

JOHN SPARKS
CHARTERED SURVEYOR

**GENERAL NOTES AND CONDITIONS RELATING TO BUILDING SURVEYS
(Level 3) PREPARED PRIOR TO PURCHASE ON RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY**

Details of the service are described below but under the RICS "Home Survey Standard" published in 2019 chartered surveyors are required to categorize pre purchase survey reports into one of three levels: 1, 2& 3. The aim is to provide the general public with a more consistent level of service/reporting and to enable purchaser to "benchmark" the services offered. Under this scheme my Building Survey is classed as a "Level 3" service which is the most detailed. The definition of this service/Level as outlined by the RICS can be found on Page 22 & 23 of that pdf at <https://www.rics.org/globalassets/rics-website/media/qualify/home-survey-standard-pdf.pdf>. (There is a link to this document on the Links Page of my web site)

In my Building Survey I shall prepare a full written report on the property, which will provide a general description of its situation, accommodation and construction. It will comment on the structural condition with notes on the defects that exist, or are anticipated in concealed areas. The repairs necessary to remedy these defects will also be covered. I shall indicate where in my opinion works of a precautionary nature are required to prevent problems occurring in the foreseeable future.

An indication of the likely costs of the major essential repairs may be included but this is intended to be used for rough guidance purposes only and it is important that detailed estimates are obtained from reputable local building contractors so that you are fully aware of any liability prior to commitment to purchase.

Prior to inspection a brief desk top study will be made by reference to the internet. Typical checks made will be by reference to flood maps, soil conditions, local authority planning portal (Building Regulations and Planning **for that property** where available but not in respect of proposals in the immediate area unless these are already known to me), listed building/conservation areas status. The results of these basic investigations will be considered when inspecting and reporting. Issues of concern will be drawn to your attention but these basic checks should not be considered as a substitute for your solicitors' environmental searches and standard checks regarding Planning and Building Regulation matters. If the vendor is present at the time of inspection they will be asked questions regarding the past history of the building and the area.

If I have local knowledge of the past use of the site this information will be brought to your attention but no tests or investigations will be carried out in respect of past uses of the site. Consequently I can give no assurances that the site has not been contaminated or polluted in some way. The environmental search provided by your solicitor will give very basic information concerning this aspect. Unless otherwise stated it will be assumed that no deleterious or hazardous materials or techniques have been used in the construction of the property. If I see materials in the property where I believe they may contain asbestos this will be drawn to your attention but no tests will be carried out to establish the presence or otherwise of asbestos within the property. In the event that there are any communal parts to the property I will not act as an asbestos inspector when inspecting properties that may fall within the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

I will carry out as detailed inspection of the property as is reasonably possible, and gain access to all areas where this will not involve damage either to the structure, or to any of the furnishings. If the property is furnished my inspection of certain areas will be limited. This applies particularly to the floors, if there are carpets fitted or tiles which cannot reasonably be raised. Exposed varnished floorboards can also easily be damaged/marked. These will not be raised if I consider there to be an unacceptable risk of damage.

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Small items of furniture will be moved, if this is possible, but larger wardrobes, sideboards etc, will not be moved. It is not possible to raise tongue-and-groove boarding without cutting the boards and accordingly this type of boarding will not be raised during my inspection unless there are existing traps readily accessible. Kitchen units that are fixed to the walls often have timber backs and bases, which conceal the wall and floor surface.

If I suspect any defect to these hidden areas from other evidence available, this will be indicated in my report, together with the recommendations concerning areas that I consider should be opened up for further examination. Such work, however, is subject to the approval of the vendor.

My inspection will not include excavations to examine the foundations and walls below ground level. This would involve breaking up of external paving and also internal floors in some cases, which would be unacceptable to the vendor. My inspection of the structure above ground level should indicate, in most cases, if any significant movement has occurred to these foundations. If defects are suspected further investigation may be recommended to include the digging of trial holes.

My equipment includes a 3.8m (12') portable ladder but in some cases this will not allow the close inspection of certain areas, particularly felt roofs over two-storey extensions or dormer windows. During my inspection however, I can usually gain sufficient evidence to indicate whether or not defects are likely to exist in these areas. If this is the case, I will recommend that further investigations be carried out using a long ladder supplied by a building contractor. I do have access to a ladder of about 5.75m (19') which can safely reach heights of about 12' but this is not carried as standard and will only be used if I have been notified about exceptionally tall ceiling heights and the use has been agreed with client well in advance of the inspection. Ultimately it is at the surveyor's discretion when on site as to what can be safely done and what cannot.

The survey will include a visual examination of the services as far as this is possible, but large areas are likely to be concealed from view. It is not possible for me to comment in detail upon the condition of the services, as this will require the advice of specialist contractors who are able to carry out the necessary tests. If defects are suspected I shall recommend that a test be carried out. A brief visual inspection will be made of built-in electrical/gas appliances, but these will not be tested. If further assurances are required regarding these then it will be necessary to arrange for the specialist inspections. Burglar alarms and other electronic security or communication systems are specifically excluded from my inspection.

I will comment on the construction and usability of outbuildings, pavings and fences, and indicate any obvious major repairs that are required. A building survey will not be carried out to these areas unless specifically requested or where I consider it may affect the main body of the building. For the purposes of my report I will assume that no high alumina cement concrete or calcium chloride additive or other deleterious materials have been used in the construction of the building.

If invasive plants such as Japanese knotweed are noted (may be hard to spot in winter months) on the site or on land close by during the course of my inspection this will be outlined in the report but no specific checks or searches of the site or surrounding land will be made for these plants and therefore unless otherwise stated I will be unable to confirm the presence or otherwise of such species as part of this service.

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Any significant breaches of planning, Building Regulations or listed building matters that relate to the subject property observed during my inspection will be brought to your attention. Issues relating to town planning proposals for road improvement schemes in the area as a whole are not covered as part of this report. I would point out that the essential written enquiries to be made by your solicitor may not indicate the existence of planning permission or an application for permission to extend or alter neighbouring properties. Therefore, to be certain that you are fully aware of such matters, a visit to the local authority planning offices to inspect the planning register is recommended.

I will provide a current reinstatement cost assessment of the building for insurance purposes by reference to the standard *BCIS Guide to House Rebuilding Costs* tables where the type of constructions used is covered by these tables. In the case of unusual properties or period timber frame houses not covered by these tables a recommendation will be made that that a detailed assessment of the rebuilding cost using an elemental cost approach should be made as soon as possible by a quantity surveyor or building surveyor who has access to the relevant current costings for specialist properties of the type concerned.

An inspection will be made as early as possible and you will normally receive a brief telephone report immediately thereafter. In most instances the written report should follow about one week later. The telephone call is only given for general guidance. You should not exchange contracts until you have had time to read and fully consider the contents of the written report. **Electronic copies of the report will not be released** as the report is designed to be read in paper format with some full sized sketches on the page opposite where a subject is being explained. If you have any inquiries regarding the terms and conditions of the report or have any specific additional requirements relating to the survey please let me know before the inspection is made so that they can be accommodated.

In accordance with R.I.C.S. requirements all reports are covered by a professional indemnity insurance policy which is bound by an Alternative Dispute Resolution System provided by *the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR)*. A complaints handling procedure is also in place and further details relating to both the matters can be provided on request.

The report is prepared for the sole use of the named clients and their professional advisers. No liability can accepted if it is used by anyone else. If the advice contained in the report is not acted on then no responsibility is accepted for the consequences. While it would be my intention that the report is confidential to you and your professional advisers, as an RICS member, I may be required to disclose the report to RICS Regulation as part of its work to ensure that RICS professional standards are being maintained.
