

### General Description

The service will be carried out by a Charter Surveyor who will provide a written report that describes his/her opinion of the visible condition and state of repair of the identified property. The surveyor will carry out his/her duties with the skill and care that can reasonably be expected from an experienced chartered surveyor.

The Building Survey service is for people who are seeking a professional opinion about the condition of a property and is based on a detailed assessment. Therefore the inspection is more extensive than for other levels of service and a considerable time will be spent at the property.

The surveyor will inspect all parts of the dwelling and will assess the interdependence of the different parts of the structure, especially the way in which the roof, walls and floors act together. Where the surveyor is concerned about a hidden problem or defect, he/she will try to identify these and explain the risk posed and what action should be taken. Recommendations for further investigations will usually be the exception.

### The Survey Inspection

The extent of inspection will depend on a range of specific circumstances (including health and safety considerations). The following critical aspects may help to distinguish this from inspection at other levels of service.

1. **Windows** – an attempt will be made to open a reasonable proportion of windows.
2. **Roof spaces** – roof spaces will be inspected that are not more than 3 metres above floor level using a ladder if it is safe and reasonable to do so. The roof structure will be inspected with particular attention paid to those parts vulnerable to deterioration and damage. Thermal insulation will not be moved but it will be usual to lift small corners so that thickness, type and the nature of the underlying ceiling can be identified and assessed. A small number of lightweight possessions will be moved to allow a more thorough inspection where permission from the owner can be obtained. In recent years, the lofts of many homes have been insulated with thick layers of thermal insulation. Usually it is not safe to move across the material and this may restrict what can be inspected.
3. **Floors** – we will closely inspect the surfaces of exposed floors and lift corners of any unfitted carpets and other floor coverings where practicable. We will assess all floors for excessive deflection. Where the boards are lifted, we will look at the space beneath by way of an inverted ‘head and shoulder’ inspection. If it is safe to do so, we will enter the underfloor area to carry out a more thorough inspection as long as the access panel is big enough, the space beneath the floor is deep enough and it is safe to do so.

4. **Furniture and occupiers possessions** – we will move lightweight, easily movable, non-fitted items where practicable, safe and where the owner/occupier gives permission.
5. **Services (for example heating and hot and cold water)** – we will not perform or comment on design calculations or test the service installations or appliances but will observe their normal operation in everyday use. This usually means:
  - a) Operating lights and extract fans where appropriate.
  - b) Asking the owner/occupier to switch on the heating appliances/system.
  - c) Where appropriate to the assessment of the system, turning on water taps, filling and emptying sinks, baths, bidets and basins, and flushing toilets to observe the performance of visible pipework.
  - d) Lifting accessible inspection chamber covers (where it is safe to do so), identifying the nature of the connections and observing water flow where a water supply is available. On dry days, this may involve pouring water into open gullies so drainage layouts can be identified.

We will advise you that further tests and inspections will be required if the owner/occupier does not provide evidence of appropriate installation and/or maintenance, or the client requires assurance as to their condition, capability and safety.

6. **The grounds** – we will carry out a thorough visual inspection of the grounds including, where necessary and appropriate, from adjoining public property. Assessment will include such external features as retaining walls, gardens, drives, paths, terraces, patios, steps, hard standings, dropped kerbs, gates, trees, boundary walls, fences, non-permanent outbuildings, rights of way, and so on. Inspection will also include the inside and outside of all permanent outbuildings not attached to the main dwelling. This includes garages, summerhouses, substantial greenhouses, toilets and leisure buildings, but not the leisure facilities inside, for example swimming pools, saunas, fitness gyms and so on.

### The Survey Report

The report will reflect the thoroughness and detail of the investigation and will:

- a) Describe the form of construction and materials used for each part of the building in detail and outline their performance characteristics. This is especially important for older and historic buildings.
- b) Describe obvious defects and state the identifiable risk of those that may be hidden.
- c) Outline remedial options and, if it is considered significant, explain the likely consequence if the repairs are not done.
- d) Propose a timescale for the necessary work including recommendations for further

investigation prior to commitment to purchase (only where appropriate and necessary).

- e) Discuss future maintenance of the property and identify those elements that may result in more frequent and/or more costly maintenance and repair than would normally be expected.
- f) Identify the nature of risks of the parts that have not been inspected. We will also make it clear that you should obtain any further advice and quotations as may be appropriate before you enter into a legal commitment to buy the property.

## **Dangerous Materials, Contamination and Environmental Issues**

We do not make enquiries about contamination or environmental dangers but if a problem is suspected recommendations will be made for further investigation.

We will assume that no harmful or dangerous materials have been used in the construction, and do not have a duty to justify making this assumption. However, if the inspection shows that these materials have been used, this will be reported and your further instruction obtained.

We do not carry out an asbestos inspection or act as an asbestos inspector when inspecting properties that may fall within the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. With flats it is assumed there is a duty holder (as defined in the Regulations), an asbestos register and an effective management plan in place and that none of these presents a significant risk to health or needs any immediate payment. We do not undertake to consult the duty holder.

We will note the presence of lead water supply pipes and give general advice if these materials can be seen. However, you must appreciate that materials are often concealed within the construction of the building. If lead pipes are a concern further specialist reports may be recommended.

We will advise if the property is in an area where, based on information published by the Health Protection Agency, there is a risk of radon. In such cases we will advise further tests to establish the precise radon level.

We will advise if there are transformer stations or overhead power lines that can be seen during the normal course of inspection. We cannot assess possible effects on health. For obvious reasons we cannot report on any underground cables.

## **Consents, Approvals and Searches**

It will be assumed that the property is not subject to any unusual or especially onerous restrictions or covenants, which apply to the structure or affect the reasonable enjoyment of the property. It will be assumed that all building regulations, planning permissions and other consents required have been obtained. In the case of new buildings, alterations and extensions which require statutory consents or approvals, we will not verify whether these have been obtained but will identify where these consents may have been required. You should ask your legal advisor to

follow up on these matters. We will not inspect drawings and specifications unless specifically requested by you.

It will be assumed that the property is unaffected by any matters which would be revealed by a local search and replies to the usual enquiries, or by a statutory notice and that neither the property nor its condition, its use or its intended use, is or will be unlawful.

## **Referral Fees**

We do not pay a referral fee or equivalent inducement to any party who may have recommended our services to you.

## **Restriction on Disclosure**

The report is for your private and confidential use. You must not reproduce it completely or in part. Third parties (with the exception of your professional advisors) cannot use it without express written authority. Any other persons rely on the report at their own risk.

As an RICS Registered Firm, we may be required to disclose our files to RICS Regulation as part of its work to ensure that RICS Professional Standards are being maintained.

## **Complaints**

We will do our very best to provide you with an excellent service. However, if you believe that you have cause for complaint; the company has a complaints handling procedure, a copy of which can be given to you on request.

## **Note on Leaseholds Properties**

Any survey of a leasehold residential property raises separate and additional factors arising from shared responsibilities and the wide variety of repairing covenants in common use. Where the property is a flat, the inspection is usually restricted to the subject property and the accessible common parts and grounds. Onerous repairing liabilities may exist independently from the property, for example where the lease imposes a liability on the property owner/occupier to pay a proportion of the total estate repair costs.

Due diligence in relation to the true legal effect of the lease is the responsibility of the client's legal advisers but as legal advisers will not usually have inspected the property the RICS member will: a) identify any obvious and relevant matters that may affect the client's responsibility for carrying out repairs and liability to pay towards their cost, and b) recommend that the client obtains independent legal advice on the terms and interpretation of the lease and any issues arising, particularly relating to ground rents and service charge obligations.

## **Cancellation Rights**

Under the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 you are entitled to cancel this contract in writing by giving notice to the surveyor's office at any time before the day of the inspection, and in any event within fourteen days of entering into this contract.