

Property Guarantee Administration



“Getting on with the job”

Part 1:

Finding a Contractor

1.0 How do you find a Contractor?

There are various ways that you may get to hear of or locate a contractor to undertake work for you but always consider the possible implications associated with the route by which you obtained the contractor's name and details. A good deal of this is common sense but knowledge of the 'workings' of the industry is a distinct advantage.

Getting timber and damp treatment right first time is important in order to avoid ruining decorative finishes and the disruption associated with 'doing it again'. Finding and selecting a good contractor is fraught with difficulty so below we have provided some guidance to help you through this process:

1.1: By recommendation

This is always *the* best way of finding a contractor. If someone amongst your family or friends has had some building preservation work carried out and they were satisfied, ask them for the contractor's details. Ask if the work was completed on schedule and within budget? How approachable and courteous were the contractors? Were there any 'extra' costs? If so what was the reason for them and was the situation handled well? Was the work carried out by tradesmen or 'young lads'? Did they clean up when they had finished? Did they offer a guarantee? Was there any problem getting the work 'snagged' and did the surveyor make a final inspection of the work?

1.2: Recommended by a surveyor or solicitor

Building preservation companies that are recommended by a solicitor, architect or structural surveyor are normally a good bet. A contractor will usually bend over backwards to maintain their good name and keep in favour with a solicitor or surveyor in order to preserve a steady stream of work from this source. A client using a contractor from this source will

always have the ultimate sanction of complaining to the surveyor or solicitor concerned should things go wrong and the contractor will know and fear this. Furthermore professional bodies are bound by their own strict codes of ethics and for them to seek or accept any form of inducement in return for work or services could have very serious consequences on their future careers.

Surveyors and architects are more likely to have seen companies in action on site compared with solicitors. Surveyors very often instruct preservation companies to accompany them whilst they undertake a structural survey. They will only use thorough, honest and reliable companies known to them because they have their own professional standards to maintain.

1.3: 'Introduced' by an estate agent

During the process of purchasing a property it is not unusual for your surveyor or building society to spring the unexpected on you and suggest that you arrange for a 'timber and damp specialist' to inspect the property. Up until this point you probably never knew that such a 'person' even existed never mind knowing where to get hold of one!

Very often when this unexpected 'hiccup' lands on your door step your first point of contact is the estate agent handling the purchase/sale. They reassuringly say do not worry and they will organise an inspection on your behalf. This is very commendable and reassuring but it is always worth stopping to think at this stage who is the estate agent working for?

Building preservation companies know that estate agents are a very good source of enquiries so they specifically target them. Whilst it does not happen in all cases some estate agents are 'encouraged' to provide survey enquiries in return for a % commission payment directly related to the value of work 'found necessary'. We are also aware of inducements such as televisions, microwave cookers, vouchers etc. that have been provided by the contractor in return for a steady stream of enquiries. Who pays for this? The client of course! Will you be getting a good honest opinion and a good standard of work in these circumstances? Who knows!

A further point worth bearing in mind is that it is in the estate agent's interest for any defects that may be present in a property to be kept to a minimum in order to keep the sale on track and not rock the boat. We are aware of a case where an estate agent put forward to a purchaser a report and estimate that they had requested that had only detected a small amount of woodworm. They withheld another report on the same property they had also commissioned that had found a large amount of expensive dry rot. After the sale completed this came to light resulting in the agent and the negligent preservation company that failed to detect the dry rot both being sued by the purchasers - quiet rightly so.

We would like to stress that the above examples of sharp practice do not go on all the time but it does happen so you should be aware.

1.4: From a product manufacturer's list

In an attempt to help homeowners and other clients avoid being fleeced by the cowboy element, most building preservation material manufacturers have established lists of 'vetted' registered or approved contractors. Whilst these lists seek to provide some form of reassurance to the paying customer always bear in mind that such lists exist for the benefit of the manufacturer in order to ensure their own customer (the contractor) loyalty. No manufacturer is able to oversee the day to day operations of a contractor and the 'vetting' claims made by some are stretching the truth. It is the commercial interest of a manufacturer to have a favourable relationship with their contractor clients so tread with caution. See *"Getting on with the job" Part 2 - 'Approved Contractors'* for more information.

1.5: Blind choice

This term refers to the selection of possible contractors that you have little or no direct knowledge of. Such contractors are usually found in Yellow Pages and Thomson Local telephone directories under 'Damp Proofing and Control' or 'Woodworm and Dry Rot Control'.

The advertising cost for an entry in one of these publications goes some way to sort the wheat from the chaff. Advertisements in these directories has to be placed a long time in advance and the fly-by-night cowboys are less likely to pay hundreds of pounds for advertising, but then some see it as a small investment that enables them to get their foot in your doorway and their talons into your chequebook. Be wary of large half page advertisements. Experience has shown over the years that those who place large advertisements tend not to be around for very long – more front than Selfridges comes to mind!

Avoid contractors who only have a mobile phone number, and no address. Under no circumstances should you entertain anyone 'cold calling' - good contractors do not need to cold call to generate work.

If you are faced with a blind choice look for companies who are members of the BWPDA (British Wood Preserving and Damp-proofing Association) and/or try to make certain that the surveyor is qualified (see *"Getting on with the job" - Part 6 – Industry Qualifications*). The BWPDA is an active industry specific association with demanding admittance requirements.

There is a plethora of other general 'catch all' associations such as FMB (Federation of Master Builders) or GMC (Guild of Master Craftsmen) which are not industry specific and relatively simple to join. Try to find a well established firm, not one that has sprung-up over the last 12 months, and look for independent insurance backed guarantees such as from ourselves.

Part 2:

Approved Contractors

2.0 Approved Contractors

Approved contractors in most service industries have been with us for many years now and the building preservation industry is no different. Product manufacturers are keen to retain the loyalty of their contractor clients in order to continue to sell their products. To help achieve this they grant contractors 'approved' status but what does this really mean?

2.1 Introduction

The basic premise runs like this.... Sales reps of product manufacturer's seek out companies either involved in the industry or on the fringes of it and try to entice that company to buy from them - usually by undercutting their existing supplier's prices. Sometimes for a modest fee and proof of the existence of their Public Liability Insurance, the newly poached contractor is signed up to the manufacturer's scheme and agrees to work with integrity and trust, to a minimum set of standards.

Due to the competitive nature of the industry hardly any of the manufacturers' now request a fee and acceptance into their 'Approved Contractor' scheme is on the say so of the representative who may have been selling ice cream last week! We are aware of one company that mailed unsolicited 'Approved Contractor' certificates to contractors! So much for vetting! Once 'approved' the manufacturer supplies some slick marketing materials along with logos for use on vehicles and company stationery.

Should a prospective client contact a manufacturer looking for a reliable contractor, they will either be given the contact details of 'Approved Contractors' that cover their area or the area rep will contact them and point them towards their own 'favoured' contractor customer. The client-contractor relationship then develops as usual, with a site visit, survey report, estimate etc.

2.2 What's in it for the client?

Well, they gain some peace of mind in knowing that they have more than likely eliminated the worst of the cowboys, and they hope that the contractor has been lightly vetted and declared 'compos mentis'. They are able to take advantage of the Manufacturer's Guarantee schemes (at an additional cost) and they have the option to complain to the sponsoring manufacturer if the contractor lets them down or does a shoddy job but do not rely too heavily on this.

2.3 What's in it for the Contractor?

Basically kudos. Gone are the days when a contractor was only 'allowed' to be 'Approved' by one manufacturer. It used to be if a contractor dared speak to another manufacturer and their current sponsor got wind of this they would be threatened with expulsion and removal of their 'Approved'

status - shock horror! Nowadays, due to the intense competition to supply building preservation materials it is not unusual to see contractors openly advertising that they are 'Approved Contractors' for several manufacturers. The tables have turned.

It's basically another form of advertising for the contractor. It also has the added kudos of allowing the Contractor to declare themselves 'Approved' and therefore add a small premium to their costs. They also have access to the technical back-up of the sponsoring manufacturer, enhanced marketing materials and rapid access to data sheets.

Many contractors also believe that the more 'badges' they have on their paperwork the more impressed their potential clients will be yet in many cases the opposite is true. Be aware that some of the less scrupulous contractors print badges, logos etc. on their paper work that they are not entitled to. It is always worth checking that a contractor is a member or is registered with whoever they are claiming to be associated with.

2.4 What's in it for the Manufacturer?

Forgive our cynicism, but the manufacturers have not established these schemes for the benefit of the client or the contractors. It is primarily for their own benefit to maintain contractor loyalty and a steady outlet for their products but as mentioned earlier this is not always the case. If the clients and the contractors are helped in the process, that's a welcome bonus.

These schemes turn contractors into unpaid Sales Reps for the manufacturers. The 'Approved Contractor' turns up on the client's doorstep, eager to sell not just their building preservation skills and expertise, but also the products of the sponsoring manufacturer....and they're actually paying the manufacturer for the privilege, which means, at the end of the day, the client is paying!

2.5 Conclusions

Approved contractor schemes in the preservation industry have been around for years and it is probably true to say that their status has been eroded over the last decade. They were viewed by some as a positive move but it should be remembered that approved lists are not infallible. They are specific to each manufacturer and a contractor that is 'Approved' by one manufacturer may not be 'Approved' by others.

Also remember that a product manufacturer has little or no influence over the day to day running of a contractor's business or their business ethics. By the same token the business ethics of some manufacturers who will grant just about anyone 'approved' status just to sell some products is to be frowned upon.

Contractors that repeatedly 'break the rules' may be thrown off a list by one manufacturer and lose their 'Approved' status, but other manufacturers will soon 'take them onboard' if it means a sale. They can not be prevented from carrying on as contractors. Work that is seriously

sub-standard may or may not be corrected by the contractor but by then, the damage is done; the client is disenchanted, the job has been delayed and the preservation industry takes another knock.

However, overall, choosing a Contractor from an approved list is still a better idea than sticking a pin in the phone book, or accepting the bargain offer from the 'bloke' that knocks on the door because he is 'working in your area'.

Part 3:

Assessing contractors survey reports

3.0 Assessing survey reports

A contractor's survey report is his shop window. It should entice you to use his services and instil confidence that any suggested work for which an estimate has been provided will be carried out to a high standard. A survey report also has other important functions.

3.1: Basic survey report requirements

The basic content of a survey report that you receive from a building preservation specialist should, amongst other things, be a clear concise summary of what was found during the survey, an explanation of why what they found is there and a detailed explanation of what they are going to do about it in the form of a specification.

The survey report that you receive should contain the following:

1. Company name, address and telephone number.
2. Date the report was typed.
3. Report reference.
4. Authorised by or instructing client(s) details.
5. Address of property surveyed.
6. Property type (optional).
7. Surveyors name.
8. Date surveyed.
9. Point of reference. (For left, right, front and rear references)
10. Weather conditions (optional)
11. Clear confirmation of the client's survey instructions.
12. Limitations of survey
13. Restrictions present.
14. Logical room/area titles.
15. External observations.
16. Internal observations
17. Treatment recommendations/specification (timber inspection)
18. Treatment recommendations/specification (rising damp report)
19. Client's responsibilities before operatives arrive on site.
20. General recommendations.
21. Drawing/Sketch plan to illustrate areas of work.

22. Specimen guarantee (if one is being offered).
23. Health and Safety information
24. Estimate/Quotation.
25. Data sheets (if relevant).
26. Notice of Acceptance (optional).
27. Terms and Conditions
28. A summary of all enclosed documents that will form part of the contract.

Whilst excellent reports are produced by some sadly the general standard tends to be poor.

3.2: The importance of the survey report

A survey report produced by a preservation specialist is a very important document:

- It is an important part of the contract that will be entered into between the client and the contractor.
- Should a dispute arise, be it about what the survey did or did not find, or what the contractor has or has not allowed for, it is the survey report and its accompanying documents that is relied upon in these circumstances.
- A report is a permanent record of the work undertaken and it is therefore directly related to any guarantee that may be provided upon completion of the work. A guarantee on its own, without a survey report to which it relates is meaningless and is merely a statement that work has taken place. The report tells you what was undertaken and where.
- A report may contain instructions for the client or their builder about other work directly or indirectly related to the preservation work being undertaken. It should also explain the consequences of what might happen if these instructions are not carried out or are carried out incorrectly.

3.3: Understand the report

It is very important that you know and understand what has been found, where, why it has occurred and exactly what is necessary to deal with it. The report should make this clear. You need to know who will be responsible for what. You need to know the work specifications that will be employed that you will be paying for.

Do not accept 'Hack off damp affected plaster and replace' or 'Spray floor timbers'. You need to know the precise sand and cement re-plastering specification i.e. the sand: cement ratios to be used as this is very important. You need to know if floor boards will be lifted to spray the underside and sub-floor timbers and boards nailed back afterwards. After

all 'Spray floor timbers' could mean just spraying the top surface of the floor boards which is no good at all.

Once you have received the competing reports and estimates/quotations read each one very carefully and make notes of what is and is not included in each. Sometimes creating a table with columns for you to tick is useful for this purpose. You might prefer one particular company but they have not included for certain items that others have such as skirting board replacement or sink removal and replacement. Ask the preferred contractor at this stage to provide a price for the work not allowed for – more often than not they will go out of their way to help if they are about to be instructed to do the whole job.

It is also very important that that you understand what you have to do before, during and after treatment, what type of guarantee you are getting, payment arrangements, health and safety implications etc. etc.

If you do not understand a report or it makes no sense ask for an explanation and get it in writing. If you still do not understand it is probably better to get someone else. Do not proceed with any contractor who does not produce a meaningful and comprehensive report.

3.4: Who do you believe?

It is not unusual to receive two or three conflicting reports and opinions about the same property. Some for example may find damp in a few walls whilst others will detect it in many more – who do you believe? Even when they find the need for similar work some allow for re-fixing skirting boards others do not. Some quote for re-plastering others do not. Some allow for timber renewals when it is necessary but others require you to organise this etc. Trying to make comparisons about something that you are not familiar with is very difficult.

In an ideal world it is best to try and ensure that each contractor is quoting for the same work but this is easier said than done. Because each company's specification of work is down to the investigative and diagnostic skill of individual surveyors' huge variances will sometimes occur making comparison very difficult.

One solution is to engage the services of a suitably qualified and experienced independent surveyor who should inspect the property and draw up a specification of work necessary. This specification should then be put out to tender to three contractors and the tender submissions should then be vetted by the independent surveyor.

Unfortunately there is still considerable reluctance on the part of the public to pay for an independent expert who in very many cases will save money by preventing unnecessary work from being undertaken. Unfortunately there is still a preference by the general public to rely on the so called 'free survey' offered by contractors who are after all surveying a property with speculative intent.

3.5: Estimate or Quotation

Some contractors submit 'estimates' whilst others submit 'quotations'. An estimate is an 'approximate judgement' – in other words the price may go up or it may, but rarely does, go down. A quotation on the other hand is regarded as a fixed price and should not change. The reality in most domestic contracts is that both amount to the same thing and even when a 'quotation' is submitted additional work may be found and the price varied. Many contractors are not aware of the difference.

Check that the price stated by the contractor includes VAT - it can come as a shock if the price you have been given is suddenly upped by 17.5%. If the price stated makes no reference to VAT then you are entitled to assume that the figure includes VAT. Anyone charging VAT must quote their VAT number on their invoice. If you are suspicious check that the company is VAT registered with Revenue and Excise.

Part 4:

Choosing Which Contractor to Use

4.0: Choosing a Contractor

Having received the survey reports and estimates from the contractors that you contacted, you now have to select one that you feel comfortable with to undertake any necessary work for you. This is an important decision. Below we outline some considerations that you should take into account when undertaking this process.

4.1: Price

The first consideration is usually 'price' but you should always look deeper than this. As a general rule, most prices for straightforward jobs should fall in a $\pm 15\%$ range. For instance, a job with a cost of £2,000 may generate estimates from contractors in the £1,700 - £2,300 range. You should be aware however that the cheapest price may not produce the best of jobs, and that the top price is no guarantee of quality.

Prices vary significantly between contractors for a variety of reasons. For example if a company employs trained tradesmen, their wage bill, and therefore the cost to the client, will be higher than a company that employs a less skilled workforce and young lads. On the other hand some contractors do not have a pricing structure at all and their price will depend upon how busy they are at that time.

Be wary of very low or very high prices. Low prices indicate that corners will have to be cut for the contractor to make a wage whilst some contractors will deliberately submit artificially high prices for work they are not really interested in. View 'special discounts' with a cautious eye.

In most circumstances the cost of specialist materials such as timber preservatives or chemical damp course products is now a comparatively small part of the overall cost of a job. The most expensive element is that

of labour. The time it takes to complete a job with how many men and what level of skill is required will dictate the overall cost.

4.2: Beware 'He who finds least gets the job but cost the most'

When selecting a contractor a major influence is obviously the cost of the work. A word of caution here is that whilst an estimate may look cheap initially this could be due to an inadequate survey or it could be a 'foot in the door' ploy. Contractors submitting very cheap estimates tend to find additional works. Once these are added to the original estimate this contractor may end up being the most expensive. Always compare very carefully what is and is not included in specifications and estimates.

4.3: Terms and Conditions

Read carefully the terms and conditions applicable to the report and estimate submitted by the contractor. You are at liberty to strike out any conditions that you feel are unreasonable before entering into any contract if both parties agree.

Not all but some contractors request the payment of a deposit. It is not unreasonable to pay some money in advance as a token of commitment as after all a contractor is allocating time in his work schedule for your job. If nothing is being purpose made then paying a large deposit a long time in advance is not to be advised. Get a written receipt for any deposit paid or suggest that you pay the deposit the first day that they attend site – 20% would be reasonable.

If the contract is large it is not unreasonable for the contractor to request 'stage payments' as the job progresses. Should this be the case get the contractor to put in writing each of the stages he expects payment and the amounts required. The final payment should be the largest and only pay this in full once you are fully satisfied and all 'snags' are dealt with. The stages should be defined by the amount of work completed and not the time spent on site. Never let payments get ahead of the value of work completed.

4.4: Is the contractor correctly insured?

Always check that the contractor you intend to use is fully and correctly insured – ask to see their Public Liability cover note – make sure it is in their trading name and look for a minimum of £1 million Public Liability.

Do not accept a cover note that does not have the same name as that on the headed paper of the report you have received. Some contractors main line of work is general building and they start a building preservation side line and believe that their building company insurance will cover their preservation business activities. Provided this has been declared to their insurance underwriter fine, but if it has not then they would probably not be insured when carrying out this type of work. In a worst case scenario you do not want to find out that the contractor was not insured after he accidentally burnt your house down!

4.5: Specimen Guarantee

If a contractor claims that all or part of their work will be covered by a long term guarantee then you should see a specimen of that guarantee before entering into a contract with the contractor. It is too late after the work has been completed to discover that the guarantee you are provided with is unreasonable or meaningless.

You should have received a specimen of the guarantee with the report but if you did not ask to see one before you place the order. Verbal guarantees are but breath on the wind.

4.6: References

Ask your preferred contractor to supply you with a minimum of 3 addresses where they have carried out similar work recently. You should if possible view their actual work rather than look at photographs that may or may not be their own work and preferably speak to their previous clients. After all, if you were spending £4,000 or £5,000 on a car, you would want to take it for a test run before committing yourself.

4.7: Personality

A final quality to consider is the contractor's personality. Is the contractor affable and easy to talk to, or bullish and arrogant? If you feel intimidated by a contractor it will be much harder for you to negotiate fairly with him should the need arise. You may have got on well with the surveyor so establish what his involvement is once the job commences. If you feel uncomfortable with a contractor then it is probably better that you use someone else.

Part 5:

Booking the job, dealing with additional work and work in progress

5.0: Arranging a start date

Once you have decided which contractor you are going to use you naturally want to 'get on with the job' as soon as possible. Most good contractors have at least a 2/3 week 'lead-time' i.e. the length of time from ordering the work to their day of arrival. If a contractor is able to start the next morning ask yourself why aren't they busy? You may wish to consider this situation should it arise and call them back.

Ask your chosen contractor for a proposed start date. If he operates a tight ship he should be able to give you a date but please bear in mind that building preservation is not a precise art and a few days either way might happen due to circumstances on preceding contracts but you should be kept informed of this. You will probably be requested to confirm your order in writing either in the form of a letter or on a Notice of

Acceptance that may have been enclosed with the original report. Keep a copy of all correspondence.

Please remember that it is not unusual for clients to say '*while you are here could you do this for me....*' which might turn a seven day job into a ten day job and the contractor's work schedule falls to pieces!

5.1: Your responsibilities

Read the contractor's report very carefully and ascertain exactly what your responsibilities are before, during and after the work.

If the report states that you must completely clear areas of work of all furniture and floor coverings prior to the arrival of their operatives on site then this is what it means. It does not mean just moving a few things out of the room or to start doing it the morning of the day that work is due to commence.

One thing that infuriates contractors is a client who does not do the preparatory work that has been requested before they arrive on site. A contractor will need access to water, and electricity, for drills, mixers etc.

5.2: Access arrangements

If the house is unoccupied then it is usual to provide a set of keys and to let them get on with it. If the house is occupied then it is probably better not to hand over a set of keys. Remember that you didn't even know these people a few weeks ago! A good contractor will refuse to take your keys if offered - if anything was to go missing, or gets broken in the house during your absence, even if it was not the fault of one of the workers, the contractor could potentially be held liable.

Should you hand over a key to what is after all a comparative stranger a wise precaution would be to change the lock once all work has finished – just in case.

5.3: Additional Work

Occasionally even the best contractors will encounter unexpected problems on some jobs - that's life. A responsible contractor however should not undertake any additional work for which you will be charged, without your prior knowledge and consent.

There are numerous reasons why additional work may be found necessary. For example excessive plaster thickness may be discovered, rot affected timbers previously concealed by plaster or masonry may be exposed, timber renewals in excess of the limits defined in the report/estimate may be required etc. Additional works often become necessary when dealing with a dry rot outbreak as frequently the full extent of the outbreak is not visible until opening up commences.

A word of caution here is that a good experienced contractor should be able to point out most areas where a dry rot outbreak may have spread to even if it has not been opened up and these areas of concern should be

made clear in the report. A good report should point this out so that you would be able to discuss the likelihood and the amount of possible additional costs that might be involved before work commences.

Establish what the contractor's procedure is if additional works are discovered. A good contractor should keep you updated on the progress of the work as well as any problems discovered that will require additional work and cost that could not have been foreseen at the time of the survey. Any delay, setback or additional costs should be reported to you at the earliest opportunity, and you should feel comfortable enough with your contractor that should this event occur you would be able to reach an agreement on how best to proceed that suits you both.

5.4: Additional Work following a pre-purchase survey

If the survey and report that you requested and relied upon was undertaken in a pre-purchase situation and the work found necessary influenced your decision to purchase or the purchase price of a property, you should consider the circumstances that brought about the discovery of the additional work.

Did the report on which you relied 'put you on notice' (warn you) of the possibility of additional work being discovered? If the answer is yes then, subject to the circumstances, there is probably little you are able to do. If the answer is no, then the survey and/or the report might be considered to be negligent. Had you been aware of the full extent of work necessary or warned of the possibility of additional work being found before you purchased the property, you might have been able to negotiate the cost of the possible work off the purchase price of the property or perhaps not even proceeded with the purchase at all.

If it is considered reasonable that an expert should have been able to foresee or anticipate the additional work but that expert failed to put you on adequate notice and you suffer a loss, a judgement would have to be made as to whether or not the contractor's original survey or report was negligent.

If the additional work is relatively small then you may just accept it and get on with the job but negotiate from a position of knowledge.

5.5: Additional Work – Owner occupier survey

If you are already the owner of a property and additional work is discovered, then whilst the contractor may have been negligent in failing to find or warn you of the possibility of additional work, either way you would still have to pay for it irrespective of whether it was discovered at the time of the original survey or at a later date. You may be disappointed with the contractor but any loss that you suffer in these circumstances is probably very small and there would not be a great deal you could do about it.

5.6: Additional work negotiations

Try to be fair and reasonable with the contractor - don't expect substantial unforeseen work to be undertaken at the contractor's expense. Equally, do not allow yourself to be conned by a wily contractor. If the additional work is able to be completed within the original time frame then it would be difficult for the contractor to justify a significant amount of additional labour cost. If the job was scheduled to take three days but with the extra work it will take four then expect an increase of 20 -25% subject to material cost.

What if you reach an impasse? This is where the use of independent arbitrators can be invaluable, if you are lucky enough to have access to one. Some of the trade associations offer an independent arbitration service and, in certain cases, we may be able to help and/or advise. In cases of sharp practice, or shoddy workmanship, your local Trading Standards office may be able to help. Ultimately, you may consider using the services of a solicitor as the only way to impress the seriousness of your concerns upon the offending contractor.

If all else fails and you haven't yet paid for the work, then pay only for that portion of the work that you are satisfied with. Promise full payment on satisfactory completion of all of the work.

5.7: Work in progress

Do not tolerate constantly delayed start dates, or short or irregular hours on site. Building preservation is not a precision art industry so jobs do over run and additional works do occur resulting in delays in a work programme but a contractor with good contract management should keep you informed and keep delays to a minimum.

Do not tolerate a stop-start operation, where the workmen arrive and do a bit of work for a day or part of it, before disappearing for two days. In these circumstances your job is being treated as what is known in the trade as "A Hospital Job" and vacant properties are where this is most likely to happen. If you have any serious concerns about the quality or progress of the work, write them down and pass a copy on to the contractor, asking for written confirmation of what action they intend to take to alleviate or dispel your concerns.

Your job is very important to you. Do not allow the contractor to treat other jobs as more important than yours once they have started. Seek reassurance before the job starts that this will not happen.

5.8: Liaise with the contractor and treat him with respect

Having work carried out on your property is a stressful time especially if it involves a certain amount of demolition and destruction. It is important that you liaise closely with the contractor throughout the job and express any concerns that you might have whilst the job is in progress and not save them up until the end after the men have pulled of site. It is far

easier to attend to any concerns whilst the men are on site as opposed to leaving it until they have pulled off site and trying to get them back later.

And finally please don't treat the contractor or the men working on site as underlings or minions. A good tradesman has pride and integrity and will not welcome being told how to do the job. Just because a man does not wear a suit to work and gets dirty does not mean that his work is menial. Treat the men with respect, and they will build that respect into your job.

PS - a cup of tea when they arrive in the morning will often get them on your side.

Part 6:

Industry Qualifications

6.0: Building Preservation Industry Qualifications

The only examination based qualifications specifically for the timber treatment and damp proofing industry are for surveyors. There are no industry specific qualifications for operatives. Outlined below is a brief history and summary of the examinations for surveyors:

6.1: Certificated Timber Infestation Surveyor (C.T.I.S.)

This qualification was introduced in 1980 and the examining body was the Institute of Wood Science. The exam consisted of a two hour written paper, practical identification of samples and a viva voce. In 1995 the British Wood Preserving and Damp-proofing Association (BWPDA) took over the examining role for a short period and in 1998 the Institute of Wood Preserving and Damp-proofing became the examining body on behalf of the BWPDA.

In 1995 C.T.I.S. ceased to be a stand alone qualification and the examination became Module 2 of the current CSRT qualification (see 6.3 below). About 600 people passed this examination prior to 1995 and they are entitled to use the initials C.T.I.S. after their name

6.2: Certificated Remedial Damp-proofing Surveyor (C.R.D.S.)

This examination was introduced in 1982 and the examining body was initially the British Chemical Damp-course Association (BCDA). In 1990, following the amalgamation of the BCDA with the British Wood Preserving Association (BWPA) to form the British Wood Preserving and Damp-proofing Association (BWPDA), the Institute of Wood Science and for a short period the BWPDA became the examining bodies. In 1998 the examining role was taken over by the Institute of Wood Preserving and Damp-proofing on behalf of the BWPDA.

In 1995 C.R.D.S. ceased to be a stand alone qualification and the examination became Module 3 of the current CSRT qualification (see 6.3

below). About 600 people passed this examination prior to 1995 and they are entitled to use the initials C.R.D.S. after their name.

6.3: Certificated Surveyor in Remedial Treatment (C.S.R.T.)

In 1995 a Legal, Health and Safety module (module 1), which comprises of a two hour written paper, was introduced to run in conjunction with the C.T.I.S. (module 2) and C.R.D.S. (module 3) examinations. Candidates who successfully pass all three modules are entitled to use the initials C.S.R.T. after their name. Candidates who had previously passed the C.T.I.S. and C.R.D.S. examinations prior to 1995 who then pass the Legal Health and Safety module are also entitled to use the initials C.S.R.T. after their name.

Since this qualification was introduced in 1995 just under 600 people are now formally C.S.R.T. qualified. Many of these are previous holders of the C.T.I.S. and C.R.D.S. qualifications who just had to take the Legal, Health and safety module to qualify.

6.4: Certificated Surveyor in Structural Waterproofing (CSSW)

This examination was introduced in 2004 to cater for the rapidly growing structural waterproofing market. The examination is intended for those who are involved with the diagnosis of problems associated with water entering buildings in below ground situations and designing appropriate remedial measures in order to create the desired 'level of dryness' in the internal environment. The examining body is the Institute of Wood Preserving and Damp-proofing. The examination consists of a two hour twenty minute written paper followed by a viva voce. Candidates who pass the examination are entitled to use the initials C.S.S.W. after their name.

6.5: Summary

If a person uses the initials C.T.I.S. after name then they have only passed the timber preservation examination and it was prior to 1995. Similarly if only C.R.D.S. is used they have only passed the damp-proofing examination, again prior to 1995. Some may have C.T.I.S. and C.R.D.S. after their name which means they have passed both of these exams prior to 1995 but have not taken the Legal, Health and Safety module.

There are those who are entitled to use C.T.I.S., C.R.D.S and C.S.R.T. after their name despite the fact that C.S.R.T. encompasses all of the examination modules. It is considered by some that three sets of initials look more impressive than just one and the choice is down to the vanity of the individual concerned. Only those who passed the C.T.I.S. and C.R.D.S. prior to 1995 have this option.

Finally there are unfortunately some cases where an individual claims to be qualified but in fact they are not. The BWPDA maintains the industry qualifications register and should you wish to confirm a person's qualification telephone the BWPDA on 01332 225100 to check.

The guidance suggested in this manual is provided in good faith and is by its nature very general and brief. Should any person or organisation wish to use or rely on any aspect of these notes then they must satisfy themselves of its accuracy and take professional advice prior to any action being taken by them. Property Guarantee Administration Guarantee Ltd. accepts no responsibility for any loss or injury that may occur as a result of the information provided in these notes.

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