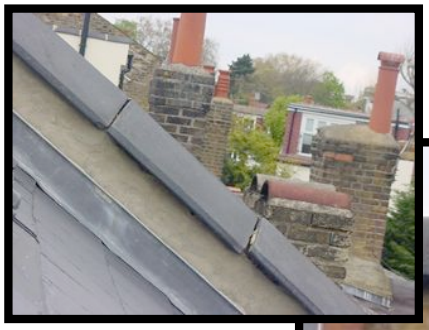
JOB REFERENCE: XXXXXXXXX

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

XXXXX
Ealing
London
W5 XXX



FOR

Mr X

Prepared by:
XXXX
INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Marketing by:
www.1stAssociated.co.uk
XXXX

CONTENTS

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 terraced house (a Halls adjoining) period property set in an established residential area. The property has been altered, extended and amended over the years and has a small garden to the front and a smallish garden to the rear.

Parking is at roadside on a first come first served permit basis on this tree lined road.

We believe that the property was built in the late Victorian era. If the 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:

1859	Charles Darwin proposes the Theory of Evolution
1870	British Red Cross Established Commencement of 1st Test Cricket England v Australia at the oval.
1880	Colchester earthquake four die in the UK's most destructive earthquake.
1884	The longest bridge in Britain, the Forth Bridge is opened
1890	
1899-1902	Boer War between Britain and Boers in Southern Africa
1901	Queen Victoria Died
1903	First flight by Wright Brothers
1904	Boer War ends
1907	Einstein proposed his Theory of Relativity
1909	Picasso introduced Cubism

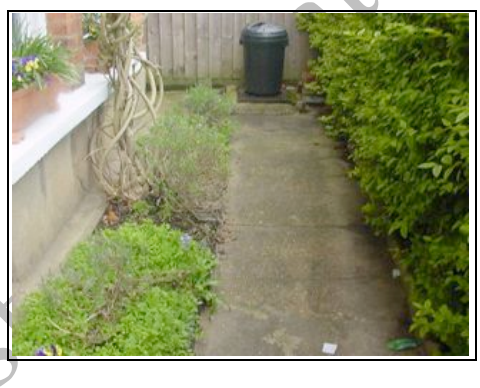
EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Front Elevation

Rear View

Street View

Right hand view



Front garden

Rear garden

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

(All directions given as you face the front of the property)

Basement

There is a basement area which is very small and accessed from the hallway on the ground floor to the rear.

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

1) Entrance Hallway

2) Reception Room (front)

3) Utilities Room with WC (internal)

4) Study (middle right hand side)

5) Kitchen/Dining Room

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

6) Master Bedroom (front)

7) Bedroom Two (middle)

8) Bedroom Three (rear left hand side)

9) Bedroom Four (small, rear right hand side)

10) Bathroom

Outside Areas

There are small gardens to the front and rear and parking is at roadside on a permit first come first served basis.

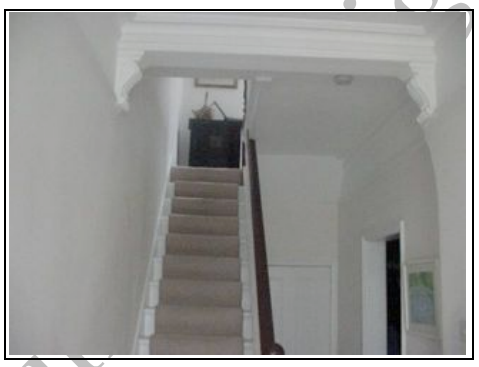
Finally, all these details need to be checked and confirmed by your Legal Advisor.

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.

Ground Floor

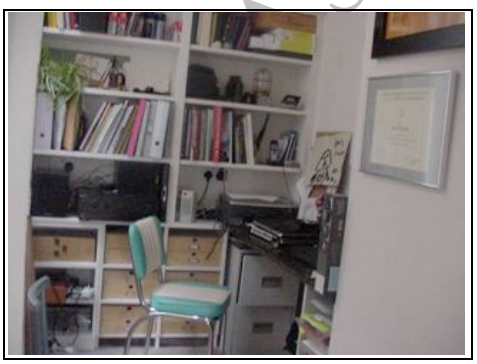
Reception Room



Entrance Hallway

Kitchen/Dining room

Kitchen/Dining Room

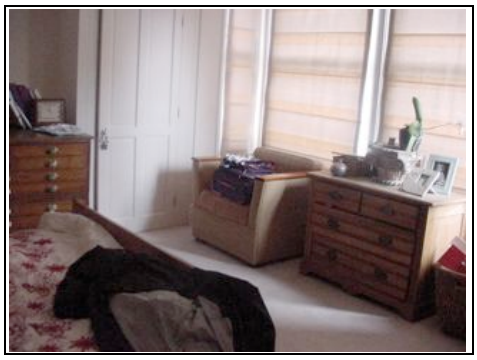


Study

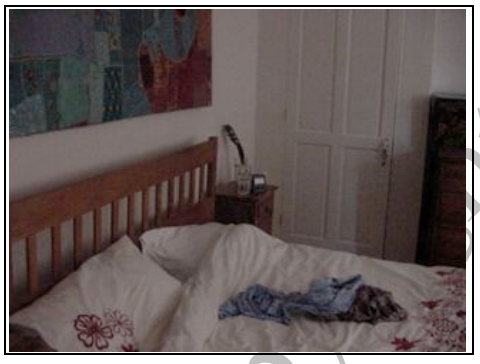
Utilities Room

WC

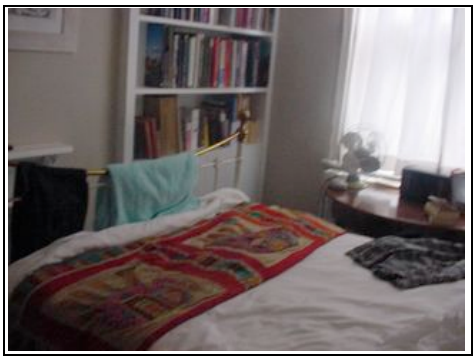
First Floor



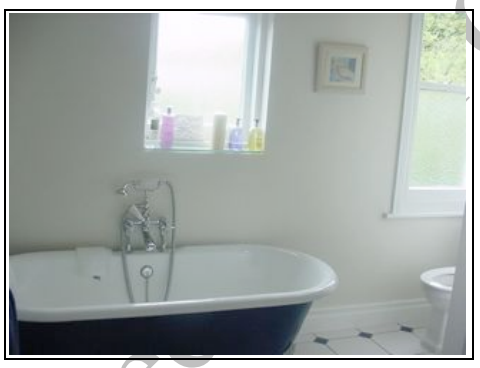
Master Bedroom



Master Bedroom

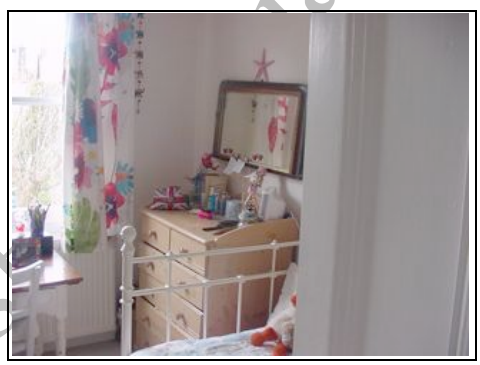


Middle Bedroom

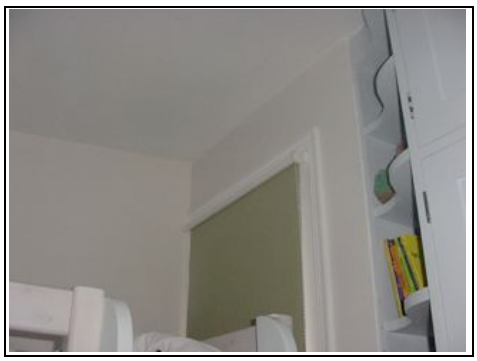


Bathroom

Shower



Rear Right Hand Side Bedroom



Rear Left Hand Side Bedroom

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Chimneys:	Three brick chimneys
Main Roof:	Pitched, clad with manmade slate
Main Roof Structure:	Cut timber roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	Mixture of Cast Iron and Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Flemish Bond brickwork re-pointed with cement mortar (assumed)
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Timber sliding sash windows, single glazed Sliding, folding door to the rear

Internal

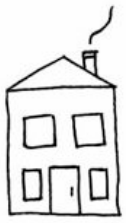
Ceilings:	Lath and plaster and plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Mixture of solid and studwork (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Suspended floor (assumed)
First Floor:	Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)

Services

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (all assumed). There is a Worcester wall mounted boiler located in the utilities room and the electrics are located under the stairs.

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 not ideal 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 250 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.

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!

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

2.0) The property has benefited from some modern upgrades to the kitchen and bathroom, you may or may not like these.

3.0) The property has good natural light due to the large double bay windows.

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

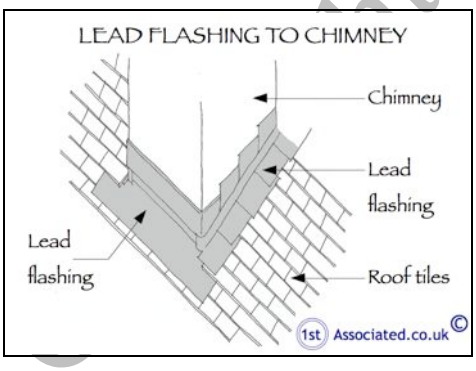
We are sure you can think of other things to add to this list.

The Bad

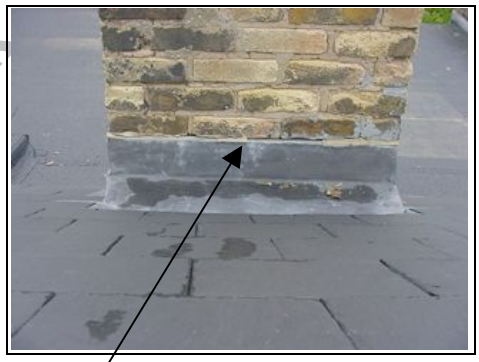
Problems / issues raised in the 'bad' section are usually solvable, but often need negotiation upon. However, a large number of them may sometimes put us off the property.

1.0) Middle Chimney

The property has three chimneys all of which were difficult to view with the exception of the middle chimney that we could view from the loft roof window. We could see that the flashings had duly come away due to it being incorrectly bedded into the brickwork.



We find poor quality lead work to be more and more common where most modern builders do not have the level of skill required to carry out lead work correctly.



Joint failing to middle chimney

Flashings Defined

Flashings prevent dampness from entering the property, usually at junctions where materials change. Such a junction is the one between the chimney and the roof.

Close up of joint

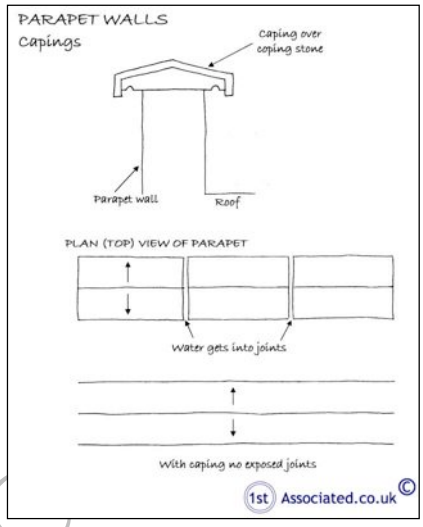
ACTION REQUIRED: Check all of the lead work to all chimneys and parapet walls and re-bed as necessary. If this is not carried out dampness will get into the property.

ANTICIPATED COST: Assuming access to your property can be gained from the flat roof rather than scaffolding we expect the costs to be in the hundreds of pounds rather than thousands of pounds if scaffolding is required; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Chimney Section of this Report.

2.0) Parapet wall problem

The parapet wall has coping stones which have not been bedded correctly and the walls require work.



Slipped coping stone to left hand side parapet wall

ACTION REQUIRED: Re-bed coping stones and check parapet walls are watertight.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £1000 to £2000, again assuming that the work can be carried out without scaffolding ; please obtain quotations.

The grey coping stones are literally just sitting on the roof

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

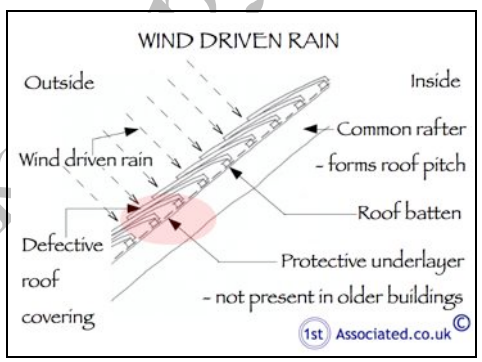
3.0) Slates to main roof

The roof is finished with a manmade slate which undulates far more than we typically see. Manmade slates normally sit very flat and it is almost as if the roof has been a DIY project.

Slates to main roof undulate

Our concern is that the slates will be lifted by the wind.

The difficulty we had was that we had a limited view of the roof internally due to the loft conversion which hides much of what we would normally be able to view.



ACTION REQUIRED: You need to monitor the roof carefully.

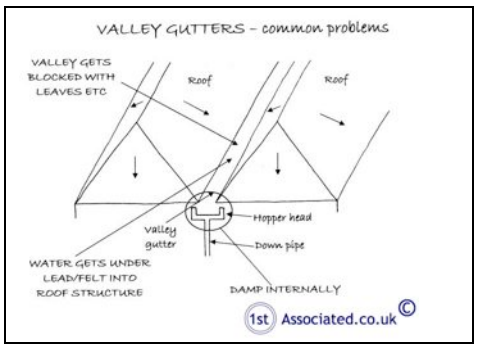
3.1) Roof slate loose

There is a roof tile which is loose at the front of the property and will allow wind driven rain to get into the property if not secured.

Manmade slate coming off the main roof in the valley gutter

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor to confirm that the roof has Local Authority Approvals and if possible the existing owners to provide receipts/guarantees for the roof work.

Investigate where the slipped slate has come from. Secure roof slate.



Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

4.0) Rear Flat Roof

To the rear of the property there is a large flat roof which we could see had next to no fall present, a minimum of 15° is required.

Flat roof, next door looks to have had problems with it

We were pleased to see that the rear roof had a modern mineral felt. It is likely to be a third of the way through its natural life and as flat roofs are problematic we would recommend that you reinstate the roof light which is currently felted over.

ACTION REQUIRED: Alter the roof light so that it is also an access to the roof.

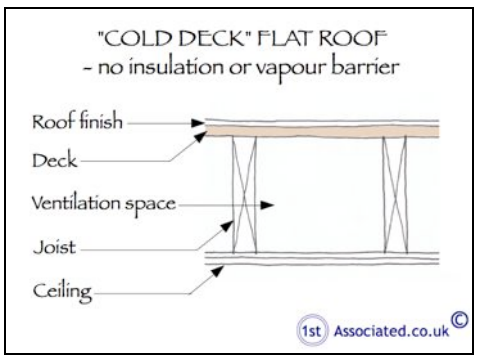
Your Legal Advisor to check and confirm if there are guarantees in relation to the flat roof.

Roof Light partly felted over

Roof Light partly felted over viewed inside the property

4.2) Insulation and ventilation of flat roof

We have no way of knowing if there is insulation or whether the flat roof is vented which are both a modern day requirements and common sense.

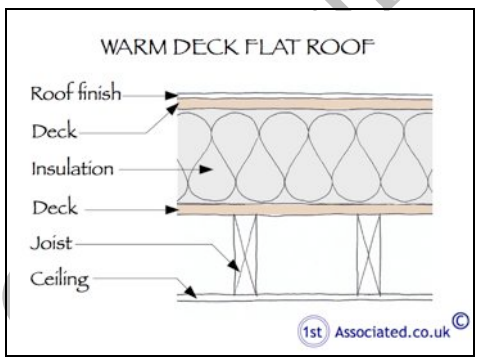


Insulation to the flat roof would make the rooms to the rear warm and the ventilation would reduce any condensation taking place to this area. Typically with flat roof conversions the rooms beneath can get heat gain during the summer and heat loss during the winter.

Please note we did not go out onto the roof as our ladders were too short and also it had been raining during the course of our survey.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please check with the existing owners whether the roof is insulated or ventilated.

ANTICIPATED COST: Depending upon the above comments the adding of insulation could cost in the region of £2000 to £4000 where the insulation is installed on top of the roof; please obtain quotations.



Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

5.0) Cast Iron Gutters and Downpipes

The property has a mixture of original cast iron and modern replacement plastic gutters and downpipes with some of the original remaining cast iron gutters and downpipes being bandaged together at the front of the property which is not ideal.

Bandaged cast iron gutter

Unusual cast iron downpipe on the front roof with extra branch on the downpipe

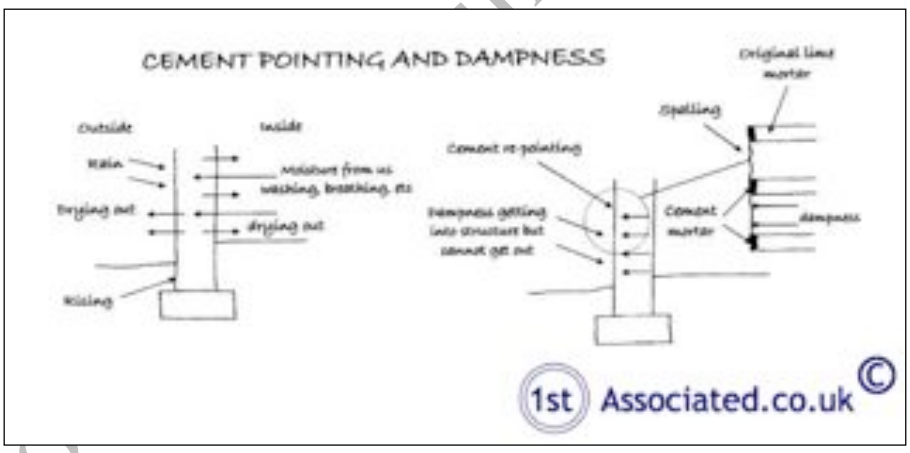
ACTION REQUIRED: Repairs to cast iron gutters and downpipes i.e. remove the bandage and either replace or repair. Cast iron of this age often requires a bitumen lining.

ANTICIPATED COST: £1000 to £2000 to carry out proper repairs; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Gutters and Downpipes Section of this Report.

6.0) Re-point correctly in a lime mortar – lime every time

The property has Flemish Bond brickwork which has been incorrectly re-pointed using a cement mortar as opposed to a lime based mortar. Cement mortar smothers the building not allowing it to breathe whereas traditional lime mortar used on properties of this age, type and style allow the property to breathe.



Cement re-pointing

Deterioration to brickwork incorrectly re-pointed in cement mortar

Pointing Defined

Pointing is the mortar between the bricks.

Re-Pointing Defined

Re-pointing is carried out where the existing mortar has failed and broken away to stop damp penetration and further deterioration. The mortar should be raked out to approximately 20mm and then replaced with a mortar of a similar type, therefore, stopping damp occurring.

We cannot comment on brickwork to the right hand side of the property (all directions given as you face the property) as we did not have access to this area.

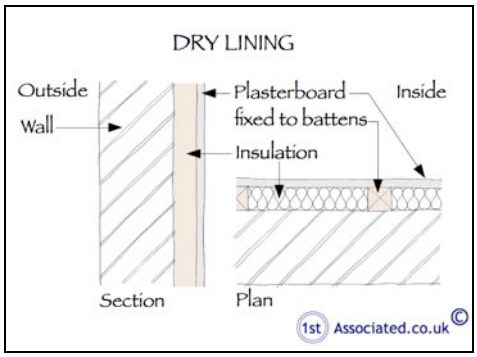
ACTION REQUIRED: Gradual re-pointing in a lime mortar, the good thing about cement mortar is that it falls off on its own, particularly when helped with a soft brush. We would recommend yearly visits by an experiences, time served bricklayer who knows how to work in lime mortar which will gradually allow the building to breathe and reduce the dampness within the building.

ANTICIPATED COST: A few hundred pounds per year for many years to come. We anticipate the work in total to cost in the region of £4000 to £6000; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

7.0) Rear Kitchen Wall is Dry Lined

The rear Kitchen wall is dry lined which means that we were unable to carry out any damp meter readings. Typically, on this age of property, walls are dry lined as there is dampness in them.



Dry Lining Defined

This term comes from the fact that plasterboard is dry and used as an inner lining within the property. Prior to this a wet plaster was used and required drying out periods which slowed the construction process down. Therefore almost universally in modern properties dry lining is used both as a ceiling material and sometimes to internally line the walls.

Dry lining to kitchen therefore unable to take damp meter readings

ACTION REQUIRED: When dry lining a solid wall such as this you should have it vented also. Carry out investigations with the existing owners (the owners were not at home at the time of our survey).

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

8.0) Work to windows

The windows to the front of the property have suffered, particularly in the sunlight, whilst the windows that we opened did open when we carried out our knife test we found that the windows had been filled and were soft.

Knife test to front window

ACTION REQUIRED: Professional repairs are necessary.

ANTICIPATED COST: Set aside the sum of £2000 to £5000 to have professional repairs carried out to the windows including easing and adjusting; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Windows Section of this Report.

9.0) Rear sliding, folding door

There is a rear sliding, folding door which we have concerns about the adding of these types of modern doors to a property such as this as there is a considerable span which needs to be supported. As such Local Authority Approvals should have been obtained.

Sliding, folding doors to rear

Planning Permission Defined

Planning Permission looks at the aesthetics and how this is appropriate for the area with such things as additional windows at the gable end.

Building Regulations Approval Defined

Building Regulations looks at the safety and the standard of building such as the adding in of the structural steels and the windows.

Looking for cracks above sliding, folding doors to rear

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor to check and confirm if Local Authority Approvals have been obtained.

Please see the Windows and Doors Section of this Report.

10.0) Loft Conversion official or not?

Whilst the conversion has two roof lights to the rear and is boarded we do not believe that this would be classed as an official loft conversion and as such a habitable room.

Next door but one's rear extension, extending over the top of the flat roof area.

The floor of the loft, which is the ceiling of the rooms below, we believe is still the original ceiling joists i.e. they are suitable for supporting a ceiling but not suitable for acquiring Building Regulation Approval for supporting a floor loading.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend your Legal Advisor makes enquiries with the Local Authority with regard to the loft conversion to find out if any approvals have been sought.

We often find that people carry out the cheap parts of a loft conversion and the expensive areas are left for example in this case:-

10.1) putting in the floor joists
10.2) adding the headroom with dormer windows etc
10.3) staircase
10.4) Fire Regulations

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 section providing you are happy with the characteristics of the property which we have mentioned throughout the report.

Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Maintenance

It should be appreciated that defects which would normally be highlighted in a modern property, effectively form part of an older property's overall character and style. Such defects are considered acceptable and may not have been specifically referred to as defects within the context of this Report.

This type of property will require ongoing maintenance and repair and a budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in good condition. This will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration.

One thing that does help make maintenance easier is good access which is why we have recommended a roof light is added to the rear flat roof to allow access to be gained to this area.

Services

Whilst we have carried out a visual inspection of the services within the property we also need to advise you of the following:

Electrics

For the electrics We would recommend an Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE) test and report carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent, which is recommended whenever a property changes occupancy.

Heating

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.

Drainage

Whilst we have lifted the manhole covers the only true way to find out the condition of the drains is to have a closed circuit TV camera report to establish

the condition of the drains. In this age of property there have often been leaks over the years.

Water Supply

There is danger in older properties of having a lead water supply; we would recommend that you speak to the water company to ask them if they have carried out such replacement, as you will be re-piping much of the water used in the building it gives an ideal opportunity to also check for any remaining lead pipes.

ACTION REQUIRED:

> We would reiterate that we recommend with regard to all services that you have an independent check by a specialist contractor.

DIY/Handyman Type Work

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as redecorating to turn the property into your home. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

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 and estimates can of course vary from area to area when giving a general indication of costs. 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 usually be best to have work supervised 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:

We would refer you to our comments in the Executive Summary, 'Good', 'Bad' and 'Ugly' Section and ask that you re-read these.

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.

We would ask that you read the Report in full 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 – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)

We have assumed that the property is to be sold Freehold or Long leasehold, with no unusual or onerous clauses and that vacant possession will be available on completion. Your Legal Advisor should confirm that this is the case.

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

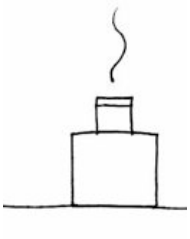
This report is being carried out under our terms of engagement for Building Surveys, as agreed to and signed by yourselves. If you have not seen or are not happy with the terms of engagement please phone immediately 0800 298 5424 or email the secretary from which this survey came from.

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

EXTERNAL



CHIMNEY STACKS, PARAPET WALLS AND ROOF WINDOWS

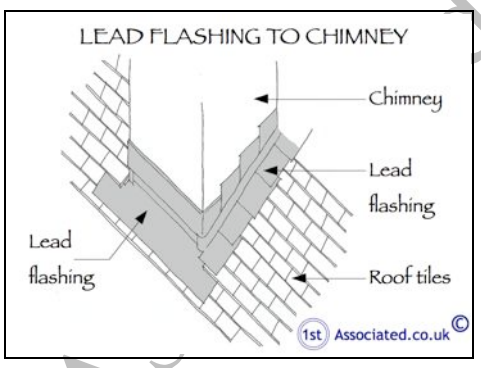
Chimney Stacks

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.

There are three chimneys to this property they are located to the left hand side, middle and right hand side and side walls sit on the Party Walls. (all directions given as you face the property).

Chimney One - middle

This chimney is the one that we have identified in the Executive Summary as having a defective flashing and as such this sort of modern builder error would be likely to be in the other two chimneys.



Chimney One requiring flashing to be correctly bedded into brickwork

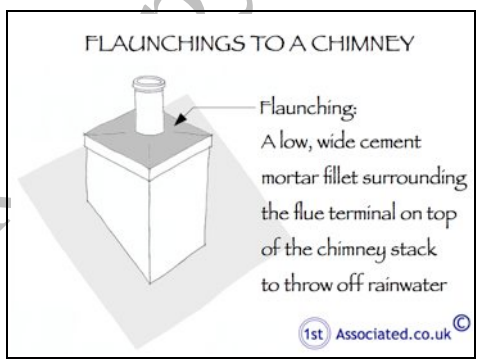
ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Chimney Two – left hand side

This chimney is brick finished with a lead flashing and numerous chimney pots. From what we could see from the roof light it looked in average condition considering its age, type and style. However we believe a close up look is necessary.

Chimney Two

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



ACTION REQUIRED: Carry out a close inspection particularly to the flashings. Re-point if necessary. Periodically inspect the chimney.

Chimney Three – front right hand side

Again, this chimney is also built with two chimney pots. We could not see the flashings and again we would recommend the flashings are inspected.

ACTION REQUIRED: Check the whole chimney and particularly look at the flashings. Periodically inspect the chimney.

Chimney Three

Flashings Defined

Flashings prevent dampness from entering the property, usually at junctions where materials change. Such a junction is the one between the chimney and the roof.

Flaunchings Defined

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

Valley Gutters

Valley gutters are generally considered to be weak areas on a roof. The valley gutter is used where a roof changes direction. In this case we believe the valley gutters could either be lead or Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) given the condition of the lead work to the chimney.

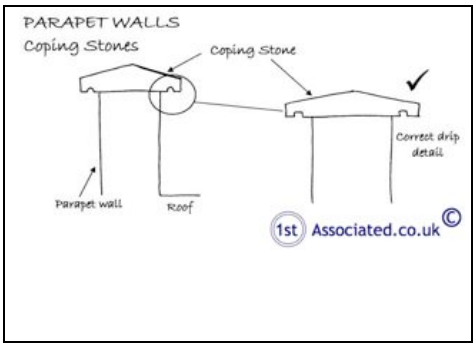
Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) valley gutter

ACTION REQUIRED: The valley gutters should be checked at high level with a roofer with long ladders. We would recommend a roofer takes photographs of any problems.

Parapet Walls

Parapet walls are usually walls that are above roof level and often sit on the boundary of the property.

In this case there are parapet walls to the main roof and also to the rear flat roof. We can see that the coping stones are coming away to the flat roof side.



ACTION REQUIRED: Re-bed parapet wall coping stone and check the parapet walls as a whole as it looks like it is relatively new work.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.


Left hand parapet wall


Slipped tile to left hand parapet wall


Right hand parapet wall


Right hand parapet wall

Finally, we were only able to see approximately forty percent of the parapet wall, therefore we have made our best assumptions based upon what we could see. A closer inspection may reveal more.

Roof Windows
(Known as roof lights or Velux windows which is the trade or generic name)

The property has three purpose made roof lights, two to the rear slope and pitch of the roof and one to the flat roof which has been partly felted over.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.


Roof light partly felted over

The roof windows within the pitched roof are in average condition with no heavy visible staining. Although we would add it seems inevitable with roof windows that they will sooner or later leak. If this doesn't occur then they seem prone to condensation. Keep a cloth handy!

Party Wall

The party wall relates to shared items, such as chimney and parapet walls. If you do any work on these you will need to deal with the Party Wall Act. Here is a brief explanation of it.

Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

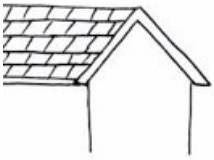
A structure that both parties enjoy the use of or benefit from. An example of this would be where both parties gain support from a wall or utilise a chimney or chimneys.

Any work to party structures, such as party walls or party chimney stacks, require agreement under the Party Wall Act. We would be more than happy to offer you help and advice in this matter.

Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the chimney stacks, parapet walls and roof windows from the parts we would see above roof level. 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 Chimney Breasts, Flues and Fireplaces Section of this Report.

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.

Dependent upon the age of your property and the type of construction it may or may not be present, please read on:

We will consider the roofs in three areas, the main roof, rear flat roof and front porch roof.

Main Roof

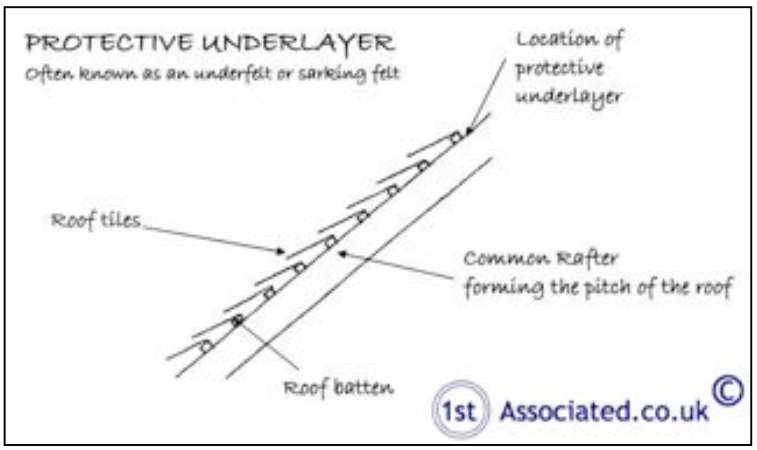
The main roof is pitched and clad with manmade slates, and, from ground level, this looks in below average condition considering the roofs age type and style. We are used to seeing a manmade slate roof that is very flat which is not what you have got in this case.

Main roof

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary with regard to further investigation.

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.



Often an older roof will have no protective underlayer at all unless it has been re-roofed post war and then it will have a Hessian base bitumen membrane. In this case we found quite unusually a modern foil protective underlayer which does indicate along with the manmade slates that this roof has been carried out fairly recently probably in the 1970s/1980s.

This photo shows the common rafters (the ones that form the pitch of the roof) and the silver area between is the protective underlayer.

Front Porch Roof

The front porch roof is clad in a manmade slate with a lead flashing detail (which we were pleased to see) and is in average condition for its age, type and style.

Front porch roof

Flat Roofs

Whilst these roofs are called "flat", present building regulations and good building practice presently requires a minimum fall of 12 degrees.

Flat roofs are formed in a variety of materials. Difficulties can arise when the water is not discharged from the roof but sits upon it, as this can soon lead to deterioration which flat roofs are renowned for.

The rear roof is a flat felt roof. Typically flat roofs have a fall of approximately15°; what we can see of the flat roof it does have a reasonable fall.

Flat roof

What we do find is that sometimes if the rear gutters are not cleared to a large flat roof such as this which also takes the rainwater from the rear pitched roof the gutters to the rear can overflow and discharge rainwater down the walls.

A detail that we could not see which is particularly important is where the flat roof and the pitched roof meet.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to check and inspect that the rainwater is not discharging down the walls next time it rains heavily.

Roof Ventilation

The latest Building Regulations require flat roofs to be ventilated. Building Regulations are not retrospective but the reason for the requirement is to make sure that any moisture that enters the roof construction is dispelled by way of ventilation. We would suggest that if the opportunity arises ventilation should be provided. This will stop the possibility of fungal growth above the ceiling in the flat roof area.

Roof insulation

Also it could not be established if there is insulation within the roof or a vapour barrier, without the vapour barrier and combined with inadequate ventilation there will be an increase in the risk of wet or dry rot.

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.

Finally, we were only able to see approximately sixty percent of the main roof from ground level via our ladder or via any other vantage point that we

managed to gain. 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

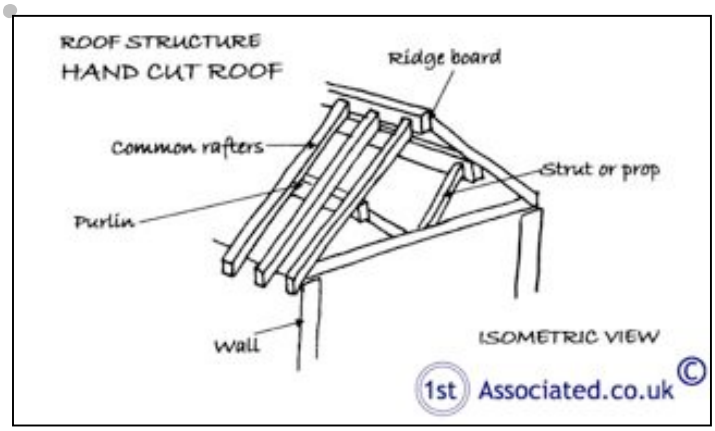
Roof Access

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located landing. There is no loft ladder, electric light or secured floorboards. We recommend that these be added, as it will make the loft space safer and easier to use.

The loft (perimeter) has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly.

Roof Structure

This type of roof structure has what is known as a cut timber roof. This is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects; however it is in line with what we typically see.



Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

- Serious active woodworm
- Structurally significant defects to the timbers
- Structurally significant dry rot
- Structurally significant wet rot

Our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof. What we could see was generally found to be in average condition for its age, type and style. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.

ACTION REQUIRED: The only way to be 100 per cent certain is to have the roof cleared and checked.

General view of inside of roof showing common rafters (ones that form the pitch of the roof) purlins, cross brace and brace to the central wall.

Bigger than usual splits in the purlins

Fire Walls

The property has one brick firewall which is located to the left hand side (all directions given as you face the property).

Fire Walls Defined

Fire walls help prevent the spread of fire through roofs and are a relatively recent Building Regulation requirement.

Firewall

Ventilation

We could not see any ventilation, this would be a requirement in a modern roof.

Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

Electrical Cables

We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of wiring found in the roof. In this case there was insufficient quantity of wiring to comment.

Please see our further comments in the Services Section of this Report.

Finally, we would ask you to note that this is a general inspection of the roof, i.e. we have not examined every single piece of timber. We have offered a general overview of the condition and structural integrity of the area.

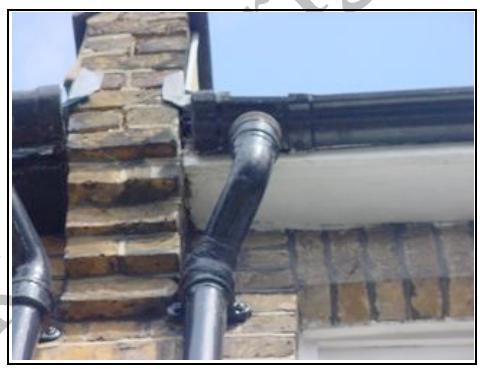
GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES

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

The property has a mixture of older cast iron and modern plastic gutters and downpipes. The condition is fairly typical of what we see; they are in average condition for their age, type and style.



Bandaged cast iron gutter and downpipe

Our only concern is to the rear with the large flat roof and rear pitched roof and the amount of rainwater that is discharging onto this section which may cause it to overflow, known as surcharging.

Cast iron of this age will need maintenance. If regularly maintained it last longer than plastic, in our experience.

Unusual cast iron gutter and downpipe to the front roof with extra branch

In addition to this there may be some minor leaks but most people would be happy to live with these providing repairs are carried out within the next six to twelve months.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend you stand outside the property next time it rains heavily and see how well the drains cope with the rainwater particularly looking at the guttering and the joints.

We would also 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.

Soil and Vent Pipe

The soil and vent pipes are plastic.

Soil and vent pipe

Finally, gutters and downpipes and soil and vent pipes have been inspected from ground level.

It was raining at the time of the inspection however we did not have the opportunity to inspect if 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.

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.

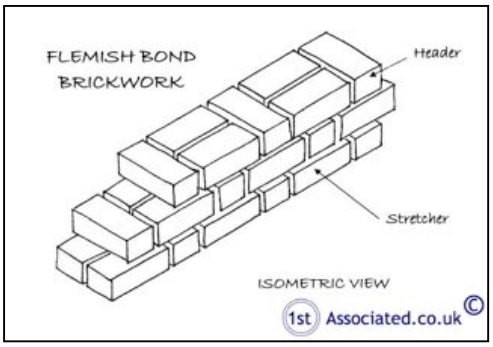
The walls are constructed of brickwork.

Brickwork

The property is built in a brick originally in a lime mortar in what is known as Flemish bond brickwork.

Brickwork to the front of the property

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.



The solid external walls may be liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon their condition and their exposure to the weather. External faces should be kept in good condition.

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.

Deterioration to brickwork incorrectly re-pointed in cement mortar rather than lime based mortar

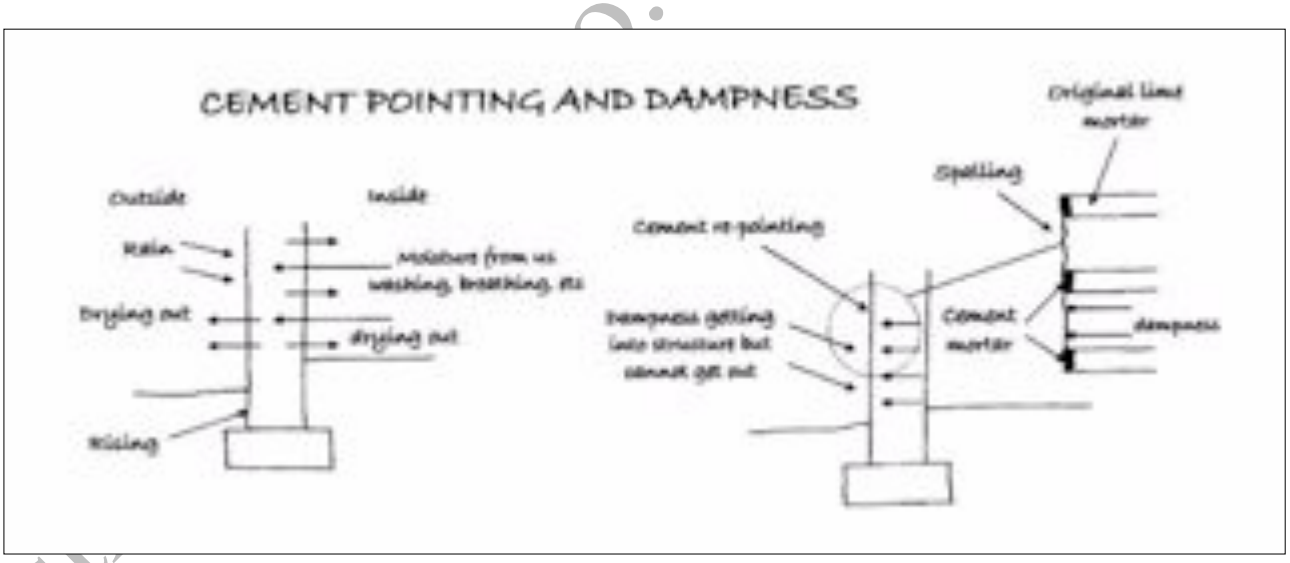
Generally Flemish Bond brickwork is liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon the condition of the brickwork and the exposure to the weather. In this case it is essential that external faces be kept in good condition.

Lime Every Time (Inappropriate Cement Mortar Re-pointing - for the Age of this Property

We would draw your attention to the cement mortar re-pointing that has been carried out on the exterior of the property that we feel is not appropriate to this building. Originally it will have been built with a lime-based mortar and this is what should be used for any re-pointing in the future.

The use of cement mortar causes deterioration to brickwork and does lead to the face of the bricks deteriorating, which in turn leads to dampness. This is a very important point.

The property is built in a mixture of yellow stock bricks and soft red bricks; the soft red bricks in particular deteriorate due to the cement mortar pointing.



Cavity Walls

Cavity walls were first used in Victorian times. It originates from solid walls not always being waterproof against driving rain and not providing a good degree of heat insulation. The design of cavity walls makes them relatively unstable and they depend upon the wall ties.

Cold Bridging

Large opening for sliding, folding doors to the rear

This era of property is likely to have cold bridging.

There is a very large opening made for the sliding, folding doors to the rear of the property.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Advisor needs to check and confirm that Local Authority Approval has been obtained and there are calculations for the lintel.

Cold bridging defined

Cold bridging is caused by a colder element in the structure allowing coldness to pass through the structure much quicker when warm moist air is present in the property.

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 / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age timber lintels, concrete 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 / plasterwork has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork / plasterwork would be if it were opened up for this age, style and type of construction. We are however aware that all is not always at 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

Given the age of the property you may find different depths of foundations. We would expect to find a stepped brick foundation.

London Clay

As with most properties in the London area, this property stands on London Clay. 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. However, from our inspection of the walls we have found nothing unusual.

Building Insurance Policy

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

It is your responsibility to check out prior to commitment to purchase that insurance is available on the property on the basis of the things we have reported in the survey. Much as we would like to we are unable to keep up with the changing insurance market and give you advice with regard to this. Please remember to talk about any cracks identified within the property. Often insurers will refer to progressive and non-progressive cracking. Unfortunately this is something we are unable to comment upon from a one-off inspection - the Building Research Establishment recommend a year of monitoring of any cracking.

We would always recommend that you remain with the existing insurance company of the property.

We would refer you to our comments with regard to building insurance throughout this report.

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.

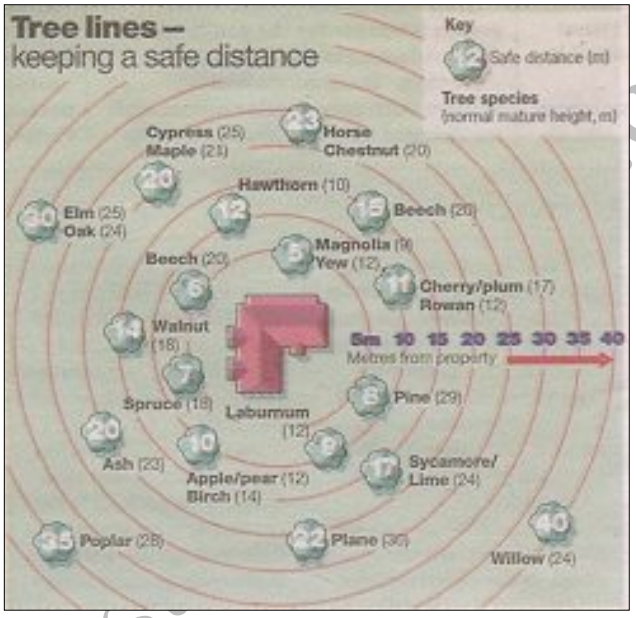
TREES

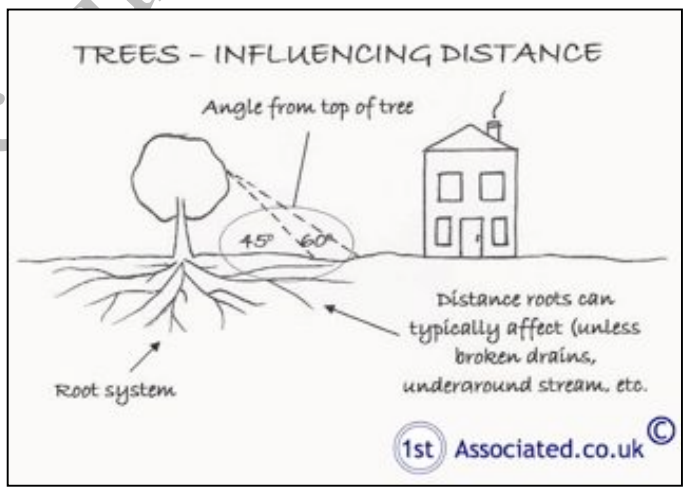
Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.

There is a tree within what insurance companies would term influencing distance of the property.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor to check and confirm who is liable and responsible for the tree. If it is the Local Authorities responsibility you need to ensure regular maintenance is carried out.

The tree is located nearby





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.

Finally, insurance requirements with regard to trees have varied over the years and in our opinion have got ever more onerous. We have seen the notifiable distance of a tree away from a property to have been reduced over the years

and we reiterate our comments elsewhere within this report that you need to make enquiries with regard to the insurability of your property in relation to trees and other features when you purchase the property.

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.

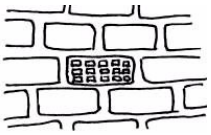
All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, we cannot see a DPC as it may be covered by a rendered plinth. This was the era when damp proof courses were starting to be added but does not necessarily mean you have one, they were often originally slate.

The render plinth may be hiding a damp proof course

Your attention is drawn to the section of the report specifically dealing with dampness.

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.

AIRBRICKS

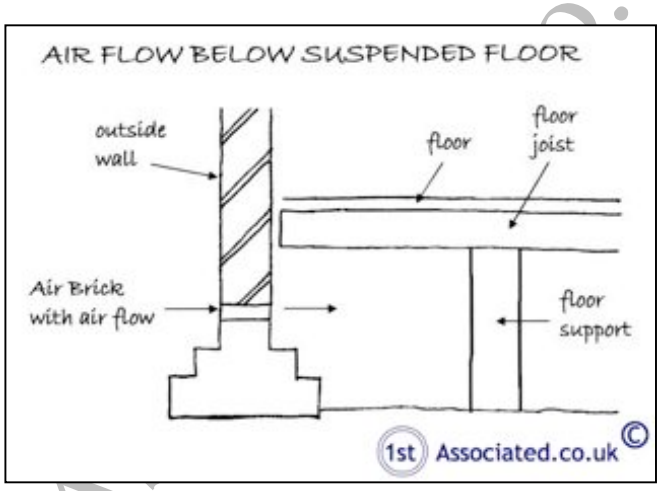


In properties with suspended floors you need to have an airflow beneath to stop deterioration. The air is allowed to pass under the property by the use of airbricks. Generally the rule of thumb is that airbricks are spaced every metre and a half approximately, but this depends upon the specific circumstances of the property.

Low Level Air Bricks

There are low level air bricks to the property which look to have been enlarged than the original brick size to double this which is good. You do however need to make sure that they are kept clean to allow and air flow underneath the building.

Air bricks are essential to have a through flow of air as this helps to reduce the chances of wet rot, dry rot and woodworm.



Air brick

Finally, we have made our best assumptions based upon our visual inspection of the outside of the property and our general knowledge of this age, type and style of construction. We have not opened up the floor, unless we have specifically stated so in this section.

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

The fascias and soffits are timber. They are painted and we would comment they are in average condition for their age, type and style. It is feasible that the front area is similar to the front windows which look in good condition however when knife tested are not.

Fascias and soffits

ACTION REQUIRED: When work is being carried out to the front windows also have a re-check of the fascias and soffits. Make sure gutters and downpipes are watertight before carrying out any work on fascias and soffits.

Windows and Doors

The property has single glazed timber sliding sash windows.

Sliding sash window

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

Knife test to window

Bay Windows

The property has the benefit of large bay windows to the front which allow good light into the property.

Bay windows

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend repairs to the windows are carried out during the summer of 2012.

Finally, we have carried out a general and random inspection of the external joinery. 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 external joinery. 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.

The external decorations is mainly to the joinery and the lintel area above the window which looks to have been relatively newly carried out (painted to sell).

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 External Joinery 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.

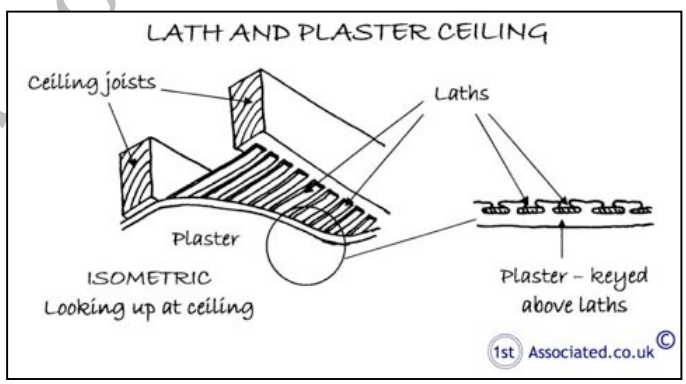
Ceilings

Where we could see the ceilings from within the roof space this property has lath and plaster ceilings however we are aware that the modern alterations have no doubt been carried out with a modern plasterboard.

Lath viewed within roof space

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.



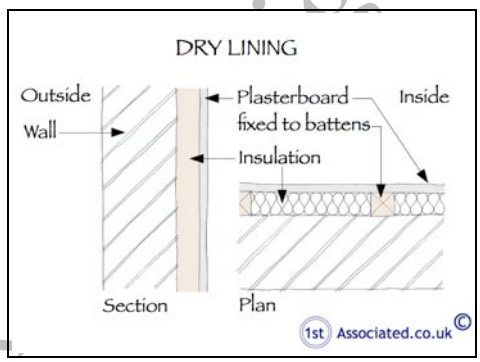
The property has some ceiling roses, whether they are original or not we are not certain but we do believe that they are a pleasant detail in the property although this is up to personal taste.

Ceiling rose

Internal Walls and Partitions

These are, we believe, a mixture of solid and studwork construction. It is of course impossible to determine the construction without opening up the walls and we have therefore taken an educated guess.

Perimeter Walls



Originally these would have been constructed with a wet plaster, possibly a lime plaster.

We believe that some of the perimeter walls have had a skim coat of modern gypsum plaster and to the rear of the property there is what is known as a dry lined wall which could be due to hiding dampness; please see our comments with regard to the flat roof and the rear of the pitched roof possibly discharging rainwater down the rear wall.

Again, we cannot be 100% certain of the wall construction without opening them up which goes beyond the scope of this report.

This comment has been based on the visual look of the wall which is relatively "smooth" and normally means a modern finish.

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.

The chimney breasts are located to the right hand side in the front lounge and the left hand side of the property in the rear kitchen/dining room as well as some chimney breasts in the bedrooms (all directions given as you face the front of the property).

Reception room fireplace

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, we will comment on the condition of the chimney breast where we can see the chimney breast. If we can see a chimney breast has been removed we will inspect for signs of movement and advise. However, often the chimney breasts are hidden so we cannot comment. Also additional support can be concealed very well when chimney breasts are hidden particularly when plastered over.

Kitchen/dining room fireplace

Your Legal Advisor needs to specifically check with the Local Authority for removed chimneys and associated chimney breasts and Building Regulations Approvals and advise by e-mail immediately if chimney breasts are found to have been removed. We would recommend opening up the structure to check the condition. If we are not advised we will assume the relevant Building Regulations Approval has been obtained.

Rear bedroom fireplace

It is strongly recommended that flues be cleaned and checked for obstructions prior to use to minimise the risk of hazardous fumes entering the building.

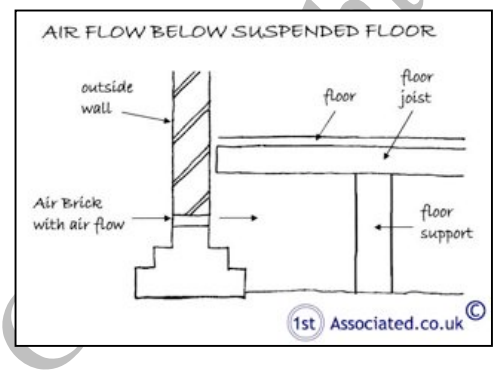
Please also see the Chimney Stacks, Flues

FLOORS

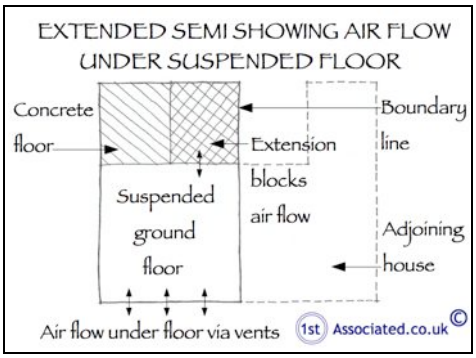
Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.

Ground Floor

The front floor of the property is a suspended timber floor which requires air movement underneath to minimise wet rot, dry rot and woodworm.



This is not exactly as the floor plan of the property but it gives a general indication of the airflow underneath the suspended timber floor.



Solid Floor

There is likely to be a solid floor to the entirety of the kitchen/dining room area. In this instance there does need to be a vent at the back of the suspended timber floor which we were unable to find.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add a vent to the back of the suspended timber floor if not present.

Step - suspended timber floor to concrete floor

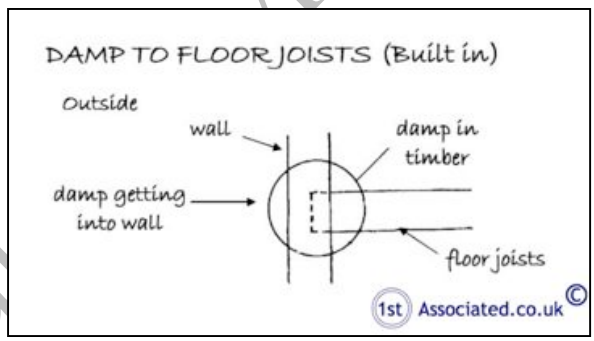
However, we have not opened up the floors or lifted the carpets / floor coverings.

There is a tiled floor to the entrance hallway which, in our opinion, is a pleasant feature.

Tiled floor to entrance hallway

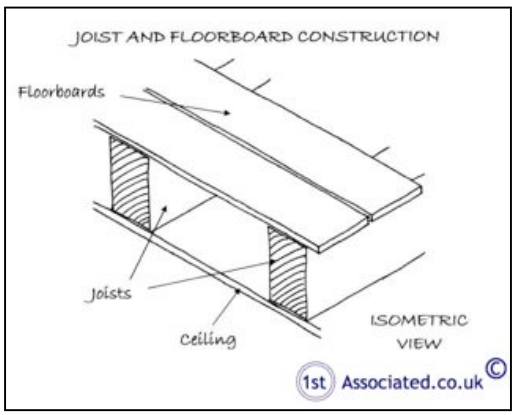
First Floor

We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards with embedded timbers, 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.



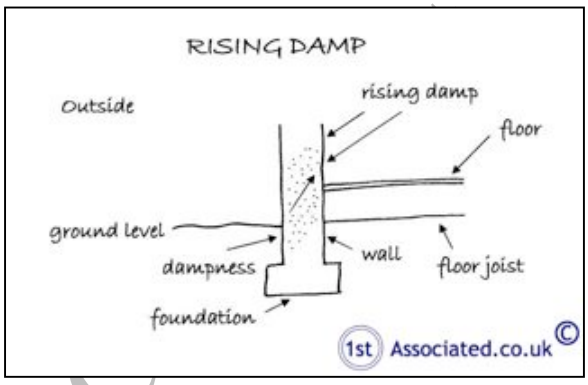
Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with fitted carpets, floor coverings etc The comments we have made are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction. We would emphasise that we have not opened up the floors in any way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

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.

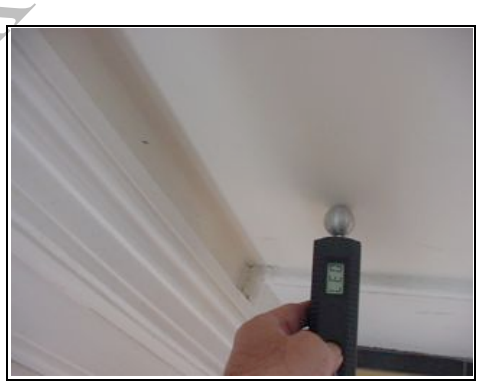
Rising Damp

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.



A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls and some internal walls. In this particular case we have found no rising damp.

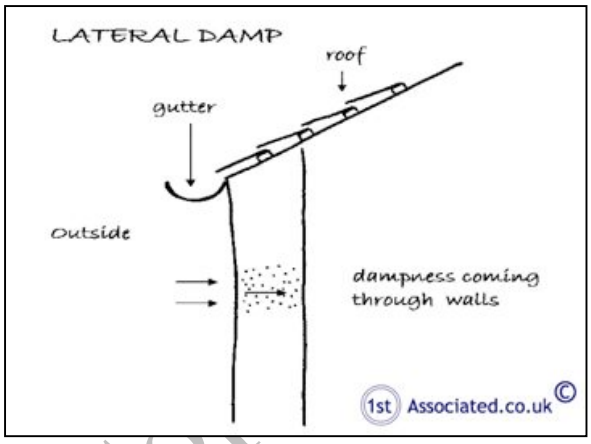
ACTION REQUIRED: Please see the Executive Summary regarding the kitchen rear wall being dry lined.



Testing for rising damp

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.



We used a damp meter on the external walls. We have not found minor dampness.

Condensation

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

At the time of the inspection there were no obvious signs of condensation.

However, it depends upon how you utilise the building. 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, cooling and ventilation of properties and opening windows to air the property regularly.

Extract fans in kitchens and bathrooms

A way of helping to reduce condensation is to have good large extract fans within the kitchens and bathrooms which are moisture generating areas.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend humidity controlled extract fans be added to kitchens and bathrooms.

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

There is a mixture of modern panelled doors and feature doors to the ground floor area.

Panel door

Staircase

We were unable to examine the underside of the stair timbers due to it being lined, which precluded our inspection, so we cannot comment further upon the stair structure. We can, however, say that the lining gives a resistance to the spread of fire if such circumstances were to occur.

Staircase lined

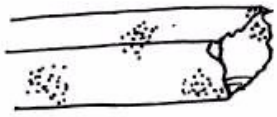
Kitchen

We are advised that the kitchen cost a lot of money, we do like the kitchen design and we would consider the kitchen to be in an above average condition.

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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 overview of the condition. Please also see the External Joinery/Detailing 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.

We would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had a limited view of the roof.

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.

We noted wet rot in the front windows and we would expect to find wet rot to the fascias and soffits. There is also a possibility that wet rot is in the suspended timber floor.

Knife test to window

Again, we would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had a limited view of the roof.

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 roof is the main area that we look for woodworm.

Within the roof we found no obvious visual signs of woodworm activity or indeed signs of past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage. In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection is usually restricted by insulation covering some of the timbers and general stored items in the roof, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings. We would comment in this instance that the main area we looked in was the roof space however it could be present in the floor; please note that we have not opened up the floors to check.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to be 100 per cent certain that there is no woodworm the only way would be to check the property when is emptied of fixtures and fittings etc.

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 paints (commonly known as Artex) contained an element of asbestos up to 1984, so care should be taken if the paintwork looks old and dated.

Internal decorations are in average condition with some marks. You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste.

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.

CELLARS

Cellars and vaults tend to be found in older properties and offer a useful space, although usually they are damp, unless some treatment has taken place such as the tanking of the walls, which is a lining process, or an external damp proofing membrane of some type has been added, or if internally the walls have been lined, therefore hiding the damp. Cellars are often susceptible to flooding from excessive rain, rising water table levels or even blocked drains.

The cellar/basement area of the property is very small and is accessed from the rear of the hallway on the ground floor.

Cellar/Basement staircase

The staircase to the cellar/basement would ideally need replacing / repair to the nosings to make safer.

Dampness, woodworm and ventilation

As with all cellars/basements a level of dampness should be expected.

There were no signs of dampness affecting the floor joists and floorboards or significant woodworm.

There was a vent to the right hand side brick wall (as you enter basement from the rear) which will help to keep the area damp minimal. However the basement is quite small and would benefit from adding extra ventilation

Alterations to cellar/basement

Please see our earlier comments regarding damp and ventilation.

The cellar/basement area is currently used for storage (but do not store any perishable goods or items of high value), however if you choose to extend and alter the /cellar basement you may need to know that head height may need increasing which will require Local Authority Approval.

Finally, we have made a visual inspection of the cellar only and have no way of knowing what the construction is without opening up the structure.

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

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

Roofs

There was approximately 200mm of insulation present in the roof, current Building Regulations requirements are of 300mm.

Insulation

Insulation beneath the slates

Walls

The walls to this property are solid in the sense that they do not have a cavity as a modern property would have. Also they are unlikely to have any substantial insulation. However, unfortunately it is generally very difficult to

improve the insulation without affecting the external or the internal appearance of the property.

Windows

The windows are single glazed and therefore will have poor thermal properties.

Services

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

Summary

Assuming the above is correct, this property is average compared with what we typically see.

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

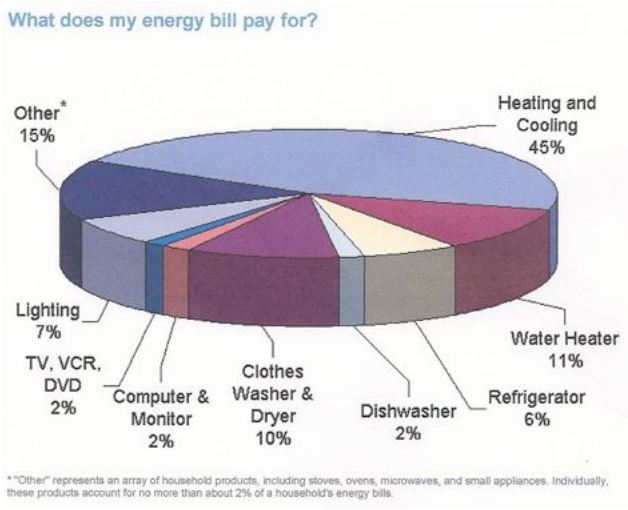
HTTP//www.est.org.uk, which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.

or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

or Sustainable Energy Without the Hot Air by David J C MacKay HTTP//www.withouthotair.com/Videos.html to download for free or buy a paper copy as we did.

It is worth watching the video How Many Light Bulbs? by David J C MacKay HTTP//www.youtube.com/watch?v=UR8wRSp21Xs

Finally, we would comment that energy we feel will become a major consideration in years to come, particularly with the greater focus in modern buildings on energy efficiency.



OTHER MATTERS

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

Security

A security system has been installed. A good alarm system should not only help reduce break-ins but also your insurance. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further.

Infra-red sensor

ACTION REQUIRED: Further information should be obtained from the vendor and the installer at a later date.

Fire / Smoke Alarms

Some smoke detectors were noted. The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply. Obviously in a property of this age this is difficult, as it would mean having surface mounted wires or cutting wiring into the plaster.

Smoke alarm

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend, for your own safety, that smoke detectors be installed. We would always recommend a hard wired fire alarm system and are also aware that some now work from a wireless signal which may be worth investigating. Whilst fire is relatively rare it is in a worst case scenario obviously devastating.

Insurance

We would always recommend staying with the existing insurance company, and then if there are any problems you should not have the difficulty of

negotiating with two insurance companies passing the blame between each other.

We would refer you to our comments with regard to building insurance throughout this report.

Asbestos

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos.

In this case we have not noted any asbestos, it was often used on service ducts which are hidden away.

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.

ELECTRICITY

It is strange to think that electricity only started to be used in domestic properties at the turn of the 19th 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 under the stairs. The fuse board looked newish and better are now available.

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, this proved satisfactory.

Earth Test

ACTION REQUIRED: As the property is changing occupancy an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test and report should be carried out by a NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

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 1st 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 an independent Gas Safe registered plumber.

We are advised that the property has mains gas.

All gas appliances, pipework and flues should be the subject of an annual service by a competent engineer, i.e., a member of Gas Safe; works to gas appliances etc., by unqualified personnel 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.

ACTION REQUIRED: As a matter of course it is recommended that the entire gas installation is inspected and made good, as necessary, by a Gas Safe registered contractor. Thereafter the installation should be serviced annually.

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

The controlling stopcock was not located.

It is important that its presence is established in case of bursts or leaks. The stopcock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ask the owners to show you where it is.

Water Pressure

When the taps were run to carry out the drainage test we checked the pressure literally by putting a finger over the tap and this seemed average. 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!).

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 piping. No significant leakage was noted on the surface, although most of the pipework is concealed in floors, walls and ducts.

Heating

The wall mounted boiler was located in the utilities room, it is manufactured by Worcester.

Our limited inspection of the hot water and central heating system revealed no evidence to suggest any serious defects but we would nevertheless 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.

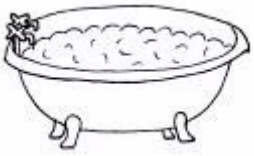
Ten Minute Heating Test

There was no owner at the property; the house was pleasantly warm during the course of our survey.

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.

Bathroom

The property has a four piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin and WC, which looks to be relatively recent.

Bathroom

WC

The property has a downstairs WC located in the utilities area.

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 foul drains from the property 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 identified two inspection chambers / manholes.

Manholes Defined

Access areas which usually fit a man (or woman) into them and are put in where the drains change direction.

Inspection Chamber / Manhole One front garden

The manhole was inspected to the front of the property using our 15 minute tap test (running water for 15 minutes). No obvious problems were seen. Water was free flowing.

Manhole one

Manhole one

Inspection Chamber / Manhole Two (rear garden)

At the time of our survey we were unable to lift and inspect manhole two. The manholes are not possible to lift without specialist lifting gear.

Manhole Two

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 into shared drains. These can be a problem during heavy rainfall and peak periods, such as the 9 o'clock rush to work.

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

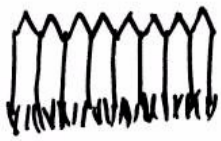
The main focus of this report has been on the main building. If you wish us to do a specific report on the other buildings then you need to instruct us for this separately. We are offering here a brief overview.

PARKING

Parking is on the roadside parking on a first come first serve permit basis, there always seems to be a number of traffic wardens in the area!

Parking at roadside

EXTERNAL AREAS



Front Garden

The property has a small front garden.

Front Garden

Rear Garden

The garden to the rear of the property is paved and is fairly small sized.

Rear Garden

Boundaries: The left hand boundary (all directions given as you face the property) is usually the responsibility of the subject property.

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.

Gap between two buildings

Neighbours

Left and Right Hand Neighbours

When we knocked the left and the right hand side neighbours at the time of our survey no one was in.

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) Double glazing or replacement windows.
iv) Roof and similar renewals.
v) Central heating installation.
vi) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
vii) Removal of any walls in part or whole.
viii) Removal of any chimneys in part or whole.
ix) 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 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.

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

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

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 sunshine and showers at the time of the inspection. The weather did hamper the survey slightly as we would normally have attempted to climb onto the flat roof at the rear via the roof windows.

In recent times our weather seems to be moving towards the extremities from its usual relatively mid range. Extremes of weather can affect the property.

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 as we did not have full access to the roof and as we were not able to open up the ground floor or the first floor.

We did not have the benefit of talking to the owners or them answering our usual question and answers and we didn't have the benefit of meeting you at the property to talk about your specific requirements which we always find helpful to explain any issues.

BUILDING INSURANCE

We do not advise with regard to building insurance. You need to make your own enquiries. Some areas may have a premium, some buildings may have a premium and some insurers may be unwilling to insure at all in certain areas. You need to make your own enquires prior to committing to purchase the property. Please be aware the fact a building is currently insured does not mean it can be re insured.

We would comment that non-insurability of a building we feel will affect value. It is therefore essential to make your own enquiries with regard to insurance before committing to purchase the property and incurring fees.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to contact an insurance company today to make enquiries with regard to insurance on this property.

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.

APPENDICES

1. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
2. Information on the Property Market
3. Condensation and Cold Bridging Article

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

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

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 and 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

This gives information with regard to house sale and purchase prices.

www.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.

www.rightmove.co.uk

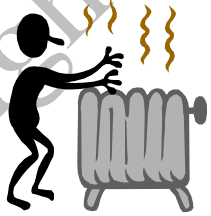
This is probably the largest Internet search engine for estate agency sales and also has useful information with regard to prices of property (but it is not the same as having a chartered surveyor value it).

www.zoopla.co.uk

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

Condensation and Cold Bridging – What is Cold Bridging?

What is cold bridging and does it always cause condensation?



We often find cold bridging on certain types of property which unfortunately means that condensation is more likely. Cold bridging is caused by a colder element in the structure allowing coldness to pass through the structure much quicker when warm moist air is present in the property, often caused by things like having a shower or a bath, cooking or washing, particularly if you are drying washing on the radiators. This is also caused by the general climate which results in condensation on the element.

Certain types of buildings are more susceptible to condensation and cold bridging

You often see condensation in properties, for example on a mirror in a bathroom when you have had a shower or a bath. Cold bridging is far worse than condensation as it is caused by an element in the structure which you can do very little to change without great expense.

Typically this will be a lintel. Problems can occur with concrete lintels that were commonly used in the 1970's, and also in more modern, better insulated properties, cold bridging has been known to occur on metal lintels. The problem is what to do about it.

Example of a concrete lintel – can you notice where the cold bridging would be in this photo?

A close up view of the concrete lintel

When is Cold Bridging Most Likely?

In our experience cold bridging is most likely on properties built in the 1930's to 1980's, most commonly in the 1970's. This is the era when we were just starting to think about insulation and we added insulation into our structures for example with cavity wall insulation or double glazed windows. This meant they were warmer which in effect has meant the significance of a lintel over a door or window being colder and allowing the transfer of coldness becomes much more important. This results in condensation that we commonly see above windows in this age and era of property.

Typical 1970's house

Typical 1970's houses

So what can you do about Cold Bridging?

The difficulty is resolving cold bridging. Normally where condensation is involved if you get the balance of warm and coolness of the air, the air ventilation and movement you can reduce considerably the chances of condensation. Airing the room which seems to have gone out of fashion where you literally open the windows in the morning to air the room is a big step forward.

Where do we most commonly see cold bridging?

We would answer this in two ways. Firstly, we see as mentioned cold bridging is common in 1970's houses. It's also more common to various other factors.

The main other factor is large families or families with young children where there is a lot of washing going on and often during the winter months this washing is then dried on radiators. This is generally known as the lifestyle of the occupants.

Expert witness cases

We have seen some terrible examples of this. We have been involved in several court cases as expert witnesses where landlords are being taken to court over the condensation being caused by cold bridging. The discussions that then take place in court with us as expert witnesses are, is it a design characteristic or is it a lifestyle characteristic that is causing problems.

Is Cold Bridging a design problem?

We have been involved in many reports on condensation and cold bridging and some legal cases where we have been asked to act as expert witness. Really it's down to the design of the property. There are cold elements in it such as a concrete frame or concrete lintels. You have a disadvantage although, not impossible to stop the condensation it's very hard. It could also be argued that where cold bridging is occurring in a modern property you are getting interstitial condensation which is condensation within the structure which you literally can't see.

1960's concrete frame

Concrete lintel visible externally but they are not always visible

Dampness and condensation around the concrete window lintel

Do lifestyle issues cause condensation?

By lifestyle issues we mean the way the building is being used. We have come across quite a few instances where it is how the property is being used that's causing the problems. This may be due to showers being taken without extractor fans being put on or it may be due to clothes being dried internally, particularly during the winter months. It could be steamy kitchens. Some things can be helped by airing the home by opening the windows and in bathrooms and kitchens you can have extractor fans that are controlled by humidity controls on the fans. So it really is an individual answer in most cases to the problems with the property.