



Richard Hourican

# THE PARTY LINE

*As a specialist Party Wall surveyor, Richard Hourican will protect your interests during building works*

Are you planning a building project – perhaps an extension, loft conversion or basement – that is on or adjacent to your property’s boundary line? Or has a ‘Party Wall’ notice dropped on the doormat informing you of a neighbour’s impending works?

In either scenario, it’s likely that you will need a surveyor with the experience and expertise to negotiate the legal minefield of the Party Wall Act (1996). Richard Hourican’s Chiswick-based chartered building consultancy provides exactly that professional service, and does so in a straightforward manner.

‘I’ve often found that surveyors speak their own language,’ Richard recalls. ‘That’s why we explain the Party Wall process to clients in detail – and we always do it in layman’s terms.’ While undertaking structural

modifications, the chances of encroaching onto a neighbour’s property are significant. ‘With loft conversions, problems are caused by raising the Party Wall (the physical divide between premises) or inserting steel beams and, with basements, it’s new foundations,’ says Richard.

‘As surveyors, we protect our client’s best interests. We will check all the drawings, serve legal notices and draw up a Party Wall Award; this is a binding agreement between home owners that sets out their duties and obligations and serves as reference in the event of a dispute.

‘Alternatively, we can also prepare a “Schedule of Condition Survey” prior to any work starting. In those instances, we survey the properties as they stand and then, if damage is caused,

there is clear proof of previously existing conditions.’

Perhaps surprisingly, the same surveyor can be engaged by the ‘Building Owner’ and the ‘Adjoining Neighbour’. This has the benefit of avoiding confusions, speeding up proceedings and cutting costs. ‘According to the law, we work for the Party Wall Act,’ explains Richard. ‘That means we are obliged to be impartial, hence we can be appointed by – and then advise – both parties involved in any project. In those cases, we are called the ‘Agreed Surveyor.’

‘It’s essential to understand all the implications of building plans,’ he adds. ‘If you don’t, it could cost thousands. Our job is to ensure everything is done correctly – and that it doesn’t!’

**Richard Hourican**  
**BSc (Hons), MCIQB,**  
**MCABE, ARICS, MPFWS**  
**Hourican & Associates Ltd**  
Building 3, Chiswick Park,  
W4 5YA  
020 8849 8390 / 07769869799  
info@houricanassociates.com  
www.houricanassociates.com