

The STRUCTURA "Good Neighbour"

Party Wall Guide

How to follow the law, protect your build, and keep the peace next door.

If you are extending your home, there is a very high chance you will trigger the **Party Wall etc. Act 1996**.

This is a strict UK law designed to protect your neighbour's property while you build. If you ignore it, your neighbour can easily obtain a court injunction to shut your building site down immediately. However, if handled poorly, the notification process can spark unnecessary boundary wars and cost you thousands in surveyor fees.

At STRUCTURA, we manage the legalities so you don't have to. Here is our plain-English guide to navigating the Party Wall Act without losing your neighbours as friends.

Step 1: Do You Actually Need a Party Wall Agreement?

You must legally serve an official Notice to your adjoining neighbours if your project involves:

1. **Excavation:** Digging foundations within 3 metres of your neighbour's property (and deeper than their existing foundations).
2. **Shared Walls:** Cutting into a shared wall (e.g., to insert steel beams for a loft conversion or removing chimney breasts).
3. **Boundary Lines:** Building a new wall directly on or right up against the legal boundary line.

If any of these apply, you must serve an official notice 1 to 2 months before work begins.



Step 2: The "Pre-Notice" Strategy (Crucial)

The biggest mistake you can make is letting the official, legal-sounding Party Wall Notice be the first time your neighbour hears about your extension.

When people receive legal documents out of the blue, they panic. They instantly "dissent" to the notice, which legally forces you to hire (and pay for) Party Wall Surveyors to draw up an Award. This can delay your project by weeks and cost upwards of £1,500 per surveyor.

The Solution: You must disarm the situation. Knock on their door, have a cup of tea, show them the architectural drawings, and hand them the informal "Pre-Notice" letter below.



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Step 3: The Informal "Pre-Notice" Letter Template

Print this out, fill in the blanks, and hand it to your neighbour personally a few days before the official legal notice is served.



Dear [Neighbour's Name],

As you may know, we are planning to carry out some building work at our property to **[briefly describe the work, e.g., build a single-storey rear extension]**.

We are incredibly excited about it, but we also want to make sure the process is as smooth and respectful to you as possible. We have hired Structura Design & Build, a highly reputable local firm, to manage the project. They operate strict working hours and site-safety protocols to keep disruption to an absolute minimum.

Because our new foundations will be relatively close to the boundary line, our project officially falls under the **Party Wall etc. Act 1996**.

In the next few days, you will receive an official "Party Wall Notice" in the post. **Please do not be alarmed by the formal legal wording.** It is simply a mandatory statutory letter we have to send to ensure everything is done by the book and your property is legally protected.

If you are happy with the proposed works, you can simply sign the consent form attached to the upcoming official notice. We would love to show you the architectural drawings and answer any questions you might have before then. Please let us know when you are free for a quick coffee!

Best regards,

[Your Name] >

[Your Phone Number]



The STRUCTURA Standard: > Dealing with the paperwork sound like a headache? With **STRUCTURA Consultancy Services**, we handle the entire Party Wall process for you. If your neighbours do require a surveyor, we can coordinate our trusted, pragmatic Party Wall Surveyors to draw up the Awards swiftly, ensuring your build stays on track and legally compliant. No disputes. No faff.

