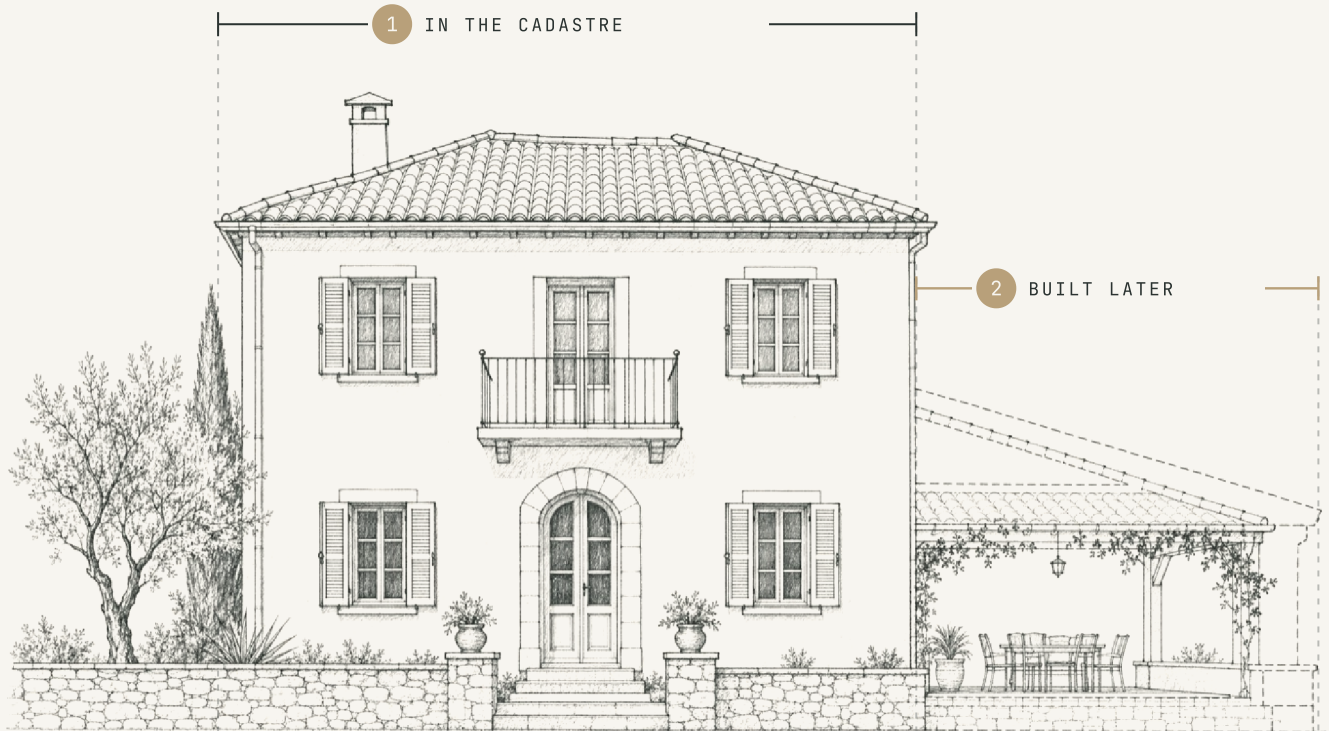


The papers that must be right

Two registers, four documents, and they do not always describe the same house.



No licence, not registered?
Then it is not part of what you buy.

WHAT IS INSIDE

1	Two registers that do not keep in step	p. 2
2	The four documents and where they come from	p. 3
3	What goes wrong most often	p. 4
4	Charges, debts and the mandatory building report	p. 5
5	Who checks what, and where to request it	p. 5 and 6

REGISTERS FOR ONE HOUSE

2

DOCUMENTS TO CHECK

4

REPORT REQUIRED FROM

50 years

General information, not legal advice. Have the papers checked by an adviser who works only for you. The mandatory report for older buildings on page 5 is not the same as our building survey.

Two registers, and they do not talk to each other

In Spain two separate bodies keep records of a piece of land and what stands on it. They serve different purposes, and neither updates the other. One document is never enough.



	1 CATASTRO, THE CADASTRE	3 REGISTRO DE LA PROPIEDAD
What it records	The property: location, floor area, year built	The ownership: who owns it and which charges are registered against it
What it is for	The value on which you pay municipal property tax (IBI)	Protecting your ownership against third parties
What it does <i>not</i> say	Who the owner is	Whether the house matches what the Cadastre describes
The document you request	Cadastral extract, see page 3	Extract, <i>nota simple</i> , see page 3

THE QUESTION TO ASK

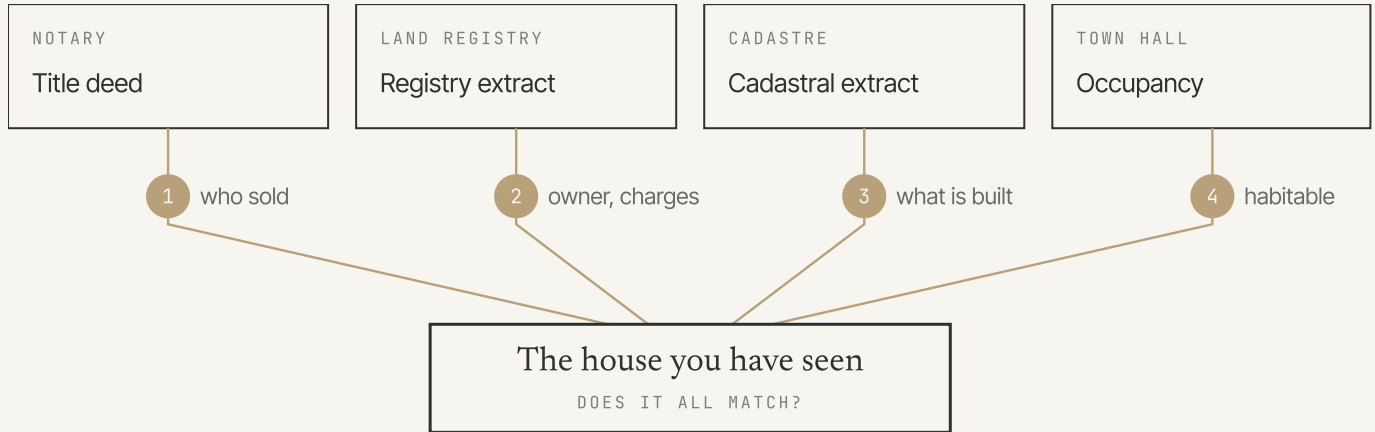
Do both registers describe the same house, and is it the house I have seen?

2 THE GAP

An extension can appear in the Cadastre but not in the Land Registry, or the other way round, or in neither. You only find out when you come to sell or renovate.

Four offices, one house

Each document comes from a different office and answers one question. Only together do they tell you whether the house is what the seller says it is.



NO.	DOCUMENT	WHAT IT SAYS	WHERE YOU REQUEST IT
1	Title deed <i>escritura pública</i>	Who the owner is, what was sold and at what price	The seller or the notary of the previous sale
2	Land Registry extract <i>nota simple</i>	The current position: owner, floor area, mortgage, attachment orders, easements	The Land Registry
3	Cadastral extract <i>referencia catastral</i>	Location, floor area, year built and cadastral value	The Cadastre
4	Certificate of occupancy <i>licencia de primera ocupación</i>	That the home may be lived in	The town hall

2 THE MOST IMPORTANT DOCUMENT

An old deed says nothing about a mortgage or attachment order added later. The extract does. Request a fresh one just before completion.

4 THE DOCUMENT MOST OFTEN MISSING

Without it, water and electricity cannot go in your name and you may not let it out. Common with older properties and unauthorised work.

FOUR THINGS TO COMPARE SIDE BY SIDE

NO.	WHAT	COMPARE	IF IT DOES NOT MATCH
1	Owner	The extract against the seller who signs	First establish who may sell
2	Floor area	Extract, Cadastre and what is actually built	Ask where the difference lies
3	Extensions	What you see against what is on paper	See page 4
4	Charges	Mortgage or attachment order in the extract	Ask your legal adviser

What we find most often on paper

We carry out 50 surveys a year. Only damp and ventilation come up more often than papers that do not match the house.

SURVEYS PER YEAR

50

TREE's own figure,
17 September 2026.

WHAT THIS DOES NOT
TELL YOU

Exactly how often. The
ranking is our experience, not
a count.

① Damp and ventilation

② The papers are not right

THIS GUIDE

③ Electrics or pipework

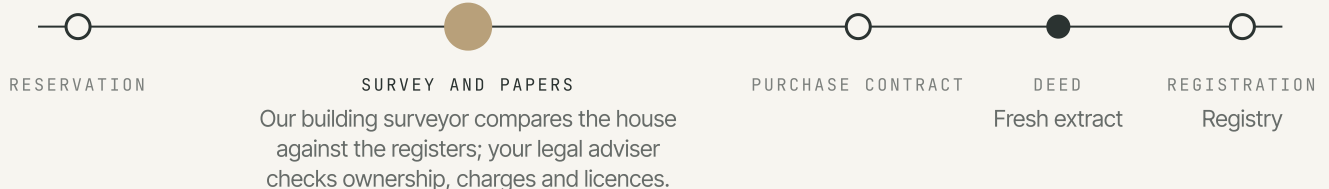
④ Roof or pool

THE THREE MOST COMMON FORMS

PROBLEM	WHEN YOU NOTICE IT	WHAT IT TAKES
Extension without a building licence	On resale or renovation	Legalisation where the rules allow, otherwise demolition
Cadastre differs from what is built	At valuation or sale	An update backed by an architect's statement
Certificate of occupancy missing	Straight away, when you connect water and electricity	An application, which only succeeds if the property complies

WHEN YOU CHECK THE PAPERS

— BEFORE THE PURCHASE IS FINAL —



THE CORE

A fault in the papers does not shrink with time. After the deed it is your problem, no longer the seller's.

A FINDING IS NOT THE END

It is a point to raise with the seller before the purchase is final. What happens next depends on what you agree.

What else to ask for

Debts and obligations can stay with the property after the seller has gone. These are the documents that show them.

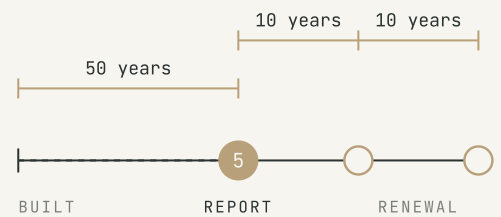
NO.	DOCUMENT	WHY	WHERE YOU REQUEST IT
1	Municipal property tax (IBI) bill and proof of payment	Unpaid bills stay with the property after the sale	The town hall or the seller
2	Certificate from the community of owners	Arrears, fees and major works	The managing agent
3	Energy certificate	Required for sale and rental	The seller
4	Building licences for any work done	For every extension, veranda, pool or storey	The town hall
5	Report on the condition of the building	Required from 50 years old, see below	The owner

5 THE MANDATORY REPORT FOR OLDER BUILDINGS

In the Comunitat Valenciana, the owner of a residential building more than 50 years old must hold a report on its condition, the *Informe de Evaluación del Edificio*. It applies to an individual house as well. The report is valid for 10 years.

If it is missing, that counts as a planning offence. You also need it to claim a renovation grant.

This statutory report is not the same as our building survey. One does not replace the other.



Example: a villa built in 1970 is more than 50 years old. Ask whether the report exists, and how recent it is.

WHO CHECKS WHAT

WHO	WHAT THEY DO	WHAT THEY DO NOT DO
Your legal adviser	Ownership, charges, debts and licences. Works only for you, for around 1% of the purchase price	Assess the building
Our building surveyor	The condition of the property, and whether what is built matches what is registered	Draw up the deed
The notary	Whether the deed is formally in order and whether any registered entries stand in the way	Look after your interests
The gestoría (administrative agency)	The paperwork after the deed: tax returns, registration, Cadastre	Assess documents

The notary does not check on your behalf

A COMMON MISUNDERSTANDING

Buyers usually expect the notary to do what a notary or solicitor does back home. In Spain the notary checks that the deed is formally correct, not whether the house is what you think you are buying. That check belongs with an adviser who works only for you.

THE SURVEY

€800 if you already have a property in mind.
Included if you are searching only with us.

FURTHER READING

Guide 03 (The building survey) and guide 04 (Renovation and permits).

WHAT WE REQUEST FOR YOU

While we prepare the purchase we obtain both extracts, and ask the seller for the deed, the certificate of occupancy and the building licences. What that costs varies by document and by office; we find out for you.

WHO THEN READS THEM

Your legal adviser assesses ownership, charges and licences. Our building surveyor checks the documents against the house itself. Just before completion we request the extract again.

Unsure about a property?

Send us the address or the cadastral reference. With an extract from the Land Registry and the Cadastre, we can quickly see whether anything is wrong.

[Book a call](#)

CALL

+34 865 76 03 63

EMAIL

info@tree.es

TOPIC	SOURCE
Registers, documents and where to request them	Buying practice in the province of Alicante · Catastro, Registro de la Propiedad, town hall
Mandatory report for older buildings	Decreto 53/2018, Generalitat Valenciana · habitatge.gva.es, retrieved 17 September 2026
Water and electricity	Confirmed by our legal adviser, September 2026
Findings, surveys per year, survey price	TREE's own figures, 17 September 2026
Legal adviser, around 1%	TREE's own figures, 17 September 2026

General information, not legal advice. What happens to a reservation if the papers are not right depends on what you agree with the seller. This guide carries a reference date and is reviewed every quarter.

THE TREE GUIDES SERIES

01 Buying in Spain	02 What it costs	03 The building survey	04 Renovation and permits	05 Buying a plot and building on it
06 The papers that must be right	07 After the keys	08 Inheritance and wills	09 Renting out	10 Mortgages for non-residents