

CHOOSING BETWEEN SURVEYS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND ADVICE

“Why do I need my own Survey?”

The best way to reach an informed decision on such an important investment as a home is to have a professional survey of the property which interests you.

Before you decide to go ahead and commit yourself legally, you can minimise the risks by asking a Chartered Surveyor from **Stilings** to answer these questions for you:

- “Are there drawbacks or defects I don't know about?”
- “If so, what do I need to do about them?”

Commissioning your own Survey is the simple, economical way to avoid unpleasant - and perhaps costly - surprises after moving in. In some cases, the Surveyor's report may enable you to renegotiate the price. The cost of that peace of mind will be a tiny fraction, (usually around $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ %), of the purchase price, certainly it is likely to be less than the seller is paying to the Agent to work on their behalf (**not for you, don't forget!**).

“But I already have a Mortgage Valuation report...,”

Even if you are seeking a mortgage - and may be paying for a Mortgage Valuation inspection and report - it is still advisable and prudent to arrange a survey by your own Surveyor. Both the Consumers' Association *Which?* Magazine, and the Council of Mortgage Lenders give this advice.

The reason is simple, the Mortgage Valuation report is **prepared for the lender - not for you, the borrower**. It answers only the lender's questions, concerning the appropriate security for your loan. **You cannot rely on it to answer the questions which concern your personal interests.**

“What choice of surveys do I have?”

STILINGS offer two forms of Survey which are specifically designed to help homebuyers: The **Building Survey**, and the **Intermediate Survey**.

Building Survey

(formerly called a Structural Survey) which is broadly comparable to the **RICS Level 3**

A Building Survey is a bespoke service *suitable for all residential properties and provides a full detailed picture of their construction and condition*. It is likely to be needed if the property is, for example, old, of unusual construction, is dilapidated or has been extensively altered - or where a major conversion or renovation is planned. Building Surveys are usually tailored to the Clients individual requirements. The Report includes extensive technical information on materials and construction as well as details of the whole range of defects, and can be undertaken on any age of property.

The STILINGS Intermediate Survey which is broadly comparable to the **RICS Level 2**

By contrast to a Building Survey, **STILINGS Intermediate Survey** follows a standard format and is designed specifically as an economy service. It therefore differs materially from a Building Survey in two major respects.

- ◆ **It is intended only for particular types of home:** houses, bungalows and flats which are:
 - conventional in type and construction;
 - apparently in reasonable condition;
 - built since 1950.
- ◆ **The report focuses on essentials:** defects and problems which are *Urgent or Significant*, where the cost of repairs might influence the decision to purchase, or the price paid - although it also includes much other valuable information.

“What else should I know about STILINGS Intermediate Survey Service?”

The Service - the Inspection, and the Report - are all explained in detail in the accompanying document: **Description of STILINGS Intermediate Survey Service**, but the main points are:

- ◆ Because of the practical limits on the type of property and on the scope of its coverage, **STILINGS Intermediate Survey Service** is priced mid-range - more expensive than a Mortgage Valuation, but costing less than a Building Survey.

- ◆ **The Surveyor's main purpose in providing the Intermediate Survey Service** is to assist you, the prospective purchaser, (or our Client), to:
 - make a reasoned and informed judgement on whether or not to proceed with the purchase
 - assess what would be a reasonable purchase price for the property.
 - be clear what decisions and actions should be taken before contracts are exchanged

The Surveyor also gives a professional opinion on the particular features of the property which might affect its present value and may affect its future resale.

The Intermediate Survey Report covers the building both inside and outside, the services and the site. It focuses on the defects and other problems which, in the judgement of the Surveyor, are **Urgent** or **Significant**, but is also considers:

- ◆ the general condition and particular features of the Property;
- ◆ particular points which should be referred to your, or the Client's, Legal Advisers;
- ◆ other relevant considerations concerning, for example, safety, the location, the environment, or perhaps things which might lead to exaggerated insurance costs.

Matters which are judged to be **not Urgent** or **not Significant** are generally **not included** in **The Intermediate Survey Report**. The Surveyor may however comment on, or make passing reference to, other matters, where it is considered such comment to be helpful and constructive, and on that basis, may bring them forward into **Section F2: Maintenance Considerations**.

Where the client should take some action before deciding whether or not to proceed with the purchase, this is signalled clearly in the text of the Report as '**ACTION**'. These items, together with other key considerations, are included in **Section F: Summary** either as **Urgent Repairs or Further Investigations**.

Specific Additions to the Service – examples could be perhaps, whether the property is suitable for a disabled person - the Surveyor will, if asked or notified beforehand, keep this in mind during the inspection, or where the Client asks for a schedule of minor defects, (for later discussion with a contractor), or the calculation of the Rebuilding Cost for Insurance purposes.

However, where testing and examination of services, (gas, electricity, water/plumbing, drainage, oil, solid fuel, solar power, heating systems, air conditioning, etc.), is required, as each is governed by separate Regulations and Standards, this would need suitably Qualified and Accredited contractors to be engaged, under direct contract, as the Surveyor does not hold those qualifications, and can therefore only offer general guidance.

	STILINGS INTERMEDIATE SURVEY REPORT	STILINGS BUILDING SURVEY
Type of property	Conventional houses, flats, bungalows, etc., in apparently reasonable condition.	Any residential or other property, in any condition.
Style of service	Economy reporting text style in standard form.	A detailed and comprehensive report that can be tailored to suit your needs.
Objectives of service	To assist the Client to: i) make an informed judgement on whether or not to proceed; ii) assess what influence the condition would have on the price offered for the property; iii) assess Urgent and Significant ACTION matters needing further advice before exchanging contracts.	To provide client with: i) a detailed assessment of construction/condition of property; and ii) technical advice on problems and on remedial works.
Special features of the service	Focus is on Urgent and Significant matters only.	Comprehensive details of Property's construction, materials used and defects.
Valuation	Although there is no valuation provided, advice can be given as to the appropriate steps to obtain a Valuation assessment to assist with negotiations.	Although there is no valuation provided, advice can be given as to the appropriate steps to obtain a Valuation assessment, to assist with negotiations.
Form of Report	Abridged reporting format with concise text	In an unlimited format, usually much longer and much more technical, the Surveyor has the opportunity, and scope, to fully describe broader issues affecting, or which might affect, (based on evidence seen), the property, and it's condition