



RICS Home Surveys

Survey level two: HomeBuyer report - Survey



Property address

Client's name

Date of inspection

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

In a world where more and more people, governments, banks and commercial organisations demand greater certainty of professional standards and ethics, attaining RICS status is the recognised mark of property professionalism.

Over 100,000 property professionals working in the major established and emerging economies of the world have already recognised the importance of securing RICS status by becoming members.

RICS is an independent professional body originally established in the UK by Royal Charter. Since 1868, RICS has been committed to setting and upholding the highest standards of excellence and integrity – providing impartial, authoritative advice on key issues affecting businesses and society.

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A

Introduction to the report

This HomeBuyer Report (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 HomeBuyer Report (Survey) aims to help you:

- make a reasoned and informed decision on whether to go ahead with buying the property
- take account of any repairs or replacements the property needs; and
- consider what further advice you should take before committing to purchase the property.

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

If you want to complain about the service, please refer to the complaints handling procedure in the 'Description of the RICS HomeBuyer (Survey) Service' at the back of this report.

B

About the inspection

Surveyor's Name

Dean Davidson

Surveyor's RICS number

5675994

Company name

Able Surveyors Limited

Date of inspection

24 September 2018

Report reference number**Related party disclosure**

I confirm that I have no personal or business connection with the vendor or agent involved in the proposed property transaction and that the opinion I give in this report is unbiased and based upon my knowledge and experience of this type of property and the full inspection of it undertaken for this report.

Full address and postcode of the property**Weather conditions when the inspection took place**

Dry and sunny

The status of the property when the inspection took place

Occupied

C

Overall opinion and summary of the condition ratings

We inspect the inside and outside of the main building and all permanent outbuildings, but we do not force or open up the fabric. We also inspect the parts of the electricity, gas/oil, water, heating and drainage services that can be seen, but we do not test them.

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 briefly 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). |
-

The report covers matters that, in the surveyor's opinion, need to be dealt with or may affect the value of the property.


Important note: We carry out only a visual inspection. This means that we do not take up carpets, floor coverings or floorboards, move furniture or remove the contents of cupboards. Also, we do not remove secured panels or undo electrical fittings.

We 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.

We inspect the roof structure from inside the roof space if there is access (although we do not move or lift insulation material, stored goods or other contents). We examine floor surfaces and under-floor spaces so far as there is safe access to these (although we do not move or lift furniture, floor coverings or other contents). We are not able to assess the condition of the inside of any chimney, boiler or other flues.

We note in our report if we are not able to check any parts of the property that the inspection would normally cover. If we are concerned about these parts, the report will tell you about any further investigations that are needed.

We do not report on the cost of any work to put right defects or make recommendations on how these repairs should be carried out. Some maintenance and repairs we suggest may be expensive.

 Please read the 'Description of the RICS HomeBuyer Report Service' (at the back of this report) for details of what is, and is not, inspected.

C

Overall opinion and summary of the condition ratings (continued)

This section provides our overall opinion of the property, and summarises the condition ratings of the different elements of the property.

If an element is made up of a number of different parts (for example, a pitched roof to the main building and a flat roof to an extension), only the part in the worst condition is shown here.

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.

Our overall opinion of the property

This property is generally in reasonable condition. There have been repairs identified however and these are listed further on in the report.

It is essential that competitive estimates are obtained in respect of all repairs listed in this report and remedial work revealed by further investigations, before exchange of contracts, so that you are fully aware of your liability before proceeding.

This report must, however, be read as a whole and although we have stressed certain items that we consider to be essential repairs, other items mentioned in the report must not be ignored. We must advise you that should you decide to exchange contracts without obtaining estimates and without waiting for responses from your legal advisers with regard to matters raised in this report, you have to accept the risk of adverse matters that may come to light and result in a need for expenditure.

We have assumed that you are reasonably familiar with the property and its general nature and layout. Descriptive details have been kept to a minimum and we have focussed remarks on matters that are central to your consideration as to whether to purchase the property. We have not attempted to list every trivial or minor defect nor gone into great detail over the internal decorations.

This property offers reasonable size living accommodation for a three-bedroom property.

Ensure that the building is capable of being insured via a buildings insurance policy that includes adequate cover for subsidence and heave or damage to drains and foundations owing to the action of plants or trees nearby.

Confirm that insurance cover can be provided for an outbreak of Japanese knotweed, as this can affect the marketing of a house. There was no Japanese knotweed identified at time of inspection.

As stated in the limitations section of this report, many parts of the building such as foundations and sub floor areas are concealed during construction and we do not disturb these. For practical reasons it follows that we have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure that are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and we are therefore unable to report that any such part of the property is free from defect. We recommend further investigation by a damp and timber specialist to carry out an invasive survey, subject to the permission of the vendor, as this will be intrusive; with floor coverings and boards being removed.

C

Overall opinion and summary of the condition ratings (continued)

	Section of the report	Element number	Element name
3			
2	Section of the report	Element number	Element name
	E: Outside the property	E5	Windows
	F: Inside the property	F7	Woodwork
		F8	Bathroom fittings
		F9	Other
G: Services	G4	Heating	
1	Section of the report	Element number	Element name
	E: Outside the property	E2	Roof coverings
		E3	Rainwater pipes and gutters
		E4	Main walls
		E6	Outside doors (including patio doors)
		E8	Other joinery and finishes
		E9	Others
	F: Inside the property	F2	Ceilings
		F3	Internal walls
		F4	Floors
		F6	Kitchen
	G: Services	G1	Electricity
		G3	Water
		G5	Water heating
		G6	Drainage
		G7	Common services

D

About the property

Type of property

Three bedroom flat

Approximate year the property was built

Circa 1990

Approximate year the property was extended

N/A

Approximate year the property was converted

N/A

Information relevant to flats and maisonettes

No items for consideration

Accommodation

Floor	Living rooms	Bed rooms	Bath or shower	Separate toilet	Kitchen	Utility room	Conser-vatory	Other	Name of other
Lower ground									
Ground	1			1				1	Hall
First		3	1		1			1	Landing
Second									
Third									
Other									
Roof space									

Construction

This property occupies part of the ground and first floors of a purpose built block. The block is a four-storey brick cavity construction and has a hipped style roof. The block is built out in areas to the front elevation and these areas have balconies. There are also recessed balconies. The ground floor is solid and the first floor is a suspended timber construction.

The flat is accessed via a communal entrance hall.

About the property (continued)

Energy

We have not prepared the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). If we have seen the EPC, then we will present the ratings here. We have not checked these ratings and so cannot comment on their accuracy.

We are advised that the property's current energy performance, as recorded in the EPC, is:

Energy Efficiency Rating

Currently 49 with potential to reach 71 with energy improvements.

Environmental impact rating

Currently 46 with potential to reach 53 with energy improvements.

Mains services

The marked boxes show that the mains services are present.

Gas

Electric

Water

Drainage

Central heating

Gas

Electric

Solid fuel

Oil

None

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

No items for consideration.

Grounds

The property occupies a plot that slopes downwards from left to right. There are tiled steps to the entrance doors.

Location

The property is in an established residential area and the immediate neighbourhood includes similar property types. The property is close to the town with local shops.

Facilities

The property is within reasonable distance of the usual amenities. Public transport is readily available and there are state schools within easy reach.

Local environment

We are not aware of adverse environmental factors. Your solicitor will be able to advise you as to any environmental issues through the searches.

It is not possible in the course of the inspection to determine whether radon is present in this building, as the gas is colourless and odourless. It is possible for radon tests to be carried out by an appropriate specialist organisation, but the tests should be carried out over a minimum three month period.

Although many properties are in a medium to high risk area with regards to ground conditions, this does

D

About the property (continued)

not necessarily mean a property will suffer from subsidence. You will need to manage the risk with adequate building insurance.

The flood risk from surface water is medium

Medium risk means that each year this area has a chance of flooding of between 1% and 3.3%. Flooding from surface water is difficult to predict, as rainfall location and volume are difficult to forecast.

Surface water flooding occurs when rainwater does not drain away through the normal drainage systems or soak into the ground, but lies on or flows over the ground instead.

Outside the property

Limitations to inspection

There were limited views to roof areas.

E1 Chimney stacks

1 2 3 NI

No items for consideration.

E2 Roof coverings

The main roof was inspected with the aid of binoculars. The roof is a traditional hipped style construction and has a covering of interlocking concrete tiles laid on timber battens, including half round ridge tiles bed in cement mortar.

1

The main tiled roof covering appeared to be in reasonable condition at this stage.

Experience shows that on-going maintenance and repair expenditure will be required to the roof. Maintenance and repair costs will be high due to the need to provide suitable and safe access. Annual maintenance is likely to have an impact on your budget and we therefore recommend you budget a sum with this in mind.

E3 Rainwater pipes and gutters

The gutters are of a uPVC variety, with half round guttering discharging rainwater from the main roof into uPVC downpipes on all elevations.

1

As it was not raining at the time of inspection it was not possible to confirm that gutter joints are completely watertight however there was no evidence to suggest that significant leakage is occurring.

uPVC guttering will expand and contract during changes of temperature and this will place stress on the gutter joints. Repairs are likely to be required from time to time to ensure that the guttering remains completely watertight.

The gutters must also be maintained regularly to remove leaves and other debris to keep them from clogging. Gutters that are filled with debris can overflow and soak the foundation, damage the roof structure and cause water leakage into the building as the water backs up. Clogged gutters can also lead to a build up of stagnant water, which allows mosquitoes to breed and also allows grasses and weeds to grow in the gutter.

Annual maintenance is likely to have an impact on your budget and we therefore recommend you budget a sum with this in mind.

E4 Main walls

The main external walls are brick cavity construction, brick or blockwork internally and plastered. There are no indications that the walls have been cavity insulated since being built.

1

The external walls are all perpendicular, generally secure and no signs of structural distress, subsidence or general disrepair were found.

All elevations are face brickwork laid in cement mortar and finished in stretcher bond, with soldier course detailing.

External walls can be subject to heavy driving rain and therefore need to be checked annually to ensure they are watertight especially around apertures. Annual maintenance is likely to have an impact on your budget and we therefore recommend you budget a sum with this in mind.

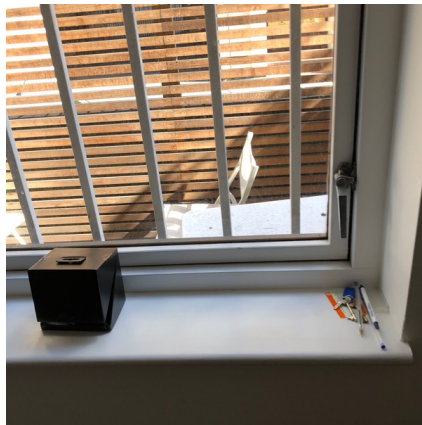
Outside the property (continued)

E5 Windows

This property has single-glazed timber casement windows in timber frames. These have locking handles and appeared to be functional.

2

The timber windows and frames have been reasonably well maintained. These will require regular maintenance and decoration approximately every five years to provide on-going weather protection.



All windows would benefit from being serviced due to age, wear and tear.

We highly recommend that all windows are serviced annually to ensure they are safe and functional. Annual maintenance is likely to have an impact on your budget and we therefore recommend you budget a sum with this in mind.

E6 Outside doors (including patio doors)

The main entrance has a timber door in a timber doorframe. This has a night latch and dead lock and appeared to be generally functional.

1

There are also three single-glazed timber doors in timber doorframes leading to the balconies, including the Juliet balcony. These have dead locks and appeared to be generally functional.

The timber doors and frames have been reasonably well maintained. These will require regular maintenance and decoration approximately every five years to provide on-going weather protection.

We highly recommend that all doors are serviced annually to ensure they are safe and functional. Annual maintenance is likely to have an impact on your budget and we therefore recommend you budget a sum with this in mind.

E7 Conservatory and porches

No items for consideration.

E8 Other joinery and finishes

The property has timber (assumed) fascia and soffits to all elevations.

1

The underside of the eaves is filled with a horizontal soffit board fixed at right angles to the wall. The soffit may be decorative but it also has the function of sealing the gap between the rafters from vermin and from the elements. The horizontal fascia board that caps the end of the rafters outside a building supports the gutter brackets.

The fascia and soffit boards have been maintained in reasonable condition. They require regular

E

Outside the property (continued)

decoration approximately every five years to provide on-going weather protection. Annual maintenance is likely to have an impact on your budget and we therefore recommend you budget a sum with this in mind.

E9 Other

There is a concrete framed balcony to the front elevation first floor. This has a metal framed safety rail with glass panels and appeared to be in reasonable condition at this stage.

1

There is also a balcony to the front ground floor. This has a timber decking terrace and timber panel fencing.

F

Inside the property

Limitations to inspection

The floors could not be fully inspected due to floor coverings. Not all areas could be inspected due to furniture and other belongings. We cannot rule out that some defects may come to light once stored items have been removed and floorcoverings lifted.

Many parts of the building such as foundations and sub floor areas are concealed during construction and we do not disturb these. For practical reasons it follows that we have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure that are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and we are therefore unable to report that any such part of the property is free from defect.

Any refurbishment of a building will inevitably expose parts of the structure currently hidden from view and so unseen defects requiring expenditure may come to light. It would therefore be prudent to include within your budget an additional sum of money for unexpected items.

F1 Roof structure

1 2 3 NI

No access to the roof structure.

NI

F2 Ceilings

The ceilings in the property are assumed to be plasterboard construction and are plastered to a smooth finish.

1

These appeared to be in reasonable condition and were generally secure with no evidence of impact damage or other disrepair.

Although some ceilings have minor cracks this is not unexpected in a property of this age and these are caused by vibrations and thermal movement. Repairs should be carried out as required before redecoration.

F3 Walls and partitions

The walls in the property are mainly plasterboard and are plastered to a smooth finish.

1

These generally appeared to be in reasonable condition and were all perpendicular, generally secure and showed no signs of distress.

Some walls had scuffmarks, hairline cracks and small dents due to wear and tear, which can be addressed as part of the internal decorations.

General notes for homeowners:

Condensation is simply the moisture caused by everyday living. Moisture is absorbed into the warm atmosphere of your house and when the house cools down the moisture condenses on cool surfaces. The result is condensation, an extremely underestimated cause of damage to homes and is almost certainly the most common form of dampness within a building.

Condensation is largely the result of improved standards of insulation, double glazing and draught proofing of properties that all give the benefit of better heat retention, but results in a lack of air ventilation, stale air and trapped moisture. Without regular ventilation, condensation often results in unhealthy living conditions with the possibility of unsightly black mould growth, peeling decorations, damage to clothing or fabrics and unpleasant musty damp smells within a property. In its severest form, a long-term condensation problem can result in permanent damage to plaster work and timbers in the home.

F

Inside the property (continued)

F4 Floors

The ground floor structure appeared to be solid concrete, which was fairly level and undisturbed.

1

The floor structure is timber with floor boarding supported by suspended timber joists.

Whilst every effort is made to check the floors, there are limitations to this survey as we are not at liberty or insured to remove furniture and floor coverings; and we are therefore unable to report that any such part of the floors are free from defect.

Where a heel test was applied, there was no excessive bounce to the floors. Detailed investigation of the floor structure was prohibited by the presence of floor coverings, which we were not at liberty to disturb.

F5 Fireplaces, chimney breasts and flues

No items for consideration.

F6 Built-in fittings (e.g. built-in kitchen and other fittings, not including appliances)

Kitchen

1



The kitchen units and components in general are showing wear and tear, but are functional.

F7 Woodwork (e.g. staircase and joinery)

Internal joinery includes stair parts, doors, frames, architraves and skirting boards. Skirting board is a board covering the lower wall and is usually moulded. It covers the uneven edge of a floor by a wall and also protects it from kicks, knocks and furniture. Architrave is usually a plain or elaborate moulding used to frame a doorway, panel, niche or window. Some of the door furniture is loose which will benefit from being killed or replaced.

2

This property benefits from profiled architrave and skirting. The internal doors are flush doors with door handles that are generally functional.

Kitchen

F

Inside the property (continued)



Glazed doors are considered unsafe, especially with young children.

Living Room



Glazed doors are considered unsafe, especially with young children.

F8 Bathroom and kitchen fittings

Bathroom

The bathroom has the following components: bath, wash hand basin, close-coupled WC, shower valve shower head attachment and shower screen.

2



The bathroom fittings and components in general are showing wear and tear, but are functional.

F

Inside the property (continued)



The mastic pointing is generally in poor condition and we recommend this be re-pointed with new mastic.

Separate Toilet

The WC has the following components: wash hand basin and close-coupled WC.



The WC fittings and components in general are showing wear and tear, but are functional.

F9 Other



This property would benefit from internal decorations.

2

G

Services

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

We are not qualified to give you any detailed reports on the services that are connected to this property and must emphasise that no formal tests have been dealt with. We have of course carried out visual checks and will comment as appropriate below, but if you require a detailed report or assurances as to the quality and condition of any of the services, further separate specialist inspection(s) will need to be commissioned. The choice of specialist(s) will be a matter for you, but they should be properly qualified in their field and should hold membership of an appropriate professional body. Your appointed specialist(s) will be able to guide you on any costs that may be necessary to bring the installation(s) into a proper state.

G1 Electricity *Safety warning: The Electrical Safety Council recommends that you should get a registered electrician to check the property and its electrical fittings and that a periodic inspection and testing is carried out at the following times: for tenanted properties every 5 years or at each change of occupancy, whichever is sooner; at least every 10 years for an owner-occupied home. All electrical installation work undertaken after 1 January 2005 should have appropriate certification. For more advice contact the Electrical Safety Council.*

1 2 3 NI



There is a mains supply and the electricity was on when we inspected. The consumer board is located in the hall and the electricity meter is cupboard under the stairs. The consumer unit is a relatively modern unit with miniature circuit breakers and RCD.

Please note: Although the electrics work and look safe, it does not mean that they are safe. The only way to be absolutely certain is for a qualified electrician to test the circuits and provide a Periodic Inspection Report.

1

This property has a variety of light fittings and there appeared to be adequate socket outlets.

G2 Gas/oil *Safety warning: All gas and oil appliances and equipment should regularly be inspected, tested, maintained and serviced by a appropriately qualified Gas Safe Engineer or Registered Heating Engineer and in line with the manufacturer's instructions. For tenanted properties by law a 12 monthly gas safety check must be carried out on every gas appliance/flue. A gas safety check will make sure gas fittings and appliances are safe to use. 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.*

No items for consideration.

G3 Water

There is a mains water supply to the property. The main stopcock is located in the Separate WC.

1

G4 Heating

Heating in the property is supplied by electric panel heaters.

We recommend these be tested by an electrician before use.

2

G

Services (continued)



Loose radiator to kitchen that needs securing.

G5 Water heating

Water heating is by electric immersion. Water is heated and stored in the hot water cylinder located in the hall cupboard. Water heats up overnight on cheaper rate electricity subject to agreement with the service provider.

1

G6 Drainage

The property has an underground foul and storm drain with a concealed soil and vent pipe. This appeared to be functional when inspected but was not tested.

1

G7 Common services

There are the following common services: a door entry system and communal lighting.

1

H

Grounds (including shared areas for flats)

Limitations to inspection

Limitations include visibility of the property and grounds where there is vegetation and shrubbery screening parts of the property, fencing; and landscape.

The findings of this survey are the result of a visual inspection only and should not be taken as a guarantee that knotweed is not present on this property or neighbouring properties.

The presence of Japanese knotweed can sometimes be concealed by property owners / occupiers either deliberately or by accident by way of: physical removal of the plants stems and crowns, mowing lawns or covering the knotweed area with turf, hard standing, landscape fabric, ornamental gravel, bark mulch and so on.

During the winter knotweed goes into temporary dormancy, leaving no viable material above ground. On larger, more mature stands, the dead canes remain in place and provide a clear visual marker of the plant's location. On younger or disturbed growth however, canes can fall over and be blown away, leaving no indication of knotweed whatsoever. For these reasons, we recommend conducting surveys during the growing season (where possible), where knotweed presence is much more evident.

H1 Garage

1 2 3 NI

No items for consideration.

H2 Other

No items for consideration.

H3 General

No items for consideration.

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, we may refer to these in the report (for example, check whether there is a warranty covering replacement windows).

I1 Regulation

No items for consideration.

I2 Guarantees

No items for consideration.

I3 Other matters

We have been told by the selling agents that the home is Leasehold. You should ask your legal advisor to confirm this and explain the implications.

J

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 be reasonably changed.

J1 Risks to the building

Timber defects:
None visible.

Structural movement:
None visible.

Dampness:
None visible. Tests were conducted with an electronic moisture meter at appropriate positions throughout the property (except where impermeable surface finishes, furniture, fitted cupboards and stored goods prevented access to take readings). No readings taken gave cause for concern.

J2 Risks to the grounds

Contamination:
None visible. We have not carried out any investigation into past or present uses of either the property or any neighbouring land to establish whether there is any potential contamination from these uses or sites to the subject property and we recommend that your Legal Adviser completes a full environmental search of the locality prior to purchase.

Flooding:
Risk of surface water flooding as identified by the Environment Agency.

J3 Risks to people

Electricity:
None visible.

Contamination:
None visible.

Fire:
None visible.

J4 Other

No items for consideration.

Surveyor's declaration

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

Signature

Dean Davidson

Surveyor's RICS number

5675994

Qualifications

MRICS

For and on behalf of

Company

Able Surveyors Limited

Address

4 Ricketts Drive

Town

Billericay

County

Essex

Postcode

CM12 0HH

Phone number

01277 651605

Website

www.ablesurveyors.com

Fax number**Email**

info@ablesurveyors.co.uk

Property address**Clients Name****Date this report was produced****RICS Disclaimers**

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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 sign 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 Consumer Rights Act 2015 it does not apply to death or personal injury resulting from negligence.

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Please read the 'Description of the RICS HomeBuyer Report Service' (at the back of this report) for details of what is, and is not, inspected.

What to do now

Getting quotations

The cost of repairs may influence the amount you are prepared to pay for the property. Before you make a legal commitment to buy the property, you should get reports and quotations for all the repairs and further investigations the surveyor may have identified.

You should get at least two quotations 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, plumbers and so on). Some work may also need you to get Building Regulations permission or planning permission from your local authority.

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 to discover the true extent of the problem.

Who you should use for these further investigations

You should ask an appropriately qualified person, though it is not possible to tell you which one. Specialists belonging to different types of organisations 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 the 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 and so you should discuss this matter with the current owner. In some cases, the cost of investigation may be high.

When to do the work

The condition ratings help describe the urgency of the repair and replacement work. The following summary may help you decide when to do the work.

- **Condition rating 2** – repairs should be done soon. Exactly when will depend on the type of problem, but it usually does not have to be done right away. Many repairs could wait weeks or months, giving you time to organise suitable reports and quotations.
- **Condition rating 3** – repairs should be done as soon as possible. The speed of your response will depend on the nature of the problem. For example, repairs to a badly leaking roof or a dangerous gas boiler need to be carried out within a matter of hours, while other less important critical repairs could wait for a few days.

Warning

Although repairs of elements with a condition rating 2 are not considered urgent, if they are not addressed they may develop into defects needing more serious repairs. Flat roofs and gutters are typical examples. These can quickly get worse without warning and result in serious leaks.

As a result, you should regularly check elements with a condition rating 2 to make sure they are not getting worse.

Description of the RICS HomeBuyer (Survey) Service

The service

The RICS HomeBuyer (Survey) Service includes:

- an **inspection** of the property (see 'The inspection')
- a **report** based on the inspection (see 'The report').

The surveyor who provides the RICS HomeBuyer (Survey) Service aims to give you professional advice to help you to:

- make an informed decision on whether to go ahead with buying the property
- take account of any repairs or replacements the property needs; and
- consider what further advice you should take before committing to purchase the property.

The inspection

The surveyor inspects the inside and outside of the main building and all permanent outbuildings, but does not force or open up the fabric. This means that the surveyor does not take up carpets, floor coverings or floorboards, move furniture, remove the contents of cupboards, roof spaces, etc., remove secured panels and/or hatches or undo electrical fittings. If necessary, the surveyor carries out parts of the inspection when standing at ground level from public property next door where accessible. The surveyor may use equipment such as a damp-meter, binoculars and torch, and may use a ladder for flat roofs and for hatches no more than 3 metres above level ground (outside) or floor surfaces (inside) if it is safe to do so.

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. The visual inspection cannot assess the efficiency or safety of electrical, gas or other energy sources; plumbing, heating or drainage installations (or whether they meet current regulations); or the inside condition of any chimney, boiler or other flue.

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.

Buildings with swimming pools and sports facilities are also treated as permanent outbuildings, but the surveyor does not report on the leisure facilities, such as the pool itself and its equipment, 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 areas (for example, shared hallways and staircases). The surveyor inspects roof spaces only if they are accessible from within the property. The surveyor does not inspect drains, lifts, fire alarms and security systems.

Dangerous materials, contamination and environmental issues

The surveyor does not make any enquiries about contamination or other environmental dangers. However, if the surveyor suspects a problem, he or she should recommend a 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 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 focuses on matters that, in the surveyor's opinion, may affect the value of the property if they are not addressed.

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

- A Introduction to the report
- B About the inspection
- C Overall opinion 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 Surveyor's declaration
- What to do now
- Description of the RICS HomeBuyer (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.

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 does not report on the cost of any work to put right defects or 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 HomeBuyer (Survey) Service for the property. If the surveyor has seen the current EPC, he or she will present the energy-efficiency and environmental impact ratings in this report. The surveyor does not check the ratings and cannot comment on their accuracy.

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).

This report has been prepared by a surveyor ('the Individual Surveyor') merely in his or her capacity as an employee or agent of a firm or company or other business entity ('the Company'). The report is the product of the Company, not of the Individual Surveyor. All of the statements and opinions contained in this report are expressed entirely on behalf of the Company, which accepts sole responsibility for these. For his or her part, the Individual Surveyor assumes no personal financial responsibility or liability in respect of the report and no reliance or inference to the contrary should be drawn.

Description (continued)

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

Nothing in this report excludes or limits liability for death or personal injury (including disease and impairment of mental condition) resulting from negligence.

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.

If the property is leasehold, the surveyor gives you general advice and details of questions you should ask your legal advisers.

Standard terms of engagement

- 1. The service** – the surveyor provides the standard RICS HomeBuyer (Survey) Service ('the service') described in the 'Description of the RICS HomeBuyer (Survey) Service', 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:
 - costing of repairs
 - schedules of works
 - supervision of works
 - re-inspection; and
 - detailed specific issue reports.
- 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** – you tell the surveyors if you have any concerns (such as plans for extension) about the property.
- 4. Terms of payment** – you agree to pay the surveyor's fee and any other charges agreed in writing.
- 5. Cancelling this contract** – nothing in this clause 5 shall operate to exclude, limit or otherwise affect your rights to cancel under the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 or the Consumer Rights Act 2015, or under any such other legislation as may from time to time be applicable. Entirely without prejudice to any other rights that you may have under any applicable legislation, 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. Please note that where you have specifically requested that the surveyor provides services to you within fourteen days of entering into the contract, you will be responsible for fees and charges incurred by the surveyor up until the date of cancellation.
- 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 a complaints handling procedure and will give you a copy if you ask. The surveyor is required to provide you with contact details, in writing, for their complaints department or the person responsible for dealing with client complaints. Where the surveyor is party to a redress scheme, those details should also be provided. If any of this information is not provided, please notify the surveyor and ask that it be supplied.

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

This report is for use in England, Wales, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man.

Typical house diagram

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

