature than the foundation and surrounding materials and could be identified by a Thermal/Infrared Thermographer, Level II.

The combination of vinyl and brick sidings has become very common in recent years. Brick is usually installed on the side of the home that faces the road, with vinyl covering the remainder. Brick is installed on the foundation with a sheet of polyethylene separating the brick from the foundation. The brick must be secured to the building using brick ties and also held off the structure with a gap of about 12mm. We typically find corner cracks in foundation when the polyethylene is not continuous at the below the brick at the corners. Brick and foundations move differently and if the bricks are mortared directly to the foundation then the

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corner of the foundation will crack. Gaps in the brick mortar, (weep holes) at the bottom or above openings are used to let moisture escape. In high rise buildings the weep holes are used also to depressurize the brick on leeward side(s) of buildings. Brick has a tendency to show movement in a building which shows up as cracks in the mortar joints or brick. Brick cracks can indicate footing and foundation problems. The spalling of brick, (surface material coming off in pieces) is caused by water. The registered home inspector will try to figure out where the moisture is coming from and seriousness of the problem. Not all problems are solvable in the given time to inspect the home.

Vinyl siding is relatively inexpensive and easy to install. Sometimes home inspectors find bucking which is an indication of poor installation. Although the product is relatively inexpensive, the large head nails must not be too tight as this must be able to move with thermal expansion. The heat from barbeques that are too close will distort, melt or ignite this siding.



The home inspector found this crack above the door. This crack is about two times larger above the door than the one found in the foundation at the door sill.



The home inspector found this dented or damaged aluminum siding.



The registered home inspector found this rotted wood below the door.



The home inspector was able to get onto the garage and found this serious crack in the brick. We called for a structural engineer to perform a thorough full review of the foundation.



At ground level the home inspector found the stucco sagging, which is common on this dated material.

Equipment Required:

Always use a licensed insured contractor and have a permit provided to ensure it conforms to the local building code and bylaws.