



MaxConsult

SURVEYING

CLIENT GUIDE

Level 2 and Level 3 Surveys

This guide is intended to help clients understand the residential surveying services provided by MaxConsult Surveying. It should be read alongside the Quotation, Terms of Engagement and other documents issued as part of your instruction pack.

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Contents

1. Welcome.....	3
2. Our Surveying Principles	3
3. Choosing the Right Survey.....	4
4. Level 2 Home Survey - Service Description	5
5. Level 3 Building Survey - Service Description	8
6. Understanding Your Survey Report	11
7. Inspection Scope and Limitations.....	12
8. Making the Most of Your Survey	13
9. Optional Additional Services	13
10. Frequently Asked Questions.....	14

1. Welcome

Buying a property is a significant financial commitment. A professional survey provides independent information about the visible condition of the property and can help you understand defects, maintenance requirements and matters that may warrant further investigation before you become legally committed to the purchase.

MaxConsult Surveying provides independent residential surveying services focused on clear, practical, proportionate, risk-based advice. We prepare reports specifically for the property inspected and reflect its condition on the date of inspection.

Our services are delivered by a RICS-regulated firm in accordance with the RICS Home Survey Standard in force on the date of inspection. The contractual scope, limitations and terms applying to your instruction are set out in the Terms of Engagement.

About MaxConsult Surveying

MaxConsult Surveying is an independent residential surveying practice specialising in pre-purchase property surveys. We aim to provide straightforward professional advice, explained in clear language, with direct communication throughout the instruction.

What this guide covers

This guide explains our Level 2 Home Survey and Level 3 Building Survey services, what the inspection involves, what you can expect from the report and how to make the most of the information provided.

2. Our Surveying Principles

Independence

We provide impartial, objective professional advice in our client's best interests.

Professional Standard

Every property is different. We apply professional judgement to its age, construction, condition and circumstances to help you make an informed property decision. Your report is provided by a RICS Regulated Firm in accordance with the RICS Home Survey Standard current at the date of inspection.

Clarity

We aim to explain technical matters and recommendations in straightforward language, with specific context photographs included to illustrate our findings.

Practical Advice

Our reports focus on significant findings, their likely implications and appropriate next steps.

Personal Service

We provide direct communication and reasonable post-report clarification with the Surveyor responsible for your inspection and report.

3. Choosing the Right Survey

The appropriate survey depends on the property's age, construction, condition, alterations and your own requirements as a purchaser. We offer two principal residential survey services: a Level 2 Home Survey and a Level 3 Building Survey.

Level 2 Home Survey: a general assessment of the property's condition, identifying significant defects and providing maintenance advice.

The Level 2 Home Survey is intended for conventional residential properties that appear to be in reasonable condition and where a more detailed building assessment is not considered necessary. It provides a comprehensive visual inspection of accessible parts of the property and identifies significant visible defects, matters requiring attention and areas where further investigation may be advisable.

Level 3 Building Survey: a more detailed assessment of the property's construction and condition, examining defects in greater depth, including their likely causes, implications and repair requirements.

The Level 3 Building Survey provides a more detailed assessment and is appropriate where the property's age, construction, condition or circumstances warrant a more comprehensive inspection and report. It may be particularly suitable for older, altered, unusual or more complex properties, properties in poor condition, or purchasers seeking a more detailed assessment.

Survey Comparison Table

	Level 2 Home Survey	Level 3 Building Survey
Primary purpose	General assessment of condition for conventional residential property	Detailed assessment of the building and its condition
Suitable properties	Conventional houses, flats and bungalows in reasonable condition	Older, altered, unusual or more complex properties
Inspection	Comprehensive visual inspection of accessible areas	More detailed visual inspection and assessment
Building description	General description of construction and condition	More detailed description of construction and building elements
Defects	Significant visible defects identified and explained	More extensive assessment and analysis of defects
Repair advice	Practical recommendations for significant defects and maintenance	More detailed recommendations for repairs and maintenance
Further investigation	Identified where inspection cannot establish a reliable conclusion	Identified where further specialist investigation or testing is required
Report	Clear, structured assessment	More comprehensive assessment with greater technical detail

4. Level 2 Home Survey - Service Description

The Level 2 Home Survey is designed for purchasers seeking an independent professional assessment of the general condition of a conventionally constructed residential property. It provides a balanced overview of the property's condition, identifies significant visible defects and highlights matters that may require attention, repair or further investigation.

The service is less comprehensive than a Level 3 Building Survey and is not intended for every type of building. It is generally suitable where the property appears to be of conventional construction, has not been significantly altered and where no major concerns are immediately apparent.

Properties for which Level 2 may be suitable

- Modern or conventional residential properties in reasonable condition.
- Many conventional houses, bungalows and flats.
- Properties where no significant structural concerns, unusual construction or extensive alterations are apparent.

Properties for which Level 2 may be less suitable

- Older, larger or more complex buildings.
- Properties that have been extensively extended, altered or refurbished.
- Historic, unusual or non-traditional properties where a more detailed assessment may be appropriate.
- Properties in poor, neglected or significantly deteriorated condition.
- Purchasers requiring detailed analysis of defects, repair methods, maintenance requirements or renovation considerations.

Such properties may be better suited to a Level 3 Building Survey.

The Inspection

We inspect the inside and outside of the main building and permanent outbuildings, recording construction details and significant visible defects that are evident at the time of inspection.

The inspection is intended to cover as much of the property as is physically accessible and safe to inspect. We do not force or open up the building fabric. This includes normally not lifting fitted carpets or floor coverings, lifting floorboards, moving heavy furniture, removing secured panels or hatches, removing stored contents or undoing electrical fittings.

Where safe and appropriate, we may use equipment such as a moisture meter, binoculars, torch and suitable ladder. A drone may be used where lawful, safe and appropriate. Equipment use does not change the visual and non-invasive nature of the service.

Roof Spaces

Where safe and reasonably accessible, we enter the roof space and visually inspect the accessible areas of the roof structure. We consider matters such as signs of deterioration, movement, water penetration, insulation and ventilation where visible.

We do not normally move or lift insulation, stored goods or other contents, and areas that cannot be safely accessed will be reported as limitations.

Services

Services are generally concealed within the construction and are therefore inspected only on a visual basis.

The inspection does not include specialist testing and cannot establish the efficiency, performance or safety of electrical, gas, plumbing, heating or other service installations. No certification is provided.

Where visible concerns are identified, further investigation by an appropriate specialist may be recommended.

Outside the Property

We inspect accessible external areas including external walls, roof coverings, windows, doors, drainage features, boundary walls, fences, permanent outbuildings and areas in common use.

Where access is restricted, or parts of the property cannot be inspected, the limitation is recorded, and further investigation may be recommended where appropriate.

Flats

For flats, we assess the general condition of accessible areas serving the subject property, including relevant external surfaces and access areas.

Areas outside the agreed scope, including many communal systems, shared structures and installations, are not specialist-tested. Matters requiring legal, management or specialist investigation will be identified where relevant.

Environmental and Hazardous Materials

The service does not comprise an environmental assessment, contamination survey or asbestos survey.

Where visible circumstances indicate a potential concern relating to hazardous materials, contamination or environmental matters, further specialist advice may be recommended.

The Report

The Level 2 report provides an objective assessment of the condition of relevant building elements based on the inspection undertaken.

It includes:

- A description of the property's construction and condition.
- Identification of significant visible defects.
- An assessment of the likely importance and implications of defects identified.
- Practical advice regarding repair and maintenance.
- Recommendations for further investigation where a reliable conclusion cannot be reached.
- Details of inspection limitations that materially affect the assessment.
- Photographs illustrating significant observations.

The report is prepared specifically for the named client and should be read as a complete document.

Energy Information

The Level 2 service does not include preparation of an Energy Performance Certificate.

Where practicable, the most recent EPC may be obtained from the appropriate central register and relevant information may be commented upon. This does not replace the EPC or constitute an energy assessment.

Legal Matters

We are not legal advisers and do not provide legal advice.

Where the inspection identifies matters that may require consideration by your legal adviser, these may be referred to within the report.

Reinstatement Cost Assessment

A Buildings Insurance Reinstatement Cost Assessment can be provided as an additional service where specifically requested and instructed.

This is separate from the core Level 2 Home Survey service.

5. Level 3 Building Survey - Service Description

The Level 3 Building Survey provides a more detailed assessment of the building than the Level 2 Home Survey. It is intended for purchasers requiring a comprehensive appraisal of a property where age, construction, condition, alterations or other circumstances justify a more detailed service.

The service provides a detailed evaluation of the building's construction, condition and defects. It considers the likely causes of significant problems, the potential consequences if left unattended and appropriate repair and maintenance considerations.

It is particularly suitable for older properties, larger or more complex buildings, properties that have been significantly altered or extended, unusual or non-traditional construction, properties requiring renovation, or buildings where defects or deterioration are already apparent.

Properties for which Level 3 may be suitable

- Older residential properties where construction methods and materials require greater analysis.
- Larger properties or buildings with more complex layouts.
- Properties that have been substantially extended, altered or refurbished.
- Buildings of unusual, historic or non-traditional construction.
- Properties requiring renovation or where significant defects are suspected.

Properties for which Level 3 may be less suitable

- Modern conventional properties in good condition where no significant concerns are apparent.
- Properties where only a general overview of condition is required.
- Situations where specialist testing, opening-up works or intrusive investigation are required.

Where a property requires specialist investigation beyond a visual inspection, appropriate recommendations will be provided.

The Inspection

We inspect the inside and outside of the main building and permanent outbuildings, recording construction details, materials, defects and other significant observations that are evident at the time of inspection.

The inspection remains visual and non-invasive. We do not force or open up the building fabric. This includes normally not lifting fitted carpets or floor coverings, lifting floorboards, moving heavy furniture, removing secured panels or hatches, removing stored contents or undoing electrical fittings.

Where safe and appropriate, we may use equipment such as a moisture meter, binoculars, torch and suitable ladder. A drone may be used where lawful, safe and appropriate.

The use of equipment assists inspection but does not alter the visual and non-invasive nature of the service.

Roof Spaces

Where safe and reasonably accessible, we enter the roof space and undertake a more detailed visual inspection of accessible areas of the roof structure.

We consider elements such as roof structure, signs of movement, moisture penetration, ventilation, insulation and evidence of previous repairs where visible.

We do not normally move or lift insulation, stored goods or other contents. Areas that cannot be safely accessed will be recorded as limitations.

Services

Services are generally concealed within the construction and are therefore inspected only visually.

The inspection does not include specialist testing and cannot establish the efficiency, performance or safety of electrical, gas, plumbing, heating or other service installations.

Where defects, deterioration or concerns are visible, further investigation by an appropriate specialist may be recommended.

Outside the Property

We inspect accessible external areas including external walls, roof coverings, windows, doors, drainage features, boundary walls, fences, permanent outbuildings and areas in common use.

The inspection considers the condition, maintenance requirements and visible defects affecting the external elements of the property.

Where access is restricted or parts of the property cannot be inspected, this will be identified within the report.

Flats

For flats, we assess the condition of accessible areas serving the subject property, including relevant external surfaces, communal access areas and visible elements that may affect the flat.

The inspection does not normally include specialist assessment of communal systems, management arrangements, service charge matters or legal obligations relating to shared parts of the building.

Where further investigation is required, this will be identified within the report.

Environmental and Hazardous Materials

The service does not comprise an environmental assessment, contamination survey or asbestos survey.

Where visible circumstances indicate possible concerns relating to hazardous materials, contamination or environmental matters, further specialist advice may be recommended.

The Report

The Level 3 report provides a detailed assessment of the property's construction, condition and defects based on the inspection undertaken.

It includes:

- A detailed description of the property's construction and materials.
- Assessment of accessible principal building elements.
- Identification and analysis of significant visible defects.
- Consideration of likely causes and potential consequences.
- Advice regarding repair, maintenance and future requirements.
- Recommendations for further investigation where necessary.
- Identification of inspection limitations affecting the assessment.
- Extensive photographs illustrating general context and report findings.

The report is prepared specifically for the named client and should be read as a complete document.

Energy Information

The Level 3 service does not include preparation of an Energy Performance Certificate.

Where practicable, the most recent EPC may be obtained from the appropriate central register and relevant information may be commented upon. This does not replace the EPC or constitute an energy assessment.

Legal Matters

We are not legal advisers and do not provide legal advice.

Where the inspection identifies matters that may require consideration by your legal adviser, these may be referred to within the report.

Reinstatement Cost Assessment

A Buildings Insurance Reinstatement Cost Assessment can be provided as an additional service where specifically requested and instructed.

This is separate from the core Level 3 Building Survey service.

6. Understanding Your Survey Report

Your report should be read in full. The summary provides an overview, but the detailed sections explain the observations, condition and recommendations in context.

Condition Ratings

Condition ratings are intended to indicate the relative seriousness or priority of matters identified. They should be read together with the accompanying text and recommendations rather than in isolation.

Defects and Their Significance

Not every defect requires immediate attention. The report distinguishes, where relevant, between routine maintenance, repairs requiring attention and matters that may warrant more urgent action or further investigation.

Further Specialist Investigations

Where the survey identifies an issue requiring specialist expertise, we may recommend further investigation by an appropriately qualified specialist. Examples can include structural engineering, drainage investigation, electrical inspection, gas or heating inspection, roofing or timber and damp investigation.

Any such investigation is a separate service and is not included within the survey. We will identify where further investigation may be appropriate, but we do not normally recommend or appoint specific contractors or specialists. The Client is responsible for selecting and appointing any contractor or specialist.

A recommendation for further investigation does not necessarily confirm that a defect exists. It indicates that the Surveyor cannot reach a sufficiently reliable conclusion from the visual inspection alone or that specialist expertise or testing is required.

Why Repair Costs Are Not Normally Included

Our surveys are intended to identify defects, explain their significance and recommend appropriate next steps. We do not normally provide repair cost estimates because the cost of work can vary substantially depending on the precise cause, extent, specification,

access, contractor, location and conditions that may only become clear following opening-up or specialist investigation.

Where significant repairs are identified, we recommend obtaining quotations from suitably qualified contractors once the scope of work is sufficiently understood. This provides a more reliable basis for budgeting than a general surveyor's estimate.

Working With Your Legal Adviser

Your legal adviser deals with legal ownership, planning and Building Regulations documentation, guarantees, rights, covenants, lease obligations and other legal matters. Where appropriate, the report will identify matters that should be raised with your legal adviser.

7. Inspection Scope and Limitations

A residential survey provides an independent assessment of the property's visible condition at the time of inspection. No visual inspection can reveal every concealed defect.

Accessibility

The inspection is limited to areas that are safely and reasonably accessible at the time of the inspection. This may include limitations caused by:

- Locked or inaccessible areas
- Heavy furniture, stored possessions and fitted finishes.
- Roof spaces or other areas where safe access cannot be achieved.
- Other physical obstructions or conditions (weather, vegetation, etc.) that prevent safe access.

Hidden Defects

Defects concealed within walls, floors, ceilings, roof structures, foundations, insulation, underground services or other inaccessible areas cannot normally be assessed without opening up or specialist investigation.

Services

Services are observed through their visible parts and normal user controls where safe to operate. We do not undertake electrical testing, gas safety inspections, plumbing pressure tests, drain testing, boiler servicing, appliance testing or certification unless separately agreed.

Health and Safety

The Surveyor determines whether an area can be inspected safely. Areas presenting an unacceptable risk of injury or damage will not be inspected.

Balanced Assessment

The survey focuses on matters likely to influence the purchasing decision, future maintenance responsibilities or the condition and performance of the property. The Terms of Engagement contain the full contractual limitations and exclusions.

8. Making the Most of Your Survey

A survey is most useful when its findings are considered before exchange of contracts.

After Receiving Your Report

- Read the report in full.
- Contact us if you need clarification.
- Discuss relevant matters with your legal adviser.
- Obtain repair quotations for significant works where recommended.
- Arrange specialist investigations recommended in the report.
- Consider the findings alongside your mortgage and other professional advice.

Before Exchange of Contracts

Where further investigations or significant repairs are recommended, these should normally be addressed before you become legally committed to purchase, wherever reasonably practicable.

After You Move In

Keep your report as a reference for future maintenance, repairs and improvements. The report records the property's observable condition at the date of inspection.

9. Optional Additional Services

Certain services are outside the core Level 2 Home Survey and Level 3 Building Survey and can be provided separately where agreed.

Buildings Insurance Reinstatement Cost Assessment

A Buildings Insurance Reinstatement Cost Assessment can be provided as an additional service. It assesses the estimated cost of rebuilding the property to an appropriate standard, including relevant professional fees and associated rebuilding considerations, subject to the agreed scope.

The assessment is intended to assist with buildings insurance decisions and is not a market valuation.

10. Frequently Asked Questions

Is a survey the same as a mortgage valuation?

No. A mortgage valuation is carried out for a lender's purposes. A Level 2 Home Survey or Level 3 Building Survey is an independent assessment of condition for the client.

Can you provide a reinstatement valuation for insurance purposes?

Yes. We can provide a building reinstatement cost assessment for insurance purposes as an additional service. This is not included in the standard survey and is subject to an additional fee, which we will confirm before undertaking the service.

Will you tell me what the property is worth?

No. The core survey is not a valuation. A mortgage valuation and a condition survey serve different purposes.

Do you provide repair costs?

Not normally. Repair costs can only be estimated reliably when the scope and cause of the work are sufficiently established. Contractor quotations are generally more appropriate for budgeting significant repairs.

Can a survey identify every defect?

No. The inspection is visual and non-invasive. Concealed or inaccessible defects may not be identifiable without opening up or specialist investigation.

Client Attendance at the Inspection: Can I attend the property inspection?

Clients and accompanying persons are not normally permitted to attend the inspection. This policy is in place for health and safety and insurance purposes, and to allow the Surveyor to carry out the inspection efficiently, safely and without interruption. However, post-inspection attendance may be agreed in advance at the discretion of MaxConsult Surveying. Any request to attend must be agreed with MaxConsult Surveying in advance. Attendance cannot be assumed or arranged on the day of the inspection.

Do you test electrical, gas, plumbing or heating systems?

No. These systems are not specialist-tested as part of the core survey. Visible elements and normal user controls may be observed where safe and appropriate.

Does a recommendation for further investigation mean there is a serious defect?

No. It means that further information is needed before a reliable conclusion can be reached. The recommendation is precautionary and does not necessarily confirm that a defect exists.

Can you inspect the roof space?

Where it is safe and reasonably accessible, yes. The inspection remains visual and we do not normally move insulation or stored contents.

Can you use a drone?

A drone may be used where lawful, safe and appropriate. It is supplementary to the inspection and does not guarantee access to concealed or inaccessible defects.

Can you advise on legal matters?

We are not legal advisers. Where appropriate, we identify matters that should be referred to your solicitor.

Can I cancel my survey after booking?

Yes. You can cancel your instruction at any time by notifying MaxConsult Surveying in writing by email or letter. Cancellation charges may apply depending on when the cancellation is received. Please see our cancellation policy in the Terms of Engagement, Section 9.3 to 9.6.

Can I contact you after receiving the report?

Yes. Reasonable post-report clarification is part of our service, subject to the terms of your instruction.

Thank you for considering MaxConsult Surveying services. We appreciate the opportunity to assist you with your property purchase.