

What is a Party Wall Agreement?

A Party Wall Agreement (technically called an “award”) is the document produced by the two party wall surveyors (or the “agreed surveyor”) acting for the respective owners.

It will usually consist of three parts:

1. The award itself i.e. a set of guidelines governing how the proposed works should progress
2. A “schedule of condition” of the adjoining property, often supported by a set of photographs
3. Drawing(s) showing the details of the proposed works

The award will normally be based upon a draft document, the most popular of which is produced by the RICS, which is then amended according to the details of the specific work. It should clearly state details of the two properties, their owners and their owners' addresses. It should also contain full details of the two surveyors (or agreed surveyor) and the “Third Surveyor” (if an “agreed surveyor” is used there will be no Third Surveyor).

Other items covered include:

- Brief details of the proposed works
- Working hours; normally 8am to 5.30pm weekdays only of residential work
- Assurances regarding the contractor’s public liability insurance
- Indemnities by the building owner in favour of the adjoining owner
- Access arrangement for the surveyors
- A time limit for commencement of the works, usually 12 months
- The adjoining owner’s surveyor’s fee

Once the award has been agreed between the two surveyors it is “published”. In practical terms this means that a signed and witnessed copy is sent to the two owners by their appointed surveyors. Although there is a 14 day right of appeal if either owner believes the award to have been improperly drawn up the award this is seldom observed.

An additional copy of the award is given to the building owner to be passed on to their contractor.