Wooster & Stock Technical Manual

This manual outlines the computer and communication systems we use day to day at Wooster & Stock. It can be used as an introduction for new members of staff, or a reference manual for day to day use in the office.

1. Calendar

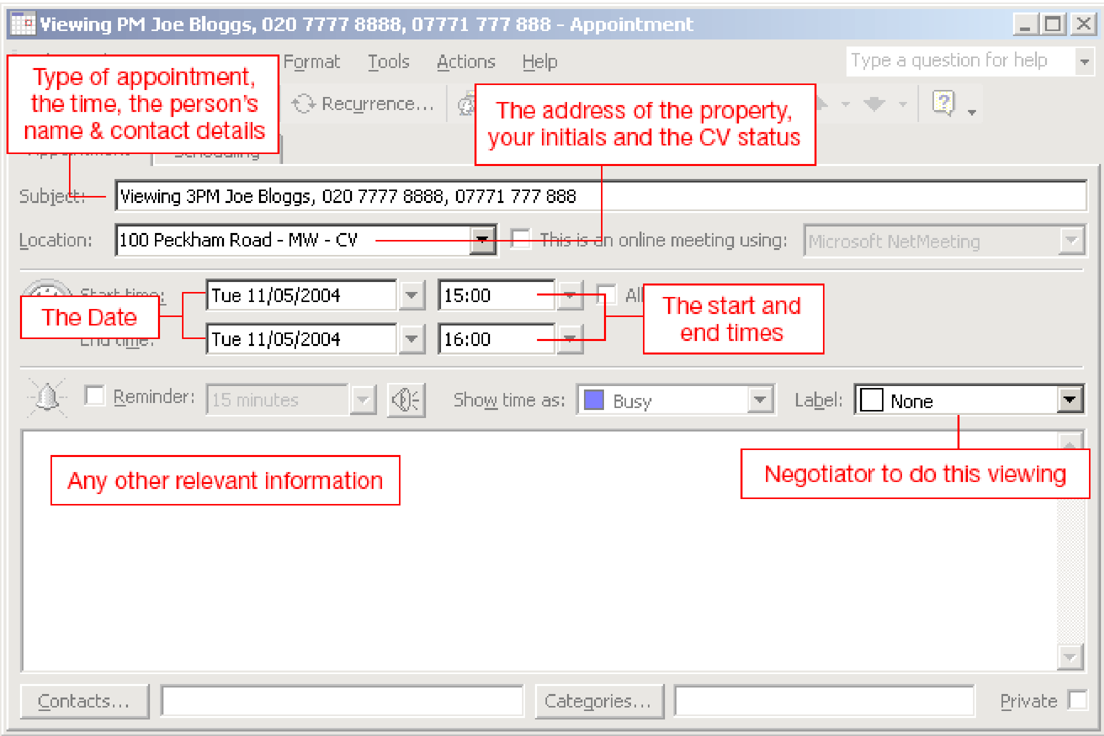
There are some simple rules to follow when making appointments in the calendar. We must all follow these to minimise mistakes and confusion. If everyone sticks to the same format, everyone will be able to understand exactly what is going on just by glancing at the screen.

When we create an appointment, it is important to enter the time manually, as well as selecting the time from the drop down menus. The reason for this is that it is ever so easy to accidentally drag an appointment to another place without even noticing you have done it. If the time has been entered in the subject field, mistakes will be easier to correct.

It is also very important to enter your initials so we all know who has booked the appointment and can come back to you in case of any queries. Even if you have booked an appointment that only relates to you (e.g. a viewing you intend to do yourself), it is still important to include your initials.

The most common appointments in the calendar are of course Viewings and Valuations. Below is an example appointment with all the information we require. You must get all the following information every time you book an appointment...

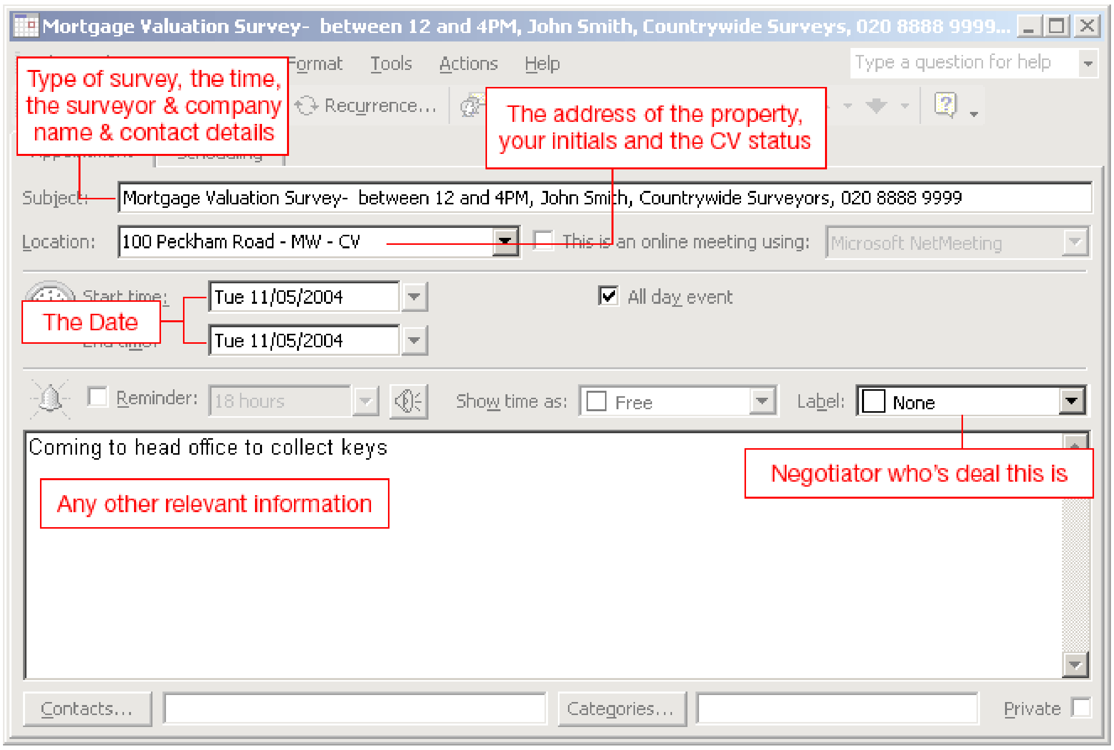
A standard appointment example:



All day appointments are generally Surveys. All day appointments stay at the top of the calendar. To make an appointment an all day event, put a tick in the box titled All Day Event. Please get as much information as possible, such as the surveyors name and mobile number, the company name and office number, a contact name at the office, the type of survey.

Please select the negotiator whose deal this is from the drop down list. Once you have booked a survey in, you should also email All Staff with the details.

An all day appointment example



Other common types of all day appointments are exchange and completion dates, disinstruction notices, days off, holidays and so on. These should all be completed with as much information as possible, and where relevant, should be coloured in the negotiator's colour.

We currently have 2 calendars, one for head office and one for Sydenham. If you are making a booking in any of the Sydenham areas (SE19, SE20, SE23, SE26, SE27 & SE6) you should put it in the Sydenham calendar only and then send an email to the Sydenham negotiators advising them you have booked it in. All other postal areas are currently dealt with by the head office, so should be placed in the company calendar.

Editing and cancelling appointments

If you are moving the time of an appointment, you should firstly alter the time via the drop down menus, or just by dragging the appointment to the new time. You must also then change the time in the subject field, and then enter a note in the notes field to say it was move from the old time to the new time. It may also be necessary to contact the vendor and/or anyone else who is related to the appointment to let them know of the change.

If an appointment has been cancelled, you should add the word CANCELLED to the beginning of the subject field, then move the appointment down to the bottom of the page (after 8PM) so it does not clog up the calendar. The time in the subject field should remain the same so we know when the appointment was due to happen. When a viewing is cancelled by the viewer, the vendor must be informed and the CV status should be updated on the appointment. When a vendor cancels an appointment, the viewer must be told. Notes to this effect should be added to the appointment.

Miscellaneous Appointments

Any other appointments like meetings, interviews and so on can be added in as required. It is not necessary for these appointments to be any longer than the default 15 minutes, even if the appointment is due to take longer. These appointments are for internal information only and should not clog up the more important calendar entries like viewings etc.

Things like birthdays, days off, sick days etc can be added in as all day events. These do not require such detailed information as appointments where clients are involved.

Abbreviations used in the calendar:

CV - This indicates we have spoken to the vendor and there is no problem with the appointment going ahead. CV stands for Contact Vendor, but it is a company term that vendors and viewers will not understand.

Msg or **CV(msg)** – This indicates we have tried to contact the vendor but have only been able to leave a message.

Not CV – The vendor has not been contacted.

Un-CV – The appointment has been cancelled and the vendor has been informed.

See Notes – Indicates there are some notes in the notes field that should be read.

2. Website

The web site is available at the following web addresses:

www.woosterstock.co.uk	www.woosterandstock.com
www.woosterstock.com	www.woosterstock.org
www.woosterandstock.co.uk	www.woosterstock.net

The web site contains full details of all the property currently on the market. Each property has a full description, internal photographs, floorplans and a location map. A lot of work is put into the web site so it is a good idea to try and get people to look at the site for themselves instead of trying to describe each property to them over the phone. It saves us time and effort, and they can browse through the property at their leisure and find exactly what it is they are after. It is important to note that the floorplans and measurements are not intended to be totally accurate, they are provided as a rough guide only.

The property page has a search facility on the right hand side. It is possible to filter the properties by type of property (houses or flats), price range (minimum and maximum) and keyword (street name or postcode). You can also choose how you want the results to be ordered (price, street or date) and you can hide all under offer and sold properties, leaving just the available houses visible.

If a property is marked as available, that means it is available to view. On the right hand side of the page there is a form to arrange a viewing. Information entered in this form is emailed to the main company inbox and placed in the arrange viewing folder.

If a property is marked as under offer, that means an offer has been accepted by the vendor and we are not able to show the property. The offer may have been placed with us, or another agent, either way viewings cannot be done. On the right hand side of the page there is a form to register interest. Information entered in this form is emailed to the main company inbox and placed in the register interest folder. If the property should become available again we will contact all interested people.

If a property is marked as sold, it means the property has either exchanged or completed and therefore no viewings can take place.

The register page allows clients to register themselves for email updates. They must have an email address to use this page. If a client asks to be registered over the phone, you should enter their details on the register page. Get as much information as you can from the client so we can keep them, informed of suitable properties. Once registered, the client will be emailed every time a new property is added that matches their price range. The mail-shot system does not work by number of bedrooms, areas or any other criteria. We also send emails when a property is reduced in price, and when a property that has been under offer comes back on the market.

The rest of the site contains local area info, links, contact information and so on.

3. Portal Websites

As well as our own web site, we also advertise our properties on several property portal web sites. These web sites show our details in their own template and layout, over which we have no control. We endeavour to keep these portal sites up to date, but there is always a delay involved of anything from 24 to 72 hours. If people are viewing our property on one of these portal sites, you should urge them to visit our web site instead as it is more up to date and contains much more information.

We currently advertise our property on:

www.findaproperty.com
www.rightmove.co.uk
www.homesandproperty.co.uk
www.propertyfinder.com
www.periodproperty.com
www.intolondon.com
www.multimap.com

We also have our contact details on a number of other property related sites:

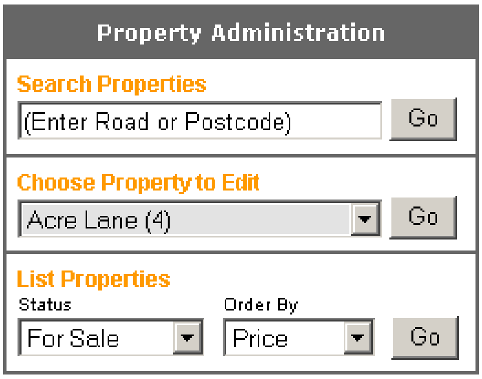
www.estateangels.co.uk
www.peckham-estateagents.co.uk
www.camberwell-estateagents.co.uk
www.sydenham-estateagents.co.uk
www.dulwich-estateagent.co.uk
www.ukpropertyshop.co.uk

In addition, we also have some of our own micro-sites, which show our property in specific areas. These sites are mainly there to get us better search engine rankings, and are powered by the same database as the main site so are always up to date:

www.propertyinpeckham.co.uk
www.propertyincamberwell.co.uk
www.propertyinsydenham.co.uk

4. Website Admin Area

The admin area of the web site is available to Wooster & Stock employees only at www.woosterstock.co.uk/login.asp. It contains full details of all properties we have ever marketed, all clients who have registered with us, and a selection of tools and documents.



The Property Administration area of the menu page allows you to search, select or list properties in the website database.

The *Search Properties* field accepts part or full street names or postcodes. Enter your search term and click the Go button. This will take you to the *Search Results* page which lists all properties that match your search term.

The *Search Results* page displays the results of your search in the form of a list. There are a number of column titles (e.g. street name, price) which you can click to re-order the search results on the field. So, clicking price will order the results by their price, starting with the cheapest. For each property there is an Edit link, which will take you to the *Edit Property* form.

The *Choose a Property to Edit* drop-down list shows all properties that are currently For Sale and Under Offer in an alphabetical list. Under Offer properties are highlighted in grey. Select the property you want to edit and click the Go button. This will take you to the *Edit Property* form.

The *List Properties* area lets you select a property status and will show all properties with the selected status. You can also choose how you want the list to be ordered. You can then click the Edit link by the property you want to edit which will take you to the *Edit Property* form.

The *Edit Property* form allows you to edit the property record. Any changes you make to this form will be reflected immediately on the site so it is imperative that you take great care when making changes to this form. Don’t change anything on this form if you are not sure what you are doing, if in doubt, ask the IT department to make the changes for you. Most of the fields on this page are self-explanatory, there follows brief descriptions of each field:

Price: The price of the property, with no currency symbol or commas.

Number: The house number. This can also hold building name, flat number etc. This information is not displayed anywhere on the web site.

Street: The name of the street. This is how the property is identified on the site. It should contain nothing except the street name.

Area: The area, selected from a list of available areas we cover.

Postcode: The full postcode of the property. Clicking the small chevron > after the postcode field will show the location of the postcode on streetmap.co.uk

Property Type: The type of property, selected from a list of types.

Market State: The current status of the property, selected from a list. Any change to the status of a property must be accompanied with full notes in the notes field at the end of the page, stating when and why the status was changed and by whom. The statuses have the following meanings:

For Sale	The property fully available for viewings.
Under Offer	Offer accepted with us or another agent, no viewings can be booked but clients can still register an interest in the property via a form on the web site.
Sold	Exchanged with us only. This will show on the site as Sold.
Exchanging Contracts	Do not use this.
Archived	General use for properties where no other status is applicable. This will not be shown on the site.
Completed	The property has completed. This will no longer appear on the site.
Withdrawn	The vendor withdrew the property from the market. This will not be shown on the site.
Disinstructed	The vendor disinstructed us. This will not be shown on the site.
Pending	The property is being worked on by the production team and has not yet been released to the website. This will not be shown on the site. The properties in pending have not been checked or approved by us or the vendor so should NEVER be shown to any potential buyers. You tell the buyer that the property is pending and will be released in due course, when full details will be available to all.

Double Glazing: A checkbox to indicate if the property has double glazing.

CH: A checkbox to indicate if the property has central heating.

Lease/Freehold: The Tenure of the property, selected from a drop down list.

OSX / OSY: These are map co-ordinates used by the map system on the web site.

Bedrooms / Receptions / Bathrooms: Drop down menus to show number of rooms in the property.

The next part of the page contains the descriptions, images and floorplans for the property. This is only to be edited by the production department.

At the bottom of the page is the notes field. Any changes you make to the property record should be noted here. Start a new line; enter the date, then the change you have made and any other info that might be relevant, then your initials.

Property notes field example

12/02/04 vendor is away until next week - we need to confirm the lease length and whether he is prepared to extend it SW - des proofed
18/02/04 Rod has chosen to spend another week on holiday, chase again next week MW
19/02/04 rs removed "backwater" and replaced with "street"
20/02/04 release by order of luke, with no lease details MW
24/03/04 Price reduced from 154950 to 149000 with 2125 emails sent LW (MW)
02/04/03: Under offer to Lucy Reade at £145k JE
14/04/04: Back on market - buyer pulled out due to personal reasons JE
29/04/04: Price reduced from 149k to 144995 by order of Rod, 2316 emails sent - MW

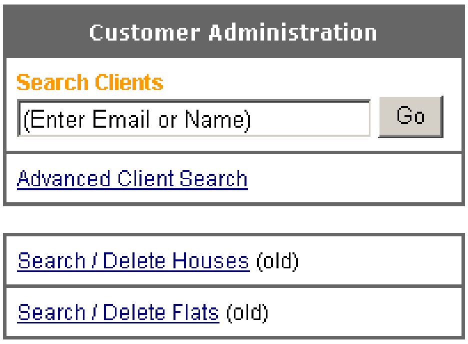
None of the changes you make to this page will be saved until you click the Update Property button at the very bottom of the page.

Common changes to property records:

Status Change: If a property goes under offer, exchanges, completes or is taken off the market for some reason, the status of the property must be changed. When a property goes under offer, it is the responsibility of the negotiator whose sale it is to set it to under offer, or ask one of the admin team to do it. If a property exchanges, it should be set to sold, and when it completes it should be set to completed which will remove it from the web site. If the property has gone under offer with us, you must enter the negotiators name and the offer amount, writing just "Under Offer" is not enough. If the property has gone under offer with another agent, you must enter the name of that agent so we can check the progress of the sale.

Price Change: If we are instructed to alter the price of a property, the IT team should be asked to do so, not the negotiator. The IT team will change the price, send an email to all interested parties, update the portal web sites, and the property detail cards. If a negotiator changes the price, there is a chance none of these additional steps will be taken.

The Customer Administration area of the menu page allows you to search, select or list clients who have registered via the web site. This is also the database of clients used to send the email alerts to.



The *Search Clients* field accepts part or full names or email addresses. Enter your search term and click the Go button. This will take you to the *Search Results* page which lists all clients that match your search term. You can then click the Edit link by the client you want to edit which will take you to the *Edit Client* form.

The *Advanced Client Search* link takes you to the *Advanced Client Search* page, where you can specify date range (the date the client registered), full or part of the client name, specific price (which will show all clients who price criteria matches the entered value), and area (which will look for the areas the client selected when registering).

Search / Delete Houses and *Search / Delete Flats* links are for deleting people from the old database. If you have received a REMOVE request and you cannot find the email address by using the Search Clients field, try searching in these 2 other areas. You can only delete clients from here, not edit. Eventually this old table of clients will be empty and all clients will be in the new database table.

The *Edit Client* form allows you to update the client’s details and property requirements. This should only be done at the client’s request. The fields on this page are all very self-explanatory. The client details area of the page is for our records only, and contains address and contact details. The property requirements area is used when sending email updates. Highlighted in red is the mailing list subscription control, checking the No button will stop emails being sent to that person, so should be used when dealing with REMOVE requests.

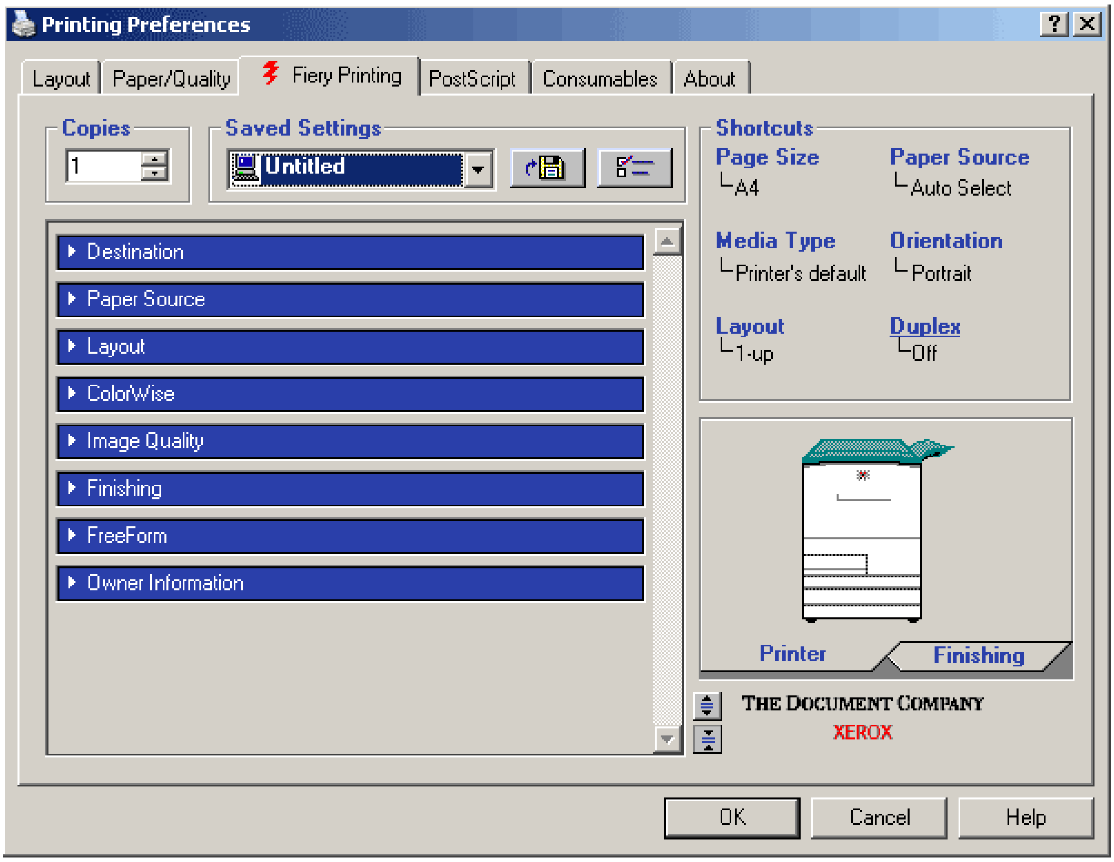
Any changes you make will not be saved until you click the Update Record button. Under this is another button titled Send Login Details. Clicking this button sends an email to the client advising them how to change their own property requirements via a special page on the web site. The client is able to change their minimum and maximum price, number of bedrooms and property type, and if they want to unsubscribe to the email updates service.

At the end of the page is the list of areas the client has expressed an interest in, then two notes fields. The first is for us to add any notes (this is not currently used), and the second is the notes field provided to the client at the time of registration on the web site.

5. Printing (Xerox DC12 at Head Office)

Please always print black and white as it is 10 times cheaper than printing in colour. Even a tiny speck of colour will count as a colour print. If you just click the print icon, it will print in colour by default. If you are printing an email or something that definitely has no need to be in colour, you are wasting company money.

Click *File* Click *Print* The selected printer should already be "Fiery EX12 Color Server PS 2.0" Click *Properties* or *Preferences*, the following screen will appear:



If it isn't already selected, click the Fiery Printing tab. Click on the Saved Settings drop-down menu and choose your desired print mode. The available modes are:

Normal - This will print on plain white paper (this is selected by default)
Normal-Colour – This will print on plain paper in colour
Headed - This will print on Wooster & Stock headed paper

It may ask you if you want to save changes to "Untitled", click No.

You can also select the number of copies you wish to print. Click OK. This will take you back to the Print dialogue box. Click Print or OK

When you click print the document is sent to the print queue. If there are other jobs in the queue yours will join the end of the queue and will be printed in the order they are sent to the queue. You will hear 3 beeps when the print job completes successfully.

If you hear 4 long loud beeps it means a problem has occurred. You need to go to the printer and look on the screen; it will tell you the problem and how to solve it. Usually this will be out of paper, or a paper jam.

If your document does not print:

1. DO NOT click print again. You will just send both jobs to the queue and you will end up printing your document twice, thus wasting paper and ink.

2. Check the printer for errors. Look on the screen of the printer for any messages, and on the screen on the RIP (the computer next to the printer). It may be out of paper, have a paper jam or be out of toner. The screen will instruct you how to solve the problem, but if in any doubt please ask the IT department.

3. See if there is a big print job being formatted. You can tell by looking on the screen of the RIP if there is a print job being formatted. This could be someone printing property cards; it takes much longer than a normal document. If this is the case you just have to wait for the other jobs in the queue to finish.

If the machine says it is out of toner do not try and change it, please inform the IT department immediately.

If you find your printing is on the wrong type of paper, it will either be because the correct type of paper has run out, or the draw containing the correct type of paper is not fully closed. Either re-fill or push shut the appropriate draw.

Photocopying

The way you photocopy depends on the type of paper you are copying from.

Normal weight paper: Place the paper face up, portrait orientation directly on to the top of the machine. Slide it to your left until the green light illuminates.

Heavy Weight or bound paper: Lift the top cover of the printer and place your document face down on the glass. Align the paper to the top left of the glass. Take care not to touch the glass with your greasy mits!

On the screen you can select various options: In general you should select “Black” to print in black and white, and “Paper Tray 1” to print on plain A4 paper.

Enter the number of copies you want on the keypad and press the green button.

Remove the originals and the copies. Please do not leave the top cover open.

6. Telephones

When a caller rings our number, all the phones in the office will ring and anyone can pick up the call simply by lifting the receiver. If you need to transfer the call to another person, please put the caller on hold by pressing the Hold button on the handset, then either dial the desired extension number (see you telephone number list), or shout across the office. The call on hold will show as a green flashing light on your handset, and a red flashing light on everyone else's. Please advise the person you are putting the call through to what line they need to take.

If you need to pick up a call that is on hold, press the button by the relevant flashing light before you lift the receiver. If another line is ringing and you pick up the receiver, you will automatically take the new call and not the call that is on hold.

If you have someone on hold for a long period of time, your handset will beep and the light will flash quickly to remind you they are still holding. If your handset is beeping, lifting the receiver will automatically put the caller back through to you. It is a good idea to go back to the caller and ask if they still wish to hold or if they would like to leave a message. If they still wish to hold, simply press the hold button again.

To speak to another member of staff using the telephone system (which is preferable to shouting across the office, particularly when several people are on the phone already), lift the receiver and dial the extension number (see your telephone number sheet). Internal calls have a single repeated ring (ring…ring…ring…), whereas calls from outside the office have a double repeated ring (ring ring…ring ring…ring ring…).

7. Photos and Floorplans

Photographing a Property

We have a very high quality of details on our site, so vendors will expect their property to be of a similar quality. Because of this, if the photos do not come out very well the vendor will probably request we go back and re-do them, so to save time in the long run, please take care over taking the initial photos and follow these guidelines.

Don't be afraid to tidy up cushions on sofas or remove them, move bits of furniture around, put nice plants or vases of flowers in different rooms, take things off kitchen surfaces, remove toothpaste, kids toys etc from bathroom area - ask the owner if they mind you doing this if you think they might object.

Always review the pictures you have taken before you leave so if any room doesn't look too great you can do it again while you're there.

All photos will be cropped to make them square so you will always lose 1/3 of the picture (Figure 1). Please bear that in mind and make sure the subject of your photo will not be lost when the image is cropped.

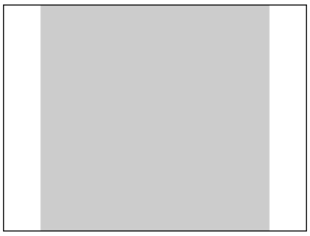


Figure 1

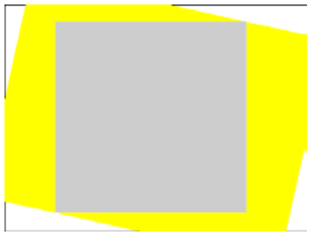


Figure 2

Make sure the camera is totally horizontal before taking your shot. Wonky photos can be corrected but the outer edges of the image will all be lost making the end image much smaller. Figure 2 shows a photo that has been rotated to make it level in yellow. The grey shows the remaining useable area of the photo.

The photo of the front of the property should include some of the surroundings. Don't take a picture where the property is all you can see. When taking photos of a block of flats, get the whole block rather than just the flat in question.

Use maximum zoom-out on all photos. When you turn the camera on, the first thing you should do is to hold down the zoom out button (W) until it stops zooming out.

Only use the camera in landscape orientation. All photos will be cropped anyway so there is no advantage in taking portrait photos.

Please take at least 2 photos of every room. Take shots from different ends of the room, try to get some floor and some ceiling in every shot to give better idea of scale and try to get as much in every photo as you can. Taking pictures of just the corner of a room does not give a good impression of size; it makes the room look smaller.

Keep the camera dead still until after the picture has been taken to prevent blurring.

If a room is too dark or too bright use the flash or adjust curtains etc.

When taking a picture of any WC please put the lid/seat down.

Saving and Cropping Photos

Connect the camera to the computer, open My Computer and open the Sony Memstick Drive.

Create a new folder in the Production (P:) / SiteFiles folder using the following naming convention: roadname - e.g. underhillrd – or if a folder of this name already exists, go to the next step…

Then within that folder create another folder with the house number – e.g. underhillrd/103/ - if it is a block of flats, create a folder with the building name, and then another within that with the flat number.

Cut and paste all the photos from the camera in to the folder you have created. If there is more than one property on the camera, ask the person who took the photos which is which, and copy them in to their own folders as above.

Now you need to edit and re-size the images in Photoshop, then save for web with the following settings: JPEG High Quality (80)

Main image	400 x 400
Large Thumbnail	146 x 146
Thumbnail	56 x 56
Up to 10 internal photos	200 x 200

Save all of these images (all lower case) with the same name as the folder you created, followed by 3 or 4 characters to define which room they are. Some examples:

underhill103ft	Front / Main Image
underhill103ftx	Large thumbnail
underhill103ftxx	Small thumbnail
underhill103rec	Reception
underhill103kit	Kitchen
underhill103gar	Garden
underhill103hall	Hallway

Floorplans

Measuring up a property and drawing plans

First get a feel for the layout of the property, try and visualise the property from a birds eye view and understand how the rooms link together. Start at the bottom of the property and work your way up, drawing one floor per sheet of paper. Please ensure you draw each floor the same way round, with the front of the property at the top of the page.

Use the laser to measure the length and width of all the rooms. If a room is an unusual shape, take additional measurements. See Figure 3

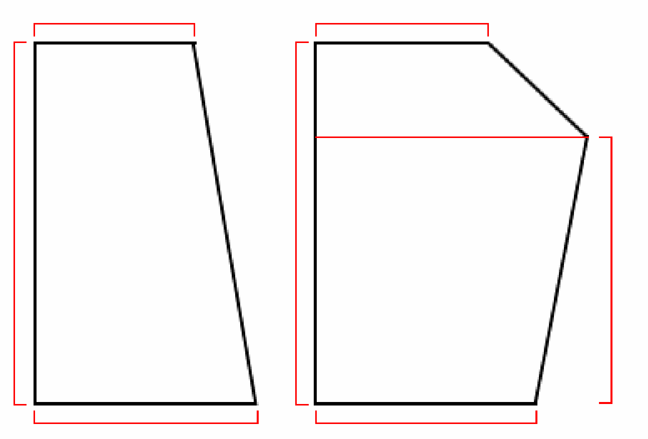


Figure 3:
Examples of unusual shaped rooms. The red lines show the measurements you will need to take.

Please include communal areas, hallways, entrance halls etc.

Location of all doors, opening in or out, left or right, including cupboard doors.

Location of all the windows, draw the windows in scale to the room.

Location of fireplaces and/or chimney breasts.

Location of all baths, showers, kitchen units, everything that is relevant.

If there is a through-reception or dining room or any other rooms that have been split in some way, please measure the rooms separately.

If the property has a garden, please measure or ask the vendor for the approximate length and use the compass to show the direction it is facing.

Creating plans in AutoCAD

Open floorplan_template.dwg from the SiteFiles folder on the Production Drive (P:).

From the menu bar choose FILE > SAVE AS > and browse to the folder containing all the property photos (see *Saving and Cropping pictures* above) and save it with the set naming convention: road name + number + (hyphen) + floor

Start with the lowest floor in the building, and position it so the front door is towards the top of the page.

First start with a square room using the rectangle tool (found in the “draw” toolbar, fifth tool along, a rectangle with two dots in opposite corners, lightly filled in).

Make sure SNAP is turned on and click in the work space on any dot and then type the measurements of the first room in. First enter the width on your keyboard, press enter, then enter the height, press enter, then click to confirm its position.

NB: The status of SNAP (forces the cursor to align with the grid) can be found right at the bottom, along with GRID (defines weather the grid displays or not), ORTHO (“snaps” the direction of the cursor into 90° directions from the last drawn position), POLAR (“snaps” the direction of the cursor into set angled directions from the last drawn position but in a much less definite way, the angle can be changed from drafting settings (via tools) and choosing the polar tracking tab from the window), OSNAP (“snaps” the cursor to defined points of objects and that have already been drawn or placed in the work space (an “object” is any shape including single lines), the points that it snaps to can also be defined from drafting settings but will probably not need to be changed as the default settings made in the template should suffice).

For non-rectangle shaped rooms use the polyline tool (found in the “draw” toolbar. The third tool along, shaped like a candy cane, with dots at the start middle and end). Click the starting point and move into the direction of the next point, type the measurement and press enter, then move into the direction of the next point, type the measurement, press enter and repeat until you reach the final wall, type C instead of typing the measurement and press enter which will complete/close the shape. Try using the polar snap and ortho snap to make the job easier and more accurate.

If there are missing measurements on the original plan drawing, it is possible to work them by moving the rooms about until you have the right shape of the house and filling in gaps, or if the measurements don’t work forcing the house to be an uneven shape, a sacrifice of up to 0.3m is reasonable to accept for a margin of error, but usually past this and it is more likely that something has been missed in the draft.

Move the rooms 1 square (0.1m) apart from each other using the move tool, found in the “modify” toolbar, sixth along, a cross with arrows at each point. Click the object you wish to move, holding CTRL for multiple selections or click a blank space and draw a box around the objects you wish to select and click again in the opposite space, then click the point you wish to move from, locate the point you wish to move to and click again.

When all the rooms are in place, use the polyline tool to draw an outline around each room as a whole offsetting each shape by 0.2m, or use the offset tool (found in the “modify” toolbar, fourth one along, looks a bit like a cloud) to offset awkwardly angled or shaped lines, then use the trim tool (tenth along in the “modify” toolbar, two lines crossing, one horizontal the other diagonal) to remove any extruding parts. (First click the objects that you wish to use to trim with, press enter and then click the parts you wish to trim off.)

---------------to be cont

This section hasn’t been finished yet, contact Simon for additional instructions.

8. Proofing details

Here are some guidelines for proof reading pending property. As we have so many people working on each property it is reasonable to expect mistakes to be made and things to be left off, so the final proof is very important. This should be done both before sending the details to the vendor, and again prior to launching the.

General details (on the edit property page):

1. Make sure the price is correct
2. Check spelling of street name (look on the map to get correct spelling)
3. Make sure the street name field only contains the street name (no house numbers or building names)
4. Check area is correct (a common one is entering Peckham instead of Nunhead, as postcodes are the same)
5. Check the tenure drop-down menu matches the tenure details at the end of the description (this only applies to leasehold & share of freehold properties)
6. Check there is a full postcode and map coordinates have been entered
7. Check property type is correct (if it is end-of-terrace, it should be set to terrace, not semi. If it is a flat over 2 levels, it is a maisonette)
8. Make sure the number of bedrooms and receptions tally up with the plans
9. Remove and apostrophes from the strap line
10. Check total floor area has been entered

Display details (on the print details page):

1. Make sure photos are straight and look their best, and the property in question is positioned in the centre of the main image
2. Make sure there are enough photos. Ideally there should be 6 or more. If there are less, look in the SiteFiles folder and see if there are any more that could be used and then add or get someone else to add them.
3. Check each floor of the floor plan for correct label (ground, first etc)
4. Each floor plan image should be the same width so they line up correctly when displayed on the site
5. Check the total floor area on the plans for accuracy
6. Check each room for correct label (incl. spelling)
7. Look at the photos to see where windows are, and double check windows on the plan (windows are commonly left out)
8. Check there is a door to each room
9. Check worktops, cookers, bathroom suites and any other additional items
10. Look at the map and make sure the location is correct
11. Once the property has been launched, check the main web site home page to see if the image is showing.

Proofing should be done initially by the person who visited the property to take photos and measure up, but then also by another member of the production team immediately prior to release.

9. Detail Cards

Our detail cards are to be given to viewers and potential buyers whenever they request details of a property, be it by post or in person. Efforts are made to keep the cards fully up to date in both the head office and the Kirkdale shop, but there is often a delay or up to 2 days from the time the property is launched on the web site.

Creating cards

Requirements: Adobe InDesign, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Acrobat

This is a brief outline of how to create a detail card. Please take care to make the property cards accurate and as nice looking as possible.

Open the Production Drive (P:), then the Cards Folder, then the Template folder.

Open either the Peckham or the Sydenham template, depending on where the property is (Sydenham cards for SE19, SE20, SE23, SE26, SE27 & SE6 – the rest is Peckham).

Save the file before going any further. Click File and save, you need to navigate to the Production Drive / Cards Folder, then create a new folder and name it with the unique property id number which can be obtained from the web site.

The card template consists of 2 pages, front and back. You can access these pages by opening the Pages window (press F12). Double click on either page 1 or page 2 to view that page.

To enter text, select the Text Tool from the Toolbox, or press T on the keyboard. On page 1 enter the street name in Title Case followed by a comma, then the first half of the postcode. Below you enter the price, preceded with a pound sign and formatted with a comma mid way through (proper currency format – e.g. £399,950).

On page 2 enter the street name which should be formatted over 2 lines. Below enter the price, then the tenure. The tenure should be in capital letters. The bullet points should be between 3 and 5 points of interest about the property. They must be formatted with a capital letter at the start of the first word only. The first should always be a reference to the number of bedrooms. If it is a house, the first line should read “3 bedrooms”, if it is a flat it should read “2 bedroom flat”, and if it is a studio it should read “Studio flat”. The rest of the bullet points should be taken from the strap line and description and should always be the best points of the property. Some examples follow:

Grade II listed
Chain free
40ft garden
Period features

Now we need to enter the description. To do this, go to the web site and locate the property you are working on, select the full description and copy and paste it into the description box on the template, overwriting the text currently there. Select all the text again, and then click Blurb in the *Character Styles* window (press Shift + F11) to apply that style to the text. The text should now be a small sans-serif font.

You now need to trim the text down to fit the available space and format it to look its best. The text should be in 3 paragraphs, the first paragraph should be between 2 and 5 lines of an opening statement. The next should be the main body of the description, which should describe many of the rooms in the house, the garden, and so on. The last paragraph should be 2 to 4 lines describing transport and the local area. You will need to trim down the description quite a lot to fit the space provided.

A full stop should always be followed with a double space. You should not leave “widows”. Widows are single words or very short lines of text by themselves on a line. This spoils the presentation, so the text will need to be further trimmed so the widow moves up onto a more complete line of text above.

Example of a widow:
On a peaceful no-through road; and with a stunning country-cottage garden, this property has four bedrooms, three receptions, and a breathtaking architect-designed kitchen.

A fixed version of the above:
On a peaceful no-through road; and with a stunning country-cottage garden, this property has four bedrooms, three receptions, and an architect-designed kitchen.

On the above example, the first paragraph has a widow. The second paragraph has been fixed by removing some words so the widow moves up to the line before.

Now you are ready to place the images into the document. Each card has 6 images, 3 on the front and 3 on the back. The large image on the front should always be the front of property image (in rare cases we use an internal image when the front of property image is not suitable). The large image on the rear is usually the garden or the best of the internal shots if there is no garden. The rest of the spaces should be filled by other images, choosing the best ones.

To place an image, select the white arrow tool (or press A), click the image placeholder where you want to place the image, click File / Place / Navigate to the Production / SiteFiles – then locate the correct folder for the property. Change the view of this folder to thumbnails, so you can see the images (right click in the folder, click views, click thumbnails). Now double click the image you want to use. This will place it into the template. You might need to move the image around a bit to get it looking right; you might also need to re-size it to fit. To resize it, select the image using the white arrow tool, hold down the shift key, then click and hold one of the corners of the image and drag to resize. Repeat this for all the other images.

Finally we need to create the map, and add it to the template. Go to the property detail on the web site and click the View Map link. Change the address of the page (in the address bar towards the top of your screen) from Map.asp?propID= to Mapc.asp?propID= (just add a c to the map bit) – this will show the same map but with an orange circle where the property is located instead of the usual small dot.

On your keyboard, press the Print Screen key (top right of your keyboard). Open Photoshop, click File / New. In the width and height boxes enter 335 (make sure it is set to pixels). This will create a new Photoshop document. Now click Edit / Paste. This will paste the screenshot (including the map) into the new document. Select the move tool (press the V key) and move the image so the map is visible. The circle should be more or less in the centre of the map, but if there is a point of interest (i.e. train station, park, river) nearby you can move the map around to show off the best points.

Select the Magic Wand tool (press the W key) and click on the orange circle. This should select the orange circle only. Click Select / Inverse. Click Image / Adjustments / Desaturate. This will make the entire image black and white, except the orange circle. Click File / Save as and save the file as map.psd in the folder you created earlier in this chapter.

Now back in InDesign, use your white arrow tool to select the map, and then click File / Place and select the map.psd file we just created.

Check over all the details, make sure everything is ok then save the document.

Publishing the Cards

Click File / Export and navigate to the correct folder for this property detail card. Enter a file name of xxx-ft.pdf where xxx is the property ID number and click the Save button. The Export PDF window appears. Select Print from the style drop down list. Click Range, then enter the page number of 1 in the box. Click Export.

Repeat the above steps, but call the file xxx-bk.pdf and in the range box enter 2.

Now we need to create the large format SR-A3 document with 4 cards on each side. Go to the Template folder in Cards on Production. Open the x4.indt template. Use your white arrow tool to select the first of the 4 cards, click File / Place then choose the xxx-ft.pdf file you created in the previous step. Repeat this process for the other 3 cards on the page. Then Click File / Export - give it a name of xxx-ft-x4.pdf where xxx is the property id; make sure it is going to be saved in the same location as the rest of the cards. Repeat this process but place the xxx-bk.pdf files on the page, then you need to hide the orange background, do this by pressing F7 to open the layers window, and clicking on the little eye icon by the bottom layer to hide that layer. Export this document and save it as xxx-bk-x4.pdf.

Exit the template but do not save it.

Printing Cards

To print, open the xxx-ft-x4.pdf file. Click File / Print then click Properties. Under the Fiery Printing Tab choose SR-A3 from the drop-down menu. Then click print. Once the printing has finished, you need to go to the print, turn the card over and re-insert it into tray 5 (face down, with the top of the card going in the printer first). Then repeat the above step but print xxx-bk-x4.pdf.

The card then need chopping up into 4 separate cards. On the front side, you will see a darker orange border around the orange cards; this is where you make your cuts.

To print a large format single card for display in the shop, open the xxx-ft.pdf document. Click File / Print then go to preferences and choose SR-A3 from the drop down menu (as you did to print the small cards). Then click Layout and enter 202% in the Scale field. Click Print. Repeat this step to print the back of the card on a separate sheet of paper.

10. Server Architecture

A brief outline of how the files are arranged on the server. If you open My Computer you see the following drive letters.

Documents (O:)
General company documents, including instruction and valuation letters. Everyone has full access to the files on this drive.

Production (P:)
Everything to do with production: Photos, floorplans, advertising, detail cards, and more, arranged into separate folders. Everyone has read access to this drive, but only members of the production team have full access (read, write & delete).

Accounts (Q:)
Accounting files and databases.

Databases (R:)
Databases: figthedog

Software (S:)
Software repository. For admin use.

[Your Name] (Z:)
Your personal drive on the server, which includes your My Documents folder. Anything you save in here will be backed up by the server on a weekly basis so it is a good idea to save everything in here (or just use your My Documents folder, amounts to the same thing).