**Plain Finance.**

# Viewing prep sheet

Take it along, tick as you go, and write down the answers. General information: it doesn't replace a surveyor's check.

Home

Where

Price

Viewing on

Agent or seller

## The building

- [ ] **Roof** Ask its age and condition, and when it was last repaired.
- [ ] **Façade and windows** Cracks, damp patches, the age of the windows.
- [ ] **Cellar** Damp, a musty smell, tide marks on the walls.

## Inside

- [ ] **Damp and mould** In the bathroom, behind furniture, in window reveals and on outside walls.
- [ ] **Heating** What kind it is, and the year it was put in.
- [ ] **Ceilings** Solid, or suspended below the real one? A suspended ceiling can hide damp, pipes or old wiring.
- [ ] **Walls** Knock on them: a hollow sound means plasterboard, or plaster coming away from the wall.
- [ ] **Floors** A wooden floor? Beware of carpet laid over it: it can hide damaged boards. Ask to lift a corner.
- [ ] **Electrics** Old: screw-in fuses, sockets without the earth clips, cloth-covered cable. New: switches instead of fuses, one of them a residual-current switch (FI-Schalter) with a test button.
- [ ] **Water pipes** Their age and condition, and any sign of leaks.
- [ ] **Light and noise** Come back at another time of day if you can.

## Papers to ask for

- [ ] **Energy certificate (Energieausweis)** The seller or agent generally has to show it at the viewing at the latest (§ 80 GModG, formerly GEG).

- [ ] **Land register extract (Grundbuchauszug)** Rights in Section II, such as a right of way, stay with the property unless they're deleted; the contract says which ones you take on.

- [ ] **Floor plans and living-area calculation**

## For a flat

- [ ] **Declaration of division (Teilungserklärung)** What is yours alone, and what all the owners share.

- [ ] **Owners' meeting minutes, last three years** Where planned repairs, disputes and special levies (Sonderumlagen) show up first.

- [ ] **Hausgeld statement and budget (Wirtschaftsplan)** What you'll pay each month, and what it covers.

- [ ] **Maintenance reserve (Erhaltungsrücklage)** How much there is, and what it's earmarked for.

## Questions to ask

Why is it being sold, and how long has it been on the market?

Have there been other offers?

What's included: the fitted kitchen, parking, a cellar room?

How old are the roof, the windows and the heating, and what condition are they in?

What year was it built? Is any asbestos known in the building? (It was used in Germany until 1993.)

Are there known defects, damp or water damage?

What are the neighbours like? Any disputes?

For a flat: how much is in the maintenance reserve, and are works or special levies planned?

Is it let? At what rent, and since when?

When could the sale be completed, and when would it be free?

If the sellers live here: are they staying in Germany, or moving abroad? (A seller abroad is far harder to pursue over a defect they hid.)

Would they agree to a surveyor looking at it before you sign?

## Notes