

# buildingSURVEYING

Underwoods



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Building Surveying encompasses a wide range of areas in the property and construction sectors, giving valuable advice in respect of the built environment to existing owners and occupiers, as well as those considering the acquisition of new commercial premises.

- Contract Administration & Project Management Services
- Defect Diagnosis
- Dilapidation Representations
- Feasibility Studies
- Building Reinstatement Cost Assessments (BRCA)
- Schedules of Condition
- Building Surveys
- Party Wall Representations
- Planned Maintenance

Our team operates to deliver a cost effective efficient service, and can provide bespoke advice throughout the lifecycle of a building to best serve your interests during the course of your property ownership/occupation. Each scenario carries its own individual reporting standards and legislative framework. So whether you are a landlord, tenant, owner occupier or developer, seeking the right professional advice is invaluable.

Underwoods have a proven track record gained from years of experience in the industry. Each client's particular needs are considered, enabling us to deliver tailored services at consistently high standards for all your building requirements.

If you require initial advice relating to any building surveying issue, then please contact either Shaun Collins or Ben Alders of our team on the details below.



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# contractADMIN

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Underwoods have undertaken a wide range of Contract Administration roles from simple dilapidations and refurbishments, through to complex design and build projects to include tenant fit out works as well as design and tender services for Grade I listed buildings.

Our Chartered Surveyors have the knowledge and expertise to develop full specifications and bring practical experience to improve your project, resulting in a practical, achievable and cost effective solution.

Underwoods have a proven track record gained from years of experience in the industry to include the provision of specialist advice to monitor specific areas of work such as removal and replacement of thatch and Collyweston slate roofing.

Each client's particular needs are considered carefully and examples of the services we provide are opposite.

- Feasibility studies to assess the viability and suitability of works.
- Inspection and design service.
- Full tendering procedure.
- Preparing and issuing contract documentation.
- Managing the works to ensure completion on time and within budget.
- Pre-snagging inspections to ensure works are completed satisfactorily.

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# defectDIAGNOSIS

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Defect Diagnosis is one of the key issues of property ownership and occupation. Once a problem is identified the most prudent route to obtaining a successful resolution is to identify the cause. At Underwoods we pride ourselves in successfully undertaking the important task of identifying the cause of specific defects, and reporting on its nature, extent and the available repair options

Often a defect within a property is a known evil. We all know it's there but very often choose not to deal with it for fear of uncovering a bigger issue which will need resolving.

This 'live with it' approach can often result in further damage or defect occurring and often leads to other linked issues. Extreme examples are leaks which can lead to wet/dry rot.

The important first step to resolution is to identify the cause, and then to explore options for remedy.

In each case the property is inspected, and the defect reported upon. The cause is investigated and a remedy is discussed. Often some issues will have multiple remedies but we are able to prioritise and detail which is likely to offer the best result at the least cost.

The aim of the process is to identify the issue and work with you to resolve the problem from a fully informed position.

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# DILAPIDATIONS

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Under the terms of a commercial lease a tenant is ordinarily obliged to maintain the property in good repair. A dilapidations schedule details the breaches of this repairing covenant by the tenant. These can be served with or without prices, dependent on whether the Tenant has agreed to undertake the work to put the demise back into repair. Schedules served after expiry of the lease are costed and form a claim for damages.

A Landlord, or their surveyor, under a lease is able to enter the property to record its condition. Whilst it is usually at the end of a tenancy that the Landlord considers the state of repair, it can be during the lease term if there are concerns as to the level of disrepair or, if they require to sell the property.

The Tenant is required to put the property back into repair, and the schedule of dilapidations describes the defects and required remedy.

When considering responsibility for property repairs it is essential for both landlords and tenants to seek professional advice so that informed decisions can be made to optimise the outcome of these situations.

The Underwoods Building Surveying team have considerable experience in the field of dilapidations having successfully acted on behalf of both Landlords and tenants, representing their interests in a wide range of property from traditional office and retail buildings to more unusual properties such as former military bunkers and church properties.

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# feasibility STUDIES

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Feasibility studies are preliminary investigations undertaken in the very early stage of a project. They tend to be carried out when a development is particularly large or complex, or where there is some doubt regarding the proposal.

The purpose of feasibility studies is to:

- Establish whether the project is viable.
- Help identify feasible cost effective options.
- Assist in the development of other project documentation such as the business case, project execution plan and brief.

Underwoods are able to assist in preparing a feasibility study in relation to land, development or redevelopment of property and can draw upon a wealth of experience from chartered valuers, building surveyors and planning consultants.

This joined up approach results in a study which can consider existing values, potential values, costs and likelihood of planning success, all of which give a full picture of whether a proposed project is feasible and an ability to effectively evaluate options for development.

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# scheduleofCONDITION

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A schedule of condition details the condition of a property, in photographic or descriptive format, usually prepared on behalf of the Tenant and for attachment to, and reference within a lease document. It is designed to limit the Tenant's liability at the end of the lease.

- Schedules of Conditions can be extended to incorporate plans recording the current layout, and specialist testing of services and underground drainage.
- An Underwoods Schedule is a detailed document and an accurate record. They are not just a set of photographs
- Schedules address any reinstatement ambiguities particularly if previous tenants' alterations are being retained.
- Most importantly, they reduce future liability and dilapidation costs at lease end.

When negotiating the terms of a new lease it is important to take professional advice from a Chartered Building Surveyor about the extent of your repairing liability.

A Schedule of Condition will detail the condition of the property, repairs that are necessary at the time of inspection, and repairs that may or are likely to be necessary by the end of the lease. Without this information the Tenant has no idea what the true cost of the lease is likely to be.

Underwoods provide comprehensive cost effective reports which often result in our clients saving significant sums on major building repair works.

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Upon purchasing a property, a Building Survey (often referred to as a Structural Survey), can be instructed by a purchaser to establish whether there are any deficiencies or defects to the subject property which will result in future works and costs.

Building Surveys come in many guises and need to be tailored to enable purchasers of property to understand the full impact of their acquisition, be it freehold or leasehold. An investment survey will be different to an occupier's survey, a buyer's survey will be different from a tenant's survey.

Whatever the purpose of the report the underlying aim is to identify any disrepair or defect, which could prove costly to the future owner or occupier.

The survey can help identify whether a tenant has met their repairing obligations under the Lease, Statute or Case Law.

Although Building Surveys are often perceived as an additional cost burden during a property acquisition, the survey itself can often prove good value to the acquiring party as it identifies any defects that may be apparent and can be a useful tool in negotiating price or budgeting for future repairs.

The Survey will enable an investor or occupier to satisfy themselves as to the integrity and repair of the subject building, and detail any potential liabilities that may be acquired along with the property.

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The Party Wall Etc. Act 1996 brought in the requirements for building owners to serve appropriate notices on their adjoining owners in relation to works carried out to party walls and proposed extensions and alterations.

The purpose of the Party Wall Act is to ensure that Adjoining Owners (neighbours) do not suffer loss or damage to their property as a direct result of the Building Owner's actions. The Act states that any damage caused to an Adjoining Owner's property, must be remedied at the expense of the Building Owner.

In order to assist with the identification of any damage that might occur, party wall surveyors will carry out a descriptive and photographic schedule of condition to those parts of an Adjoining Owner's property, which are at risk from damage, prior to the commencement of building works being undertaken.

Whether you have received a notice, or are to embark on works affecting a party wall, (albeit directly or due to excavation works), Underwoods are able to assist in preparing the relevant Party Wall Award documentation and ensuring that the correct procedures are followed.

Underwoods have considerable experience in representing both sides to a Party Wall award and are well practiced at ensuring the works progress smoothly and any disruption or damage is kept to a minimum and remedied at the earliest stage.

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