

The Porto Property Buyer's Checklist

What to check before you sign the CPCV — from a builder, not a checklist inspector. These are the defects we find again and again on real surveys, nearly always behind a fresh coat of paint and nearly always missing from the listing.

1 · WATER & DAMP — the number one issue we find

- A damp wall or floor when it hasn't rained for weeks — the water is coming from below or being fed from somewhere, not from the air.
- Garden beds, paving or gravel sitting against the façade or higher than the internal floor — water bridges straight over the threshold.
- The property sits below street level — groundwater pressing at the slab. Ask whether pumps are running, and how often.
- Bubbling paint or a faint salt bloom — damp painted over rather than cured. It comes back the first wet winter.
- Black mould on the coldest surfaces — window reveals and room corners — points to condensation and poor ventilation.
- One freshly plastered or repainted wall in an otherwise tired room — ask what it's covering.

2 · THE ROOF — and the details nobody photographs

- Patches of newer red tiles among old moss-covered ones — a roof nursed along in bits, never assessed as a whole.
- Heavy lichen or biological growth holding moisture against the tiles; ridge capping past its life.
- Parapet walls with old mesh-and-render repairs — a classic hidden pathway for water into the rooms below, while everyone blames the window.
- Gutters and downpipes discharging against the wall instead of into a drain — a five-minute fix that prevents a five-figure problem.
- Staining that carries onto the neighbour's side of a roof junction — chronic saturation at roof level.

3 · STRUCTURE & TIMBER

- Stepped cracking following the mortar joints, cracks wider at one end, or cracking mirrored on both sides of a wall — that's movement, and movement needs its cause found before any cure is priced.
- Fresh cracks over a recent repair — a crack repaired without a diagnosis is a crack with a head start.
- Swollen joinery, split architraves or black-stained floorboards near windows — the signature of prolonged, repeated wetting.
- Timber beam ends wherever they meet moisture — under bathrooms, against external walls, below roof leaks — rot hides inside the wall until someone lifts a board.

4 · SERVICES — and the small things that tell a big story

- Aged electrics — undersized supply, no earth, wiring decades out of date. A rewire is disruptive and must happen before finishes go in.
- Flexible corrugated waste pipes under sinks — cheap, blockage-prone, and a classic source of the stain on someone else's ceiling.
- An AC compressor boxed in with no ventilation; a condensate pipe punched straight through the façade and left.
- Shutters dragging and scoring the floorboards — the small things tell you how the place was really looked after.

5 · APARTMENTS — the building can cost you more than the flat

- Obtain the condominium meeting minutes, the approved works schedule and the reserve-fund position **before** you sign the CPCV — that's where the surprises live, and almost nobody checks.
- The roof is a shared element: you pay your fraction of any re-cover through the permilagem, whether the leak is over your flat or not.
- Ask the simplest question in the building: has anyone actually inspected the roof?

6 · NEW BUILDS — new doesn't mean good

- Flush thresholds with no drainage channel or continuous waterproofing — one Atlantic downpour and water tracks straight under the door.
- Cold spots, condensation or corner mould on a building marketed as energy-efficient — thermal bridging where insulation is broken by a beam or slab edge.
- Snag early, while defects are still the developer's responsibility to put right. Leave it, and the cost quietly transfers to you.

7 · THE PROCESS — Portugal doesn't work the way home does

- There is no legal duty on the seller to disclose defects — no disclosure forms to fall back on.
- The estate agent works for the seller, however friendly they are over coffee.
- A bank valuation is not a condition survey — it tells the lender what the property is worth, not what state it's in.
- Get any survey done **before** you sign the CPCV. Once the deposit is paid, your room to negotiate or walk away narrows sharply.

If the property passes your eye, put a builder through it before you sign.

Independent pre-purchase surveys from €490 + IVA — report in your inbox within 24 hours, with a condition grade, costed repairs and a straight verdict: buy, renegotiate, or walk away. Strictly independent — no agents, no commissions.

WhatsApp +351 969 718 294 · admin@antipodeanporto.net · antipodeanporto.com

© 2026 Antipodean Building Services, Lda · NIF 517 418 657 · Licensed builder · IMPIC Alvará n.º 109726-PAR · Porto, Portugal. This checklist points your eye; it is not a survey. More at antipodeanporto.com/blog.