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FREE GUIDE · PARTY WALL ETC. ACT 1996

Party Wall Glossary

The key terms you'll come across in Party Wall Notices, letters and Awards, explained in plain English. Section numbers refer to the Party Wall etc. Act 1996.

Access to neighbouring land S8

The right, under section 8, for a Building Owner's workers to enter neighbouring land to carry out work permitted by the Act, after giving 14 days' notice (except in an emergency).

Adjoining Occupier

Anyone living in or occupying the neighbouring property, such as a tenant, who may be entitled to notice of access but is not usually an Adjoining Owner.

Adjoining Owner

The owner of the neighbouring property affected by the proposed works. A property can have more than one Adjoining Owner, such as a freeholder and leaseholders.

Agreed Surveyor S10(1)(A)

A single surveyor appointed jointly by both owners to settle the matters in dispute and make an Award. Often quicker and cheaper than two surveyors.

Appeal S10(17)

Either owner may appeal an Award to the county court within 14 days of it being served.

Award S10

The legal document made by the surveyor(s) that sets out what work may be done, how and when, and records the condition of the neighbouring property. Sometimes wrongly called a "Party Wall Agreement".

Building Owner

The owner who wants to carry out the work and who must serve the Notices.

Counter Notice S4

A notice an Adjoining Owner can serve, after receiving a Party Structure Notice, asking for additional work for their own benefit, such as piers or recesses.

Dispute S5, S10

Under the Act, a dispute simply means the owners have not agreed in writing. If an Adjoining Owner does not consent, surveyors are appointed to resolve it. It does not mean a falling-out.

Enclosure costs S11

Where an Adjoining Owner later makes use of a wall built at the Building Owner's expense, they may have to pay a fair share of its cost.

Excavation Notice S6

Notice of excavation within 3 metres of a neighbouring building and deeper than its foundations, or within 6 metres where the excavation would cut a 45-degree line from the bottom of its foundations. At least one month's notice is required.

Line of Junction Notice S1

Notice of a new wall to be built on or up to the boundary line. At least one month's notice is required.

Owner S20

Under the Act, an owner includes the freeholder and anyone holding a lease of more than a year. That is why a converted house can have several Adjoining Owners.

Party Fence Wall S20

A garden wall (not part of a building) that stands astride the boundary line.

Party Structure S20

A party wall, or a floor or other structure separating parts of a building in different ownership, such as the floor between two flats.

Party Structure Notice S3

Notice of work to an existing party wall or party structure, such as inserting beams, cutting in, raising or underpinning. At least two months' notice is required.

Party Wall S20

A wall standing on the boundary that forms part of a building, or a wall that separates buildings belonging to different owners, such as the wall between two semi-detached houses.

Schedule of Condition

A written and photographic record of the neighbouring property's condition before work starts, used to assess any damage later. Usually attached to the Award.

Security for Expenses S12

Money an Adjoining Owner can ask the Building Owner to set aside before certain works start, as protection if the work is left unfinished.

Section 10(4)(b) appointment S10(4)(B)

If an Adjoining Owner does not appoint a surveyor within 10 days of a formal request, the Building Owner can appoint one on their behalf.

Special Foundations S7, S20

Foundations reinforced with steel, such as reinforced concrete. They cannot be placed on the neighbour's land without written consent.

Third Surveyor S10(1)(B)

A surveyor selected at the outset by the two appointed surveyors, who decides any point the two surveyors cannot agree on. Rarely called upon.

Two-surveyor route S10(1)(B)

Each owner appoints their own surveyor, and the two surveyors agree the Award together.

Got a question about your project?

Send us your drawings or the Notice you've received and we'll explain what applies, in plain English.

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