



NZIBI eNEWS -JUNE 2015

Official Newsletter of the New Zealand Institute of Building Inspectors Inc.

Annual Conference

The Institute's 2014 Annual Conference was held in November with between 50 and 60 people in attendance. This was the first official conference for the organisation since its formation and follow on from the meetings in 2013 held to determine interest in re-establishing the organisation.



Delegates at Conference 2014

This year's conference has been brought forward to July and will be held around this time in future years.

The programme for 2015 is full of topics that should be of value to building inspectors. We have tried to develop a programme that will offer potential future work opportunities along with topics that will help you avoid possible complaints and/or legal action. I have attached draft copies of the programme and registration forms for Conference. If you wish to attend please complete and return the registration form along with payment.

NZIBI Activities

NZIBI Logo:

The Executive recently produced a new version of the NZIBI logo for use

specifically by members. This new version has the words “Registered Building Inspector” rather than the Institute name which is more relevant for members and will help answer those questions you often get asked by clients.



Website:

The NZIBI website is currently under development. We hope to have the basic site up and running by Conference so content etc can be discussed further. We want the site to be interactive including a forum through which members can discuss issues, videos and informative/technical type articles for training purposes and to demonstrate to the general public what Building Inspectors do, and contact information and links to members' websites to make it easy for customers to select a Building Inspector in their area.

Membership Identification:

The Executive is introducing two forms of identification for members – a one-off A4 sized Membership Certificate that will be issued when an applicant is accepted as a Registered Member, and a wallet sized plastic ID card members can use onsite to confirm membership to clients. This will be issued annually as the members' practicing certificate.

The attached form headed “Find an Inspector Form” will provide the information we need for the website and ID cards. Could all Registered Members and anyone applying for membership please complete this form and return it to me at the following email address neville.scott@xtra.co.nz

Building Inspection and Reporting Guidelines:

The Institute is part way through production of a set of guidelines covering the inspection and reporting process. The intention is to show how an inspection could be carried out, and how the results are then presented in a user friendly report to provide clients with a clear concise accurate “picture” of the property they are interested in purchasing.

Everyone has developed their own processes to do this work. These guidelines are just that – a suggestion about how others may approach the job rather than a requirement that you must follow. The important point raised is that you need to have a process that you follow onsite to ensure that you cover everything off minimising the chances of missing issues that may exist.

These guidelines will be made available on the website once completed.

Continuing Professional Development:

As a profession those working as Building Inspectors need to keep themselves up-to-date with changes occurring in the construction industry – standards, regulations and legislation, products and systems etc. To help with this the Institute is looking at including an online self-completion CPD programme on the website. When this is completed we will provide everyone with their own login to the members section of the website and instructions on how the CPD programme should be completed.

Terms and Conditions of Contract:

A standard set of Terms and Conditions of Contract were requested by those that attended the early meetings held by the Institute. The Executive has discussed this and is looking to produce a set that will include core terms and

conditions as well as additional clauses that members can use if they wish. Again these Terms and Conditions of Contract will be optional as many of you will have spent a lot of time and money producing your own. These will also be made available to members through the website.

Industry Representation/Complaints:

Assisting members by providing representation to industry is one of the key services the NZIBI can provide to members, especially those that work by themselves. We had a good example of this just before Christmas that should also provide a warning to members.

In brief, a building inspector carried out an inspection of a property for a client and discovered issues that could potentially be quite expensive to repair. The client went back to negotiate a price with the vendor. The vendor became upset with the Inspector because the vendor did not believe there was anything wrong with the property. The vendor noticed that the Inspector was advertising himself as an LBP so the vendor complained to the Licensed Building Practitioners Disciplinary Committee about the actions of the Inspector.

In the meantime the clients of the Inspector agreed to purchase the property at the vendor's asking price even though they were fully aware of potential problems. Despite the vendor receiving everything they were asking for they still proceeded with the complaint, and the Licensed Building Practitioners Disciplinary Committee, after reviewing the complaint, decided to proceed with the hearing.

As an individual the Building Inspector was up against a large bureaucratic body with all the resources of a Government Department behind them. This could potentially be a very expensive exercise for an individual.

The Institute lobbied on behalf of the Inspector pointing out that the Licensed Building Practitioners Disciplinary Committee did not have jurisdiction over building inspections of the built environment – they do over new construction. It took a number of approaches to different people at MBIE and the LBP Board before they agreed to defer the hearing to determine if they had jurisdiction or not.

Two or three weeks ago they came back stating they would not proceed with the complaint as they agreed they did not have jurisdiction. They did point out however that as the Inspector was advertising that he was a licensed building practitioner the Board could, if they wished, hear a complaint against the Inspector for bringing the LBP scheme into disrepute.

The warning is if you are an LBP and include this on your letterhead make sure you state what you are licensed for. Even then if there is a complaint the LBP Disciplinary Committee could take action on the basis of bringing the scheme into disrepute.

Technical Article - Ground Clearances

GROUND CLEARANCES

By Graeme Blissett
President, New Zealand Institute of Building Inspectors

Why are they very important? What is considered 'acceptable'? Why do we care?

Ground clearances are the minimal distances that claddings and suspended floor levels must be from the outside ground or levels under the building in order to keep the materials and the buildings interior as dry as possible.

By having ground and paving levels close to floor levels to avoid having steps between the inside and the outside of a building, owners and designers either

ignore, or are unaware of, the serious effect this practice can have on durability, and the health risk they can create;

- durability and performance of building materials
- health risks to occupants from unacceptably high moisture levels, mildew and mould growths, and fowl water spillage.

Building owners will often be unaware of problems resulting from inadequate ground clearances until the level of degradation is visually obvious and therefore serious, not to mention expensive.

What are ground clearances?

Excessive moisture levels are the primary cause of poor material performance in buildings, so minimum distances from the ground or outside levels are necessary to keep buildings as dry as possible. These distances prevent;

- moisture being transmitted from the ground to building elements
- ground water flowing or ponding below a suspended floor
- foul water overflow from gulley traps entering into the building or sub-floor space

Problems cause by inadequate ground clearances;

The most common problems caused by inadequate ground clearances are;

- water splashed onto absorbent claddings such as timber, fibre cement and masonry
- water movement via capillary migration to the cladding and / or flooring or framing timber
- premature failure of paint finishes where claddings are continuously damp
- drainage slots (open perpend joints) for veneer claddings being blocked by high ground levels, causing water to build up in the cavity causing damp conditions
- drainage slots in joinery units being blocked
- paving being installed higher than the internal floor level, thus potentially allowing surface water to flow into the building.
- Dampness within the sub-floor that may result in premature deterioration of the floor and framing timbers and increased levels of humidity that may also cause mould growth inside the building

The legal situation

As far as the law is concerned the current owner is responsible for ensuring that the building complies with the requirements of the New Zealand Building Code (NZBC) at all times. Specific functional requirements that relate to the NZBC relating to ground clearances are;

- E1 Surface Water: Clause E1.2 states that buildings and site works shall be constructed in a way that protects people and other property from the adverse effects of water.
- E2 External Moisture: Clause E 2.2.2 states that buildings shall be constructed to provide adequate resistance to penetration by, and the accumulation of, moisture from the outside.

However, ground levels are an acceptable solution under the NZBC therefore consideration for the height of the building, that the ground is sloping away from the building and the width of the soffits must also be considered.

Minimum permitted clearances

So what is acceptable?

For buildings constructed on a concrete slab the following minimum clearances are required:

- for veneer cladding – 100 mm above paving and 150 mm above soil
- for other cladding – 150 mm above paving and 225 mm above soil
- for suspended floors – minimum gap of 550 mm between the underside of the flooring and the ground

- bottom of the cladding to the ground for suspended floors – 200 mm
- gully traps must be at least 25 mm above a paved area and 100 mm above an unpaved area

Generally cladding must be at least 50 mm below the finished floor level.

All of the above information must be taken into consideration when performing a visual pre-purchase building inspection on a building. Of course there are other requirements to consider;

- is the elevation facing the prevailing weather
- width of soffits
- is the building one or two stories,

and of course the main consideration being performance. How old is the building and is it performing?

If the ground levels are not in line with the above requirements and there are no signs of any 'issues' in a building that is say 15 years old, then the building must be deemed to comply, correct? As a registered building inspector do you mention that the building does / does not comply with these requirements and the possible long-term damage that non-compliance may cause?

GRAEME BLISSETT

TRANSITIONAL MEMBER (NZIBS)

REGISTERED BUILDING INSPECTOR (NZIBI)

MASTER BUILDERS FEDERATION REGISTERED TRADESPERSON
(NO: 848)

BUILDING FOREMAN CLERK OF WORKS QUALIFIED (AUS)

BOINZ MEMBER (NO: 4403)

BRANZ Seminar – Key to Quality: Opening the door on how we build

Media reports and anecdotal evidence backed by two recent BRANZ surveys highlight a number of documentation, quality and performance issues with new housing. These reports have increased in recent times with rising workloads, time constraints and a perceived decreasing skill level in the industry.

But how bad is it really? How are we seen by our customers? Can we do better?

This seminar aims to open the door to practical steps we can take to deliver compliant residential buildings that satisfy our customers' aesthetic, performance and quality demands. It will be based on a number of studies designed to better understand the client and designer/builder relationships so that designers/builders/clients make better decisions and quality buildings result. Two key BRANZ studies will be looked at in depth – the regular survey of new house owners' levels of satisfaction and the 2014 new house construction quality survey. In the quality survey, 225 houses under various stages of construction were inspected. Problem areas and defects were recorded for each house and classified as either a performance defect or an aesthetic or finish defect.

This seminar will use a number of the real issues highlighted during the new house construction quality survey to explore these questions:

- Why did the situation arise?
- How might you deal with the end result?
- What was actually wanted/specified/acceptable?
- Was what was specified buildable?
- Was sufficient detail provided?
- Did you have sufficient time?

- Who was responsible?
- What steps should you take to avoid it happening in the future?
- How prepared are you to effectively deal with building quality?

PRESENTERS:

Trevor Pringle- B Arch, ANZIA- BRANZ Principal Writer

Greg Burn- NZCD (Arch), Dip Bus (Marketing)- Structures Ltd

INVESTMENT:

Seminar only cost is \$92 per person including GST

LOCATIONS:

The seminar series is being held in 22 locations throughout New Zealand from Whangarei to Invercargill.

DATES:

The first seminar is being held in Palmerston North on Monday June 29 with the series ending in Auckland – North Shore on Wednesday August 12.

For further information and registrations call BRANZ on 04-238 1291, email: SeminarRegistrations@branz.co.nz or register online at www.branz.co.nz