



## CHARTERED BUILDING CONSULTANCY

If a neighbour is carrying out building work next to your home- usually a loft conversion or rear ground floor extension- you can seek to protect your **Party Wall** from damage.

In England and Wales, there is legislation in place to help protect 'home owners' property when building work takes place nearby. The Party Wall etc. Act 1996 entitles you as the homeowner- to a Party Wall Survey. Whoever is undertaking the building work usually pays the costs on your behalf.

### How can my Party Wall be damaged?

There are three common ways a wall can be damaged during building work. The first is RSJ steel beams causing plaster on your side of the wall to crack, blow or fall away (see A). RSJs are often used in loft conversions. Secondly jack hammering- where heavy vibrations can sometimes cause plasterwork to crack or fall away (see B). Jack hammers are often used when removing chimney breasts. Lastly, excavating close to a Party Wall causing the earth around the foundations to shift (see C). Your buildings' natural right of support is temporarily removed if your neighbour is digging within three metres of and to a lower level of your building. Excavation work is generally undertaken for ground floor extensions.

What do our Party Wall Surveyors do? Protects your Party Wall and helps resolve matters in the unlikely event of damage, by-

i) Reviewing your neighbour's proposals for carrying out building work and determining a suitable 'method and manner' when work is carried out (for example a standard clause in our Party Wall Agreements restricts the use of jack hammers).

ii) Inspecting and recording the pre-works condition of the relevant parts of your property. Photographs are taken which may be used to resolve disputes if damage occurs.

iii) Serving a 'Party Wall Award' (sometimes called a 'Party Wall Agreement') on you and your neighbour to authorise building work under the Party Wall Act. This sets out your neighbour's rights and responsibilities, as well as setting out the legal protections you are entitled to.

iv) The 'Party Wall Award' will include a copy of the written survey of your property, and is held on our files (with the accompanying photographs) for a minimum of 10 years.

Using a Hourican & Associates Party Wall Surveyor can incentivise the builder to ensure their procedures are carried out in the correct way.

### *Good neighbours stay good friends*

A good surveyor understands the nuances of maintaining good relationships with neighbours. Hourican & Associates Ltd. have honed this skill since 2013 through more than 4000 Party Wall surveys. Before you employ our services, we recommend you speak to your neighbour. It may be they already have another Party Wall Surveyor in mind and there would be no need to get another company involved. If they don't, we would be delighted to act for both you and your neighbour. In the unlikely event of damage occurring to your property, we are skilled in resolving situations in a just, amicable and cost-effective way.

How much will this cost my neighbour? Surveyor's fees will vary depending on the scope of the works, but are typically between £1,000 and £1,500+VAT. The best way to limit costs is for both owners to use the same surveyor, which the Government and organisations with an interest in the Party Wall Act recommend in the first instance. A Party Wall surveyor is obligated to remain impartial.

### Information on the Party Wall Act

You can find the full information on the Party Wall Act from the web link on the cover of this leaflet, but we would like to highlight some specific areas which may be of use to you. These are:

The Party Wall Act applies to structural work to shared 'Part Walls' between properties and/or new walls built at or astride the boundary of adjoining properties.

The Party Wall Act is also applicable if excavation is carried out within 3 metres of any of your buildings or structures, which includes detached properties without Party Walls.

