

Building Surveys and Reports

Building Surveys and Reports

4th Edition

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Preface to Fourth Edition

This book provides a comprehensive guide for surveyors and architects on the steps to take when approached by a client asking for a structural survey. It deals with all types of buildings: domestic, commercial and industrial. Advice is given on how to diagnose faults, with many detailed sketches and photographs to illustrate the text. Examples of various types of reports are given in the appendices.

We are living in an era of change. Adaptation of buildings for different uses and extensions to existing buildings are commonplace. In each of these cases measured and building surveys are necessary. Some of the difficulties which are met with are described in Chapters 3 and 4, and advice is given as to how to avoid mistakes.

The book covers both old and new methods of construction. The subject has been treated basically under the elements of construction, most of which are interrelated. It is assumed, however, that the reader has some knowledge of building techniques.

Flood and fire damage has been given a separate chapter since it involves different structural problems in diagnosing the cause, as well as negotiations with insurance assessors before steps for reinstatement can be put in hand.

During the past 60 years there have been many new materials and construction techniques using new and traditional materials. The surveyor can no longer be dependent on a limited range of materials, but must exercise his judgment in a widening realm of alternatives. The fabric of a building has to satisfy different user needs and occupational factors. The surveyor's duty is to identify what performance is required from the fabric in terms of durability and weathertightness. It is therefore essential that he must have a sound knowledge of not only building construction, but also the performance of materials in use.

The focus of this book is primarily on traditional construction of residential and non-residential buildings. It aims to provide the reader with guidance on the methodology and risks of inspecting and surveying buildings generally. What makes this revised edition different from most of its competitors is that it includes a comparison of the various surveys available. In this regard reference has been made to the Construction Industry Council's 1997 guidance note on the definitions of building inspections and surveys (see Appendix I).

Also contained in this edition are examples of typical schedules used in condition and dilapidations surveys. This supplements the other sample survey checklists described in Appendices III and IV. The importance given to construction safety has increased since the early 1990s. One of the appendices contains guidance from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) on surveying properties safely. Appendix VIII contains a glossary of terms relevant to building inspections and surveys.

The introduction of the ill-fated Home Condition Report near the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century has prompted a marked increase in

publications dealing with this subject. The Bibliography of this fourth edition has been expanded as well as updated to reflect this upsurge.

The new material in this edition covers in slightly more detail slate supply and slate defects. It also addresses condition appraisal of non-domestic property using the Department of Health's rating system. The number of checklist schedules in the appendices has been expanded accordingly.

It is hoped that this book becomes a main primer for construction undergraduates and novice building surveyors learning to inspect and survey landed property. Also, hopefully more experienced construction professionals involved in surveying buildings will find this revised edition useful.

*James Douglas,
June 2010*

Acknowledgements

A major advantage of revising someone else's work is that there is already an extensive body of material to work from. Indeed, the bulk of this book did not require any drastic overhauling, which clearly reflects well on Edward Noy's previous editions. Naturally, therefore, I would like to thank Edward for allowing me to revise his book to produce this fourth edition. I hope that he is pleased with the result.

I would, of course, like to express my appreciation to Wiley-Blackwell for their confidence in allowing me to revise this work. It is gratifying to know that publishers are keen to continue promoting books on building surveying and related construction topics. The construction industry needs to keep expanding its body of literature so that the knowledge of and guidance on best practice of inspecting and surveying buildings can be disseminated more widely.

In particular, my thanks go to Paul Sayer, publisher, for providing me with the opportunity to write this fourth edition. I also wish to express my appreciation to his colleague Catherine Oakley for the gentle reminders and friendly cajoling throughout the revision of this work.

My gratitude, too, goes to my retired former colleague Edith Bowman FRICS for her guidance on the legal implications of undertaking surveys.

I would also like to thank Tony Condron of Delvemade Ltd for his feedback and technical guidance on the problem of cut edge corrosion and its solution. My thanks too are owed to Cristina Campbell of SSQ for her information on and experience of slate supplies and slate properties.

Wherever possible every attempt has been made to acknowledge the numerous sources used in this book. The reviser would like to apologise in advance if there is any case where this has not been achieved. Due acknowledgement will be made in any subsequent edition.

James Douglas