



# FAQs: Structural and visual inspection surveys at properties in the Poets area of Bedford

## **Why do we need to carry out these surveys?**

East West Railway Company (EWR Co) must carry out structural surveys on a number of properties in the Poets area of Bedford to gather data that will help to provide the owners with more certainty about the future of their property. The information gathered from these surveys will help us to develop our designs further and understand whether or not these properties need to be acquired and demolished for the construction of the railway.

The surveys will gather key details about the existing construction of these properties, such as the wall thicknesses, foundation width and depth, and how the roof structure is built at the party wall with the neighbouring property. This information will inform the remedial works required to the properties to ensure the building remains stable after the works on the neighbouring properties. Before the party wall survey, we will visually inspect the party walls to determine the best approach for further investigation

## **What does the visual inspection involve?**

A visual inspection survey will be carried out both internally and externally at the properties, including the back garden/patio, if applicable.

Our team will inspect the property on foot with the equipment mentioned below to measure the size of the rooms, door and window thresholds, thicknesses of walls, sizes of floor joists, roof joists and roof rafters, where appropriate.

## **What equipment will be used for the visual inspection?**

We may use a torch, phone camera, tape measure and handheld laser distance measure. Our team will ensure that any personnel, residents and/or members of the public are clear before taking photos or using the distance measurer.

## **When will the visual inspection take place?**

We will carry out visual inspections between 9am and 5:30pm, Monday to Friday. We will agree the date and time with residents.

## **How long will the visual inspection take?**

Each visual inspection will typically take 2 to 4 hours, depending on the size of the property.

## **Will personal data be recorded for the visual inspection?**

No. Only physical features of the property will be recorded.

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### **What does the structural survey involve?**

The structural survey will consist of a cavity wall investigation (drilling a small hole through the wall – as shown below), to determine the thickness of the external walls, and trial pit investigations at the front and/or back of the property to confirm the depth of foundations.

#### Cavity wall investigation

A cavity wall drill hole is drilled into the external face of the cavity wall at the mortar joint between bricks (approximately 10mm to 12mm diameter) and a borescope will be inserted into the hole to inspect the wall. This will confirm the thickness of the outer leaf and the wall cavity width. This can be carried out on the front or back of the house.



The photo above shows an example of an operative drilling a small hole in the mortar joint between bricks to insert a borescope camera. The image is then displayed and reviewed on site. We will repair the hole and the property will be returned to the condition it was in before the survey was carried out. Our team will avoid carrying out this work on any rendered walls.

#### Trial pit investigation

Trial pits will be hand dug in the ground at the front and/or back of the property, to minimise disruption and to avoid impacting any buried utilities.

Trial pit holes will be around 1metre x 1metre, depending on the space available and the space required by the operative to dig the hole to the required depth. The aim is to dig to the underside of the foundation to establish its depth and construction below ground level, however if the underside cannot be reached the maximum depth of the pit will be 1metre.

Areas of clear soil (e.g with no trees, flower beds, paving, or service covers) will be chosen to allow minimal disruption, and this will be backfilled after inspection has taken place.

If a trial pit must be dug under hard landscaping, such as a patios, then any paving will be carefully removed, and reinstated once the trial pit has been backfilled. We may need to reinstate any paving that is taken up on a separate day. We will discuss this with the resident and if necessary we will only dig trial pits in clear soil.



### **What equipment will be used for the structural survey?**

For cavity wall investigations we will use handheld drills and a borescope camera. Trial pits will be hand dug with spades and shovels.

### **When will the structural survey take place?**

We will carry out structural surveys between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday. We will agree the date and time with residents.

### **How long will the survey take?**

The survey may take up to half a day, however the trial pits may be left open for longer in order to allow for inspection, which may take between 30 minutes and an hour. Trial pits will be backfilled before our team leaves site for the day.

### **Will personal data be recorded for the intrusive survey?**

No. Only physical features of the property will be recorded. This may include but not limited to party walls, flooring, external walls and loft spaces.

### **Who can I contact if I have any more questions?**

Should you have any further queries, you can contact us using the details below:

- **Email us** at [land@eastwestrail.co.uk](mailto:land@eastwestrail.co.uk)
- **Send us a message** online at [www.eastwestrail.co.uk/get-in-touch](http://www.eastwestrail.co.uk/get-in-touch)
- **Call us** on 03308387583
- **Write to us** at Freepost EAST WEST RAIL LAND
- **Sign up** for project updates at [www.eastwestrail.co.uk/latest-news/newsletter](http://www.eastwestrail.co.uk/latest-news/newsletter)