

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SURVEY LEVELS

HomeBuyers Report – Level 2	<p>This level of service is for purchasers who are seeking a professional opinion at an economic price. It is, therefore, less comprehensive than a Building Survey. The focus is on assessing the general condition of the main elements of a property.</p> <p>This intermediate level of report includes a visual inspection of the building, its services and grounds, but without any tests. Concealed areas normally opened or used by the occupiers are inspected if it is safe to do so (typical examples include roof spaces, basements and cellars). The report objectively describes the condition of the different elements and provides an assessment of the relative importance of the defects/problems. At this level, although it is concise, the report does include advice about repairs and any ongoing maintenance issues. Where the surveyor is unable to reach a conclusion with reasonable confidence, a recommendation for further investigations will be made.</p> <p>This level of report suits a broader range of conventionally built properties, up to 150 years old. This level of service is unlikely to suit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complex buildings, for example those that have been extensively extended and altered; • unique or older historic properties; • properties in neglected condition. <p>In such cases, a HomeBuyers Report will often result in numerous referrals for further investigations, an outcome that many clients find disappointing.</p> <p>The HomeBuyers Report is not considered a suitable option where the purchaser is planning to carry out extensive repair and refurbishment work in the future, the Building Survey being considered the better option.</p>
Building Survey – Level 3 Equivalent	<p>This level of report is for purchasers who are seeking a professional opinion based on a detailed assessment of the property.</p> <p>The report consists of a detailed visual inspection of the building, its services and the grounds and is more extensive than a HomeBuyers Report. Concealed areas normally opened or used by the occupiers are inspected if it is safe to do so (typical examples include roof spaces, basements and cellars). Although the services are not tested, they are observed in normal operation.</p> <p>The report objectively describes the form of construction and materials used for different parts of the property. It describes the condition and provides an assessment of the relative importance of the defects/problems. Additionally, it should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe the identifiable risk of potential or hidden defects in areas not inspected; • propose the most probable cause(s) of the defects based on the inspection; • outline the likely scope of any appropriate remedial work and explain the likely consequences of non-repair; • make general recommendations in respect of the priority and likely timescale for necessary work and <p>Where the surveyor feels unable to reach the necessary conclusions with reasonable confidence, they will refer the matter for further investigations.</p> <p>This level of report will suit any domestic residential property in any condition.</p>

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Element of Property	General	HomeBuyers Report – Level 2	Building Survey – Level 3 Equivalent
Windows	<p>In all cases, the surveyor will only open windows where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • permission has been given and • any keys/locks are available and are easy to operate without force or damage. <p>The presence of occupier possessions and heavy curtains will often restrict inspection.</p>	<p>Include one on each elevation and one of each different type of window where there is a variety.</p>	<p>Attempt to open all windows where possible.</p>
Roof Space	<p>The surveyor will carry out an inspection of roof space that is not more than three metres above floor level, using a ladder if it is safe and reasonable to do so. Energy efficiency initiatives have resulted in thick layers of thermal insulation in many roof spaces. Usually it is not safe to move across this material as it conceals joist positions, water and drainage pipes, wiring and other fittings. This may restrict the extent of the inspection and the scope of the report.</p>	<p>The surveyor will not remove secured access panels and/or lift insulation material, stored goods or other contents. The surveyor will visually inspect the parts of the roof structure and other features that can be seen with attention paid to those parts vulnerable to deterioration and damage.</p>	<p>The surveyor will enter the roof space and visually inspect the roof structure, with attention paid to those parts vulnerable to deterioration and damage. Although thermal insulation is not moved, small corners should be lifted so its thickness and type, and the nature of the underlying ceiling can be identified (if the surveyor considers it safe to do so).</p>
Floors		<p>The surveyor will inspect the surfaces of exposed floors but will not lift carpets, floor coverings or floorboards, or move furniture. The surveyor will not lift hatches or carry out an 'inverted head and shoulders' inspection. The surveyor will assess floors for excessive deflection by a 'heel-drop' test.</p>	<p>The surveyor will inspect the surfaces of exposed floors and will lift the corners of any loose and unfitted carpets or other floor coverings where practicable. The surveyor will assess all floors for excessive deflection by a 'heel-drop' test. For a more complete assessment, the magnitude of any identified deflection/slope should be measured. Where the subfloor is inspected, an inverted 'head and shoulders' inspection will be carried out at the access point (either physically or using mirrors, cameras and the like).</p>

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<p>Inspection Chamber and Underground Drainage</p>	<p>The surveyor does not perform or comment on design calculations or test the service installations or appliances in any way. At all levels, inspection chamber covers in common areas of flats are not lifted. In all cases, the surveyor will advise the purchaser that further tests and inspections will be required if the occupier does not provide evidence of appropriate installation and/or maintenance, or the purchaser requires assurance as to their condition, capability and safety.</p>	<p>The surveyor will lift accessible inspection chamber covers to drains or septic tanks (where it is safe to do so and without causing damage) and visually inspect the chamber(s).</p>	<p>The surveyor will lift accessible inspection chamber covers to drains and septic tanks (where it is safe to do so and without causing damage) and observe the normal operation of the drains in everyday use. This will be restricted where properties are empty and drained down. Where the surveyor considers it appropriate, and where practical, to the assessment of the system, 'everyday use' will usually include turning on water taps to sanitaryware and flushing toilets so the performance of visible drainage pipework can be observed and the nature of the below-ground connections identified.</p>
<p>Other Services</p>	<p>Other services are taken to mean all piped and cabled services associated with the property including electrics and other cabled systems, hot and cold water systems, heating, above ground drainage, ventilation services, renewable energy systems and so on. The surveyor does not perform or comment on design calculations or test the service installations or appliances in any way. In all cases, the surveyor will advise the purchaser that further tests and inspections will be required if the occupier does not provide evidence of appropriate installation and/or maintenance, or the purchaser requires assurance as to their condition, capability and safety.</p>	<p>The surveyor will visually inspect all parts of the different service systems that can be seen within the normal course of the inspection.</p>	<p>In addition to those actions described under 'Inspection chambers and underground drains', the surveyor will observe the normal operation of the services in everyday use (where it is safe to do so and without causing damage) including operating an identified sample of lights and extractor fans and asking the occupier to operate the heating.</p>

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<p>The Grounds</p>	<p>The surveyor will carry out a visual inspection of the grounds from within the boundaries of the subject property and where necessary, from adjoining public property.</p>	<p>The surveyor will carry out a cursory inspection of the grounds during a general walk around noting any limitations. The assessment should include external features relevant to the instruction and requests from the purchaser. The inspection should also include the inside and outside of all permanent outbuildings not attached to the main dwelling, where access is possible, relevant to the instruction and purchasers requests. The surveyor will use appropriate methods and equipment to inspect a roof that is not visible from a window or another part of the building, and that is not more than three metres above ground level if it is safe and reasonable to do so.</p>	<p>As with the HomeBuyers Report, the surveyor should perform a comprehensive inspection of the grounds, noting any limitations. Specific defective features and other matters associated with the grounds can be costly to resolve and may affect the purchaser's decision. Consequently, the surveyor should fully account for these during a Building Survey and be prepared to follow the trail of suspected problems to a greater extent than in a HomeBuyers Report. Examples include assessing retaining walls in danger of collapsing, deeply sunken paths or driveways, and dilapidated boundary walls or fences, as well as the legal and insurance implications.</p>
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