



A FIELD GUIDE TO CONDITION SURVEYS

A HANDY GUIDE TO HELP YOU IN THE
FIELD WHILST VOLUNTEERING.

















You've completed the training module, but we know that is a lot of information to remember!

We have created this short document that acts as a handy guide for what to look for on each element when completing a Condition Survey.

You might like to print this and keep it with you when you go out surveying.

Scoring System

For each element you will be asked to rate it on a scale of 1 to 8.

1	Good	The element is of a high standard with no need for work.			
2					
3	Fair	The element is of an okay condition but could benefit from work			
4					
5	Poor	The element needs work in the near future and risks deteriorating			
6					
7	Very Bad	The element needs immediate work and is severely deterioration			
8					

Not Applicable
↪ This feature is not relevant
to the building

Not Visible
↪ This feature is not visible
on the building

Roof

When looking at roofs consider:

- Is it straight or does it have any dips in it suggesting buckling of the rafters?
- Are there gaps between tiles/slates that can let water in?
- Are there missing tiles/slates?
- Can you see slates/tiles or slate/tile debris on the floor around the building?
- Are there signs of general failings of flashings or are they missing?
- Is thatch in good condition or is it damaged, deteriorating or mossy?
- Are there lead tingles suggesting nail sickness?
- Is the leadwork cracking or missing?



Gutters and Downpipes

When looking at gutters and downpipes consider:

- Does the building have them and if it does do they work?
- Are they all joined together and fixed to the wall?
- Are they blocked with plants and debris?
- Are they doing a good job of getting water away from the building or are they discharging onto the walls?
- Can you see damp staining on the wall behind them indicating they're not working well?



Wall Structure

When looking at wall structures consider:

- Looking at the surfaces, is there anything obvious going on?
- Are there any open cracks in the brickwork and how big are they?
- Are any areas bulging or sagging?
- Are bits of rendering missing?
- Is the brick eroding?
- Are bits of pointing missing?
- Look at the base of the walls, are there colour changes which might suggest that water is getting in?
- Is there lots of white dust or crystals on the wall surface which might indicate damp?

Walls can be difficult to categorise. Old buildings do move and may have moved in the past producing cracks that can look concerning but we're looking for new and recent movement.

You could look for past repairs or repointing that have cracked again which might suggest new movement.

As a general rule of thumb, cracks in the masonry or through the lintels and sills rather than in the pointing can suggest more serious movement.



Doors

When looking at doors consider:

- Has the building still got doors?
- Are those doors secure?
- Are there problems with the glasswork in the doors?
- Are there any signs of vandalism such as broken or boarded-up doors?
- Are there rotten timbers?
- Is any paint work flaking?



Windows

When looking at windows consider:

- Are there broken panes of glass?
- Are the frames decayed or in a generally bad condition?
- Is paint on the frames peeling?
- Are there signs of vandalism, such as broken or boarded up windows?



Architectural Details

When looking at architectural details consider:

- Are they there, and if so, what condition are they in?
- Look for structural instability, are elements missing or broken?
- Masonry detail can be assessed in a similar way to walls, but look out for peeling black crust resulting from pollution
- Have affixed decorative elements split the stone they are adjoined to?
- Are metal decorative elements rusting? Are they still securely fixed?
- Is leadwork damaged, missing, or pitted with pollution or acidic decay?
- Are decorative timber cornices and ornamentation rotted?

Good



Fair



Poor



Very Bad



Boundary Walls, Gates, and Railings

When looking at boundary walls, gates, and railings consider:

- Are there any there and, if so, what condition are they in?
- Are there signs of structural instability?
- Are there elements missing or broken?
- Is there flaking or missing paintwork?
- Is any wood rotting?
- Is any brickwork eroding or spalling?



Interior

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD YOU ATTEMPT TO
ACCESS PRIVATELY OWNED BUILDINGS.**

**There are very few cases where you will be able to examine the
interior of a building.**

**Please only assess the interior of buildings which are open to the
public, for example a library or a pub.**

**If you can access the interior, look for evidence of leaking/water
ingress such as staining or bubbling paintwork as well as any
damage to internal fixtures and fittings.**



Additional Building Elements

There are lots of elements you will have been asked about during the process of doing a Condition Survey but you may feel not everything is being captured about the condition of the building. It is the Additional Building Elements and the subsequent Overall Condition Fields that allow you to take an overarching view on the condition of the building.

Some other things you might want to consider could be:

- Does it seem neglected?
- How's the pointing/masonry on the chimney?
- Are there any signs of spreading? Is the chimney stack straight?
- If it has pots are they straight, or are bits falling off?
- Is there any sign of soot leaking through the masonry?

Overall Condition

Once you have spent some time looking at each of the individual elements of the building you will be asked to provide an overall condition rating for the building. Use the ratings you have given the different elements to guide what you think the overall condition is.

There may be times where for the most part elements will be rating poor (5-6), fair (3-4), or even good (1-2), but there may be a significant problem in one area which will mean that the overall rating may be very bad (7-8). For example if all the doors, windows, and walls etc are in a fair (3-4) condition but there is a section of the roof missing then the overall condition rating would be very bad (7-8) because the lack of weather proofing the roof is providing leaves the building at major risk of rapid further deterioration.



Curtilage Buildings and Partial Listings

"Curtilage structures" are those listed in addition to the main listed building; for example, stables associated with an old farmhouse.

When you complete a condition assessment, this will be focussed on the main building on the site; the farmhouse, in this example.

Many of these "curtilage structures" are historically important. However, they don't have a listed building number of their own to identify them.

We have included 'Are curtilage structures at risk?' as your opportunity to note any curtilage structures which are clearly at risk. This is useful for when the main building is in good condition and the overall site does not deserve a rating such as Very Bad but a rating Good does not reflect the additional structures.

Locally Listed Buildings

In addition to the national listings held by Historic England (also known as the statutory list; including Grades I, II, II*), Local Councils are encouraged to maintain a "Local List" of buildings.

Being included on this list gives Locally Listed buildings protection in the Planning process and highlights their historical or architectural significance (which we find beneficial in securing funding for their restoration).

We are including the function for you to suggest a building for local listing. Each Council sets their own qualifying criteria for Local Listing. We cannot meet all these criteria in one project, so we ask you simply to consider whether the building you are looking at significantly adds to the heritage of the local area and to add a photo.

Full instructions and guidance regarding suggesting a building for local listing can be found on our website in the 'A Guide to the DHBT B@R project and app' document.