

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

Apartment

West Kensington, London. W14



FOR

Mr X

Prepared by:

XXXX

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Marketing by:

[www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk)

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Firstly, may we thank you for your instructions of XXXX; we have now undertaken a Building Survey (formerly known as a Structural Survey) of the aforementioned property. This Survey was carried out on XXXX.

The Building Survey takes the following format; there is an introductory section (which you are currently reading), which includes a synopsis of the building, and a summary of our findings.

We then go through a detailed examination of the property starting with the external areas working from the top of the property down, followed by the internal areas and the buildings services. We conclude with the section for your Legal Advisor and also attach some general information on the property market.

We are aware that a report of this size is somewhat daunting and almost off-putting to the reader because of this. We would stress that the purchase of a property is usually one of the largest financial outlays made (particularly when you consider the interest you pay as well).

We recommend that you set aside time to read the report in full, consider the comments, make notes of any areas which you wish to discuss further and phone us.

We obviously expect you to read the entire report but we would suggest that you initially look at the summary, which refers to various sections in the report, which we recommend you read first so that you get a general feel for the way the report is written.

As part of our service we are more than happy to talk through the survey as many times as you wish until you are completely happy to make a decision. Ultimately, the decision to purchase the property is yours but we will do our best to offer advice to make the decision as easy as possible.

# **REPORT FORMAT**

To help you understand our Report we utilise various techniques and different styles and types of text, these are as follows:

## ***GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION***

*This has been given in the survey where it is considered it will aid understanding of the issues, or be of interest. This is shown in "italics" for clarity.*

## **TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED**

Throughout the Report, we have endeavoured to define any technical terms used. This is shown in "Courier New" typeface for clarity.

## **A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS**



We utilise photographs and sketches to illustrate issues or features. In some photographs a pencil has been used to highlight a specific area. The sketches are not 100% technically accurate; we certainly would not expect you to carry out work based upon the sketches alone.

## **ORIENTATION**

Any reference to left or right is taken from the front of the property, including observations to the rear, which you may not be able to physically see from the front of the property.

## **ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

We have used the term **ACTION REQUIRED** where we believe that there are items that you should carry out action upon or negotiate upon prior to purchasing the property.

Where a problem is identified, we will do our best to offer a solution. However, with most building issues, there are usually many ways to resolve them dependent upon cost, time available and the length of time you wish the repair/replacement to last.

## **SYNOPSIS**

### **SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION**

This is a first floor apartment within, what we believe to be a late Georgian/early Victorian detached three storey property that has been converted to apartments. There is an access area to the front with bin storage etc and we are advised that there is no access to the rear garden (your solicitor to check). Parking is on the street on a first come first served basis with a parking permit system in operation.

We believe the properties are Shared Freehold. We have not seen copies of the shared freehold, but we would be happy to comment if the details are duly forwarded to us. As the property is Shared Freehold you will no doubt have a shared responsibility for common areas/common components. Common areas/common components include not only the access stairways and corridors but also other areas of shared use such as the roof structure and external walls and the drainage for example.

We believe that the property was built in the 1840s to 1860s. If the exact age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

#### **Putting Life into Perspective!**

*Some of the things that were happening around the time the property was built:*

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1833 | The Factory Act of 1833 introduced a compulsory two hours schooling each day for children. It wasn't until the 1880 Education Act that school attendance became compulsory for all children up to the age of ten. |
| 1837 | Victoria becomes Queen of Great Britain.  |
| 1840 | The First Postage Stamp   |
| 1851 | First World Exhibition held in London   |
| 1854 | Florence Nightingale pioneers modern nursing in the Crimea  |
| 1859 | Charles Darwin proposes the Theory of Evolution   |
| 1863 | The Opening of London Underground   |

## EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front View



Rear view



Right hand view



Left hand view



Rear garden – which we do not think you have access to

## **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

### **Apartment No 3, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor**

The accommodation consists of:

Entrance hall

Front kitchen

Front Lounge

Office to the right

Rear right hand bedroom with en suite

Bedroom to the rear left hand side

Family shower room to the front

#### **Communal Areas**

Shared entrance doorway

Hallway and stairways and we assume right of access

#### **Outside Areas**

Parking is on the street on a first come first served basis with a parking permit in operation and there is no access to the rear garden.

## INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

The following photos are of the internal of the property to help you recall what it looked like and the general ambience (or lack of). We have not necessarily taken photographs of each and every room.



Kitchen, front left hand side



Lounge at front of the property



Family shower room



Office



Second Bedroom rear left hand side



En suite bathroom



Master Bedroom rear right hand side

## COMMUNAL AREAS



Communal entrance, front garden and shared staircase ?  
your legal advisor to check



Stairway and entrance to Flat 3

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## **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

### **External**

Chimneys:	Four Brick chimneys
Main Roof:	Pitched hipped roof clad with slates and flat central area
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Cast iron
Walls:	Flemish bond brickwork(assumed) which is repointed in cement mortar with some low level render
Fascias and Soffits:	Brick corbelling
Windows and Doors:	Painted timber sliding sash

### **Internal**

Ceilings:	Lath and plaster (assumed)
Walls:	Internal – heavy duty studwork (assumed) and perimeter walls are lath and plaster false wall/dry lining (assumed)
Floor: First Floor:	Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)

### **Services**

We are advised (by the owner) that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (assumed). The boiler is a Glow-warm boiler and is located in the kitchen and the electrics are 1980s/90s located in the hallway just outside the family shower room.

The above terms are explained in full in the main body of the Report.

We have used the term ‘assumed’ as we have not opened up the structure.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summaries are dangerous as they try to précis often quite complex subjects into a few paragraphs. This is particularly so in a summary about someone's future home when we are trying to second-guess what their priorities are, so it is important the Report is read in full.

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of fifty plus photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if an issue has not been discussed that you are interested in or concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it; if we have not we will happily go back.

Generally we found the apartment to be in average condition and the property with our limited inspection is in average considering the property's age, type and style with a few exceptions. We have divided the Executive Summary into 'The Good', 'The Bad' and 'The Ugly', to help distinguish what in our mind are the main issues.

### The Good

*Survey reports often are full of only the faults and general 'doom and gloom', so we thought we would start with some positive comments on the property!*

Older properties typically have more space than newer properties, both in the actual size of the rooms and the height of the rooms.

The property also has good natural day light particularly with the bay window to the lounge.

The property also has many of the original features left, which add to the overall character of the property.

We are sure you can think of other things to add to this list.

## **The Bad**

*Problems / issues raised in the 'bad' section are usually solvable, but often need negotiation upon. However, a large number of them may sometimes put us off the property.*

### 1) **No integrated fire alarm system**

We would recommend that an integral fire alarm system is added to the whole property.

Probably the best sort for an older property that is occupied such as this one is a radio activated system (if it is possible) rather

than one where all the wiring has to be put into the property and the walls have to be opened up.



Battery operated single smoke detector

At present if there was a fire on the ground floor you may not be aware of it! it is quite high height to jump from a window!!

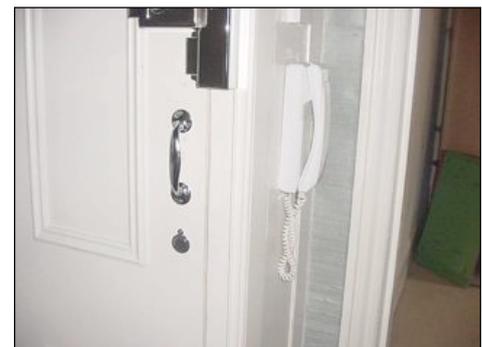
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add an integral fire alarm system that is activated throughout all the properties

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £5000-£10,000 dependent on the quality and specification of the fire alarm system and such things as whether it links to the local Fire Brigade or whether it a central office and if it is radio activated or wired; quotations required. This should be a shared cost that is paid by everyone but you will need agreement.

Please see the Other Matters Section of this Report.

### 2) **Improve security**

At present you have a voice only door entrance system, we would recommend that you have it changed to a video entry system which is particularly important when you are on the first floor as this means that you get to see the person as well as hear them



Telephone entry

i.e. if the postman calls with a parcel. We generally feel for this type of property this is a minimum standard.

We also suggest security wise the addition of a London bar on your front door, should anyone get into the property that is not wanted it makes it more difficult for them to get into your property which is particularly important if you are the only one in the property.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add video entry system and London bar

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Between £3000-£6000 or less if carried out the same time as the fire alarm system; quotations required. This should be a shared cost that is paid by everyone but you will need agreement.



Add a London bar to the apartment entrance door

Please see the Other matters Section of this Report.

### 3) Chimney vents blocked

We noted that some of the chimneys (there would have been one in each room remember that in years gone by the only heating would have been via a chimney) appear to have had the vents blocked.

For example in the rear right hand bedroom where a built in chimney has been added in front the vent would appear to be blocked.



Vent to chimney rear left hand side

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You do need to check there are vents to each chimney that is not in use to stop them becoming damp and ultimately causing sulphate attack or dampness to get into the property, ironically it will probably affect your neighbours before it affects you.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds to open up or form vents; quotations required.

Please see the Chimney Section of this Report.

#### 4) Entrance roof, gutters and cracking

There is a shared entrance area with the associated roof this roof is adjacent to your family shower room and we noted that it had a new roof on it which is asphalt, ideally this should have a reflective paint added to it, we also noted a small drainage outlet, in our experience these typically get blocked. Additionally during our question and answer session we spoke to the present owners about this and were advised that they had literally seen it full of water and they do keep an eye on it and regularly clear the roof.



Small outlet (hidden behind the leaf)

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You will need regular maintenance to stop the small drainage outlet from getting blocked by clearing it of leaves etc. The only way we know of resolving this matter long term is to make the outlet much larger.



Entrance

**ANTICIPATED COST:** To make the outlet larger we would expect costs to be in the region of £500 as you may need scaffolding it should be something you can raise with everyone as a shared cost; quotations required.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

#### Cracking

You may have seen some cracking as you enter the property to the ceiling, you will also see some cracking to the bricks outside. We believe that this is a direct result of water getting into the structure over the years from the roof problem that



Hairline cracking in entrance hall

we have just mentioned so you can see how important it is to ensure that the flat roof over the entrance is maintained to ensure that the water does not build up on it. kept free of water.



Awkward configuration of rainwater goods to the entrance porch may lead to dampness getting into the property



Cracking to left hand side brick arch at the front of the property

#### 5) Ventilation/Condensation possible problems

To the kitchen and shower room/bathroom areas, which are areas where you create moisture and humidity, we would recommend the adding of extract fans that are operated with a light switch or humidity stats to reduce the likelihood of condensation.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add extract fans which are controlled by humidity thermostats

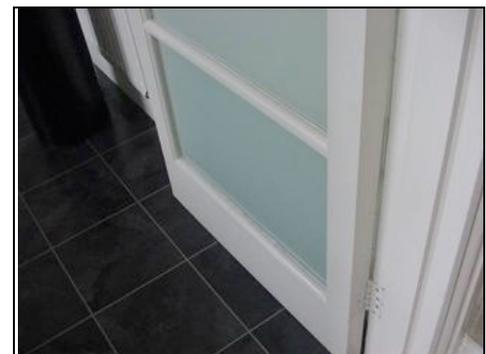
**ANTICIPATED COST:** £200 per extract fan; quotations required.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

#### 6) Glass door not glazed to British Standards

We noted a door with glazing showing no British Standards kite mark we suggest that you replace with safety glass. In a worst case scenario is someone walks into it it can be dangerous.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Replace glass with safety glass.



Door without safety glass

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**ANTICIPATED COST:** Around £250 may be cheaper to have the door replaced; quotations required.

Please see the Internal Joinery Section of this Report.

7) **Tree nearby**

There are trees nearby to the right hand side these can cause damage to the structure, you need to make sure that they are regularly maintained, they look to have been loped in this year at some point but you do need to keep an eye continually to ensure that they are maintained.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to establish who owns the trees and who should ensure to maintain them!

Note tree height similar size to the property

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.

8) **Other costs that you may have in association with the rest of the property**

We have already mentioned the fire alarm system and a video door entry system but we would also bring to your attention the following:

**Entrance Stairs**

Typically we find that these leak water into the apartment adjacent to it and there may be some future costs in relation to this.



Entrance stairs

**Dampness to Ground Floor Flat**

Additionally typically we find that the ground floor flat has dampness and again you may have costs associated with this as this is a shared freehold and you share a lot of the costs.

## Plan Preventative Maintenance

We have not had the benefit of seeing a Planned Preventative Maintenance schedule and during our question and answer session with the owners they did not feel there was one however it would be normal good practice to have one and this will identify future costs of repairs on the property.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal advisor to request this and forward a copy onto us for further comment, literally without one there is a possibility of costs occurring without being budgeted for with the sinking fund. Please see our comments later on the sinking fund. We did ask about the sinking fund but were advised this was £100 and we feel this is low due to the age of the property and also advised that it used to be £200 which we feel is a more appropriate level.

### 9) Services

#### Internal radiators

We noted dated internal radiators, for example to the bedrooms. We were not able to see that many of the radiators as they were covered.



Radiators not next to a window

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We therefore would recommend that when you carry out your refurbishment that you put radiators underneath the windows (this is the best place for them as it allows air circulation without this it increases the likelihood of condensation/black mould in the corners of the rooms).

You may wish to change the radiators and add a modern radiator which would be a double convection radiator which gives out more heat than the older radiators.

Finally we would comment heating is very subjective as discussed if you do feel the cold a lot then in these properties particularly with single glazed sliding sash windows and large rooms it can be cold in the winter so we would suggest that you increase the size of the radiators. There is a calculation known as British Thermal Units (BTU) that you can use to work out the size of the radiators, one property which we dealt with where the

people were particularly susceptible to coldness we doubled the BTU rating.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Approximately £200 per radiator; quotations required.

### **Increase number of power points**

Increase the number of power points as we noticed the power points being used were over loaded.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add power points.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Approximately £100 per power point; quotations required.

### **The Ugly**

*We normally put here things that we feel will be difficult to resolve and will need serious consideration.*

There is nothing which we feel falls within this category however we would specifically refer you to our comments with regard to living in multi occupied properties and the 'sinking fund'/property maintenance which can be a major problem. Also we note the lack of a fire alarm system throughout the property and the level of security not having a video entry system.

### **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

### **Living in Multi-Occupied Shared Freehold Properties**

This is more a statement of information. There can be problems living in multi occupied properties with anything from noisy neighbours to non-contribution to the 'sinking fund'. The property is Shared Freehold, which is very different to having a Freehold property, where you can almost literally do as you like (within the scope of the Law!).

Please see the attachment in the Appendices at the end of this Report.

### **Sinking Fund / Planned Maintenance - Future Work**

With properties such as this there should be a planned maintenance program. We would expect this to be looking at and considering any anticipated works and associated costs at least ten years in advance, from our discussions with the owners they were not aware of one.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Advisor to confirm future planned maintenance costs and expenditure, if there is not one then you need to ensure that one is carried out.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Your Legal Advisor to confirm.

### **Communal Areas**

Please see other costs that you may have in association with the rest of the property.

Please see the Outside Areas Section of this Report.

### **Reactive / Day-to-Day Maintenance and Cyclical Maintenance**

By reactive / day-to-day maintenance we mean work of a more immediate nature, such as repairs to leaking showers or blocked drains or entry door systems. By cyclical maintenance we mean maintenance carried out on a regular basis such as to the fire alarm system and the lifts and the garden maintenance.

Dependent upon the terms of your shared freehold agreement some of this may come under your responsibility but be managed for you and re-charged back to you by the Management Company.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Typically there is a Service Charge for day-to-day maintenance / reactive maintenance and also cyclical maintenance. Your Legal Advisor to confirm costs.

### **Maintenance**

The maintenance requirement will typically be to the internal of the property only with the external maintenance being carried out as a shared responsibility as you have a shared freehold.

### **Purchase Price**

We have not been asked to comment upon the purchase price in this instance, we have however referred you to sources of general information on the housing market within the Information on the Property Market Section, which can be found in the Appendices at the end of the Report.

### **Every Business Transaction has a Risk**

Every business transaction has a risk, only you can assess whether that risk is acceptable to you and your circumstances. You should now read the main body of the Report paying particular attention to any “**ACTION REQUIRED**” points.

### **Estimates of Costs**

Where we have offered an estimate of building costs please remember we are not experts in this area. We always recommend you obtain quotations for the large jobs before purchasing the property (preferably three quotes). The cost of building work has many variables such as the cost of labour. For unskilled labour we currently use between £75 and £100 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

If you obtain builders estimates that vary widely, we would advise the work is probably difficult or open to various interpretations and we would recommend a specification is prepared. It would probably be best to supervise the work if it is complex, both of which we can do if so required.



## **SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION**

The Summary Upon Reflection is a second summary so to speak, which is carried out when we are doing the second or third draft a few days after the initial survey when we have had time to reflect upon our thoughts on the property. We would add the following in this instance:

From our discussions you advised that you are going to refurbish the property you need to take our comments into consideration baring in mind the future refurbishment which we are not aware of the extent of this. We would be more than happy to help you with this if you so wish.

As a general comment for any work required we would always recommend that you obtain at least three quotations for any work from a qualified, time served tradesperson or a competent registered building contractor prior to legal completion.

If you so wish we can prepare specifications and obtain quotations for the work, whatever you do don't allow the estate agent to organise the quotes as he will utilise people he regularly uses who know they have to keep in with him/her to get further work and therefore are very keen to please the estate agent, as opposed to you the real client and at the end of the day it doesn't take long to organise.

We would ask that you read the Report and contact us on any issues that you require further clarification on.

## **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

Just a few more comments about the Report format before you read the actual main body of the Report.

### **TENURE – SHARED FREEHOLD**

We have not seen a copy of the shared freehold agreement and have assumed for the purposes of this report that it is a full repairing and insuring shared freehold agreement and that there are no onerous or unusual clauses, if there are your Legal Advisor/Solicitor should bring these to our attention

### **ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?**

It is important to remember that the estate agents are acting for the seller (usually known as the vendor) and not the purchaser and are therefore eager to sell the property (no sale – no fee!). We as your employed Independent Chartered Surveyor represent your interests only.

### **SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR**

To carry out your legal work you can use a solicitor or a legal advisor. We have used both terms within the report.

### **TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS**

This report is being carried out under our terms of engagement for Residential Building Surveys, as agreed to and signed by yourselves. If you have not seen and signed a copy of our terms of engagement please phone immediately.

### **OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION**

Our aim is for you to be completely happy with the service we provide, and we will try and help you in whatever way possible with your property purchase - just phone us.

**THE DETAILED PART OF THE REPORT  
FOLLOWS, WORKING FROM THE TOP  
OF THE PROPERTY DOWNWARDS**



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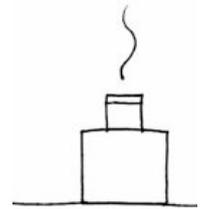
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## EXTERNAL

### CHIMNEY STACKS



#### Chimney stacks

*Chimneys developed originally from open fires placed within buildings. From this, the chimney has developed to its present day format where it is used as an aesthetic feature and focal point rather than purely just to heat the room.*

This property has four chimneys in total. The chimneys are located two to the front and two to the rear at the corners of the roof.

#### Chimney One – front right hand side

This chimney is difficult to view but from what we could see of it, it was a substantial brick chimney with five chimney pots. We could just see parts of the lead flashing which looked in average condition.

Unfortunately we were unable to see the very top of the chimney known as the flaunchings, we therefore cannot comment upon them.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** With such large chimneys we believe there should be an annual check, access can be gained from the top floor flat we believe.



Chimney One

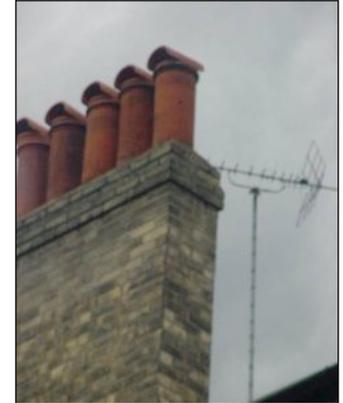
#### Chimney Two – rear right hand side

Again we had difficulty viewing this chimney from ground level, it was a substantial brick built chimney with five large chimney pots sitting fairly straight therefore we would assume they are in reasonable condition from this.



Chimney Two

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As previously described access required to check condition.



Top of chimney two

### Chimney Three – front left hand side

We had the benefit of being able to view these from the adjoining property. We again were able to see it was a substantial brick built chimney with four chimney pots and lead flashing. We were unable to see the flaunchings on the very top. We can see from that the chimney pots have been re-bedded which is typical on such large chimneys.



Chimney Three

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Again we believe they should be inspected every year.



### Chimney Four – rear left hand side

We had the benefit of being able to view these from the adjoining property. We again were able to see it was a substantial brick built chimney with four chimney pots and lead flashings. We noticed some hairline cracking to the flaunchings but were unable to get a good view of it due to the chimney of the adjoining property being in the way (remember we were viewing these from next doors roof).



In the foreground you can see the chimney pots of Chimney Four rear left hand

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As previously described a yearly inspection is recommended.

Flaunchings Defined

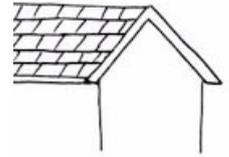
A low, wide cement mortar fillet surrounding the flue terminal on top of the chimneystack to throw off rainwater.

Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the chimney stacks from the parts we could see. The inspection was made from ground level within the boundaries of the property (unless otherwise stated) using a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. A closer inspection may reveal latent defects.

Please also see the Chimney breasts, Flues and Fireplaces Section of this Report.

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## ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



*The Roof Coverings and Underlayers section considers the condition of the outer covering of the roof. Such coverings usually endure the extremes of climate and temperatures. They are susceptible to deterioration, which ultimately leads to water penetration.*

*The underlayer's function is to minimise wind and water damage. Dependent upon the age of your property this may or may not be present, please read on:*

We viewed the roof from the adjoining properties roof as there was no access via the top floor flat as no one was in at the time of our inspection. We will consider the roofs in three areas; the high level roof, the Bay window roof and the flat roof.

### Main Roof

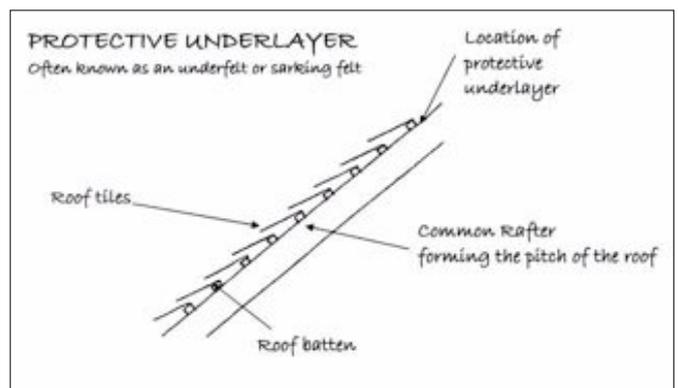
We were able to see the left hand side of the roof clearly from the adjoining neighbours property and we had limited view on the rest of the roof. From this we would comment that the roof is pitched and clad with quarried slate. The slates sit fairly true and are generally in average condition considering the property's age, type and style.



Main roof

### Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)

*From the 1940s onwards felts were used underneath tiles/slates to stop wind damage and water penetration, these in more recent years have been replaced with plastic equivalents. These are*



*commonly known as underfelts but now the name is not really appropriate, as felt is not the only material used.*

Unfortunately it was not possible to access the loft space to inspect its condition.

### **Bay Window Roof**

Bay Window roofs can often have problems but unfortunately we could not see it but during our question and answer session we spoke about it with the present owner who advised it had been repaired recently.



Bay window

### **Flat Roof – entrance area**

This has been recently covered in asphalt (we know this from our question and answer session with the present owner) and looked in reasonable condition. We believe this roof is a few years into its 25 year plus life, the main concern we have for this roof is the outlet, please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Flat roof entrance area

Finally, all the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. Flat roofs have been inspected from upper floor windows and/or ground level.

Unfortunately we were only able to see approximately thirty percent of the main roof properly from ground level via our ladder or via any other vantage point such as we managed to gain access to the neighbour's property but this only really gave us a good view of the left hand side of the property (all directions given as you face the property). We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see; however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

For further comments with regard to ventilation please see the Roof Structure and Loft Section.



## **ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT**

### **(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)**

*The roof structure or framework must be built in a manner which is able to give adequate strength to carry its own weight together with that of the roof covering discussed in the previous section and any superimposed loads such as snow, wind, foot traffic etc.*

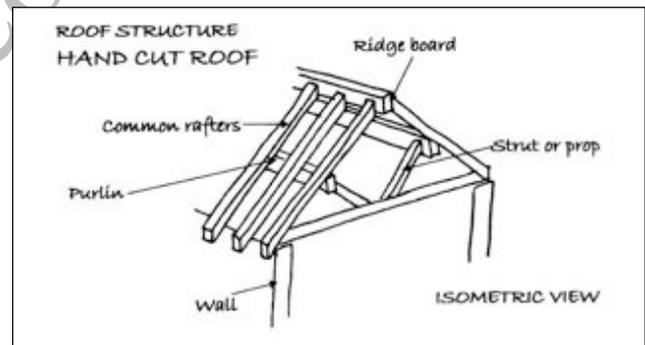
#### **Main Roof**

#### **Roof Access**

Unfortunately we could not gain access to the top floor flat, which would in turn usually gives us access to the loft/ roof space. We would be more than happy to return if you can gain access for us into the roof space via the top floor flat, we feel at the very least you should go and visit them prior to purchasing the property to have a chat if there are any problems.

#### **Roof Structure**

Whilst we could not see the roof structure, given the age, type and style of property, we believe the roof structure is likely to be what is known as a cut timber roof. This is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site.



#### **Ventilation**

We could not see any ventilation to the roof from ground level. We would ideally recommend that ventilation is added to these roofs as today as you increase the thermal efficiency in the roof by adding insulation and a general increase in the warmth in the property it can cause condensation problems.

#### **Insulation**

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

Finally, we would take an educated guess as we have not been able to gain access to the roof, i.e. we have not examined every single piece of timber.

## GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



*The function of the gutters and downpipes is to carry rainwater from the roof to the ground keeping the main structure as dry as possible.*

*Defective gutters and downpipes are a common cause of dampness that can, in turn, lead to the development of rot in timbers. Regular inspection and adequate maintenance are therefore essential if serious problems are to be avoided.*

### Gutters and Downpipes

From ground level the gutters and downpipes looked to be plastic.

Generally they appear in average condition, we spoke to the occupier during the question and answer session about these and were advised that some of these had been recently replaced.

We are concerned how rainwater gets away from the flat roof.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would always recommend that the gutters and downpipes are cleaned out, the joints are checked and the alignment checked to ensure that the gutters fall towards the downpipes. In this case you should have an annual maintenance contract particularly as you have trees nearby.



Gutters and downpipe



There is a kink in the downpipe and assume it is to reduce the speed the water.

### Soil and Vent Pipe

Soil and Vent pipes look to be predominately cast iron with this age of property cast iron will be in need of regular maintenance. We also noted what we believe to be some lead pipes, please see the photos, as far as we are aware there is no danger with lead pipes being used as waste pipes only as service pipes.

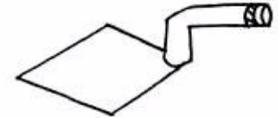


Soil and vent pipes

Finally, gutters and downpipes have been inspected from ground level. As it was not raining at the time of the inspection it is not possible to confirm 100 per cent that the rainwater installation is free from blockage, leakage etc. or that it is capable of coping with long periods of heavy rainfall. Our comments have therefore been based on our best assumptions.

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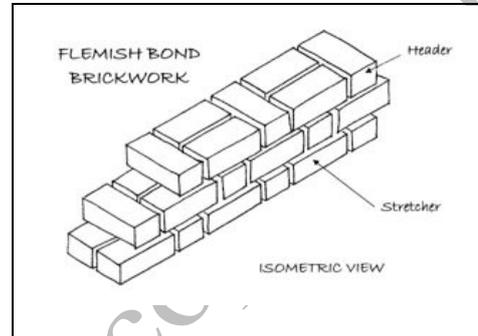
# WALLS



*External walls need to perform a variety of functions. These include supporting upper floors and the roof structure, resisting dampness, providing adequate thermal and sound insulation, offering resistance to fire and being aesthetically presentable.*

## Brickwork / Render

The property is brick built in a Flemish bond brick originally in a lime mortar that is known as Flemish bond brickwork, which has been repointed in a cement mortar.



The term Flemish Bond relates to the way the bricks are bonded together and have a pattern visible from the outside of the property that shows the end of the brick (header), then the side of the brick (stretcher), then the end of the brick, then the side of the brick, and this pattern repeats course after course, i.e. header-stretcher, header-stretcher.



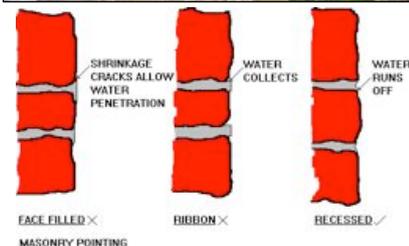
## Pointing

We believe in some areas the property has been proud pointed which is not ideal for example around the soft red brick arches which in our opinion will cause deterioration in the not too distant future.

Proud pointing above and repointing below



**ACTION REQUIRED:** During our question and answer session the owners advised that it had been recently repointed and we would comment that it looks to have been repointed in a strongish cement mortar. Unfortunately this is the wrong sort of mortar it would have been more appropriate to have



repointed in lime mortar and in years to come this will mean that you will need to carry out repointing.

Before the 19th Century, the practice of building timbers into external walls was almost universal. These were known as bonding timbers. They are of course prone to rot as solid walls allow dampness through. Unfortunately, without opening up the structure, we are unable to confirm if this is the case.

Generally Flemish Bond brickwork is liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon the condition of the brickwork and the exposure to the weather. In this case the solid external walls may be liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon their condition and their exposure to the weather. It is essential that external faces be kept in good condition.

## Render

There is a small area of render to the right hand side of the property and bring it to your attention as we think there is likely to be some dampness in the area from the general fall of the driveway, which in a shared agreement you may have responsibility for.



Brickwork with render

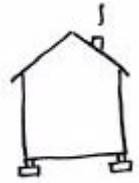
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal advisor to specifically ask if there are any problems with the other flats that will need resolving within the next 10 years.

Finally, the external walls have been inspected visually from ground level and/or randomly via a ladder. Where the window and door lintels are concealed by brickwork / render / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age timber lintels, rubbed brick lintels or metal lintels are common, which can be susceptible to deterioration that is unseen, particularly if in contact with dampness.

Our comments have been based upon how the brickwork / render / plaster has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork / render / plaster would be if it were

opened up for this age, style and type of construction. We are however aware that all is not always as it seems in the building industry and often short cuts are taken. Without opening up the structure we have no way of establishing this.

## **FOUNDATIONS**



*The foundations function is, if suitably designed and constructed, to transfer the weight of the property through the soil. As a general comment, many properties prior to the 19th Century have little or no foundations, as we think of them today, and typically a two-storey property would have one metre deep foundations.*

### **Foundations**

In properties of this type the foundations will have been specially designed many years ago and are likely to be a stepped brick foundation and there is likely to be a basement to them. Without opening up the structure we cannot be certain. The foundations have obviously stood the test of time with no visible signs of movement to the walls although sometimes they are effected by nearby trees. Please see our comments on trees.

### **London Clay**

This property stands on London Clay, as with the majority of properties in London. It is, therefore, more susceptible than most should drains leak or trees be allowed to overgrow, etc. It is not unusual to have some settlement in London properties.

### **Building Insurance Policy**

In Shared Freehold properties the property is usually insured by the Landlord and recharged back to the Shared Freeholder. It is a condition of the Shared Freehold Agreement that insurance is taken with the Landlord. As we have not seen a copy of the Shared Freehold Agreement we can only assume that this Shared Freehold Agreement carries the usual convention.

You should ensure that the Building Insurance Policy contains adequate provision against any possibility of damage arising through subsidence, landslip, heave etc.

Finally, we have not excavated the foundations but we have drawn conclusions from our inspection and our general knowledge of this type, age and style of property.

As no excavation has been carried out we cannot be 100 percent certain as to how the foundation has been constructed and we can only offer our best assumptions and an educated guess, which we have duly done.

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# TREES

*Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.*

Next doors trees are very close to the building and need maintenance, we recommend you speak to next door about the trees to ensure they are happy to maintain them



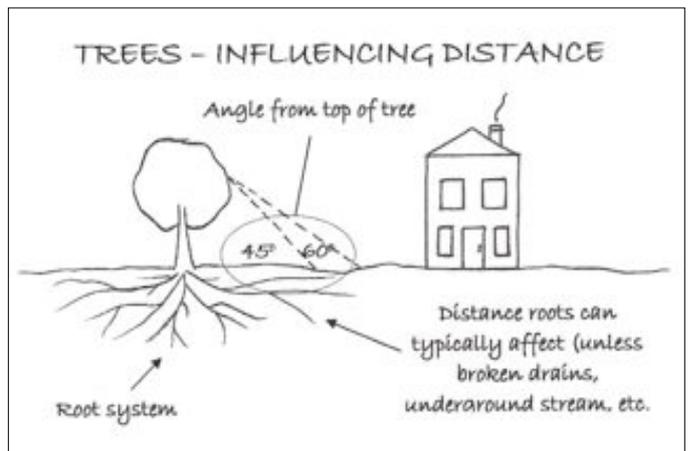
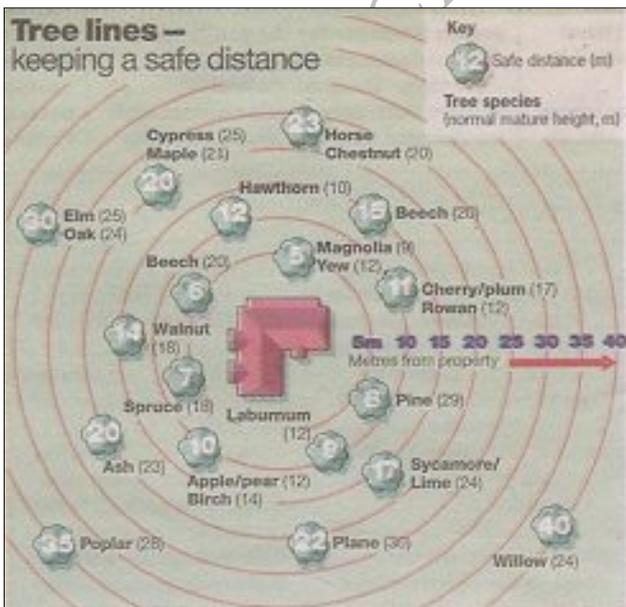
Tree higher than building

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The trees need professional maintenance as soon as possible please see our comments in the Executive Summary

Damage to foundations and underground services can be caused by trees and shrubs.

Although there were no signs of structural damage attributable to trees at the time of the inspection the possibility of future problems cannot be ruled out.

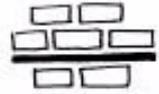
If common sense is used and trees and shrubs are not allowed to overgrow the property you should not have any problems. Equally we would not recommend the removal of trees without specialist advice, as this could damage the dynamics of the soil in the area and the water table level.



Influencing Distance Defined

This is the distance in which a tree may be able to cause damage to the subject property. It is not quite as simple as our sketch; it depends on the tree, its maturity, the soil type etc., etc.

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.



## DAMP PROOF COURSE

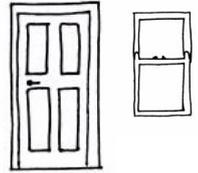
*The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required various other basic standards. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout London and then the country as a whole, although this took many years for it to become standard practice.*

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, we were not able to identify a damp proof course they were a requirement from 1877 which may be around the time the property was built and they may or may not have been added.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Generally we do find some dampness in these properties which you may have responsibility duty having a shared freehold, your solicitor needs to specifically request if there is any such work.

Please see the Dampness Section of this report.

Finally, sometimes it is difficult for us to identify if there is a damp proof course in a property. We have made our best assumptions based upon our general knowledge of the age, type and style of this property.



## FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS

*This section covers fascias, soffits and bargeboards and windows and doors, and any detailing such as brick corbelling etc.*

*Fascias and soffits offer protection to the rafter feet and also allow the securing of the guttering. Windows primary functions are to admit light and air, but they also have thermal and sound properties. The doors allow access and egress within the property.*

### Fascias and Soffits

We have a nice decorative brick course sometimes know as dragon teeth. We believe there may be a fascia above the brick course although this is difficult to see due to the height of the building and the guttering hiding it.



Close up of brick corbelling

### Windows and Doors

This property has sliding sash windows, they have a painted timber finish and are in reasonable condition although we would add we were only able to inspect them via opening the windows internally. During our question and answer session with the present owners they advised that refurbishment had been carried out on the windows therefore latent defects may be being hidden



Close up of window

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Sliding sash windows commonly need some easing and adjusting by a carpenter who is use to dealing with this type of work. Please see our comments with living with sliding sash windows as they can be cold and draughty if you have not experienced them previously.

#### General Information on Sliding Sash Windows

If you have not lived in a property with sliding sash windows previously, you should be aware that typically they are draughty and rattle. There is no easy way to eliminate this problem. In our experience, a general ease and adjustment of the windows and the addition of a plastic tube draught sealer (available from most DIY stores) and regular redecoration is the best option to minimise the

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draughtiness of the windows in this case. Horizontal Sliding Sash Windows (sometimes known as York Windows)

Finally, we have carried out a general and random inspection of the fascias and soffits and windows and doors. In the case of the fascias and soffits it is typically a visual inspection from ground level. With the windows and doors we have usually opened a random selection of these during the course of the survey. In this section we are aiming to give a general overview of the condition of the fascias and soffits and windows and doors. Please also see the Internal Joinery section.



## EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

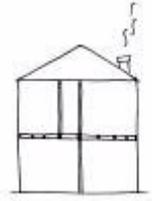
*The external decorations act as a protective coat for the building from the elements. Where this protective covering has failed, such as with flaking paintwork, the elements will infiltrate the structure. This is of particular concern as water is one of the major factors in damage to any structure.*

Generally the external redecoration is a joint responsibility shared with the other owners and occupiers which will cover such things as painting the windows and associated repairs. You will need to build up funds with the other shareholders via the sinking fund to redecorate and the associated scaffold and any associated management access costs.

Finally, ideally external redecoration is recommended every four to five years dependent upon the original age of the paint, its exposure to the elements and the materials properties. Where painting takes place outside this maintenance cycle repairs should be expected. Ideally redecoration should be carried out during the better weather between mid-April and mid-September.

Please see our comments in the Fascias and Soffits and Windows and Doors section.

## INTERNAL



# CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

*In this section we look at the finish applied to the structural elements such as the plasterwork applied to the ceiling joists, walls or partitions, together with the construction of the internal walls and partitions. The concept of internal finishes is relatively modern. Partitioning developed originally to separate the livestock from the human occupants. Finishes have developed from this very functional beginning to their decorative nature of today.*

## Ceilings

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are originally lath and plaster, but in some areas have had plasterboard tacked over them or replaced. This type of work is normally carried out where the ceilings are in poor condition, as removing lath and plaster is very messy, time consuming and expensive as it is labour intensive.

## Ornamental Plaster

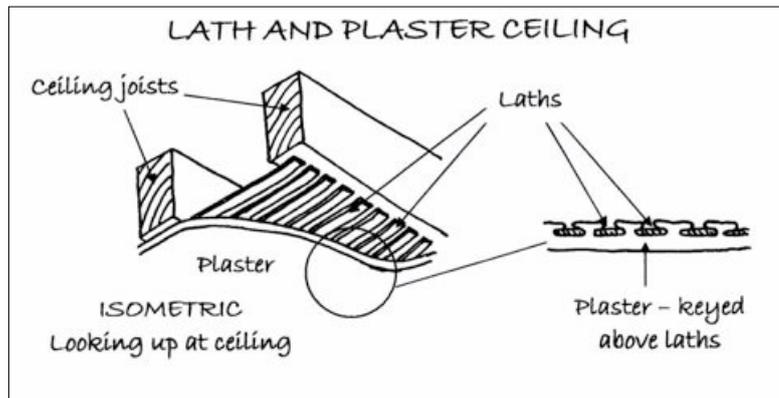
In the eightieth century ornamental plaster ceilings came into vogue, many beams disappeared from view, encased in boarding or plaster which is the case with this building. You certainly have a decorative coving, the skill required for these is considerable and adds to the overall feel of the property.



Ornamental plaster ceiling and coving

## Lath and Plaster Defined

Laths are thin strips of timbers which are fixed to the structure. Wet plaster is applied to the laths, usually in several layers. The plaster forms a key as it is forced between the laths. This plaster, once dry, is given further coats and often a decorative finish.



Plasterboard Defined

The usual name for Gypsum plasterboard, which is building board with a core of aerated gypsum, usually enclosed between two sheets of heavy paper, used as a dry lining.

**Internal Walls and Partitions**

We found the walls to be studwork, which, we think, is quite dense; by this we mean that the timbers are relatively close together and/or there is insulation board in between the timbers. This type of studwork limits the noise transfer and, if the timbers are close enough, can be structural.

**Perimeter Walls**

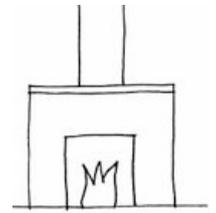
False wall commonly known as dry lining has been used. This is often used in older properties to hide/prevent dampness coming through. From our personal experience we have found that dampness can often be hidden behind these walls causing deterioration.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally the dry lining should be opened up and checked for defects, this could be carried out when you carry out the refurbishment.

Finally, ceilings, walls and partitions have been inspected from floor level and no opening up has been undertaken (unless permission has been obtained by yourselves). In some cases the materials employed cannot be ascertained without samples being taken and damage being caused.

We cannot comment upon the condition of the structure hidden behind plaster, dry lining, other applied finishes, heavy furniture, fittings and kitchen units with fitted back panels.

## CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



*With the advent of central heating fireplaces tend to be more a feature than an essential function in most properties.*

In some rooms the chimney breasts were visible in other rooms, for example the rear right hand room they were not due to the built in cupboards. Please see our comments within the Executive Summary with regard to this.

At the time of the survey no chimneys were in use. Any chimneys that you do not propose to use should be capped and ventilated to prevent dampness.

Finally, it is strongly recommended that flues be cleaned and checked for obstruction prior to use to minimise the risk of hazardous fumes entering the building.

Please also see the Chimneystacks, Flues and Parapet Walls section of this Report.

## FLOORS



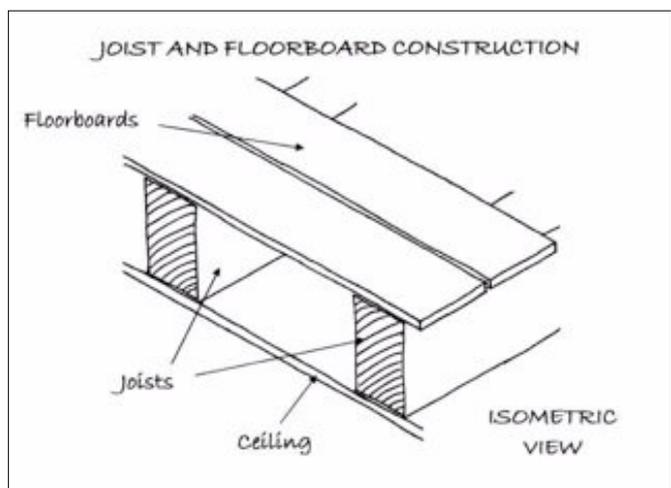
*Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.*

### First Floor

We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards and typically embedded as this is typical in this age of property.

Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

These are usually at first floor level consisting of a joist



supported from the external walls, either built in or, in more modern times, sitting upon joist hangers, sometimes taking additional support from internal walls, with floorboards fixed down upon it.

Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with fitted carpets, floor coverings, etc. The comments we have made are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction. We would emphasise that we have not opened up the floors in any way or lifted any floorboards.

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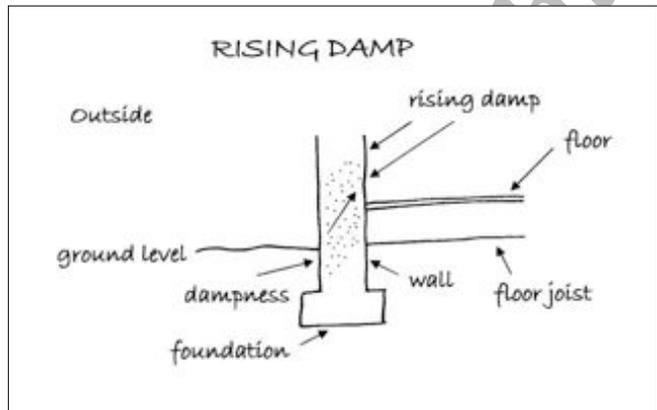
## DAMPNESS

*In this section we look at any problems that are being caused by dampness. It is therefore essential to diagnose the source of the dampness and to treat the actual cause and not the effect of the dampness.*

### Rising Damp

*Rising damp depends upon various components including the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation of the material, amongst other things. Rising damp can come from the ground, drawn by capillary action, to varying degrees of intensity and height into the materials above.*

*There is now much debate over whether true rising damp does exist after research over a 10 year period.*

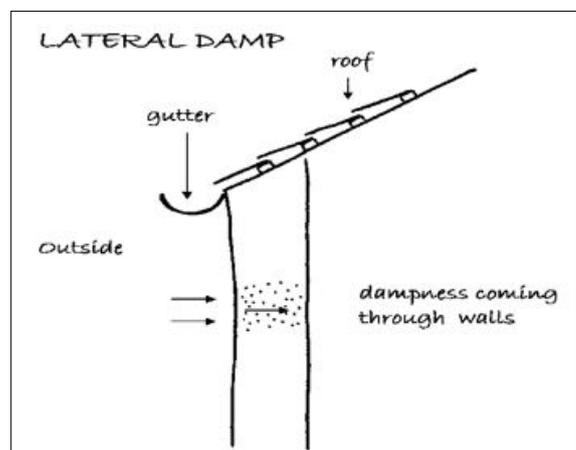


As you are not on the ground floor, rising damp really should not affect you as, typically, it only rises to approximately a metre, although, ironically, you are likely to have a part responsibility for the cost of rectifying any dampness!

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal adviser to check and confirm with the existing owners if there is any damp work programmed to be carried out and any associated work.

### Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

*This is where water ingress occurs through the walls. This can be for various reasons such as poor pointing or wall materials or inadequate gutters and downpipes, such as poorly jointed gutters.*



Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to internal walls, floors and other surfaces. Our readings were in line with what we would expect for this age of property, i.e. minor dampness. No evidence of any significant penetrating/lateral dampness was detected.



Dampness test

## **Condensation**

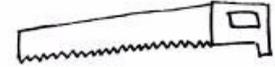
*This is where the humidity held within the air meets a cold surface causing condensation.*

We have concerns that there were no extract fans in the humidity areas such as the kitchen, the family shower room and the en suite room that may not be able to cope with the condensation. This is why we would recommend that extract fans are added in these areas although you may wish to live in the property first to establish if you feel this is appropriate with the way you use the property.

At the time of the survey we could see no obvious signs of condensation, however, it depends upon how you utilise the building. You do not appear to have any outside areas for drying clothes, in the winter months this can be a problem and you need to check and ensure that the property stays ventilated and avoid any condensation occurring. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating and ventilation of properties. Often opening windows to air the building, particularly first thing in the morning, resolves most condensation issues.

Finally, effective testing was prevented in areas concealed by heavy furniture, fixtures such as kitchen fittings with backboards, wall tiles and wall panelling. We have not carried out tests to BRE Digest 245, but only carried out a visual inspection.

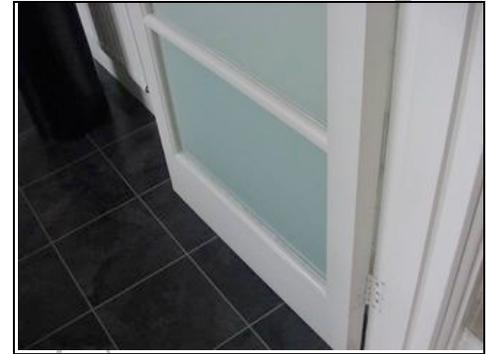
## INTERNAL JOINERY



*This section looks at the doors, the stairway, the skirting boards and the kitchen to give a general overview of the internal joinery's condition.*

### Doors

The property has a glazed panel doors internally. From a safety point of view and current Building Regulations (who monitor minimum standards on new properties) requires that a toughened glass be used to prevent any problems. In this instance we could not see a kite mark.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary Glass door without safety glass

### Staircase

We were not able to view all of the staircase but would we could see it was lined however please note that we have not opened up the floors.

### Kitchen

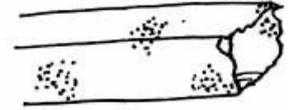
From our cursory visual inspection the kitchen looked in reasonable condition, although it has suffered from some general day-to-day marks. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.



Kitchen

Finally, it should be noted that not all joinery has been inspected. We have viewed a random sample and visually inspected these to give a general over-view of the condition. Please also see the External Fascias and Soffits and Windows and Doors Section.

## TIMBER DEFECTS



*This section considers dry rot, wet rot and woodworm. Wet and Dry rot are species of fungi, both need moisture to develop and both can be very expensive to correct. We would also add that in our experience they are also often wrongly diagnosed.*

### Dry Rot

*Dry rot is also sometimes known by its Latin name *Serpula lacrymans*. Dry rot requires constant dampness together with a warmish atmosphere and can lead to extensive decay in timber.*

In the areas inspected no evidence was seen of any significant dry rot

### Wet Rot

*Wet rot, also known by its Latin name *Contiophora puteana*, is far more common than dry rot. Wet rot darkens and softens the wood and is most commonly seen in window and doorframes, where it can relatively easily be remedied. Where wet rot affects the structural timbers in a property, which are those in the roof and the floor areas, it is more serious.*

In the areas inspected there was no evidence was found of any wet rot, however in this age of property we would expect it to have embedded timbers to the floor joists and we would expect some wet rot to be in it, please note that we have not opened up the floors.

### Woodworm



*Active woodworm can cause significant damage to timber. There are a variety of woodworm that cause different levels of damage with probably the worst of the most well known being the Death Watch Beetle. Many older properties have woodworm that is no longer active; this can often be considered as part of the overall character of the property.*

The main area that we look for woodworm is in the roof, in this case we have not been able to inspect it therefore our comments are limited to timbers we can see in the apartment which is very limited and we would comment that we cannot see any woodworm within this timber but we have seen less than 5% of the timber that we would normally view.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you gain access to the roof space we would be more than happy to return and inspect the roof and comment upon this.

Finally, when you move into the property, floor surfaces should be carefully examined for any signs of insect infestation when furniture and floor coverings are removed together with stored goods. Any signs that are found should be treated to prevent it spreading. However, you need to be aware that many damp and woodworm treatment companies have a vested interest in selling their products and therefore have fairly cleverly worded quotations where they do not state if the woodworm they have found is 'active'. You should ask them specifically if the woodworm is active or not.

We would also comment that any work carried out should have an insurance backed guarantee to ensure that if the company does not exist, or for whatever reason, the guarantee is still valid. More importantly it is essential to ensure that any work carried out is carried out correctly.

## INTERNAL DECORATIONS



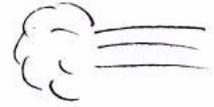
*With paints it should be remembered that up to 1992 lead could be used within paint and prior to this most textured paint (commonly known as Artex) contained an element of asbestos up to 1984, so care should be taken if the paintwork looks old and dated.*

The decoration is average, with minor marks as you would expect in a home that's been lived in.

As you advised you intend to refurbish the entire property we will not comment any further with regard to the internal decoration.

Finally, we would draw your attention to the fact that removal of existing decorative finishes may cause damage to the underlying plasterwork necessitating repairs and making good prior to redecoration.

## **THERMAL EFFICIENCY**



*Up until the mid 1940s we did not really consider insulation in properties, for example it was only in the 1960s that we started putting insulation in the roof and then it was about 50mm, in the 1970s this was upgraded to 100mm. Then we started to think about double glazing and cavity wall insulation. Since then insulation standards have increased considerably and today we are looking at typically using insulation not only in the roof but also in the walls, floors and windows and more recently considerable work has been carried out on how efficient boilers are within properties. Care has to be taken that properties are not insulated disproportionately to the ventilation as this can cause condensation and you should be aware that you need to ventilate any property that is insulated.*

### **HIPs (Home Information Packs) Report**

We understand that HIPs were suspended from 20th May 2010. Energy Performance Certificates are required before a sale completes

### **Roof Insulation**

Unfortunately we cannot access the roof space/ loft

### **Walls**

The walls are solid and therefore they have limited thermal efficiency.

### **Windows**

The windows are sliding sash and therefore can be draughty particularly if you are used to living with double glazing, service records should be obtained.

### **Services**

Service records should be obtained. It is essential for the services to be regularly maintained to run efficiently.

### **Summary**

With regard to the property we would be concerned that you may find it cold and from what we could particularly see it is average and we would add that you are effectively insulated by the apartment below you and the apartment above you.

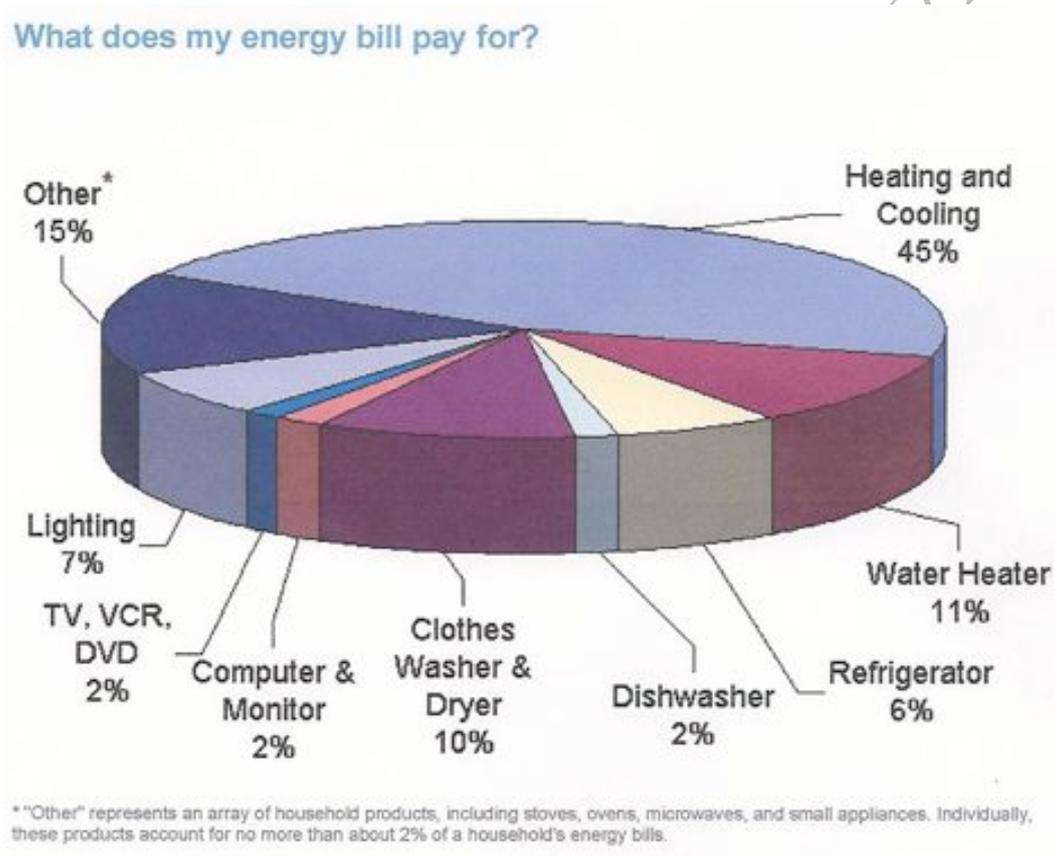
Further information can be obtained with regard to energy saving via the Internet on the following pages:

*HTTP//www.est.org.uk, which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid*

*or alternatively www.cat.org.uk*

*or www.ecocentre.org.uk for an alternative technological view.*

Finally, we would advise that an energy rating is required for future house sales.



## OTHER MATTERS



*In this section we put any other matters that do not fit under our usual headings.*

### Security System

We believe that you need to improve this for example please see our comments with regard to the video entry system in the Executive Summary.

### Fire / Smoke Alarms

We recommend that interlink radio optical smoke/heat detectors are installed. If one alarm detects a fire, all alarms go off. We would recommend the mains powered units are used (near forget to change batteries again!) Please contact us if you require help with stockists or do an internet search using "Interlinked radio smoke/heat alarms"

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We consider this essential, please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

### Insurance

As this property is shared freehold we assume you have to pay your building insurance via the Management Company or Building Owner. Typically they will arrange for insurance and recharge it to you at a percentage of the cost. You should ensure that they have suitably insured the property.

### Asbestos

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. This was commonly used post war until it was banned only in the last ten or so years, although it is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time. We are not asbestos surveyors.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to confirm you are 100 percent free of asbestos you need to have an asbestos survey carried out.

## **SERVICES**

This survey does not include any specialist reports on the electricity supply and circuits, heating or drainage, as they were not requested. The comments that follow are based upon a visual inspection carried out as part of the overall Building Survey.

Services and specialist installations have been visually inspected. It is impossible to examine every detail of these installations without partially dismantling the structure. Tests have not been applied. Conclusive tests can only be undertaken by suitably qualified contractors. The vendor/seller should be requested to provide copies of any service records, test certificates and, ideally, the names and addresses of the installing contractors.

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# ELECTRICITY



*It is strange to think that electricity only started to be used in domestic properties at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with gas lighting still being the norm for a good many years after.*

Periodic inspections and testing of electrical installations is important to protect your property from damage and to ensure the safety of the occupants. Guidance published by the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) recommends that inspections and testing are undertaken at least every 10 years (we recommend every five years) and on change of occupancy. All electrical installation works undertaken after 1st January 2005 should be identified by an Electrical Installation Certificate.

## Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the hallway just outside the shower room. We would date the fuse board as being from the 1980s and, whilst not the best now available, it is reasonable.



Fuse board

## Earth Test

We carried out an earth test in the kitchen area to the socket point that is normally used for the kettle and this proved satisfactory.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would add that you do need to obtain a copy of the last electrical inspection the property has had as a whole. If there is no record of an electrical test having been undertaken within the last five years, it is recommended that the installation be tested by a competent electrician (NICEIC registered) and all recommendations implemented. Thereafter, the installation should be re-tested every five years.



Earth Test

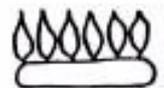
Also note that Building Regulations require certain electrical work to be

certified by an approved contractor. Please see the appendices at the end of this survey for further details.

In addition to this your Legal Advisor is required to make full enquires with the owners to establish if any electrical installation work has been carried out and to provide suitable certification for any works carried out after 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005. Any comments made within this report or verbally do not change this requirement.

For basic general information on this matter please see the appendices at the end of this report.

## GAS



*There is very little we can check for in a gas installation, we do inspect to make sure there is one and that it has a consumer unit and that the boilers are vented. Ideally you should have a service inspection carried out by a Gas Safe registered heating engineer.*

We are advised the gas meter is located on the ground floor of the property although we did not actually see it.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As a matter of course it is recommended that the entire gas installation is inspected and repaired or replaced, as necessary, by a GAS SAFE registered contractor. Thereafter the installation should be serviced annually.

All gas appliances, pipework and flues should be the subject of an annual service by a Gas Safe registered heating engineer; works to any gas appliance by an unregistered person is illegal. Unless evidence can be provided to confirm that there has been annual servicing we would recommend that you commission such a service prior to use to ensure safe and efficient operation.



## **PLUMBING AND HEATING**

*In this section we do our best from a visual inspection to look at how the water is supplied to the property, how the supply is distributed around the property, how it is used to heat the property and how it is discharged from the property.*

### **Water Supply**

Assumed are mains.

### **Water Pressure**

When the taps were run to carry out the drainage tests we checked the pressure, literally by putting a finger over a tap, and the pressure seemed typical of what we find. Some taps were not working at the time of the inspection.

The Water Board have to guarantee a certain pressure of water to ensure that things like boilers, particularly the instantaneous ones, have a constant supply of pressured water (they would blow up if they didn't!).

We have not used a listening stick to check for water leaks

### **Cold Water Cistern**

We have not found a water tank. We can only assume that the water is directly fed to the taps. The original idea behind a water tank was to help water pressure and to give an emergency supply of water.

### **Plumbing**

The plumbing, where visible, comprises copper pipework. No significant leakage was noted on the surface, although most of the pipework is concealed in ducts and floors.

### **Heating**

The boiler was located in the kitchen, our limited inspection of the hot water and central heating system revealed no evidence to suggest any serious defects, however we would recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed

with an approved heating engineer.

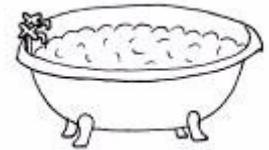
### **Ten Minute Heating Test**

The heating was switched on and we were able to feel the radiators warm up in the rear bedroom but you do need to appreciate we are not able to access most of the radiators due to the radiator covers. Please see our comments with regard to improving the heating in the property.

Finally, it should be noted that the supply pipe from the Water Company stopcock to the internal stop tap is the responsibility of the property owner.

We cannot comment on the condition of the water service pipe to the building. It should be appreciated that leaks can occur for some time before signs are apparent on the surface.

## **BATHROOM**



*In this section we consider the overall condition of the sanitary fittings such as the bathroom, the kitchen, the utility room and the cloakroom.*

### **Shower room**

There is a shower room to the front of the property which the owners advised has been modernised during our question and answer session.

### **En Suite**

There is an en suite to the rear right hand master bedroom which has a three piece bathroom suite, which looks in good condition and consists of a WC, basin and bath. Again we were advised that this been upgraded while the current owners have been in the property.

Finally, although we may have already mentioned it above we would reiterate that it is important to ensure that seals are properly made and maintained at the junctions between wall surfaces and baths and showers etc. We normally recommend that it is one of the first jobs that you carry out as part of your DIY on the property, as water getting behind sanitary fittings can lead to unseen deterioration that can be costly, inconvenient and difficult to repair.



## **MAIN DRAINS**

*The sanitary system, as we know it now, came into being some 100 years ago during the Victorian era and works so successfully today it is often taken for granted. It is only in recent years that re-investment has taken place to upgrade the original drainage systems.*

It is assumed that the property has mains drainage and that the foul drains discharge into a public sewer; this should be confirmed by your Legal Advisor prior to exchange of contracts, who should also provide information in respect of any common or shared drains including liability for the maintenance and upkeep of the same.

The cold taps have been run for approximately quarter of an hour in the bathroom and kitchen. No build up or back up was noted.

### **Inspection Chambers / Manholes**

*For your information, inspection chambers / manholes are required to be provided in the current Building Regulations at each change of direction or where drainage runs join the main run.*

We have not found any man holes/ inspection chambers or rodding eyes, this is unusual.

With a multi-occupied property it is very difficult to establish which inspection chambers / manholes relate to which property. We can carry out a die test, however, in this instance we have run the taps for quarter of an hour plus, as noted above, with no build up or back up, so we did not feel that it was required.

Finally, it must be emphasised that the condition of the property's foul drains can only be ascertained by the carrying out of a test; such a test has not been undertaken. Should there be leaks in the vicinity of the building then problems could occur, particularly with respect to the stability of the building's foundations. Drainage repairs are inevitably costly and may result in damage being caused to those areas of the property beneath, or adjacent to, which the drains have been run.

### **Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage**

*Whilst very innocent looking rainwater downpipes can cause lots of problems. If they discharge directly onto the ground they can affect the foundations and even if they are taken away to soak-aways they can attract nearby tree roots or again affect foundations.*

*Some rainwater drains are taken into the main drainage system, which is now illegal (as we simply do not have the capacity to cope with it), and can cause blockages to the main drains! Here we have done our best from a visual inspection to advise of any particular problems.*

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal, in this age of property it is likely to be shared drains which means the rainwater and the foul water go through the same drainage system. This does mean that there can be problems during the 9 o'clock rush and during heavy rainfall.

Finally, rain/surface water drains have not been tested and their condition or effectiveness is not known. Similarly, the adequacy of soak-aways has not been established although you are advised that they tend to silt up and become less effective with time.

Please also see our comments within the Gutters and Downpipes section.

## OUTSIDE AREAS

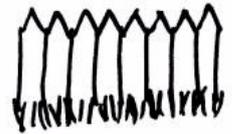
### PARKING



Parking is on roadside on a first come first served basis with permit control and there was parking available at the time of the survey.



### EXTERNAL AREAS



#### Front Garden

There is a front area with a shared access, you need to check and ensure you have a point of access to this and that you have some room for bin storage etc.

#### Rear Garden

Advised by present occupier that there is no access to rear garden

Finally, whilst we note the boundaries, these may not be the legal boundaries. Your Legal Advisor should make further enquiries on this point and advise you of your potential liability with regard to any shared structures, boundary walls and fences.

#### Neighbours

##### Neighbour above

We knocked on the door and no one was in.

**Neighbour below**

We knocked on the door and no one was in.

**Other Neighbours**

At the adjoining house we spoke to the owner who allowed us to access their roof to view the property and were very pleasant.

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## **POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR**

If you wish to proceed with your purchase of the property a copy of this report should be forwarded to your Legal Advisor and the following points should be checked by him/her:

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:
  - i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
  - ii) Rising damp treatments.
  - iii) Roof and similar renewals.
  - iv) Central heating installation.
  - v) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
  - vi) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
- d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- e) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.
- f) Liabilities in connection with shared services.
- g) Adjoining roads and services.
- h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- i) General development proposals in the locality.
- j) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.
- k) Confirm from enquiries that no underground tunnels, wells, sewers, gases, mining, minerals, site reclamation/contamination etc., exist, have existed or

are likely to exist beneath the curtilage of the site upon which the property stands and which could affect the quiet enjoyment, safety or stability of the property, outbuildings or surrounding areas.

- l) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.
- m) Any outstanding Party Wall Notice or the knowledge that any are about to be served.
- n) Most Legal advisors will recommend an Envirosearch or a similar product is used by you to establish whether the area falls within a flood plain, old landfill site, radon area etc. If your Legal Advisor is not aware of Envirosearch or similar please ensure that they contact us and we will advise them of it. Any general findings should be brought to their logical conclusion by using appropriate specialist advisers.

However, with regard to Envirosearch or similar general reports please see our article link on the [www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk) Home Page.

- o) Any other matters brought to your attention within this report.

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

Your Legal Advisor should carry out Local Authority searches to ascertain whether the property is a Listed Building and whether it is situated in a Conservation Area. They should also find out any information available with regard to Planning Applications and Building Control. We have not made any formal or informal Local Authority enquiries.

Finally, your Legal Advisor should carry out any additional enquiries they feel necessary and if they find anything unusual or onerous then we ask that they contact us immediately for our further comments.

West Kensington, London. W14

It is our policy not to offer a conclusion to ensure that the Building Survey is read in full and the comments are taken in context.

If you would like any further advice on any of the issues discussed (or indeed any that have not been discussed!) then please do not hesitate to contact us on **XXXX**

For and on Behalf of  
Independent Chartered Surveyors

**This Report is dated: XXXX**

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## **REFERENCES**

The repair and maintenance of houses  
*Published by Estates Gazette Limited*

Life expectancies of building components  
*Published by Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and  
Building Research Establishment*

Surveying buildings  
*By Malcolm Hollis published by Royal Institution of  
Chartered Surveyors Books.*

House Builders Bible  
*By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press*

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# APPENDICES

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## **LIMITATIONS**

Our limitations are as the agreed Terms and Conditions of Engagement.

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

The report has been prepared in accordance with our Conditions of Engagement dated XXXX and should be regarded as a comment on the overall condition of the property and the quality of its structure and not as an inventory of every single defect. It relates to those parts of the property that were reasonably and safely accessible at the time of the inspection, but you should be aware that defects can subsequently develop particularly if you do not follow the recommendations.

## **ENGLISH LAW**

We would remind you that this report should not be published or reproduced in any way without the surveyor's expressed permission and is governed by English Law and any dispute arising there from shall be adjudicated upon only by the English Courts.

## **SOLE USE**

This report is for the sole use of the named Client and is confidential to the Client and his professional advisors. Any other persons rely on the Report at their own risk.

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

Although we are pointing out the obvious, our Surveyors obviously can't see through walls, floors, heavy furniture, fixed kitchen units etc. they have therefore made their best assumptions in these areas.

As this is a one off inspection, we cannot guarantee that there are no other defects than those mentioned in the report and also that defects can subsequently develop.

## WEATHER

It was dry and sunny at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

Our weather seems to be moving towards the extremities from relatively mid range. A few interesting facts in Britain over the years have been:

2000	Wettest year on record at the time
2003	Driest year on record at the time
2004	Wettest August on record at the time
2004	Boscastle was the worst flash flood on record at the time
2005	Third driest year on record at the time
2006	Warmest year recorded on record at the time
July 2006	Hottest July on record at the time
2006	Hottest autumn on record at the time
2007	Warmest spring on record at the time
2007	Wettest June on record at the time
April '06-April '07	Hottest 12 months on record at the time
2008	
2009	Third wettest August since 1956
2010	Heaviest snowfall in March since 1991
	Britain faces one of the coldest winters for 100 years

References                      BBC News [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

This may have adverse effects on lots of buildings in years to come.

## NOT LOCAL

It should be noted that we are not local surveyors to this area and are carrying out the work without the benefits of local knowledge on such things as soil conditions, aeroplane flight paths, and common defects in materials used in the area etc.

## OCCUPIED PROPERTY

The property was occupied at the time of our survey, which meant that there were various difficulties when carrying out the survey such as stored items within cupboards, the loft space and obviously day-to-day household goods

throughout the property. We have, however, done our best to work around these.

## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited due to no having had the benefit of being able to open up the floors and we have not had access to the flat below and the flat above to check on things such as any noise transfer to them and if they have any concerns. We have also not had the benefit of seeing a Planned Maintenance Schedule to see what future work is planned and accessing the roof space.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Our computer system sends two copies of our Terms and Conditions to the email address given to us when booking the survey; one has the terms attached and the other has links to the Terms and Conditions on our website (for a limited time). If you have not received these please phone your contact immediately.

## **General Information on Living in Leased/Shared Freehold Properties**

### **Living in Multi Occupied Properties**

- As a leasehold/shared freehold flat owner, you usually own and are responsible for the maintenance of everything within its four walls, including floorboards and plasterwork, but not usually the external or structural walls.

The landlord, who can be a person, a company, a local authority or a housing association, owns the structure and common parts of the building and the land it stands on and is responsible for its maintenance.

According to independent advice agency the Leasehold Advisory Service (Lease), it's now becoming quite common for the leaseholders/shared freeholders to own the freehold of the building through a residents' management company, effectively becoming their own landlord.

- A lease/shared freeholder agreement is a contract between the leaseholder/shared freeholder and the landlord, giving conditional ownership for a fixed period of time. It is the key to all the responsibilities and obligations of both the leaseholder/shared freeholder and the landlord and should spell out what you can expect from the landlord in terms of services.

No two leases/shared freehold agreements are the same, so it is essential you read yours carefully to find out exactly what your rights and responsibilities are. Get advice if unsure about any legal language.

- Your contractual rights laid out in the lease/shared freehold agreement normally entitle you to expect the landlord to maintain and repair the building and manage the common parts such as grounds, staircases and hallways.

At the same time, you will be required to keep the inside of the flat in good order, to behave in a neighbourly manner, to pay a share of the costs of maintaining and running the building and not to do certain things, such as sub-let, without the land-lord's consent.

- Because leasehold/shared freehold is a tenancy, it is subject to the payment of a rent – which may be nominal. Ground rent is a specific requirement of the lease/shared freehold and must be paid on the due date.

- Service charges are payable by the leaseholder/shared freeholder to the landlord for all the services they provide, including maintenance and repairs, insurance of the building and, in some cases, provision of central heating, lifts, lighting and cleaning of common areas etc. Service charges usually also include the costs of management, either by the landlord or by a professional managing agent.

Details of what can and cannot be charged by the landlord and the proportion of the charge to be paid by the individual leaseholder/shared freeholder are all set out in the lease/shared freehold agreement. So do read it very carefully.

All maintenance costs are met by the leaseholders/shared freeholders and landlords normally make no financial contribution. Service charges can vary from year to year and can go up and down with no limit other than that they are “reasonable”.

Most modern leases/shared freehold agreements allow for the landlord to collect service charges in advance, repaying any surplus or collecting any shortfall at the end of the year.

- The lease/shared freehold agreement normally obliges the landlord to take out insurance for the building and common parts and gives them the right to recover the cost of the premium through service charges. The policy doesn't usually cover the possessions of individual leaseholders/shared freeholders.
- Many leases/shared freehold agreements provide for the landlord to collect sums in advance to create a reserve fund, ensuring that enough money is available for future scheduled major works such as external decoration. The lease/shared freehold agreement will set out the sums involved and when regular maintenance works are due.
- Leaseholders/shared freeholders have powerful rights to challenge service charges they feel are unreasonable at Leasehold Valuation Tribunals (LVTs), which provide a relatively informal way to resolve residential leasehold/shared freehold disputes.

Application to LVTs can be made under many different laws and on many subjects. LVTs can determine, among other things, the reasonableness of a service charge and whether it is payable and disputes relating to insurance.

Lease publishes useful leaflets, which are downloadable from its website, on LVTs.

- Some landlords carry out the management of the property themselves but many appoint a managing agent to manage and maintain the building on behalf of the landlord in accordance with the terms of lease/shared freehold agreement, current relevant legislation and codes of practice.

The agent takes instruction from the landlord, not the leaseholders/shared freeholders, but should be constantly aware of the leaseholders'/shared freeholders' wishes and requirements. The agent will receive a fee which is usually paid by leaseholders/shared freeholders as part of the service charges.

- There is no statutory regulation of managing agents. Some are members of professional organisations such as ARMA, the Association of Residential Managing Agents, tel: 010-797-2607 or go to [arma.org.uk](http://arma.org.uk), and agree to abide by its own code of practice and that of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, tel: 0870-333-1600 or visit [rics.org.uk](http://rics.org.uk).
- If there is a problem with management services, the leaseholder's/shared freeholder's argument is not with the agent but with the landlord, who has ultimate responsibility for the full and proper management of the property.

Leaseholders/shared freeholders with such complaints are advised to discuss their situation with Lease before contacting their landlord. In extreme cases where the landlord will not meet his obligations to maintain the buildings and communal areas in accordance with the lease/shared freehold agreement, it may be necessary to take action through the county court. Lease can give in-depth advice on such a course of action.

- For disgruntled leaseholders/shared freeholders who have suffered long-term bad management from landlords or who believe they could do a better job at a lower cost, there is another option.

Since September 2003, flat owners in England and Wales have been able to exercise the Right to Manage (RTM) and take over the management of their building without having to prove any fault on the part of their landlord.

RTM, part of a package of reforms stemming from the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002, empowers leaseholders/shared freeholders to take control of the running of their building without having to stump up large sums of money to buy the freehold. They also gain better control over insurance costs and the level at which service charges are set.

Exercising this right is a relatively simple process. A formal notice is served on the landlord by an RTM company which has been set up by a sufficient number of qualifying tenants – leaseholders/shared freeholders whose lease/shared freehold agreement was originally granted for a term of more than 21 years. For details, see the Lease website.

But don't think of RTM as easy DIY management and a way of getting rid of all managing costs. Managing a building involves running a complex business and complying with a raft of legislation and there will always be managing costs. Lease advises leaseholders/shared freeholders exercising this right to appoint a professional to manage their block.

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## **THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS**

Here is our quick guide to the Regulations, but please take further advice from a qualified and experienced electrician.

From 1st January 2005, people carrying out electrical work in homes and gardens in England and Wales must follow new rules in the building regulations. All significant electrical work carried out in the home will have to be undertaken by a registered installer or be approved and certified by the local authority's building control department. Failure to do so will be a legal offence and could result in a fine. Non-certified work could also put your household insurance policy at risk.

If you can't provide evidence that any electrical installation work complies with the new regulations, you could have problems when it comes to selling the property.

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

1. A certificate showing the work has been done by a Government-approved electrical installer - British Gas or NICEIC Electrical Contractor.
2. A certificate from the local authority saying that the installation has approval under the building regulations.

Homeowners will still be able to do some minor electrical jobs themselves. To help you, we've put together this brief list of dos and don'ts.

### **Work You Cannot do Yourself**

- Complete new or rewiring jobs.
- Fuse box changes.
- Adding lighting points to an existing circuit in a 'special location' like the kitchen, bathroom or garden.
- Installing electrical earth connections to pipework and metalwork.
- Adding a new circuit.

## INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

We used to include within our reports articles on the property market that we thought would be of interest and informative to you, however we were concerned that in some cases these did not offer the latest information. We have therefore decided to recommend various websites to you, however it is important to realise the vested interest the parties may have and the limits to the information.

[www.landreg.org.uk](http://www.landreg.org.uk)

This records the ownership of interests in registered land in England and Wales and issues a residential property price report quarterly, which is free of charge. The Land Registry is a Government body and records all transactions as far as we are aware, although critics of it would argue that the information is often many months out of date.

[www.rics.org.uk](http://www.rics.org.uk)

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors offer quarterly reports via their members. Although this has been criticised as being subjective and also limited, historically their predictions have been found to be reasonably accurate.

[www.halifax.co.uk](http://www.halifax.co.uk) and [www.nationwide.co.uk](http://www.nationwide.co.uk)

Surveys have been carried out by these two companies, one now a bank and the other a building society for many years. Information from these surveys is often carried in the national press. It should be remembered that the surveys only relate to mortgaged properties, of which it is generally considered represents only 75% of the market. It should also be remembered that the national coverage of the two companies differs and that they may be offering various incentives on different mortgages, which may taint the quality of information offered. That said they do try to adjust for this, the success or otherwise of this is hard to establish.

[www.hometrack.co.uk](http://www.hometrack.co.uk)

From what we can see this is an internet based company who say they offer independent property research (in fact they say they are the only independent company), although they also advise that they are part of a property related group that has bought and sold over 60 million pounds worth of residential property, which indicates that they may have a vested interest. They do also comment that they have carried out their own independent surveys and they have at least two Hometrack recommended estate agents in each postcode area. We would refer you to the 'About us' section within their website to understand better where their information is coming from. We would comment that we have been pleasantly surprised with the quality of information provided by the company.

[Motleyfool.co.uk](http://Motleyfool.co.uk)

We also like the Motley Fool website which is a general financial site and although it is selling financial services and other services they do tend to give a very readable view of the housing market.

<http://www.nethouseprices.com/>

This website offers information on land registry recorded property sales, by postcode or address.

[www.globrix.com](http://www.globrix.com)

This is a very good website for seeing the prices of properties for sale in a certain postcode area.