

RICS
Building Survey 

Property address

Client's name

Date of inspection



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Description of the RICS Building Survey Service
Typical house diagram

* Please read the entire report in order

RICS is the world's leading qualification when it comes to professional standards in land, property and construction.

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A Introduction to the report

This Building Survey is produced by an RICS surveyor who has written this report for you to use. If you decide not to act on the advice in this report, you do this at your own risk.

The Building Survey aims to:

- help you make a reasoned and informed decision when purchasing the property, or when planning for repairs, maintenance or upgrading of the property;
- provide detailed advice on condition;
- describe the identifiable risk of potential or hidden defects;
- where practicable and agreed, provide an estimate of costs for identified repairs; and
- make recommendations as to any further actions or advice which need to be obtained before committing to purchase.

Section B gives an outline description of what the inspection covers. A more detailed description is contained in the 'Description of the RICS Building Survey Service' at the end of this report.

Any extra services provided that are not covered by the terms and conditions of this report must be covered by a separate contract.

After reading this report you may have comments or questions. If so, please contact the RICS surveyor who has written this report for you (contact details are given in section L).

If you want to complain about the service provided by the RICS surveyor, the surveyor will have an RICS-compliant complaints handling procedure and will give you a copy if you ask.

Property address

B About the inspection

Surveyor's name	Steven J M Butler MRICS		
Surveyor's RICS number	0088538		
Company name	Steve Butler		
Date of the inspection	9.30am to 12.00 pm 1st April 2015	Report reference number	106 Main Street
	1.00pm to 1.30pm 2 nd April 2015		
Related party disclosure	None		
Full address and postcode of the property			
Weather conditions when the inspection took place	Dry and blustery following several days of heavy showers		
The status of the property when the inspection took place	Occupied and fully furnished		

Property address

We inspect the inside and outside of the main building and all permanent outbuildings. We also inspect the parts of the electricity, gas/oil, water, heating, drainage and other services that can be seen, but these are not tested other than through their normal operation in everyday use.

To help describe the condition of the home, we give condition ratings to the main parts (the 'elements') of the building, garage and some parts outside. Some elements can be made up of several different parts.

In the element boxes in parts E, F, G and H we describe the part that has the worst condition rating first and then outline the condition of the other parts. The condition ratings are described as follows.

3	Defects that are serious and/or need to be repaired, replaced or investigated urgently.
2	Defects that need repairing or replacing but are not considered to be either serious or urgent. The property must be maintained in the normal way.
1	No repair is currently needed. The property must be maintained in the normal way.
NI	Not inspected (see 'Important note' below).

Important note: We carry out a desk-top study and make oral enquiries for information about matters affecting the property.

We carefully and thoroughly inspect the property using our best endeavours to see as much of it as is physically accessible. Where this is not possible an explanation will be provided.

We visually inspect roofs, chimneys and other surfaces on the outside of the building from ground level and, if necessary, from neighbouring public property and with the help of binoculars. Flat roofs no more than 3m above ground level are inspected using a ladder where it is safe to do so.

We inspect the roof structure from inside the roof space if there is safe access. We examine floor surfaces and under-floor spaces so far as there is safe access and permission from the owner. We are not able to assess the condition of the inside of any chimney, boiler or other flues. We do not lift fitted carpets or coverings without the owner's consent. Intermittent faults of services may not be apparent on the day of inspection.

If we are concerned about parts of the property that the inspection cannot cover, the report will tell you about any further investigations that are needed.

Where practicable and agreed we report on the cost of any work for identified repairs and make recommendations on how these repairs should be carried out. Some maintenance and repairs that we suggest may be expensive. Purely cosmetic and minor maintenance defects that have no effect on performance might not be reported. The report that we provide is not a warranty.



Please read the 'Description of the RICS Building Survey Service' (at the end of this report) for details of what is, and is not, inspected.

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Overall assessment and summary of the condition ratings

This section provides our overall opinion of the property, highlighting areas of concern, and summarises the condition ratings of different elements of the property (with only the worst rating per element being inputted in the tables). It also provides a summary of repairs (and cost guidance where agreed) and recommendations for further investigations.

To make sure you get a balanced impression of the property, we strongly recommend that you read all sections of the report, in particular the 'What to do now' section, and discuss in detail with us.

Overall opinion

The property is considered to be a reasonable proposition for purchase provided that you are prepared to accept the cost and inconvenience of dealing with the matters raised in the report. The work would best be approached as a single all in one refurbishment project.

3

Section of the report	Element number	Element name
E: Outside the property	N/A	There are no elements with this condition rating
F: Inside the property	F3 F5	Walls and partitions Fireplaces, chimney breasts and flues
G: Services	G1	Electricity
H: Grounds (part)	N/A	There are no elements with this condition rating

2

Section of the report	Element number	Element name
E: Outside the property	E1 E2 E3 E4 E5 E6 E7	Chimney stacks Roof coverings Rainwater pipes and gutters Main walls Windows Outside doors (including patio doors) Conservatory and porches
F: Inside the property	N/A	There are no elements with this condition rating
G: Services	G3	Water
H: Grounds (part)	H2	Permanent outbuildings and other structures

1

Section of the report	Element number	Element name
E: Outside the property	E8	Other joinery and finishes
F: Inside the property	F1 F2 F4 F6 F7 F8	Roof structure Ceilings Floors Built-in fittings Woodwork (for example, staircase and joinery) Bathroom and kitchen fittings
G: Services	G2 G4	Gas Heating

Property address

C

Overall assessment and summary of the condition ratings

H: Grounds (part)	G5 G6 H1	Water heating Drainage Garage(s)
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C

Overall assessment and summary of condition ratings (continued)

7

Summary of repairs (and cost guidance)

Formal quotations should be obtained prior to legal commitment to purchase the property

Repairs	Cost guidance (where agreed)
Electrical system	£3000.00 to £5000.00
Chimney breasts	£350.00 for engineer £1000.00 for building works.
Dampness	£2000.00 for obviously damp areas, but it would be better to strip back and reline all ground floor walls with insulation backed boards in which case the cost is likely to be circa £5000.00

Further investigations

Further investigations should be obtained prior to legal commitment to purchase the property (see 'What to do now')

Obtain reports and quotations in respect of the matters raised above.

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D

About the property

Type of property	Detached house converted from a pair of semi detached houses
Approximate year the property was built	1850
Approximate year the property was extended	Not known
Approximate year the property was converted	N/A
Information relevant to flats and maisonettes	N/A

Accommodation

Lobby, inner hall, two reception rooms, kitchen, utility area and toilet.
Landing four bedrooms and a bathroom

Construction

The original two properties had a total frontage of about 27'6 and a depth of 26'3 with height to roof edge of about 15'6 at the south east corner increasing to about 17'6 at the rear due to the slope of the site. There is approximately a further 10' to the apex of the roof. This part of the property is believed to have had 18" thick stone front and side walls with a 9" brick rear wall all of which have been rendered at a later date. It is suspected that the window openings have been substantially enlarged and that the entrance doors have been repositioned.

The two properties appear to have been separated by front and rear chimney breasts and masonry walls. Cross walls divided each property into a reception room and kitchen, and two bedrooms. Stairs are likely to have been against the outside wall of each kitchen and separated from the kitchen and rear bedroom by partitions.

First floors joists appear to have depths of about 5" and 7" spanning short distances between internal and external walls and large approximately 9" x 9" structural timbers spanning the full width of each original reception rooms and the depth of the original kitchens.

The roof is covered with slates supported on approximately 3" x 3" rafters at about 16" centres. These are in turn supported by two rings of approximately 6" square longitudinal timbers spanning up to 9' between internal walls and four approximately 18' x 10" x 3" hip rafters.

The property appears to have been first extended by the construction of an outhouse with width of 12'0, depth of about 9'0 with a height of about 8'0 at the

Property address

D About the property

south east corner of the property. The walls are believed to have been of 4.5" brick construction that has later been rendered. There is a reinforced concrete roof. At some time the outhouse has been incorporated into the living accommodation.

At some later date the two storey south side projection has been constructed part being built off the outhouse. The roof is also finished with slates. The roof structure appears to be approximately 4" x 2.5" self-supporting rafters. The length of the unsupported rafters was not measured.

There then appears to have been a further extension to construct the entrance lobby the flat roof being finished with lead. The roof structure is hidden. The walls are believed to be solid blocks or bricks clad with slates

There has been a recent conservatory addition comprising of a dwarf rendered wall and timber frame with single glazing supporting a timber framed polycarbonate roof.

First floor roof edges are enclosed with timber gutter and soffit boards. Rain water goods are largely plastic. Some cast iron sections remain.

The original ground floors are believed to have been replaced probably with concrete or bitumen but none were seen. First floors appear to be finished with bitumen. It is possible that the bitumen has been used to level lime ash floors that would have been poured onto reeds laid over the joists in the original parts of the property. The side extension first floor is also finished with bitumen but how it is constructed could not be determined.

Doors and windows are largely of timber construction and have single glazing. Secondary glazing has been added in parts.

Floors and ceilings are finished with papered or painted plaster.

There is gas fired central and hot water heating provided by an Ideal Mexico boiler via steel panel radiators and a hot water cylinder.

Means of escape

Means of escape would be good provided that the first floor window openers, which were not tested, are operational.

Security

No particular risks were noted. The low former outbuilding roof provides easy access to the first floor rear windows.

Energy

Property address

D

About the property

We have not prepared the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). If we have seen the EPC, then we will report the 'Current' rating here. We have not checked this rating and so cannot comment on its accuracy. We are advised that the property's current energy performance, as recorded in the EPC, is:

Energy Efficiency Rating

The energy efficiency and environmental impact ratings are both F.
The projected ratings of B are considered unlikely to be easily achieved.

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About the property (continued)

Services

Gas

Mains Other

Electricity

Mains Other

Water

Mains Other

Drainage

Mains Other

Please see section K for more information about the energy efficiency of the property

Central heating

Gas Electric Solid fuel Oil None

Other services or energy sources (including feed-in tariffs)

None noted

Grounds

There are good sized grounds including a single garage. There is access to the rear garden from a shared side path.

Location

Situated in a small village about two miles from Loughborough.

Facilities

Local village amenities. Loughborough has most amenities.

Local environment

No particularly adverse factors noted. Some potential purchasers may be put off by the garage type property that is opposite.

Other local factors

No particularly adverse factors noted.

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E Outside the property

Limitations to inspection

There were no particular restrictions.

1 2 3 NI

E1 Chimney stacks	<p>There is a central brick chimney stack with three pots and cowl. Vegetation growing near to the top suggests that it requires repointing. Some of the brick faces appears to be disintegrating. Redundant flues can be capped and vented to help remove dampness from the property. The mortar at the juncture with the roof could be prone to fracturing and would best be replaced with metal.</p>	2
E2 Roof coverings	<p>The lead covering of the entrance lobby has fractured and should be replaced or repaired as soon as possible to prevent water ingress which is likely to decay the deck.</p> <p>Plastic linings suggest that the pitched roof surfaces have been replaced in relatively recent years.</p> <p>It is suspected that several slates on the front elevation and a number of the slates at the bottom of the rear elevation do not sit correctly and would benefit from adjustment to ensure that they remain water tight.</p> <p>The concrete roof flat roof covering appears to be satisfactory.</p>	2
E3 Rainwater pipes and gutters	<p>The rear gutter undulates and should be re-laid at a consistent fall to avoid spillage. It may also be possible to raise it closer to the roof edge. The downpipes that cross the walls from front to rear of the property are unsightly.</p>	2
E4 Main walls	<p>The types and locations of damp proof courses, if there are any, could not be identified. The former outhouse walls are below the ground level on both sides and the reception room floor is likely to be at if not below ground level on the front elevation which will encourage penetrating dampness. The rendering of the walls to ground level may assist rising dampness.</p> <p>The property is believed to have solid external walls that will be cold and prone to condensation. The single skin walls of the utility and toilet areas will be particularly cold and prone to condensation. They will also require careful maintenance to ensure that they remain water tight.</p> <p>Minor fracturing on the south elevation and of the utility and toilet walls is unlikely to be significant. There have been minor losses of the rendering on the side of the lobby and at the north east corner of the property.</p> <p>It could not be determined if lintels have been installed above the enlarged window openings. Precautions are likely to be required if the frames are removed. Replacement frames are likely to require specialist manufacturing or installation of steel lintels if not already present to</p>	2

Property address

E

Outside the property

ensure that the areas of walls above the openings are properly supported.

The uneven render gives the property a poor appearance. Improvement will be difficult. You should ensure that if the render is replaced any replacement will allow the wall to breathe and not contain moisture within it.

E5 Windows	The windows require comprehensive repair and redecoration, particularly the rear window frame in the utility area which is badly decayed. It will be difficult to achieve a high quality finish to repairs. Most would want to replace all the windows with modern double glazed equivalents. The openers were not tested as the timber is prone to swelling which makes them difficult to shut without a risk of breaking the glass.	2
E6 Outside doors (including patio doors)	No significant defects were noted. The large glazing panels in the dining room to conservatory doors and side panels should be replaced with one that have toughened glass to reduce the risk of injury to anybody falling against them.	2
E7 Conservatory and porches	The timber frame particular the sill requires early attention to prevent the onset of serious decay. Putty requires replacement to prevent water sitting behind it and causing decay. Most potential purchasers would want to replace the conservatory with a modern equivalent.	2
E8 Other joinery and finishes	There are slight gaps in the roof edge enclosing timbers at the rear of the property that may attract insects.	1
E9 Other	None noted	NI

Property address

F Inside the property

Limitations to inspection

All floor surfaces were covered. Small areas of first floor covering were lifted to identify the type of floor finish.

1 2 3 NI

F1
Roof structure

There is evidence of beetle infestations of some of the timbers in the main roof void. They are likely to be extinct as they are seldom successful once the wood dries. It would however be prudent to treat them as a precaution.

1

The provision of additional rafters adjacent to the originals suggest that some of the hidden parts may have been in poor condition perhaps due to moisture sitting on them or beetles. There was no evidence that the structure is distressed at present.

The hips rafters are supported by timbers struts that bear into the chimney structure. One of the longitudinal ring of timbers also bears into the chimney breast. It is doubtful that the bearing of the timbers into the chimney structure would meet current regulations due to the risk of damage from heat. There was no evidence that the timbers are distressed at present.

Redundant timber and felt liners on the underside of the rafters should be removed to allow the timbers to be ventilated as this helps reduce the risk of condensation.

There was no evidence of a significant problem with condensation in the roof void but it would be preferable if ventilation could be provided from the roof edges particularly if the enclosing timbers are replaced.

F2
Ceilings

No significant defects were noted but some may be dated and may be prone to collapse due to age particular if decoration is disturbed.

1

Head room is low above the utility area steps.

Unless insulated the concrete roof of the utility area is likely to be particular cold and prone to condensation.

F3
Walls and partitions

Dampness was noted in the utility and toilet area walls that are below the kitchen floor and high ground levels. It would be preferable if these areas were lined with a water resistant membrane before re-plastering.

3

Dampness was also noted in all the skirting boards of the kitchen and in the dining room particularly near to the chimney breast and adjacent cupboard.

Then base of others walls appeared to be dry but the property is occupied by an elderly lady and may be kept much warmer than if others occupied the property.

Property address

F

Inside the property

Consideration should be given to removing the plaster from all internal walls and lining them with insulation backed plasterboard. This would have the potential advantages of containing dampness, salts and other contaminants within the walls that may encourage dampness and moving the condensation point away from the surface to within the wall structure. As the walls are probably of random rubble construction chemical injection types damp proof course are unlikely to be successful.

A wall and chimney breasts have been removed to combine the previously separate front reception rooms. The profile of the ceiling suggests that a lintel has been installed to hold up the wall that divides the front bedrooms, parts of the front chimney breasts and the floor structures. This work would have required building regulation consent.

A wall has also been removed to create or enlarge the opening from lounge to dining room. It is presumed but could not be confirmed that a lintel has been installed above the opening to support the wall between the northern bedrooms and also the floor structure of the north east bedroom. There was no evidence that the first floor walls and floors which are above are distressed.

Most would want to line the utility and toilet areas with insulation backed lining.

F4
Floors No significant defects were noted.

1

F5
Fireplaces, chimney
breasts and flues

The chimney breasts have been removed from the front reception room and front bedrooms. The west corners of the roof void sections of the chimney breasts appear to be supported on steel lintels spanning from the wall that divides the front bedrooms to the wall that divide the bedrooms from the landing and north east bedroom. It is doubtful that the bearing for the steel meets regulations although there is no evidence that the walls are distressed. The position of the lintels is such that they provide limited support to the chimneys.

3

The rear section of the chimney breast is supported by the replacement chimney breast constructed in the lounge and corner of the north west bedroom. The northern side of the centre of the chimney breast appears to be supported by a steel band that rests on the steel lintel and front bedroom dividing wall. Support is limited and the suitability of the steel band doubtful. There is no such support for the southern side. Support to both sides of the chimney breast is also provided by some boards that bear on the bedroom dividing wall and some ceiling joists.

The arrangements appear to be defective and there has been some fracturing of the chimney breast in this area. It is considered likely that some additional support will be required particularly for the central section of the front chimney breasts. It may be possible to pass an additional steel lintel through the middle of the chimney breast so that it bears on the two existing lintels and front bedroom dividing wall.

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F

Inside the property

It is doubtful that the arrangement for supporting the chimney breasts would meet current regulations. You are advised to seek the opinion of an engineer before exchange of contracts as to how the support of the chimneys may be improved.

The interior of the flues is likely to be in poor condition due to attack from condensates of combustion over the years. You are advised against using the boiler or open fire unless the flues have steel liners to contain fumes and prevent further deterioration of the interior of the flues.

F6 Built-in fittings (e.g. wardrobes)	No significant defects noted. Most would want to update them.	1
F7 Woodwork (e.g. staircase and joinery)	No significant defects noted. Beware that the large gaps in the landing rails could trap a child's head.	1
F8 Bathroom and kitchen fittings	No significant defects noted. Most would want to update them.	1
F9 Other	None noted.	NI

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Services are generally hidden within the construction of the property. This means that we can only inspect the visible parts of the available services, and we do not carry out specialist tests. The visual inspection cannot assess the services to make sure they work efficiently and safely, or meet modern standards.

Limitations to inspection

There were no particular restrictions.

1 2 3 NI

- G1 *Safety warning: The Electrical Safety Council recommends that you should get a registered electrician to check the property and its electrical fittings at least every ten years, or on change of occupancy. All electrical installation work undertaken after 1 January 2005 should have appropriate certification. For more advice contact the Electrical Safety Council.*

Electricity

The meter and consumer unit is in the utility area. The vendor advises that the system has a serious fault and casual inspection suggests that it is many years old. The property is likely to require complete rewiring. Quotations to bring the system up to standard should be obtained before exchange of contracts.

3

- G2 *Safety warning: All gas and oil appliances and equipment should regularly be inspected, tested, maintained and serviced by a registered 'competent person' and in line with the manufacturer's instructions. This is important to make sure that the equipment is working correctly, to limit the risk of fire and carbon monoxide poisoning, and to prevent carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from leaking into the air. For more advice contact the Gas Safe Register for gas installations, and OFTEC for oil installations.*

Gas/oil

The meter is in the utility area. No significant defects noted but due to the age of the property have the system tested before exchange of contracts.

1

- G3 Vendor advises that the stop tap is adjacent to the ground floor toilet. The need to unscrew boxing is likely to be problematic in the event of an emergency.

Water

There are tree metal tanks in the roof void. They appear to be in poor condition and should be replaced with plastic ones.

2

- G4 No significant defects were noted but the system is believed to be thirty years old or so. The boiler is likely to be approaching life expiry and will not be as efficient as modern equivalents. Parts may be hard to obtain. Unless seen in operation and having a satisfactory service record then have it tested before exchange of contracts. In order to meet current regulation in respect of flues the boiler is likely to have to be relocated when replaced increasing costs.

Heating

1

- G5 From the boiler via a cylinder. No significant defects were noted but unless seen in operation and having a satisfactory service record then have it tested before exchange of contracts.

Water heating

1

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G

Services

G6 Drainage	No significant defects were noted to the visible above ground drainage. No inspection covers noted. This may make access to the system difficult in the event of a blockage.	1
G7 Common services	None noted.	NI
G8 Other services/features	None noted.	NI

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Limitations to inspection

There were no particular restrictions.

1 2 3 NI

H1
Garage(s) No significant defects noted. There are some minor beetle infestations. They are probably extinct but it would be prudent to treat them. The low lip on the floor slab may allow water to enter when it rains heavily or the wind drives the rain. A minor fracture at the head of the south wall is believed to be caused by shrinkage of a mortar packing. 1

H2
Permanent outbuildings and other structures The sill of the front door canopy is deteriorating because the downpipe empties onto it. It should be relatively simple to adjust the gutter so that it drains into the nearby hopper. 2

H3
Other There is an unguarded drop from the rear terrace and the front path is very uneven. 1

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Issues for your legal advisers

We do not act as the legal adviser and will not comment on any legal documents. However, if during the inspection we identify issues that your legal advisers may need to investigate further, these will be listed and explained in this section (for example, check whether there is a warranty covering replacement windows). You should show your legal advisers this section of the report.

I1 Regulations	<p>Confirm that the removal of the internal walls and chimney breasts comply with local authority requirements.</p> <p>The integration of the single skin former outbuilding into the living accommodation would not comply with modern regulations but is believed to be historic.</p>
I2 Guarantees	<p>None known.</p>
I3 Other matters	<p>Rights and obligations in respect of the shared entry path.</p> <p>An apparent interlock of the north boundary with the adjacent property. The northern face of garage projects beyond facer of adjacent property's house wall.</p> <p>Drains could be shared with others in which case maintenance of such parts is likely to be the responsibility of the water company.</p>

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Risks

This section summarises defects and issues that present a risk to the building or grounds, or a safety risk to people. These may have been reported and condition rated against more than one part of the property or may be of a more general nature, having existed for some time and which cannot reasonably be changed.

Risks to the building	J1 Dampness. Poor support of the front chimneys in the attic.
Risks to the grounds	J2 Driving or heavy rain may enter under the garage door.
Risks to people	J3 Electrical system. Large glazing panels. Unguarded drops.
Other risks or hazards	J4 None noted.

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K Energy efficiency

This section describes energy related matters for the property as a whole. It takes account of a broad range of energy related features and issues already identified in the previous sections of this report, and discusses how they may be affected by the condition of the property.

This is not a formal energy assessment of the building but part of the report that will help you get a broader view of this topic. Although this may use information obtained from an available EPC, it does not check the certificate's validity or accuracy.

K1 Insulation	The walls have very limited insulation and will be cold, particularly the single skin walls of the utility and toilet areas. Large areas of the roof pitched roof void have only modest levels insulation. The amount of insulation if any in the various flat roofs could not be determined.
K2 Heating	The system is likely to be very inefficient compared to modern equivalents due to a relatively inefficient boiler and poor thermostatic control.
K3 Lighting	Existing bulbs are inefficient compared to modern equivalents.
K4 Ventilation	There is no evidence of mechanical ventilation. Any redundant flues in the rear chimney breasts could be used for free passive stack ventilation.
K5 General	None noted.

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Surveyor's declaration

"I confirm that I have inspected the property and prepared this report."

Signature

Surveyor's RICS number Qualifications

For and on behalf of

Company

Address

Town County

Postcode Phone number

Website Fax number

Email

Property address

Client's name Date this report was produced

RICS Disclaimers

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Please read the 'Description of the RICS Building Survey Service' (at the end of this report) for details of what is, and is not, inspected.

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If you are a prospective or current home owner who has chosen an RICS Home Survey you should carefully consider the findings, condition ratings and risks stated in this report.

Getting quotations

You should obtain reports and at least two quotations for all the repairs and further investigations that the surveyor has identified. These should come from experienced contractors who are properly insured. You should also:

- ask them for references from people they have worked for;
- describe in writing exactly what you will want them to do; and
- get the contractors to put the quotations in writing.

Some repairs will need contractors with specialist skills and who are members of regulated organisations (for example, electricians, gas engineers or plumbers). Some work may also need you to get Building Regulations permission or planning permission from your local authority. Your surveyor may be able to help.

Further investigations

If the surveyor is concerned about the condition of a hidden part of the building, could only see part of a defect or does not have the specialist knowledge to assess part of the property fully, the surveyor may have recommended that further investigations should be carried out (for example, by structural engineers or arboriculturists) to discover the true extent of the problem.

Who you should use for these further investigations

Specialists belonging to different types of organisation will be able to do this. For example, qualified electricians can belong to five different government-approved schemes. If you want further advice, please contact your surveyor.

What the further investigations will involve

This will depend on the type of problem, but to do this properly, parts of the home may have to be disturbed. If you are a prospective purchaser, you should discuss this matter with the current owner. In some cases, the cost of investigation may be high.

This guidance does not claim to provide legal advice. You should consult your legal advisers before entering into any binding contract or purchase.

The service

The RICS Building Survey Service includes:

- a thorough inspection of the property (see 'The inspection'); and
- a detailed report based on the inspection (see 'The report').

The surveyor who provides the RICS Building Survey Service aims to:

- help you make a reasoned and informed decision when purchasing the property, or when planning for repairs, maintenance or upgrading the property;
- provide detailed advice on condition;
- describe the identifiable risk of potential or hidden defects;
- where practicable and agreed, provide an estimate of costs for identified repairs; and
- make recommendations as to any further actions or advice which need to be obtained before committing to purchase.

Any extra services provided that are not covered by the terms and conditions of this report must be covered by a separate contract.

The inspection

The surveyor carefully and thoroughly inspects the inside and outside of the main building and all permanent outbuildings, recording the construction and defects (both major and minor) that are evident. This inspection is intended to cover as much of the property as physically accessible. Where this is not possible an explanation is provided in the 'Limitations to inspection' box in the relevant sections of the report.

The surveyor does not force or open up the fabric without owner consent, or if there is a risk of causing personal injury or damage. This includes taking up fitted carpets, fitted floor coverings or floorboards, moving heavy furniture, removing the contents of cupboards, roof spaces, etc., removing secured panels and/or hatches or undoing electrical fittings. The under-floor areas are inspected where there is safe access.

If necessary, the surveyor carries out parts of the inspection when standing at ground level from adjoining public property where accessible. This means the extent of the inspection will depend on a range of individual circumstances at the time of inspection, and the surveyor judges each case on an individual basis.

The surveyor uses equipment such as a damp-meter, binoculars and a torch, and uses a ladder for flat roofs and for hatches no more than 3m above level ground (outside) or floor surfaces (inside) if it is safe to do so.

The surveyor also carries out a desk-top study and makes oral enquiries for information about matters affecting the property.

Services to the property

Services are generally hidden within the construction of the property. This means that only the visible parts of the available services can be inspected, and the surveyor does not carry out specialist tests other than through their normal operation in everyday use. The visual inspection cannot assess the efficiency or safety of electrical, gas or other energy sources; the plumbing, heating or drainage installations (or whether they meet current regulations); or the internal condition of any chimney, boiler or other flue. Intermittent faults of services may not be apparent on the day of inspection.

Outside the property

The surveyor inspects the condition of boundary walls, fences, permanent outbuildings and areas in common (shared) use. To inspect these areas, the surveyor walks around the grounds and any neighbouring public property where access can be obtained. Where there are restrictions to access, these are reported and advice is given on any potential underlying risks that may require further investigation.

Buildings with swimming pools and sports facilities are treated as permanent outbuildings and therefore are inspected, but the surveyor does not report on the leisure facilities, such as the pool itself and its equipment internally and externally, landscaping and other facilities (for example, tennis courts and temporary outbuildings).

Flats

When inspecting flats, the surveyor assesses the general condition of outside surfaces of the building, as well as its access and communal areas (for example, shared hallways and staircases) and roof spaces, but only if they are accessible from within the property or communal areas. The surveyor also inspects (within the identifiable boundary of the flat) drains, lifts, fire alarms and security systems, although the surveyor does not carry out any specialist tests other than through their normal operation in everyday use.

Dangerous materials, contamination and environmental issues

The surveyor makes enquiries about contamination or other environmental dangers. If the surveyor suspects a problem, he or she recommends further investigation.

The surveyor may assume that no harmful or dangerous materials have been used in the construction, and does not have a duty to justify making this assumption. However, if the inspection shows that these materials have been used, the surveyor must report this and ask for further instructions.

The surveyor does not carry out an asbestos inspection and does not act as an asbestos inspector when inspecting properties that may fall within the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. With flats, the surveyor assumes that there is a 'dutyholder' (as defined in the regulations), and that in place are an asbestos register and an effective management plan which does not present a significant risk to health or need any immediate payment. The surveyor does not consult the dutyholder.

The report

The surveyor produces a report of the results of inspection for you to use, but cannot accept any liability if it is used by anyone else. If you decide not to act on the advice in the report, you do this at your own risk. The report is aimed at providing you with a detailed understanding of the condition of the property to allow you to make an informed decision on serious or urgent repairs, and on maintenance of a wide range of issues reported. Purely cosmetic and minor maintenance defects that have no effect on performance might not be reported. The report is not a warranty.

The report is in a standard format and includes the following sections.

- A Introduction to the report
- B About the inspection
- C Overall assessment and summary of the condition ratings
- D About the property
- E Outside the property
- F Inside the property
- G Services
- H Grounds (including shared areas for flats)
- I Issues for your legal advisers
- J Risks
- K Energy efficiency
- L Surveyor's declaration
 - What to do now
 - Description of the RICS Building Survey Service
 - Typical house diagram

Condition ratings

The surveyor gives condition ratings to the main parts (the 'elements') of the main building, garage and some outside elements. The condition ratings are described as follows:

Condition rating 3 – defects that are serious and/or need to be repaired, replaced or investigated urgently.

Condition rating 2 – defects that need repairing or replacing but are not considered to be either serious or urgent. The property must be maintained in the normal way.

Condition rating 1 – no repair is currently needed. The property must be maintained in the normal way.

NI – not inspected.

Continued...

The surveyor notes in the report if it was not possible to check any parts of the property that the inspection would normally cover. If the surveyor is concerned about these parts, the report tells you about any further investigations that are needed.

The surveyor may report on the cost of any work to put right defects (where agreed), but does not make recommendations on how these repairs should be carried out. However, there is general advice in the 'What to do now' section at the end of the report.

Energy

The surveyor has not prepared the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) as part of the RICS Building Survey Service for the property. If the surveyor has seen the current EPC, he or she will provide the Energy Efficiency Rating in this report, but will not check the rating and so cannot comment on its accuracy. Where possible and appropriate, the surveyor will include additional commentary on energy related matters for the property as a whole in the K Energy efficiency section of the report, but this is not a formal energy assessment of the building.

Issues for legal advisers

The surveyor does not act as 'the legal adviser' and does not comment on any legal documents. If, during the inspection, the surveyor identifies issues that your legal advisers may need to investigate further, the surveyor may refer to these in the report (for example, check whether there is a warranty covering replacement windows).

The report has been prepared by a surveyor ('the Employee') on behalf of a firm or company of surveyors ('the Employer'). The statements and opinions expressed in the report are expressed on behalf of the Employer, who accepts full responsibility for these.

Without prejudice and separately to the above, the Employee will have no personal liability in respect of any statements and opinions contained in this report, which shall at all times remain the sole responsibility of the Employer to the exclusion of the Employee.

In the case of sole practitioners, the surveyor may produce the report in his or her own name unless the surveyor operates as a sole trader limited liability company.

To the extent that any part of this notification is a restriction of liability within the meaning of the Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977 it does not apply to death or personal injury resulting from negligence.

If the property is leasehold, the surveyor gives you general advice and details of questions you should ask your legal advisers. This general advice is given in the 'Leasehold properties advice' document.

Risks

This section summarises defects and issues that present a risk to the building or grounds, or a safety risk to people. These may have been reported and condition rated against more than one part of the property or may be of a more general nature, having existed for some time and which cannot reasonably be changed.

Standard terms of engagement

1 The service – the surveyor provides only the standard RICS Building Survey Service ('the service') described here, unless you and the surveyor agree in writing before the inspection that the surveyor will provide extra services. Any extra service will require separate terms of engagement to be entered into with the surveyor. Examples of extra services include:

- plan drawing;
- schedules of works;
- re-inspection;
- detailed specific issue reports;
- market valuation and re-instatement cost; and
- negotiation.

2 The surveyor – the service is to be provided by an AssocRICS, MRICS or FRICS member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, who has the skills, knowledge and experience to survey and report on the property.

3 Before the inspection – this period forms an important part of the relationship between you and the surveyor. The surveyor will use reasonable endeavours to contact you regarding your particular concerns about the property and explain (where necessary) the extent and/or limitations of the inspection and report. The surveyor also carries out a desk-top study to understand the property better

4 Terms of payment – you agree to pay the surveyor's fee and any other charges agreed in writing.

5 Cancelling this contract – you are entitled to cancel this contract by giving notice to the surveyor's office at any time before the day of the inspection. The surveyor does not provide the service (and reports this to you as soon as possible) if, after arriving at the property, the surveyor decides that:

- (a) he or she lacks enough specialist knowledge of the method of construction used to build the property; or
- (b) it would be in your best interests to have an RICS HomeBuyer Report or an RICS Condition Report, rather than the RICS Building Survey.

If you cancel this contract, the surveyor will refund any money you have paid for the service, except for any reasonable expenses. If the surveyor cancels this contract, he or she will explain the reason to you.

6 Liability – the report is provided for your use, and the surveyor cannot accept responsibility if it is used, or relied upon, by anyone else.

Complaints handling procedure

The surveyor will have an RICS-compliant complaints handling procedure and will give you a copy if you ask.

Note: These terms form part of the contract between you and the surveyor.

This diagram illustrates where you may find some of the building elements referred to in the report.

