



Understanding Thatched Roofs Course

Course Times: 1 day 9.30 – 5.00

Course Summary

The first half of the course looks at some of the history of thatched roofs, the materials used, regional styles, the different methods of thatching and ridging techniques, some roof construction, tools and fixings, how to recognise the different materials. There is also additional information on fire barriers and fire precautions, factors affecting the life of thatch and its maintenance and specific details on best practices employed in and around thatched roofs. The course also touches on Building Regulations Part B, Part L, Part J and Part P.

The afternoon session is wholly focused on Defects in Thatched Roofs and how to survey a thatched roof for a condition based or full building survey. This will cover topics such as external defects specific to thatched roofs that include: chimneys, roof coverings, rainwater pipes & guttering, windows in thatch & dormers. Internal defects include: roof frames and ceilings. Condition rating is based on the criteria within the Home Condition Survey (HCS) and the Home Buyers Report (HBR). It does provide a sound and logical way of assessing the condition of a thatched roof for a Full Building Survey. Time will be spent doing practical condition ratings on a selection of thatched roofs from photographs.

Who Should Attend

Building and Energy professionals; Residential Building Surveyors, Surveyors, Building Surveyors, Local Authority Building Inspectors, Conservation Officers, Domestic Energy Assessors, Home Energy Advisors, Green Deal Advisors, On Construction Energy Assessors, some Commercial Energy Assessors, Architects, Estate Agents, Loss Adjusters and Home Owners.

Course Pre-requisites

A prior knowledge of old buildings will be necessary. There will be a model of a thatched roof, examples of different fixings, tools and materials.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Have a basic understanding of the life cycle of a thatched roof; how a thatched roof works and an understanding of “U” Values of thatch and insulation/condensation issues.
- Identify the different thatching methods and materials used in UK, along with common defects, and the principal causes of thatch fires and their prevention.
- Have a full understanding of surveying a thatched property for a Full Building Survey and applying Condition ratings to those parts of a thatched property that are linked by and to the thatched roof; for an RICS Home Buyers Report, an RICS Condition Report and a Home Condition Survey.

What is Included

- A very comprehensive set of course notes is provided, including 8 page surveying thatch guidance and 8 page set of checklists.
- Certificate of training course attendance (6 hours CPD)
- Lunch and refreshments
- When held in Devon we take a short walk around the village of South Tawton looking at thatched roofs. Course held in 15th century thatched Church House. www.thechurchhouse.org.uk



Course Contents

Morning Session – Introduction to Thatch

- The origins of thatch and the thatching skills.
- Outline of the current thatching industry
- How thatch works.
- Types of thatching – new work and re thatching
- Fixings, hazel coppicing, hazel and willow.
- Main materials of water reed and wheat straw.
- Combed wheat reed and production of combed wheat reed.
- Examples of houses thatched with combed wheat reed.
- Long straw and production of long straw
- Examples of houses thatched with long straw
- Water reed and production of water reed
- Examples of houses thatched with water reed
- The process of thatching and re thatching using the 3 thatching methods.
- Ridging and the materials used.
- Different ridging techniques.
- Saddles & Box gutters.
- Windows & thatch.
- Valleys in thatched roofs.
- Roof construction – new & old.
- Eaves treatments.
- Identification of thatch materials on the roof.
- Tools used to thatch a roof.
- Life of a thatched roof & factors affecting the life of a thatched roof.
- Factors determining the timing of a re ridge or re thatch.
- Fire precautions and fire barriers
- RdSAP 9.82 September 08 & U values of thatch.
- Thatch & Building Regulations
- Thatch Surveys
- Health & Safety
- Animals, birds & insects and thatched roofs

Afternoon Session – Defects and How to Survey a Thatched Roof

External defects specific to thatched roofs that include: chimneys, roof coverings, rainwater pipes & guttering, windows in thatch & dormers. Internal defects include: roof frames and ceilings. Condition rating is based on the criteria within the Home Condition Survey (HCS) and the Home Buyers Report (HBR). It does provide a sound and logical way of assessing the condition of a thatched roof. Time will be spent doing practical condition ratings on a selection of thatched roofs from photographs.

A set of detailed guidelines on how to survey and condition rate a thatched roof and a check list are supplied.

The condition categories are those used in the HCS and HBR.

- How to apply condition rating
- Identifying common defects in each of the following sections using photographs and then applying a condition rating.
- Information from the owner.
- How to complete the HCS or HBR for a thatched property.
- Section D Exterior condition
- Chimneys.
- Roof coverings
- Rainwater, Guttering & downpipes.
- Windows
- Section E Interior condition
- Roof construction
- Ceilings
- Fireplaces & chimney breasts
- Section F Services
- Electrics

Attendees are then divided into groups and each group is given a set of photographs of a different thatched property. They are then to study the allocated property and using the guidelines and check lists they identify defects and assign condition ratings. They then each present their findings to the whole group and there follows a general discussion.