

## Architect centre

Malaysia's leading property inspection and  
building advisory service provider

# Know your defects



Sagging roofs can be due to deterioration or when lightweight materials are replaced with heavier ones.

**P**icture yourself dishing out all of your life's savings, or a significant chunk of that, into a single purchase – a piece of property.

A major decision, yes? To ensure your money is well spent, it is therefore important to inspect the property thoroughly before you sign on the dotted line.

### Hidden problems

To the untrained eye, a home may often look aesthetically pleasing but could, in fact, be hiding a myriad of problems, which usually surface after the deed is done. By then, the new owners would be in a fix to budget for repair works.

Sometimes, they are not to be blamed for allowing the faults to go unnoticed as certain do-it-yourself (DIY) products to help "dress up properties" could turn out to be "weapons of mass deception".

Typical warning signs to look out for include gap-filling products, wall panelling, strategically placed furniture, rugs or potted plants, and newly painted surfaces, according to Architect Centre

Sdn Bhd (ACSB), an architectural service centre that provides building inspection services.

### Causes and remedies

To understand how to treat a problem, it is important to understand the cause.

For example, cracking in brickwork is often due to soil movement caused by factors such as moisture movement in reactive soils, uneven settlement of the foundation: additions to existing buildings, or excessive vibrations. It could also cause by expansion or shrinkage of the clay brickwork itself.

If a crack appears overnight, don't panic – it doesn't mean that your house will come tumbling down soon. The fact is most cracks require cosmetic treatment only, and are not indications of serious structural damage.

If the cracks are due to moisture movement in reactive soils, the remedy could be as simple as watering your garden a bit more or less.

Another common problem for homeowners is a leaking or sagging roof. Leaks occur when mortar cracks away

from the ridge or capping tiles or mortar joints near valley gutters.

A quick and easy fix is to plug the crack with a suitable silicone product. If the leak is severe, then rebedding of all the capping or other tiles in new mortar is necessary.

As for sagging roofs, they occur through deterioration brought on by age or when lightweight roofing materials such as corrugated steel is replaced with heavier materials like concrete tiles. It is important to reinforce any roof framing before the changeover of the property is made.

Another problem that sometimes misses the eye is termite infestation. There are over 175 species of termites in Malaysia, but only about 10 per cent of them cause damage of any economic significance.

Termites are easily eradicated by puffing one or two grammes of toxic dust into their galleries and covering over the entry point after puffing. As termites clean or "groom" each other, they pass on the toxic dust which eventually kills off the entire

colony.

Dampness in homes is also often overlooked although that can become a health hazard, which is costly to deal with. However, simple remedial work could solve or minimise this problem.

There are three types of dampness: rising damp, falling damp, and horizontal or penetrating damp. A damp wall or ceiling is difficult to detect, but it starts to show up as the atmosphere becomes drier.

Surface stains, lifted surface finishes and efflorescence as well as fretting are three common signs. As long as one recognises the various types of dampness, the situation can be quickly remedied.

### Prevention is better than cure

The key to resolving all housing faults is to recognise the problem and applying a proper maintenance programme.

As the "Do not be penny wise but pound foolish" saying goes, it is best to spend on a proper building inspection by the experts. With that, you need not end up spending more than you bargained for.

ACSB offers professional help to inspect your property for defects, maintenance and design, but minus the stress.

For more information,  
call 03-2698 2488 or visit  
[www.architectcentre.com.my](http://www.architectcentre.com.my)

If you have a horrifying story on home defects, we'll like to hear it. Get the entry forms from [www.pan.org.my](http://www.pan.org.my) or [www.architectcentre.com.my](http://www.architectcentre.com.my). All stories judged worthy of publishing every fortnight will win OOH termite inspection vouchers worth RM200 each and RM250 worth of Dorco tools.

Weekly winners will be in the running to win grand prizes worth more than RM10,000

is total!

You could either email your entry to [property@gmail.com](mailto:property@gmail.com) or post it to *ISI-Property*, "Our Worst Nightmare Competition", 4th Floor, Balai Berita, 31 Jalan Klang, 59100 Kuala Lumpur or to Architect Centre Sdn Bhd, 466 Jalan Tampang, 50480 Kuala Lumpur.

For more information, email [info@architectcentre.com.my](mailto:info@architectcentre.com.my) or call 03-2698 2488.