

This time of year

Well it's summertime and everybody's looking forward to getting away or at least most of us are, some poor surveyors are stuck with a mountain of work to get through first!

I'm going to go back to talking about property itself and in this example I'm actually looking at two residential properties, although they are designed to talk about property matters in general rather than be relating to Housing.

If you look at the first photo, the wall is clearly decaying. This may seem very obvious and it is but only if the entire property is inspected. One of the issues surveyors sometimes have is that it is not always possible to get a good view of every part of a property- sometimes this is due to physical constraints, and sometimes it has to be said due to a lack of access being offered by the property owners. Like all surveyors and other professionals, I am asked to do the most work for the least cost and whereas it may be tempting (particularly for some) to cut corners, missing something like this only results in a significant professional indemnity claim.

The second picture shows the top of the wall leaning out where it is not properly tied in to the front and rear walls of the main structure. The issue here is actually quite significant as I have advised that the wall should be taken down to a level where the ground floor ceiling and the first floor are 'as one', whilst supporting the main roof structure with a temporary frame, and then rebuilding the wall. This will not be a cheap or easy exercise.

But why am I talking about these and why bring them up now? Firstly because in each



Philip Bowe

case I was asked to look at the properties after they have been bought - when the buyers did not think the expense of few hundred pounds was worth it against the issues they are now facing. So the first lesson is that it is always worthwhile getting a survey, no matter how much the property costs.

The second lesson relates to the time of year. At this time of year, there is not much rain so we surveyors cannot comment fully on the operation of rainwater goods. However, there is a growing problem with rainfall and its distribution in the ground. In years gone by the amount of land that was covered by concrete, tarmac or block paving was fairly nominal compared to the amount of green land around. Now I'm not want to say we don't need new housing, because we clearly do, and we

also need new commercial units for all sorts of reasons. However, if we do not keep a certain amount of virgin land available for water to drain, it has to go somewhere. And that is where we are getting more and more floods from as water levels in rivers rise and have no open land to soak into. Whereas I wouldn't consider myself a "green", I do advise that some green policies are needed. We must maintain a level of open land for waters to drain away otherwise we will all end up underwater sooner than we expect.

And the third point - Artificial Intelligence is all very good. Even I've learned how to use it to an extent, but AI is limited to that old computer saying "GIGO" - Garbage in, Garbage out. There are numerous computer programs being offered to surveys now to aid them in their work, and many of these will be very useful. However, I still don't believe anything can beat the human eye in seeing the real state of a property on its own and in context. So we need to keep people in the field as surveyors, and we need to keep using them. Don't rely on technology for everything, and keep me in my colleagues doing what we do best - advising you before you buy or rent.



Commercial Rent Reviews
and Lease Renewals
Schedules of
Dilapidation and Condition
Rating Challenges
Tax Valuations



BIV BOWES
INDEPENDENT SURVEYORS
PROPERTY CONSULTANTS

Ellison House,
2 Osborne Road,
Jesmond,
Newcastle upon Tyne,
NE2 2AA.
www.bivbowes.com
Tel: 0191 462 6 264