

Terms and Conditions of Engagement for Residential Building Survey (Level 3 Service)



Peter Collins Chartered Surveyor

Regulated by RICS

The terms on which this service will be undertaken are set out below.

Based on the inspection as defined below, the surveyor is a chartered surveyor who will provide you with a written report that describes their opinion of the visible condition and state of repair of the identified property. The surveyor will carry out their duties with the skill and care that can be reasonably expected from an experienced chartered surveyor.

Assumptions

Unless otherwise expressly agreed with the surveyor, while preparing the report the surveyor will assume that:

- the property (if for sale) is offered with vacant possession
- the property is connected to mains services with appropriate rights on a basis that is both known and acceptable to you; and
- access to the property is as of right based on terms both known and acceptable to you.

Dangerous materials, contamination and environmental issues

The surveyor makes no enquiries about contamination or other environmental dangers. If they suspect a problem, they will recommend further investigations.

The surveyor will assume that no harmful or dangerous materials have been used in the construction, and they do not have a duty to justify making this assumption. However, if the inspection shows that these materials have been used, the surveyor will report this.

The surveyor does 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 'dutyholder' (as defined in the Regulations), an asbestos register and an effective management plan all in place and none of these presents a significant risk to health or need any immediate payment. The surveyor does not consult the dutyholder.

The surveyor 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 the surveyor is concerned about lead pipes they can see, they may recommend a specialist inspection and report.

The surveyor will advise if the property is in an area where, based on information published by Public Health England, there is a risk of radon. In such cases, the surveyor may advise further tests to establish the precise radon level.

The surveyor will advise if there are transformer stations or overhead power lines that they can see during the normal course of the inspection. If present, they cannot assess any possible effect on health. For obvious reasons, the surveyor cannot report on any underground cables.

Consents, approvals and searches

The surveyor will assume 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.

The surveyor will assume 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, the surveyor will not verify whether these have been obtained but will identify where these consents may have been required. You should ask your legal adviser to follow up on these matters. The surveyor will not inspect drawings and specifications unless you specifically ask.

The surveyor will assume 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.

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 advisers) cannot use it without the surveyor's express written authority. Any other persons rely on the report at their own risk.

As an RICS member, the surveyor may be required to disclose the report to RICS Regulation as part of its work to ensure that RICS professional standards are being maintained.

Complaints

The surveyor shall do their very best to provide you with an excellent service. However, if you believe that you have cause for complaint, PCCS has a complaints procedure, a copy of which can be given to you on request.

General Description of Level 3 Service (Building Survey)

The level of 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 the surveyor will spend a considerable time at the property.

The surveyor will closely inspect all parts of the dwelling and 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, they will try to identify these and explain the risk they pose and what action you should take. Recommendations for further investigations will usually be the exception.

This level of service will suit any domestic residential property in any condition, depending on the competence and experience of the practitioner.

The Level 3 Inspection

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

Windows

The surveyor will attempt to open the majority of the windows.

Roof spaces

The surveyor will carry out an inspection of roof spaces that are not more than 3 meters above floor level using a ladder if it is safe and reasonable to do so. They will enter the roof space if it is accessible and visually inspect the roof structure with particular attention paid to those parts vulnerable to deterioration and damage.

Although the surveyor will not move thermal insulation, small corners will be lifted if it is considered safe so its thickness, type and the nature of the underlying ceiling can be identified and assessed. Where considered necessary, the permission of the owner will be sought to move a small number of lightweight possessions so a more thorough inspection can take place.

In recent years, the loft of many homes have been insulated with thick layers of thermal insulation. Usually, it is not safe to move across this material and this may restrict what the surveyor can look at in the roof space.

Floors

The surveyor will closely inspect the surfaces of exposed floors and will lift the corners of any loose and un-fitted carpets and other floor coverings where practicable. They will assess all floors for excessive deflection. Where the boards are lifted, the surveyor will look in the space beneath by way of an inverted 'head and shoulder' inspection. If it is safe to do so, they 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.

Furniture and occupiers possessions

The surveyor will move lightweight, easily movable, non-fitted items where practicable, safe and where the owner/occupier gives permission.

Services (for example, heating and hot and cold water)

The surveyor will not perform or comment on design calculations, or test the service installations or appliances but will observe the normal operation in everyday use. This usually means:

- operating lights and extractor fans where appropriate
- asking the owner/occupier to switch on the heating appliances/system
- where the surveyor considers it appropriate to the assessment of the service system, turning on water taps, filling and emptying sinks, baths, bidets and basins, and flushing toilets to observe the performance of visible pipework
- 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.

The surveyor 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.

The grounds

The surveyor will carry out a thorough visual inspection of the grounds, and, where necessary and appropriate, from adjoining public property. The 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.

The inspection will also include the inside and outside of all permanent outbuildings not attached to the main dwelling. This includes garages, summer houses, substantial greenhouses, follies and leisure buildings, but not the leisure facilities inside, for example swimming pools, saunas, fitness gyms, and so on.

Specific defective features and other matters associated with the grounds can be costly to resolve and may affect your purchase decision. Consequently, the surveyor will fully account for these. Examples include assessing retaining walls in danger of collapsing, deeply sunken paths or driveways, dilapidated boundary walls or fences and the legal and insurance implications.

The Level 3 Report

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

- 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
- describe obvious defects and state the identifiable risk of those that may be hidden
- outline remedial options and, if the surveyor considers it to be significant, explain the likely consequences if the repairs are not done
- propose a timescale for the necessary work including recommendations for further investigation prior to commitment to purchase (only where appropriate and necessary)
- discuss future maintenance of the property and identify those elements that may result in more frequent and/or more costly maintenance and repairs than would normally be expected
- identify the nature of risks of the parts that have not been inspected.

The surveyor will also make it clear that you should obtain any further advice and quotations recommended before you enter a legal commitment to buy the property.