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Chartered Building Surveyors





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## ABOUT US

The Chartered Building Surveying practice of Orpwood Associates was founded by Trevor Orpwood in 1975 and has obtained an enviable reputation for consistently applying a high level of technical expertise, experience, and commercial awareness, to execute client's building projects and to resolve their property problems.

All surveyors are members of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, building surveying faculty and are trained to combine their academic and practical skills to provide the correct technical solution, but at the same time being aware of the need to protect or enhance asset value.

Although a full range of building surveying services are provided the practice's prime areas of expertise are in the fields of design and contract administration (which includes commercial, educational, and residential buildings), the pre-purchase survey of commercial and higher value residential premises, party wall matters, and dilapidations.

Operating out of our South London office most of our work is carried out within London and the Home Counties but with occasional projects undertaken elsewhere in the UK.





## ARCHITECTURAL AND DESIGN SERVICES

An important fundamental of any construction project is an accurate site survey which then forms the framework for any future design. The first advice given by Orpwood Associates on any architectural project concerns the procurement of a site plan or existing floor plans. If the site or building is of a simple nature then we will produce the survey and drawings in house using traditional methods. However, if the site is large, irregularly shaped and the ground undulating or the building particularly large and complicated, then a brief will be prepared by us and quotations obtained from appropriate geomatic surveyors.

Following agreement of the client's brief, initial enquiries are made with the local planning authority and, if required, an initial budget cost is formulated. Initial scheme drawings are then prepared to test the feasibility of the design in terms of the constraints of the site, planning issues and the client brief. Once the optimal scheme has been achieved, a Planning Application is submitted together with an application for listed building consent, where appropriate. The drawings are then further developed to incorporate all necessary constructional details and information provided by other professionals,

such as the structural engineer or building services engineer, in order to create the 'working drawings'. These are then submitted (together with any necessary calculations or other information) for Building Regulation Approval to the local authority or Approved Inspector. The approved working drawings are then used as part of the contract documentation to obtain tenders for the work and for the contractor's use during the construction period.

All drawings are produced by 'Autocad' computer-aided drafting software and can be provided in electronic format or in traditional paper prints.

Orpwood Associates have extensive experience in the design of many types of building including residential, commercial, industrial, and educational, covering a variety of building operations including extensions and alterations, refurbishments, changes of use and new buildings.

For larger projects, we integrate the services of other constructional professionals, such as structural engineers, building services engineers, acoustics and audio visual consultants. We are also able to adapt our service to collaborate with the client's own architect or interior designer.

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# BUILDING SURVEYS AND DEFECT DIAGNOSIS



Orpwood Associates not only provide a range of surveys to suit a wide variety of needs, but also ensure that each survey report provides the vital information for the client to base his or her decision to acquire, retain, or reject a building.

## Building Surveys

Apart from the identification of structural defects, disrepairs, poor design and workmanship, and a lack of compliance with building legislation, we can assist clients on a range of issues relevant to their acquisition such as:

- The provision of budget costs for repairs, alterations and to bring the building into statutory compliance;
- Advise on the feasibility of adapting the building for a specific use or its suitability for extension;

- Advise on legislative concerns such as the need for asbestos management, DDA Audit, or an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC).

We also provide advice on the need for specialist inspections, for example of the electrical installation by NIC.EIC and ECA approved contractor, or the heating and plumbing installations by a CORGI registered engineer.

## Condition Surveys

Our service can record the condition of a group of buildings for asset management purposes, to record the condition of a building prior to adjacent demolition or tunnelling operations commencing, or to limit the extent of repairing obligations under a lease.

## Defect Diagnosis

We have considerable experience in the investigation, and diagnosis, of constructional defects and disrepairs. In addition, we can advise on liability, and warranty and insurance claims.

## Feasibility Surveys

With our knowledge of architectural design, construction legislation, building costs, and construction techniques, we are ideally placed to advise clients on the feasibility of a potential development.



## CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION

Some building owners are of the opinion that once they have obtained their Planning Permission and Building Regulation Approvals and they have their builder lined up to start, that the appointment of a building surveyor, or other construction professional, is unnecessary. In the case of small projects where the builder's capability is known and where the employer has some knowledge of building construction, this opinion may well be justified. However, for the majority of owners who have neither the knowledge nor the time to monitor the performance of their contractor, it would be prudent for them to employ an experienced Contract Administrator.

When Orpwood Associates act as Contract Administrators we:

- Check that the contract drawings, specification, and sub-contractors and supplier's quotations are sufficiently detailed and appropriate for the proposed works;
  - Obtain prices for the work from the clients or our own approved list of contractors, either by competitive tender or by negotiation;
  - Advise on the appropriate form of building contract to be used and the extent and nature of insurance cover to be provided;
  - Monitor the work in progress to ensure that the work is being carried out using the correct materials and to the appropriate standard or workmanship, that adequate progress is being made and to answer the contractor's queries and requests for further information;
  - Agree and certify interim payments, vet and agree extras and claims;
  - Provide and issue all certificates and other notices required under the contract;
  - Negotiate and agree the contractor's final account;
  - Inspect the work at the end of the defects liability period and issuing any necessary instructions.
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## DILAPIDATIONS

Wherever a leasehold interest exists so might a claim for dilapidations. Put simply a dilapidations claim is a liability, which arises from failing to comply with the lease obligations to put or keep premises in a certain state of repair and redecoration and to return them to the landlord in this condition at the end of the lease, usually with any tenant's alterations or additions removed.

The intention of the law and practice relating to dilapidations is to retain the value of the landlord's investment by maintaining the income stream and keeping void periods to a minimum. It also exists to protect tenants from false claims.

The landlord's dilapidations claim is normally prepared by his surveyor who produces a priced schedule of defects and a statement of the landlord's loss, which is served on the tenant by the landlord's solicitor.

The tenant may then respond to the claim in various ways e.g. by challenging its validity, carrying out the repairs, or making a payment to the landlord in compensation of the losses he has incurred as a result of the failure to repair. In the case of the latter, this payment may include, rent, rates, and service charges, incurred by the landlord whilst the building is being put back into repair.

It will be appreciated from the above brief summary that "dilapidations" is a complex subject, which requires knowledge of repair and maintenance, building costs, valuations, and dilapidations law. It is also the case that no two dilapidations



matters are ever exactly the same, and each case must be considered on its own merits and with a strong focus on the landlord's true loss.

Orpwood Associates are used to acting on dilapidations matters for both landlords and tenants on commercial, industrial, and residential premises, and in complying with the Property Litigation Association's "Dilapidations Protocol".



## DISPUTES AND LITIGATION

Orpwood Associates can provide practical and legal advice in dealing with property and construction related disputes. Although we encourage the settlement of disputes by negotiation, mediation, and arbitration, in some cases litigation is necessary even though this may not result in the matter coming to court.

We act for both claimants and defendants as single joint experts in the County Court, or as part of the client's litigation team acting as independent experts in accordance with the civil procedure rules and the mandatory guidance notes for acting as an Expert Witness as set down by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, and in dilapidations claims in accordance with the protocol of the Property Litigation Association (PLA).

We have acted on the following matters:

- The quality and value of building works;
- Negligent or defective building works;
- NHBC warranty claims;
- Party Wall and Neighbourly matters;
- Professional negligence claims arising from building surveys and works;

If you are involved with a dispute we would be pleased to provide initial advice free and without obligation.

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## FIRE AND FLOOD DAMAGE REINSTATEMENT



A fire or serious damage by other insured perils including subsidence, high winds, flooding, or the impact of vehicles can be a traumatic experience for most property owners, and fortunately one in which they are unlikely to have previous experience.

In cases such as fire and flood, your first point of call will be the emergency authorities, but in others such as subsidence, the damage may only become apparent over a period of time. However, in all cases you will need to consult your insurance company or broker to find out what you should do next.

Orpwood Associates have considerable experience in dealing with property insurance claims and have repaired many buildings following the effects of fire, flood and subsidence. In particular, we can:

- Assess the extent of the damage and arrange for any necessary temporary protection or support;
- Assist you in submitting your insurance claim;
- Meet and agree the scope of the necessary repair works, with the loss adjuster appointed by your insurance company;
- Prepare a detailed specification of works and submit for competitive tender to suitable builders;
- Submit the tender results to the loss adjusters, and agree the contract sum and the contractor to be appointed;
- Administer the building contract checking on work standards, and progress, and negotiate and agree the contractor's final account.

We would point out that we are approved by the regulation section of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors to provide advice on insurance related matters.



## LEASEHOLD REPAIRS AND TENANT ALTERATIONS

The management of residential blocks is often a thankless task and one which is likely to be particularly arduous when carried out by inexperienced "volunteers" on behalf of resident-managed blocks and Residents' Associations. Amongst the problems which commonly arise are the difficulties of balancing the need for essential repairs with the budget available, differentiating between repairs and improvements, ensuring that the works are properly carried out and value for money obtained, and in some cases, deciding who has the responsibility to execute or pay for the repairs.

Orpwood Associates can provide expert advice on such matters to both professional managing agents and Residents' Associations and have experience of dealing with blocks and estates of all sizes, ages and construction. In particular assistance can be given with the preparation of the annual mainte-

nance budget, planned maintenance, and the specification and procurement of major repairs.

In both commercial and residential premises, tenants will from time to time want to carry out alterations to their part of the premises, and although they may have obtained the appropriate Planning and Building Regulation Approvals, they may be unaware that their lease requires them to obtain a 'Licence for Tenants Alterations' from their landlord. Orpwood Associates can assist both tenants and landlords in this situation, helping tenants to provide the right information to the landlord and negotiating the conditions of the licence, and on behalf of the landlord, we can vet the tenant's proposals to ensure that they are not of detriment to the building and other residents, and that the works are carried out in conformity with the Licence.





## PARTY WALL MATTERS

Although the Party Wall etc. Act 1996 extended the scope of party wall legislation to the whole of England and Wales, similar legislation has been in place in London for over 100 years, and Orpwood Associates has over 30 years experience in acting in this type of work.

We at Orpwood Associates deal with Party Wall matters on a daily basis and have an in-depth knowledge of the workings of the Party Wall etc. Act 1996, which, coupled with our broad experience of construction techniques, gives us the ability to resolve your party wall dispute. Thus, whether you are a developer contemplating the redevelopment of a city centre site or owner concerned about the possible effect of a neighbour's extension on your house, we would be pleased to hear from you.

This legislation has two main purposes. The first is to enable building work and development to be carried out in congested urban environments, and the second to provide some protection to the owners and occupiers of adjoining land and buildings which may be affected by such work.

As its name suggests, the Act covers work to "Party Walls" (i.e. essentially those walls which separate the buildings of different owners, and/or which sit astride the boundary between two properties), but also deals with walls built up to the boundary, and excavations which are lower than the adjoining owner's foundations and within a prescribed distance from them.

# PROJECT MONITORING AND ACTING AS CLIENTS REPRESENTATIVE



We would define Project Monitoring as 'protecting the client's interests by identifying and advising on the risks associated with acquiring an interest in a development that is not under the client's direct control'.

Our surveyors have experience of project monitoring in the residential, commercial, and health care sectors, acting for banks or funding institutions and tenants or purchasers who have entered into a commitment to lease or purchase a property on completion.

The extent of the service provided varies from project to project but will generally include providing advice on the following matters:

- Land and property acquisition matters;
- Statutory consents;
- The competency of the developer, its team and any proposed project management systems;
- Development, finance, consultancy and construction agreements;
- Construction costs and programmes;
- Design and construction quality.

In our experience, the appointment of a project monitor (or client's representative) is of considerable value to directors and managers in companies and organisations who have little or no property or construction expertise. In this case, the project manager acts as an 'interpreter' and a 'mediator' between the developer and client thus ensuring both parties have a better understanding of the other's requirements, objectives, and limitations and helping to minimise the expectation gap between the parties.



## PLANNED MAINTENANCE

When it is important to keep a building in good repair, to provide adequate financial for future cyclical or major repairs, and to ensure that the maintenance funds or service charges are used wisely, then a planned maintenance programme is required.

Orpwood Associates have prepared maintenance programmes for many residential apartment blocks and institutional buildings. Commonly extending over a 10-year period, the preparation of the plan commences with a detailed survey of the property, usually accompanied by the inspection of the communal building services such as lifts, hot and cold water supplies, heating, ventilation and drains by specialist contractors.

Following the inspection, the cost of each repair is estimated and prioritised in respect of their urgency, their overall effect on the building and its occupants, and the availability of funds. A programme of repairs is then prepared, taking into account such matters as the frequency of cyclical repairs, the need to make maximum use of scaffolding, and the need to avoid undue fluctuations in the service charge or annual expenditure budgets.

The preliminary programme is then discussed with the clients, to ensure that their own priorities and management criteria are taken account of and then a final programme is produced on an Excel spreadsheet, enabling the programme to be revised on an annual basis as repairs are carried out, quotations received and substituted for estimated figures, or to adjust for changes of inflation in building costs.



The plan can also incorporate advice on compliance with new statutes, health and safety issues, and energy saving proposals.

Once the plan is adopted, we can also assist with its implementation, either by recommending suitable contractors or preparing specifications for the work, obtaining tenders, and carrying out the contract administration process.

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