OTTAWA HOUSE INSPECTION

Condo Inspections

Inspecting a condo unit: common areas, access, condo conversions and Tarion

4 Expert Answers from Inspection IQ

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Q1

Common areas in an Ottawa condo: does the inspection cover them?

Ontario.ca lists "common areas in a condominium" among the elements an inspector will typically examine, so common areas are within scope. What the inspector can actually see and record depends entirely on access.

The federal Office of Consumer Affairs puts it plainly: "a home inspection report will be limited to describing conditions in the areas of the home that the inspector can see or has access to." It advises making sure all areas are accessible before the inspection begins. For a condo, that means corridors, the lobby, the parking garage, mechanical rooms, the roof and any amenity spaces the inspector cannot enter without a key or a booking will simply not appear in the report. The unit itself, its visible plumbing, electrical, heating and cooling, ceilings, walls, floors and windows, is examined the same way as any other home.

A few things worth knowing before you book:

- Ask the inspector in advance which common areas they plan to cover and what access they will need. Ask the seller or listing agent which common areas can be opened on the day.
- Ontario.ca notes that an inspection is a visual examination; it is not a pass or fail test and does not assess whether anything meets zoning or building codes.
- The inspection report covers the condition of what the inspector can see on the day. It does not assess the condo corporation's finances, the reserve fund, or what repairs the corporation has planned. Those questions go to your lawyer, who can review the status certificate.

Before you confirm a booking, ask the inspector to send you a sample report from a condo inspection, so you can see exactly how they document shared spaces and what they include when access is limited.

Q2

What can an inspector see in a Sandy Hill condo building?

What the inspector can see in a condo comes down to access. The federal Office of Consumer Affairs says a home inspection report "will be limited to describing conditions in the areas of the home that the inspector can see or has access to", and advises making sure the seller or agent makes all areas accessible for inspection.

Ontario.ca's general list of what a home inspector will typically examine covers the foundation, doors and windows, the roof if they are able and it is safe to do so, exterior walls, attics, plumbing and electrical systems where visible, heating and air conditioning, ceilings, walls and floors, insulation where visible, ventilation, drainage, structural

integrity, and common areas in a condominium. In a Sandy Hill condo, which of those an inspector reaches depends on what the unit contains and which shared spaces are opened for the visit.

So before the inspection:

- Ask the seller or listing agent which common areas can be opened on the day.
- Ask the inspector how their report records an area they could not reach.
- Plan to be there: ontario.ca says buyers should make sure they are present for the inspection.

The limits are the same as for any home. Ontario.ca says a home inspection is not a pass or fail test and does not assess zoning or building codes, that an inspector cannot see or find everything, and that an inspector does not provide warranties or guarantees on a home's condition.
What the condominium corporation is responsible for, its reserve fund and its status certificate are not inspection questions; those go to your lawyer.

Ask the inspector, when you book, which common areas they ask to see and how much condo work they have done.

Q3

Worth inspecting a Centretown condo apartment before buying?

A home inspection of a condo apartment is worth considering, and published Ottawa-area inspector pricing for a condo apartment runs roughly $350 to $470 plus HST. What you get for that fee is a visual examination of the unit itself, not the building as a whole.

Ontario.ca's general list of what an inspector will typically examine includes plumbing and electrical systems where visible, heating and air conditioning systems, ceilings, walls and floors, insulation where visible, ventilation, doors and windows, and common areas in a condominium. The federal Office of Consumer Affairs adds that the report is limited to areas the inspector can see or has access to, so if a mechanical room or storage area is locked, it stays uninspected. Before the inspection, it helps to confirm with the seller or agent that every space in the unit will be accessible.

What the inspection will not do is equally important to understand. Ontario.ca is clear that an inspection is not a pass or fail test and does not assess whether the home meets zoning or building codes. Ontario.ca also says an inspector cannot see or find everything, and gives the example that an inspector may not find mould. The inspector does not provide a warranty or guarantee on the unit's condition. And the federal Office of Consumer Affairs says an inspector should not give you estimates of repair or renovation costs; written quotes from the trades who would

do the work are the right source for those numbers.

For a condo specifically, the unit inspection tells you about the condition of what is inside your four walls. It says nothing about the building's reserve fund, the status certificate, or what the condo corporation is responsible for maintaining. Those are documents your lawyer reviews, not your inspector. If the unit has a wood-burning fireplace or insert, WETT questions are covered on ottawafireplaces.com.

A few things worth asking before you book:

- May I see a sample report from a condo inspection?
- Do you have experience inspecting condo apartments specifically?
- Do you carry insurance, and can you give me the details in writing?
- Will you provide a written contract before the inspection starts?

Ontario.ca also suggests that if you are the buyer, you should be present during the inspection.
Local inspectors listed in the Ottawa Construction Network directory reply by email to requests sent through the form on this page.

Ask each inspector you call how much condo work they have done, and for a sample report from a condo apartment.

Q4

Does Tarion cover a condo conversion unit in Ottawa?

Partly. Tarion says that for condo conversions, "pre-existing elements are not covered by the one-year warranty." Ontario.ca describes a residential condominium conversion project as existing non-residential buildings that are converted to condominiums, and says pre-existing elements of those projects are not covered by some of the 1-year warranties. It also notes that coverage may vary by the type of home, and that homes built on existing footings or foundations may not be covered.

For anything that is covered, Tarion's warranty runs in three periods: 1, 2 and 7 years. Tarion describes the one-year warranty as including items such as defects in work and material and unauthorized substitutions, the two-year warranty as including items such as water penetration, heating and electrical, and the seven-year warranty as covering major structural defects from the date of possession to the seventh anniversary.

Which parts of a particular conversion unit fall inside or outside those periods is not something a walk-through can settle. A few points help:

- Ask Tarion, and your lawyer, which elements of the unit are new and which are pre-existing for warranty purposes.
- If you are buying from another owner, Tarion says a home under 7 years old may still be eligible for warranty coverage.
- Tarion asks you to notify your builder before you make a claim.

A home inspection is a separate question. Ontario.ca's list of what an inspector will typically examine includes common areas in a condominium, and the federal Office of Consumer Affairs says a report covers only the areas the inspector can see or has access to. Neither tells you what Tarion covers.
Before you rely on any warranty for a conversion unit in Ottawa, put the question of new versus pre-existing elements to Tarion and to your lawyer in writing.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa House Inspection. It does not constitute professional or legal advice. A home inspection is a visual inspection with limits: it is not a pass or fail test, does not assess zoning or building codes and comes with no warranty (ontario.ca). Ask your agent or lawyer about offers and conditions, and Tarion about new-home warranties. Information is current as of November 8, 2026 and may change. Visit **ottawahouseinspection.ca** for the latest answers.