



SURVEY DEPARTMENT

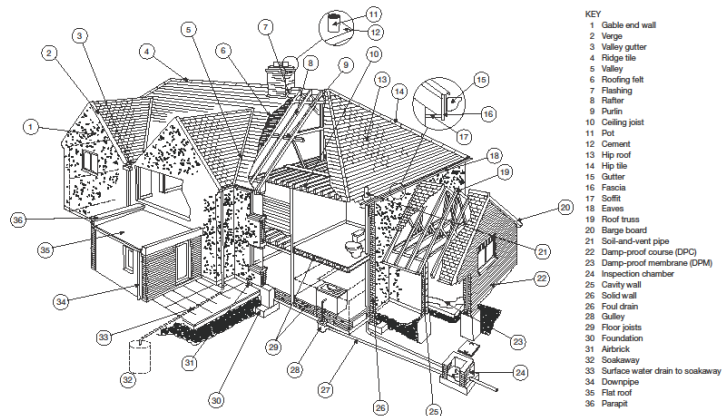
SPRING 2010 NEWSLETTER

RICS LAUNCH NEW CONSUMER FRIENDLY HOMEBUYER REPORT

The launch of the RICS Homebuyer Report with its clear rating system and jargon free language is excellent news for consumers.

You have commissioned a survey on the condition of your prospective new home and then found a complicated, jargon filled survey in your hands – sounds familiar? With the welcome launch of the RICS Homebuyer Report (the HBR), complicated and difficult to understand surveys will now be a thing of the past. Designed to provide clear, simple and easy to follow information about the condition of a property, the report firmly places the consumer's needs at the heart of the HBR.

The report reflects recent changes in the home buying and selling process. It is concise and user friendly, intended to assist the purchaser in their decision by reporting on a property's condition, value, need for repairs and replacements, and what further advice is required before exchanging contracts.



One of the key features of the new report is the colour-coded condition ratings that properties receive, based on the surveyor's professional judgement on the state of repair of the building. A green rating indicates no repairs are necessary, whilst red points to serious defects that require urgent attention, making the assessment more straightforward for the buyer.

The report still details essential findings contained in previous surveys, as well as highlighting issues for legal advisers, identifying risks and hazards of the property, such as structural movement, damp and timber defects – three major concerns that purchasers have, and the report provides the surveyor's opinion of the current market value and insurance assessment. It will focus on matters that, in the surveyor's view, may affect the value of the property if left unattended. For more information about the report or to obtain a quotation, please contact the Survey Department on 01565 751328.

THE AREA'S LEADING INDEPENDENT ESTATE AGENCY
AND RESIDENTIAL SURVEYORS



NEW STAFF

Recent improvements in activity levels has necessitated an expansion of our secretarial/office staff in order to ensure that our standards are maintained for our customers.

We are therefore pleased to welcome Jane to our team.

Any enquiries regarding the type of surveys we carry out and the fees which we charge should be directed to Sandie or Jane on our dedicated telephone number, 01565 751328.



TOPICAL TIPS

Central heating boiler not working in cold weather?

Got one of the new condensing boilers?

Check to see if the external condensate pipe is frozen as this may be the cause of the problem.

Have you increased your loft insulation recently?

In very cold weather check your loft space for condensation. Freezing conditions may cause this to happen depending on the type of roofing felt installed and the degree of ventilation provided. This could damage your roof timbers.

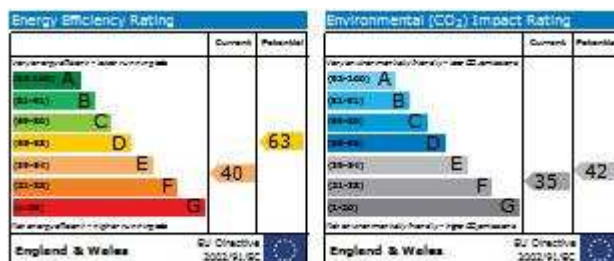


EPC's ARE THEY A LOAD OF HOT AIR?

There are many difficulties when starting the process of selling or renting out your property and this will include the requirement to obtain an Energy Performance Certificate. This is intended to help us improve the energy efficiency of houses, but is it working or are they just a lot of hot air that is going to waste?

The appraisal is carried out by accredited energy assessors who will collect information on the property which is entered into an approved software programme which then calculates the Energy Performance Certificate and makes recommendations as to how the efficiency could be improved.

The efficiency of the property is rated on a scale between A and G, with A being the best and G the worst.



There is no evidence yet to suggest that people are being strongly influenced in their purchasing decision as to whether the property is in a particular band or not. Nonetheless our assessors are reporting that when they are arriving on site an increasing number of people have recently carried out some low cost improvements such as using low energy light bulbs, upgrading loft insulation or installing cavity wall insulation. It seems therefore that the message is beginning to get through that with a potential for rapidly rising fuel bills, people are becoming increasingly keen to cut back on their fuel usage.

For further information on how to improve the energy efficiency of your property or commission an EPC if you are contemplating selling or renting, then contact Matthew Evans in our Survey Department, on 01565 751328.

MARKET COMMENT

At the beginning of 2009 there were various projections in the media that house prices would fall that year by 10 to 15%. Those concerns have now proved to be unfounded with the average house price in the last quarter of 2009 showing a small rise. This reflects better than anticipated activity levels, although these are still very weak by historic standards.

Anecdotal evidence from our offices suggests that the housing market is beginning to stabilise but there remains some uncertainty going into the future and it is important therefore that buyers obtain up to date advice on market conditions and value trends when considering a house sale or purchase.

The Survey Department of Gascoigne Halman can provide that support to purchasers by carrying Homebuyer Reports or Building Surveys. The department can be contacted for further advice on 01565 751328.

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