

## Welcome, Bienvenu!

You have reached the **Home Page** for the experienced independent Chartered Surveyor, **Alan Bird** who trades as: Alan F Bird Consulting - *Consultant Chartered Surveyor/Expert en Immobilier*, based at 1276 Gingins near Nyon, 30Km from Geneva on *La Côte*, in Vaud.

Here, please find information about Alan's background & skills; services offered; examples of recent commissions and projects plus some practical tips for the home-seeker or home-owner and some examples of interesting cases or problems. Also, *for the Seller*, a critical set of "first impressions" – "*The Buyer's Ambience*" to help remove possible barriers before the property goes to the market!

### Biographical Information

**Professional Memberships:** Qualifying in 1981, Alan is a Member of the world-wide professional body & regulator, The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors ("RICS") whose Royal Charter was granted in 1861. There are 134,000 members, world-wide of whom some 500 practice in Switzerland. Alan is one of the original 4 founding-members of The RICS-Switzerland, established in 2003. The RICS was the first professional regulator to demand Members covenant to adhere to a code of ethics. Members are also required to meet strict annual Continuing Professional Development targets. Membership of the Chartered Management Institute affords additional dimensions.

**Summary of Services offered:** These are best described under these 7 headings-

- Property advice
- Surveys & inspections for different purposes, especially for:-
- Home Buyers' Reports ("roof to drains due-diligence for Buyers");
- Feasibility studies, say for alterations of a chalet, villa or château;
- Project development – working-up an idea into a *project proposal*, then:
- Managing the project to Completion, Hand-over and Final Account reconciliation;
- "Mystery Buyer" service for the seller *before their property goes to market* – this is believed to be unique, in Switzerland & improves speed of sale by optimising First Impressions impact!

**Skills:** This range appears on Alan's entry on the RICS website:-

*Building Materials and Defects; Building Surveying; Business and Management; Conservation and Restoration; Design and Specification; Dilapidations; Environmental; Inspection; Land Use; Landlord and Tenant; Project Management; Property Management; Refurbishment; Rural; Survey Reports; Sustainability.*

*In addition, problem-analysis and problem-solving are key skills, Alan being a good detective (damp in buildings is a particularly familiar theme!). The measurement of land & buildings plus the preparation of plans and drawings for contracts or alteration-work are core-skills! Discounted cash-flow is available. Also, estimating for new and remedial work. (A recent commission involved successfully challenging excessive costs for a luxury new-build villa). Managing multi-disciplinary teams is a key skilled function as even modest building-projects demand at least 4 or 5 specialists! Raising funds from discretionary grants, competitive Lottery sources and from private donors or foundations has*

*been a recurrent theme in his work alongside promoting government and UK National Lottery initiatives.*

**Background:** Educated & trained in the UK, Alan has worked for 3 professional UK firms operating in real estate matters and has been Head of Profession, both within a large land-owning charity and a Government agency having over 600 countryside management partnerships with farmers & landowners. Alan's experience includes very broad professional matters as diverse as the sale of country houses; management of sporting interests & let farms; making condition-surveys & negotiating easements for a 1 metre diameter natural gas feeder-main pipeline through the Lake District; setting-out a 9-hole golf-course; designing a dairy-complex to house & feed 100 cows; designing an 80-head beef rearing building; letting deep-water moorings to The Admiralty; directing after-use of a logistical base/deposition-site following construction of an estuary marina; the acquisition of land and buildings ("site-assembly" – including on estuaries & for a river re-alignment project); designing and delivering over 100 suites of facilities for the enjoyment and education of visitors, often in remote, sensitive countryside settings throughout the UK; the sale of a disused railway line; the sale of a logistical base & warehouse during a recession!; managing commercial buildings in 25 UK cities plus repair, alteration or improvement of a portfolio of 60 houses plus a variety of other buildings often in scenic and remote locations, notably on coasts and islands. Having an interest in and experience of traditional building-construction methods, Alan understands vernacular architecture & the problems encountered in exposed locations and the extremes of weather. His design and delivery experience has been recognised **in 2 award-winning construction projects** – a new-build visitor reception centre on the North Norfolk coast and the complete rescue & refurbishment of a 19<sup>th</sup>. Century cliff-top "folly", which became the 3<sup>rd</sup>. most-visited tourist attraction on Anglesey Island, North Wales. (Please see the **Anglesey Case Study**) Alan has arbitration-experience (won 2; drew 1; "lost" 1), was successful in a rating Appeal and has experience working with, amongst others The Government Property Lawyers and The Treasury Solicitor. He also gave detailed written & oral evidence to a House of Commons *Select Committee*. Alan also gave telling evidence at a recent *Tribunal* in Nyon supported by the Tenants' association, ASLOCA.

**Recent experience:** Since moving to Switzerland in 1999, Alan undertook a distance-learning MBA with The Open University covering Marketing; Strategic finance; Creativity, Innovation & Change plus Senior Management foundations whilst undertaking a variety of consulting commissions including with well-established consultants, *Cyneffin* in Bangor, North Wales, when Alan's efforts won a competitive tender for a new landscape-management scheme in the Bowland Forest on behalf of a county council. Alan guided a sports club in their development & expansion plans to relocate preparatory to the *London 2012 Olympiad* and has Executive Board experience with a Government Agency (running a strategic business unit); a retail company and 3 membership or voluntary organisations. Most-recently, Alan has provided pre-contract survey services and set-up and managed a variety of mainly residential improvement projects in Switzerland and nearby France – mainly large-scale repairs, like re-roofing villas; installing kitchens and bathrooms or preparing feasibility-studies for ambitious but "unfinished symphonies". Creating a small hotel from a large French *villa* has been a satisfying conversion. Deploying a little-known traditional "green" Larch logs montagne method from Savoie to restrain an unstable hillside was a key learning-point! (Please see **the Percival Case Study**). Advising an investment syndicate on a "tired" hotel in a major ski-resort proved a challenge. Advising a prospective buyer in the *very first Internet auction* in Switzerland concerning a famed period lakeside 35-room Chateau proved stimulating. Also, he's been called-in

to help troubleshoot larger-scale projects, including a luxury new-build chalet in Verbier & a farmhouse renovation project in France when the Clients lost confidence in a retained manager or architect. He has a network in both countries of trusted *Artisans*. There are examples of some of these projects in the **Portfolio** pages. To date, some 260 Clients from amongst 22 nationalities have been helped to acquire or improve a home or given guidance. This range of experience-backed services is probably unique in Switzerland where there are few safeguards for the property-buyer and where “gazumping” is lawful. Even France, for comparison has a range of mandatory independently-procured reports on commonly-encountered issues, notably lead; asbestos; energy-consumption and “greenhouse gas” emissions and so on. Interpreting those demands some special approaches. *Caveat emptor, or let the buyer beware* is good advice, everywhere!

Please enjoy your visit.

*Now, how might I help you?*

Alan Bird

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*Consultant Chartered Surveyor/Expert en Immobilier*



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