

JOB REFERENCE: XXXX

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

XXXX  
London.  
SW17 XXX



FOR  
Mr X

Prepared by:  
XXXX  
INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# **REPORT FORMAT**

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

## **GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

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

## **TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED**

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

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



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

## **ORIENTATION**

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

## **ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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

## **SYNOPSIS**

### **SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION**

This is a mid terraced two storey property in a residential area of similar properties which has had various alterations and amendments over the years.

There is a small front yard and a small courtyard to the rear together with a terrace above the kitchen accessed from the rear bedroom.

Parking is at roadside on a first come first served basis and there is also paid for residents permit scheme in place.

We believe that the property was built in the 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:*

1863	The Opening of London Underground
1896	First modern Olympic Games (Athens)
1899-1902	Boer War between Britain and Boers in Southern Africa
1901	Queen Victoria died.

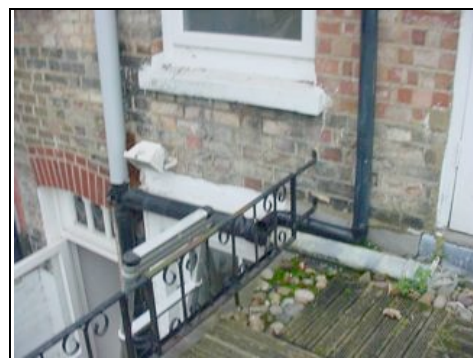
## EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front View



Looking down at rear courtyard area



Terrace/balcony

## **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

### **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Through Lounge / Dining area (open spiral staircase to first floor)
- 2) Kitchen

### **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 3) Front Bedroom
- 4) Rear Bedroom with access to terrace
- 5) Internal Bathroom

### **Outside Areas**

The property has a small yard to the front and a rear courtyard with a terrace above the kitchen. Parking was good at on the day of our survey (although we were parking during the working day) on a resident permit basis.

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



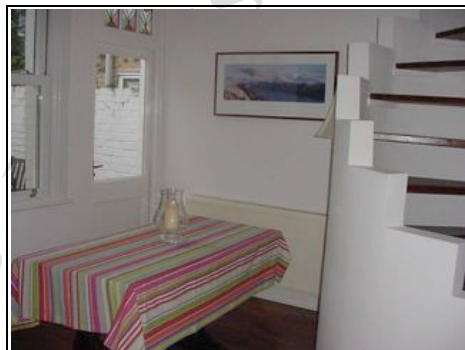
## INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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



Lounge to front



Lounge/Dining room to rear  
with access to courtyard



Kitchen

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**First Floor**



Front Bedroom



Rear Bedroom



Bathroom

## **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

### **External**

Chimneys:	Two brick chimneys Two parapet walls
Main Roof:	Pitched, clad with manmade slate
Rear Roof:	Asphalt (assumed) unable to view due to wood decking present
Main Roof Structure:	Cut timber roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	Cast iron and plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Flemish Bond brickwork (assumed)
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Double glazed plastic windows

### **Internal**

Ceilings:	Lath and plaster (assumed) probably with plasterboard.
Walls:	Predominately 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 (assumed). There is a wall mounted Valliant boiler in the kitchen rear right hand corner (all directions as you face the property) and the 1990s electrics are located in the lounge.

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 190 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) We liked the unusual layout for a Victorian property and feel it is a good use of space.
- 2.0) The property benefits from outside areas both a terrace and a courtyard to the rear albeit please see our comments on these areas.
- 3.0) The property has good natural light due to the bay window.

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) Roof

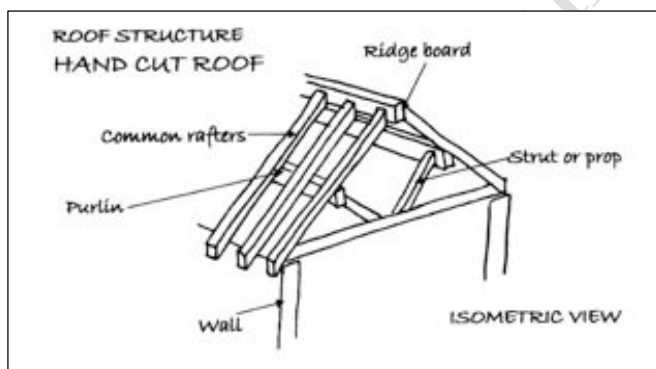
#### Purlins

The roof structure is what is known as a cut timber roof, the roof trusses are known as common rafters which form the pitch of the roof and are supported by purlins. In this case we could see that the purlins were supported with little more than a timber wedge built into the wall. Typically a timber strut would be present as can be seen in the sketch or it would have a brick nib to sit on. This means we would term this roof is light weight.

We note that the original slates have been replaced with manmade slates and were pleased to see this as this is a light weight construction and best for this roof given the way the roof structure is built.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend the purlins would benefit from having struts added whilst it could be argued that the roof has survived the test of time. We feel that a safer measure would be to have struts added.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds, the struts need to be positioned as in the sketch. We would recommend you have these



Front right hand purlin



Rear right hand purlin

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added as soon as possible; most competent carpenters should be able to carry this work out; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

## 2.0) Movement

We can see what we would term historic movement within the property. Examples of this are as follows:-

2.1) The movement to the front bedroom above door

2.2) The movement to the wall at the front

2.3) Hairline cracking in some of the walls.

We would comment that most movement in this age of property is historic but we do suggest in addition to this when the property was altered with walls being removed and moved additional weights and loadings were put on the property which has affected it and caused the additional movement.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As this is a terraced property the property cannot move far as it has buildings on either side however structural movement of any sort can put people off purchasing a property with the perception of problems. Ideally the existing owner should lodge an insurance claim with the insurance company monitoring the property for typically a year who will then advise in writing whether



Movement visible to front bedroom above door



Movement visible to front wall



Cracking to rear bedroom wall

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they feel there is any progressive movement or not. Whilst we feel the odds are that there is not any progressive movement this would alleviate any future problems or concerns about the movement.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** There should not be any cost as you would simply carry on with the same insurance company the present owners are with and have a written agreement that the claim can be transferred from the present owners to yourselves with the limit of cost the excess or whatever else the insurance companies small print has in place.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

### 3.0) Guttering

With a property such as this there are often problems with gutters in two specific areas:-

3.1) The front bay where the gutter can overflow and cause dampness to the wall.



Guttering to rear

3.2) To the rear where extra guttering has been added on the kitchen side where we believe the gutter will overflow.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a hopper head is added to catch the rainwater. You may have some dampness coming into the kitchen from this where it has been overflowing over the years.

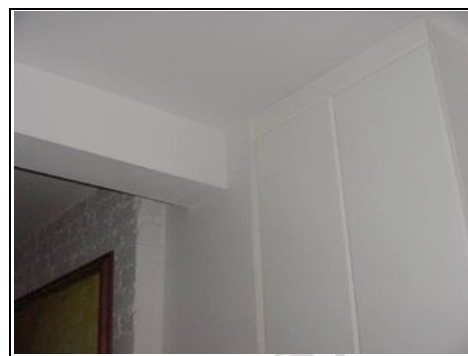
**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Gutters and Downpipes Section of this Report.



#### 4.0) Structural alteration without purlin nib

In theory the removal of the wall on the ground floor should have Building Regulations Approvals however we often find that they do not. We would also add that this is becoming a greater problem with solicitors rightly wanting all the paperwork to be in place.



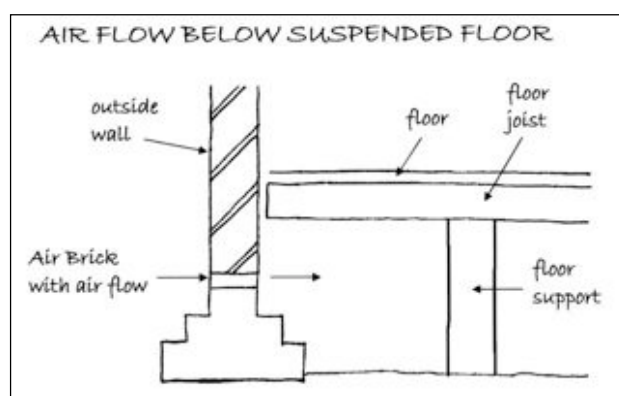
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Advisor to request the documentation if not available we believe insurance is available for unauthorised Building Regulation repairs. Our concern is that the end of the structural support (known as a lintel or RSJ) cannot be seen as it has been boarded around and we cannot therefore comment if there are any stress marks around it. We would be happy to return if the structure is opened up or comment on photographs of the structure opened up.

No purlin nib added to alteration internally

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

#### 5.0) Suspended floor not vented properly

The property has a suspended timber floor which is not vented properly. This can cause deterioration to the floor the vents provide airflow to help reduce the effects of woodworm, wet rot and dry rot.



Unfortunately we could not see the condition of the floor as it is hidden by the laminate floor covering.

We do have concerns regarding the condition of the floor.



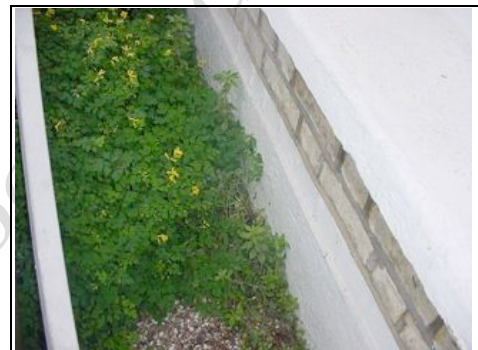
**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to add at least two airbricks to the front of the property and make sure that they cannot act as gutters. To the rear you have one airbrick which is acting as gutter and is also blocked which you need to open up; it is essential that you have airflow here. At some point in time you should open up the ground floor itself to check the condition of the timbers.



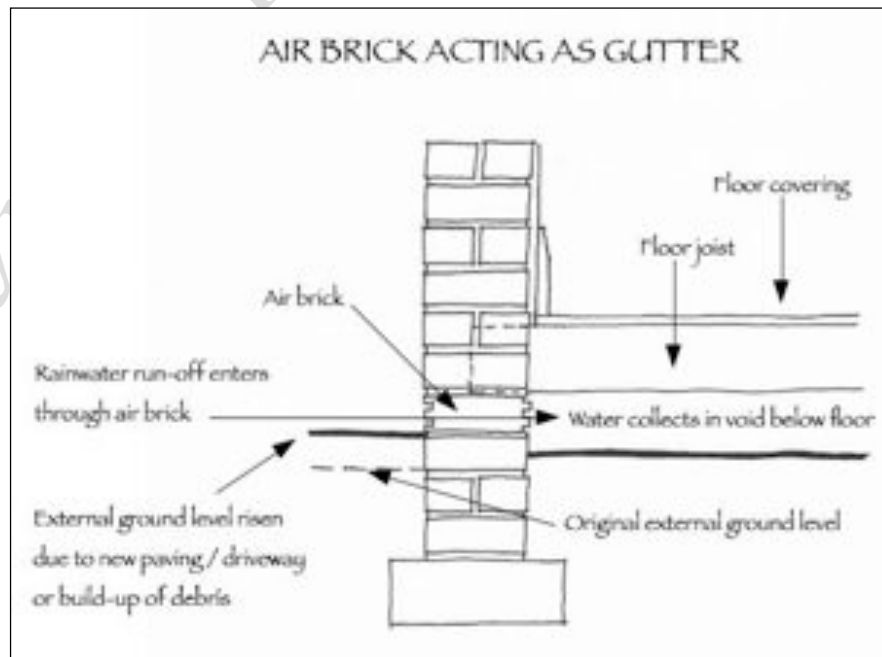
Laminate floor hiding what is beneath



Rear airbricks acting as gutter and also blocked



Front airbricks not visible



**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds to add airbricks or expose, protect, repair and make sure airflow is going through them. The repairs to the floor can again be a few hundred pounds to a thousand or so pounds dependent upon the condition ; please obtain quotations.

#### Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

A suspended timber floor usually consists of timbers spanning the ground floor, supported on piers (usually brickwork), vented via air bricks within the walls.

Please see the Floor Section of this Report.

### **6.0) Condensation**

The property has a higher than average chance of getting condensation because of the way it is arranged with an internal extract fan in the internal bathroom which we do not think is big enough and the kitchen area having various external walls.

In addition you have internal radiators in the property, a tiled floor in the kitchen and the plastic double glazed windows do not have trickle vents.

#### Trickle Vents Defined

Small vents to the windows to allow air movement inside the property to stop a build up of fumes or humidity.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Improve the extraction in the internal bathroom. We would recommend using an extract fan with a humidity controlled thermostat. We would also recommend adding the same in the kitchen.



Small extract fan in bathroom



Window without trickle vent

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**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

### 7.0) Terrace/balcony

We cannot view the actual roof of the terrace/balcony which also forms the floor due to the decking with the whole area being DIY quality.

We have checked with a damp meter internally within the kitchen to see if there is dampness coming through and are pleased to say we did not find high levels of dampness. However we did find a bit which we suspect relates to the gutter which we mentioned earlier that a hopperhead added here can help.

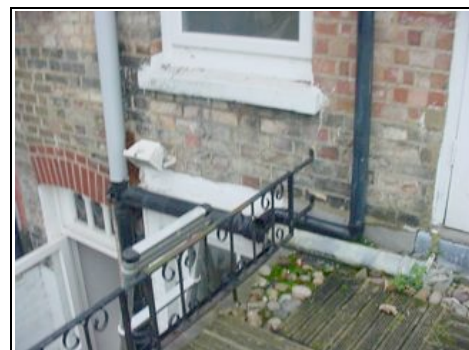
The moss that we could see on the roof indicates to us that rainwater is sitting on it so it could be in danger of leaking.

There was a low rail to this area which we would be happier seeing a higher rail. Building Regulations currently require rails to be 1.2m with balustrades every 100mm however the terrace/balcony may not be official and not have had Planning Permission and Building Regulations and does overlook other neighbours.

We could see that next door has a terrace/balcony and interestingly they have the same decking on theirs. Having said that the door to the rear looks to be quite old.



Moss sitting on terrace/balcony due to rainwater sitting on this area.



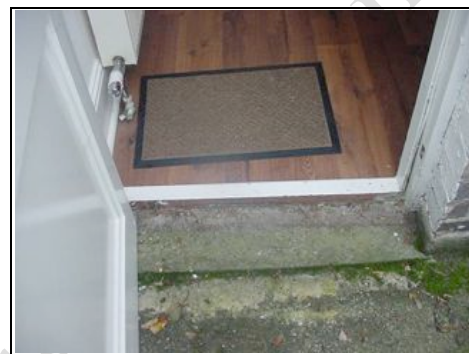
Low rail around terrace/balcony

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Advisor to specifically request if Local Authority approvals have been obtained for the terrace/balcony.

## 8.0) Dampness

### Ground level outside similar to ground level inside

The ground level outside the property is similar to the ground level inside which indicates that there is likely to be dampness to the floor and may get in when it rains heavily as we could see moss in this area.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to amend this threshold detail.

Ground levels similar

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £500 - £1500; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Floors Section of this Report.

## 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 feels falls within this category however we would comment that historic movement in the property may put some people off when they come to sell it in the future. Lack of airbricks and the potential condition of the floor together with the threshold problems to the rear courtyard need to be resolved as quickly as possible.

We would expect you to obtain discount on the property price based upon these and the other issues mentioned.

## **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 the 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.

## **Services**

**ACTION REQUIRED:** 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.

## **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

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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.

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## **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 not be surprised given the way the terrace/balcony low hand rail, the way the staircase is and the way the wall has been removed on the ground floor if all these alterations have been carried out without permission from the Local Authority.

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 and contact us on any issues that you require further clarification on.

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## **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**



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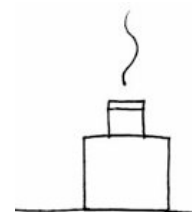
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## EXTERNAL

### CHIMNEY STACKS AND PARAPET WALLS



#### 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 two chimneys to this property they are located to the left and right hand sides and sit on the Party Wall (all directions given as you face the property).

#### Chimney One – left hand side

This chimney is brick finished with a lead flashing and four chimney pots. From what we could see from ground level it looked in average condition considering its age, type and style. Unfortunately we were unable to see the top of the chimney known as the flaunching, we therefore cannot comment upon them.



Chimney One

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We note that there is a satellite dish on the chimney, we do find that these can cause deterioration. There looks to be minor ad hoc re-pointing needed.

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## **Chimney Two – right hand side**

This chimney was built in a similar manner to the first chimney.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** With both chimneys we suggest that a close up inspection is carried out in the summer of 2012 when we are recommending work to the parapet wall is also carried out. Again there looks to be minor ad hoc re-pointing needed, please see photograph labelled rear right hand side parapet wall where you can see pointing is missing on the chimney.



Chimney Two and parapet wall

### 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.

## **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 are built from brick with a cement render. We can see that some of the render is deteriorating, cracking or is completely missing.

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Cracking to rear left hand side parapet wall



Rear right hand side parapet wall



Render coming away and brickwork spalling re-rendering needed

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend the entirety of the parapet walls are re-rendered and the lead flashing is checked. Dampness will get into the property if this is not carried out.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £2500-£5000, it is likely to be expensive due to the need to have scaffolding.

#### Render Defined

A sand and cement external coating applied in two or three coats or layers.

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

## **Party Wall**

The party wall relates to shared items, such as the chimneys 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 and parapet walls 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.

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## **ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS**



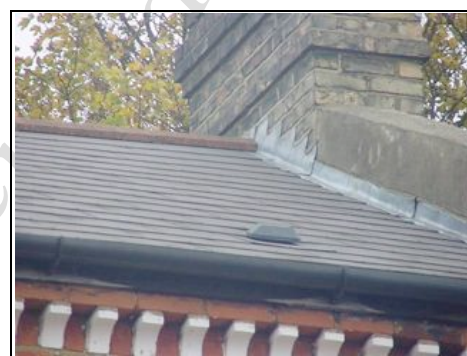
*The Roof Coverings and Underlayers section considers the condition of the outer covering of the roof. Such coverings usually endure the extremes of climate and temperatures. They are susceptible to deterioration, which ultimately leads to water penetration.*

*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, the rear flat roof and the front bay window roof.

### **Main Roof**

The main roof is pitched and clad with a manmade slate, and, from ground level, this looks in average condition considering the roofs age type and style. With this age of roof there will usually be a few missing or displaced slates, this is nothing unusual.



Main roof

We were quite pleased to see the light weight replacement roof considering the structure and condition. We had a limited view of the roof as we could not view it at the rear.

### **Vented roof**

We noted some vents which are often known as plastic mushrooms in the roof which were commonly used in the 1980s and 1990s to help vent a roof and stop/reduce condensation.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** When you carry out work to the chimneys and parapet walls you need to have a closer inspection of this roof and carry out periodic inspections and maintenance of the roof, as required.

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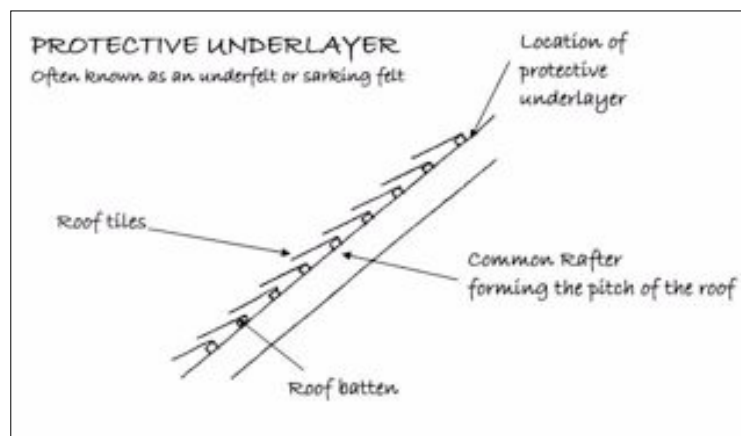
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## **Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)**

*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.*



When we inspected the loft space we found a Hessian base Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s. We generally found it to be in average condition, it is damaged in a few more places than we normally find.



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

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## Low level pitched roof to front bay window

The low level pitched roof to the front bay window is clad in a manmade slate.



Pitched roof over front bay window

## Flat Rear Roof

*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.*



Rear roof clad in decking

The rear flat roof forms the terrace/balcony area and we are unable to view the material used due to the presence of timber decking.

However we could see that the upstand is in asphalt which in our opinion is a Rolls Royce material for flat roofs and fairly unusual to have on this era of residential property even on modern extensions. We would comment that we could see next to no fall on the roof.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** During the summer of 2012 we would recommend you lift all of the decking so that you can see the roof beneath and take photographs and email these to us and we would be happy to comment on the condition.

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.

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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 the roof itself.

Finally, we were only able to see approximately fifty percent of the main roof due to the rear being hidden 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.

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## 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

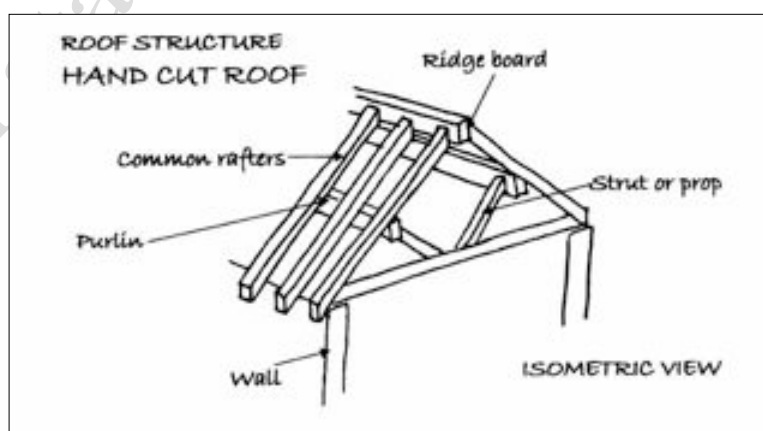
#### Roof Access

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located rear bedroom. 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.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** In this instance the sketch is not correct as there are not any struts or props in the roof. We would recommend that these are added.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## **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



General view of inside of roof

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



Purlin

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

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

## **Fire Walls**

The property has two brick firewalls which are located one to the left hand side and one to the right 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.

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### **Water Tanks**

There is relatively modern plastic water tank hidden amongst all the many stored items in the roof.

We would always recommend that water tanks be drained down and cleared of any debris etc. (we have seen dead birds and other unmentionable things in these tanks). As you are cleaning your teeth with this water it is best that it is as clean as possible!



Water tank

### **Ventilation**

We were pleased to see mushroom vents. Please see our comments in the earlier part of the roof section.

### **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 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

From what we could see there is predominately plastic gutters and down pipes however we believe there may be some cast iron remaining to the front of the property. The condition of the gutters and downpipes that we could see is in average condition for their age, type and style although we do feel there is a problem with regard to rainwater being discharged to the rear of the property.



Gutter and downpipe

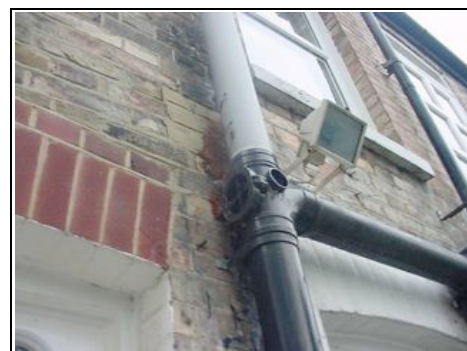
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

We would always recommend that the gutters and downpipes are cleaned out, the joints are checked and the alignment checked to ensure that the gutters fall towards the downpipes.

### Soil and Vent Pipe

The property has plastic soil and vent pipes. The soil and vent pipe has a very awkward route running along the top of the flat roof and is open and exposed to the environment.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend the soil and vent pipe is boxed in where it is exposed so that it does not freeze up and get damaged.



Soil and vent pipe

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



Soil and vent pipe awkward run

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## WALLS

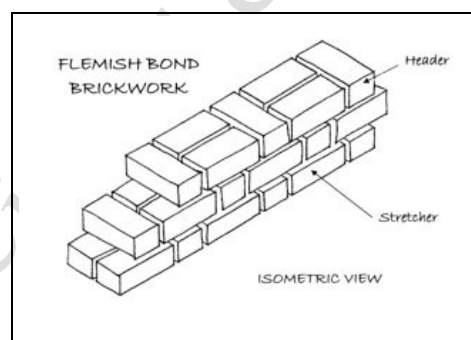


*External walls need to perform a variety of functions. These include supporting upper floors and the roof structure, resisting dampness, providing adequate thermal and sound insulation, offering resistance to fire and being aesthetically presentable.*

The walls are constructed of Flemish bond brickwork.

### Brickwork

The property is built predominately in a yellow/white brick with soft red brick detailing around the door arch and a band of brickwork to the window areas and top of the wall together with the soffit detailing originally in a lime mortar in what is known as Flemish bond brickwork.



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.



Brickwork.

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.

Generally Flemish Bond brickwork is liable to penetrating dampness

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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.

## **Spalling to soft red brickwork**

As is often the case the soft red brickwork used for detailing due to re-pointing in cement mortar is deteriorating and spalling. It is a priority that you have this re-pointed in a lime based mortar.



Spalling to soft red brickwork.

### Spalling Defined

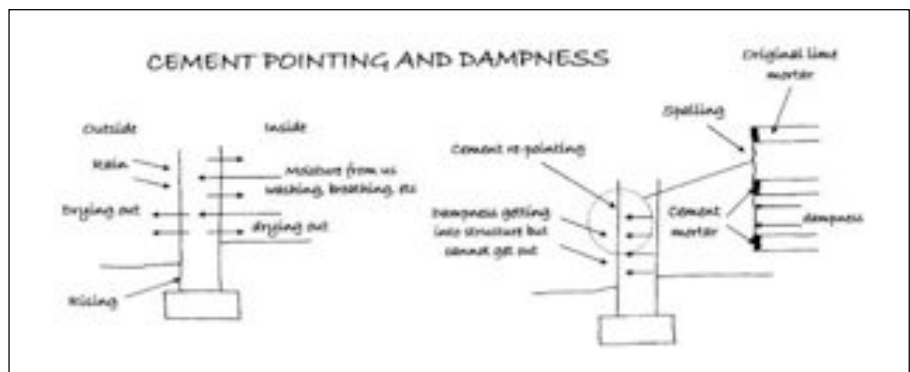
Spalling occurs to brick or stone when water penetrates the surface and via freezing and thawing starts to cause deterioration to the surface. This in turn allows further water penetration and the surface breaks up further. This ultimately can lead to water damage or structural damage to the area.

## **Re-pointing**

A cement mortar has been used rather than a lime based mortar. We recommend you use lime mortar in any future repairs regardless of what the builders say! Using lime mortar will limit further damage to the brickwork, which is almost impossible to repair successfully. However, we would add that many, if not most, of the properties that are re-pointed are re-pointed wrongly; it is only in recent years that we have discovered the problems that can occur from it.



Cement re-pointing



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## **Undulations and cracks to brickwork**

If you look closely at the brickwork you can see it undulates slightly and there is some old cracking to it. This relates to the movement in the property that we have mentioned earlier.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Cracking at front

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, 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 / plaster has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork / plaster would be if it were opened up for this age, style and type of construction. We are however aware that all is not always as it seems in the building industry and often short cuts are taken. Without opening up the structure we have no way of establishing this.

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## **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 possibly with a bedding of lime mortar.

### **London Clay**

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

### **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.

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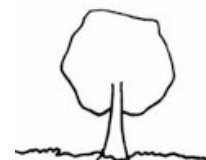


Finally, we have not excavated the foundations but we have drawn conclusions from our inspection and our general knowledge of this type, age and style of property.

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

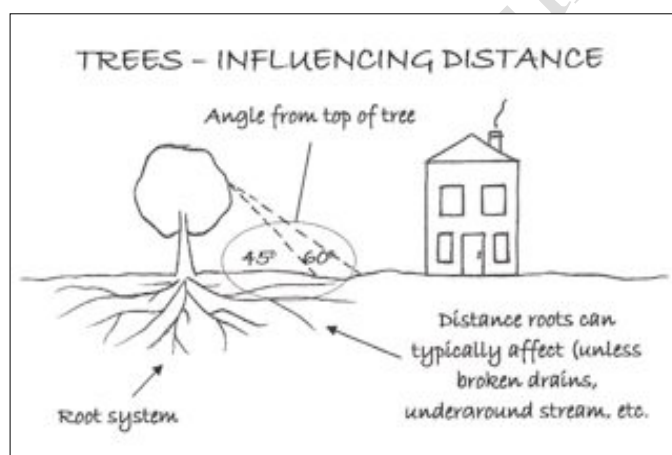
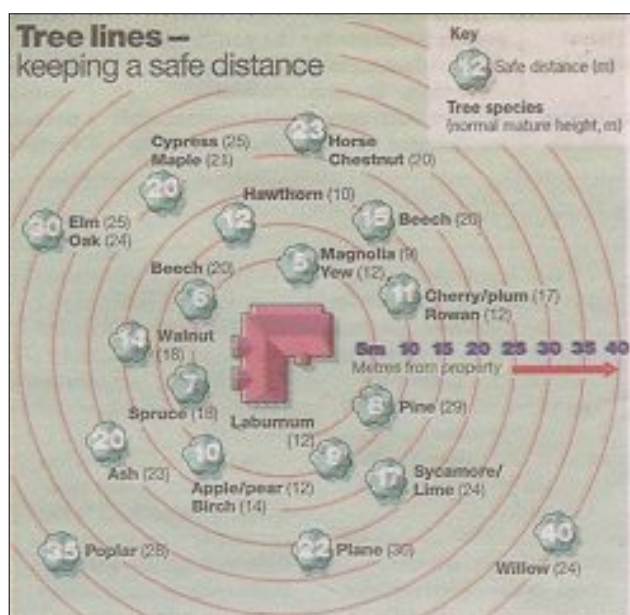
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## TREES



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

There are no trees within influencing distance of the property.

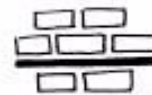


### Influencing Distance Defined

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, cannot see a damp proof course due to the render plinth but in this age of property it is likely a slate damp proof course is present.



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

Damp proof course cannot be seen due to render plinth.

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.

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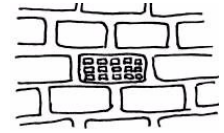
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## AIRBRICKS



*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.*

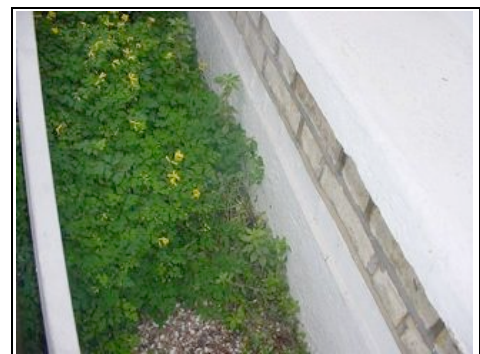
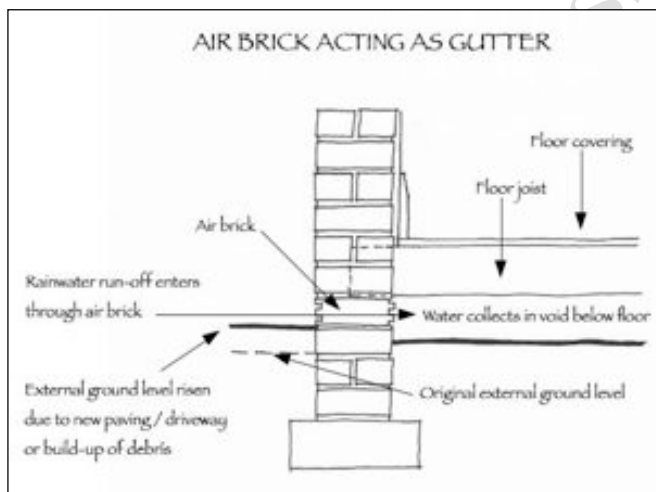
### Low Level Air Bricks

The floors to this property are what is known as a suspended timber floor. This means there should be a through flow of air beneath. Subfloor ventilation is essential in discouraging rot and on no account should the airbricks be obstructed.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Air brick acting as gutter



Looking for airbricks and not finding any at front of property

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.

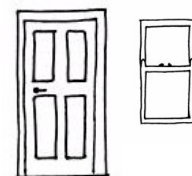
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## FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS

*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 and also there is a brickwork detail often known as dog tooth in soft red brick. Please see our comments on soft red brick in the walls section.

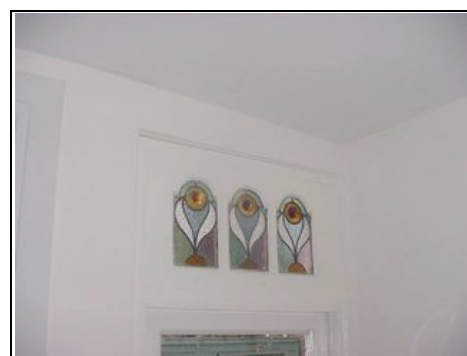
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Make sure gutters and downpipes are watertight before carrying out any work on fascias and soffits.



Dog tooth detailing at fascias and soffits

### Windows and Doors

The property has plastic double glazed windows, which generally look to be of a reasonable quality. We would draw your attention to the fact that sealed double glazed units can fail, particularly as a result of poor workmanship during installation. Failure of the seal leads to condensation between the two panes of glass and simply replacing the affected units may not provide a satisfactory long-term solution. In this case the profile of the windows follows the sliding sash configuration.



Window detailing

There is a timber leaded light to the rear and also to the door to the terrace/balcony.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** In this case some paintwork is required to the timber doors particularly the one to the terrace/balcony.

Enquiries should be made as to the existence of any transferable guarantees. Generally it is considered that double glazed units have a life of about ten years.

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.

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## **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.*

It is fairly minimal but the areas that do require action such as the timber doors should be carried out in the summer of 2012.

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.

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**INTERNAL****CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES**

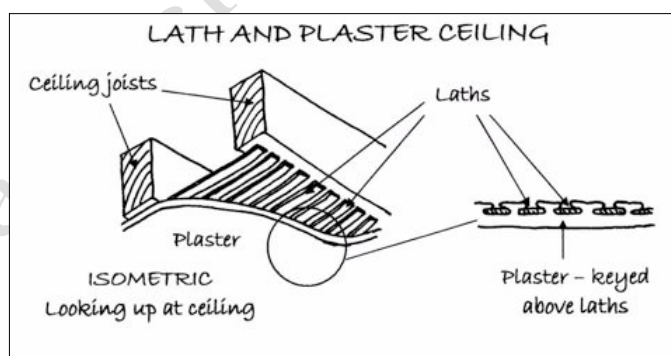
*In this section we look at the finish applied to the structural elements such as the plasterwork applied to the ceiling joists, walls or partitions, together with the construction of the internal walls and partitions.*

**Ceilings**

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that originally this property is likely to have had a lath and plaster ceiling. However there have been made alterations to the property such as removing the central wall on the ground floor and are now likely to be a mixture of plasterboard and lath and plaster..

**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.

**Internal Walls and Partitions**

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

**Perimeter Walls**

Originally these would have been constructed with a wet plaster, possibly a lime plaster. We now believe they are a skim coat of gypsum plaster. It is of course impossible to determine the construction without opening up the walls and have therefore again taken an educated guess.

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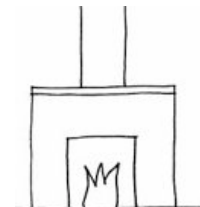
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Finally, ceilings, walls and partitions have been inspected from floor level and no opening up has been undertaken (unless permission has been obtained by yourselves). In some cases the materials employed cannot be ascertained without samples being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

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## **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 left hand side (all directions given as you face the front of the property).

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.



Left hand side chimney breast

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 and we do not comment as modern techniques for adding support can concealed very well particularly when plastered over.

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.

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

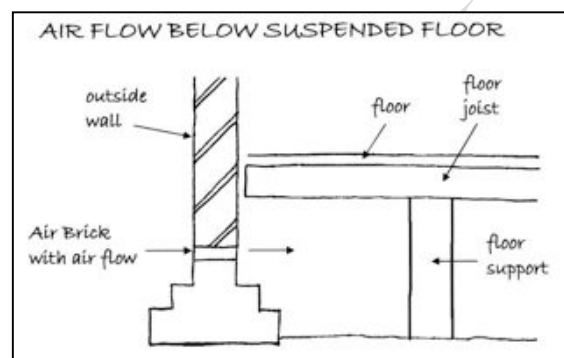


*Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.*

## Ground Floor

### Suspended Timber Floor

The ground floor of the property is a suspended timber floor to everywhere but the kitchen which is tiled and believed to be solid underneath assumed concrete. Suspended timber floors are wood floors suspended above ground level and require ventilation beneath them to help reduce the chance of wet rot, dry rot and woodworm. Suspended timber floors are generally a softer floor than our common concrete floor or the older tiled floors. There are concerns in recent times with regard to the heat loss due to the air void beneath these floors (although warm air rises) with the problems that can relate to drafts going underneath the floors.

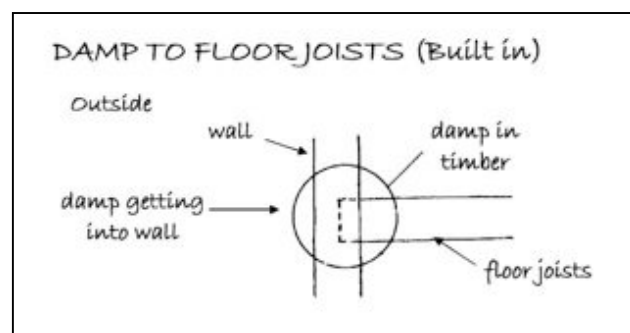
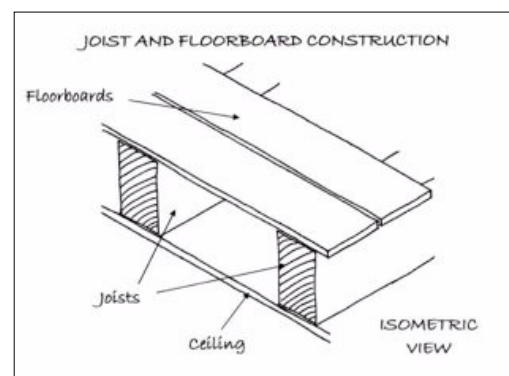


## First Floor

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.



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

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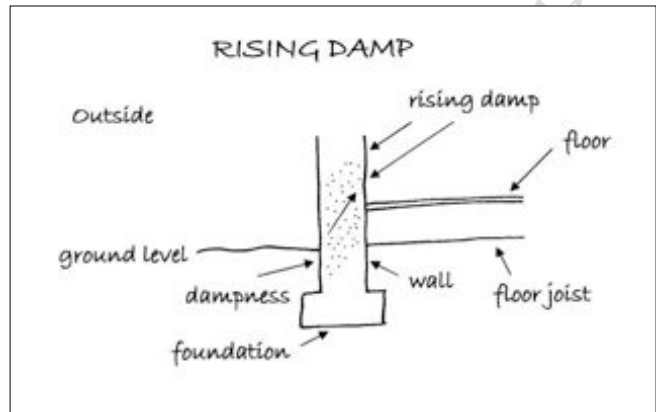


## DAMPNESS

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

### Rising Damp

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



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 but we think there is likely to be condensation in the kitchen due to the tiled floor but this we would not normally consider a problem as it is not a habitable room.



Testing for rising damp

The main area of dampness that we would draw to your attention is due to the similar ground levels to the rear where we feel dampness may get in in this area and the lack of ventilation underneath the suspended timber floor.

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

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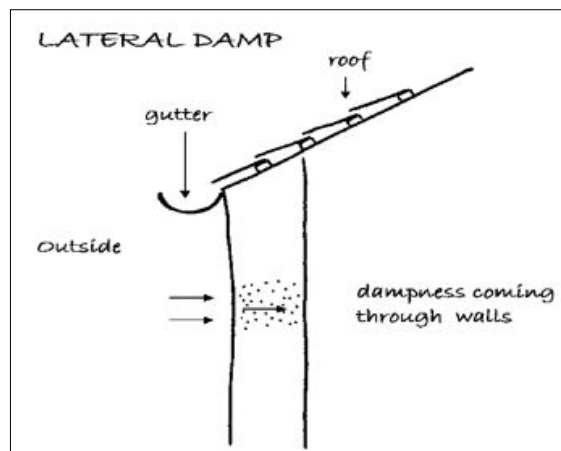
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## **Lateral or Penetrating Dampness**

*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 dampness.

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



Testing for lateral 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 when we carried out the survey however due to the internal bathroom and the way the kitchen is laid out please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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 and ventilation of properties. Normally opening windows first thing in the morning resolves most condensation issues.

### **Extract fans in kitchens and bathrooms**

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary regarding replacing the small extract fan with a larger humidity controlled extract fan in the bathroom and adding one to the kitchen.

**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.

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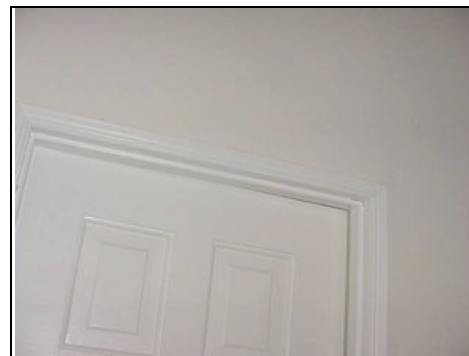
## **INTERNAL JOINERY**



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

### **Doors**

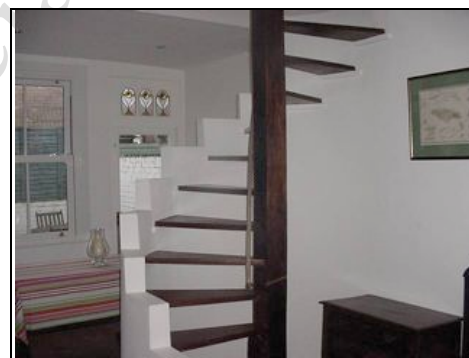
The doors are painted panelled doors.



Panelled door

### **Staircase**

The stairs were very unusual to find in this age of property. Whilst we appreciate they are a feature they do not meet current Building Regulations as they do not have a proper hand rail but a rope. As mentioned with the terrace/balcony area the balustrade would need to be approximately 1.2m high with 100mm openings.



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.

### **Kitchen**

We found the kitchen in average condition, subject of course to some wear and tear as one would expect.

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.

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## 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 have not visually seen any dry rot during the course of our inspection.

We would advise that we have not opened up the floors and have concerns regarding the laminated flooring together with having a limited view of the roof due to the many stored items in this area.

### 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.*

Again, we have not visually seen any wet rot during the course of our inspection.

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 and floor are the main areas that we look for woodworm.

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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 we were unable to examine the floor due to it being covered with laminate flooring.

**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. 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.

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## **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**

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 300mm, in this instance 100-200mm was present.

### **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 double glazed and therefore will have reasonable thermal properties.

### **Services**

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

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## 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.*

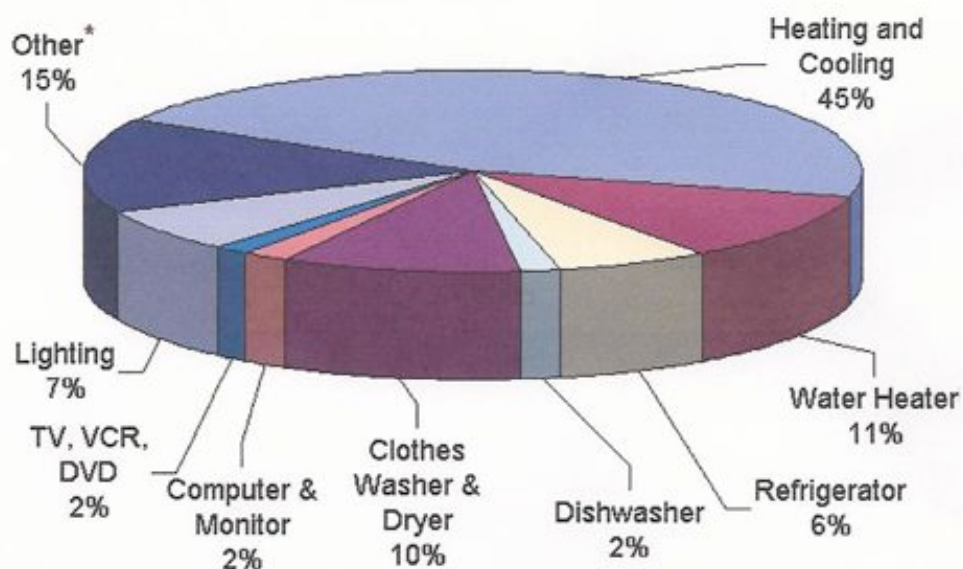
*or alternatively [www.cat.org.uk](http://www.cat.org.uk)*

*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.

What does my energy bill pay for?



\* "Other" represents an array of household products, including stoves, ovens, microwaves, and small appliances. Individually, these products account for no more than about 2% of a household's energy bills.

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## **OTHER MATTERS**

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

### **Security**

No security system was noted. It is a personal decision as to whether you feel one is necessary. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further. We suggest you contact a member of NACOSS (National Approval Council for Security Services), obtainable through directory enquiries, or your local Police Force for advice on a security system.

### **Fire / Smoke Alarms**

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. 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.

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## **SERVICES**

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

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

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# ELECTRICITY



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

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

## Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the lounge. The fuse board looked fairly new 1980s/1990s possibly later.



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.

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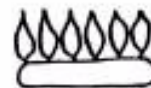
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In addition to this your Legal Advisor is required to make full enquires with the owners to establish if any electrical installation work has been carried out and to provide suitable certification for any works carried out after 1<sup>st</sup> January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

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

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## 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. The consumer unit is located in the kitchen.

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**

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

### **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 boiler was located in the kitchen it is manufactured by Valliant.

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

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contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

### **Ten Minute Heating Test**

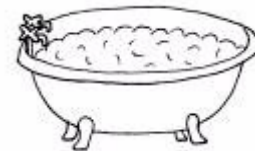
There was no owner / occupier at the property and therefore we do not turn the heating on in case there is a problem with it.

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.

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## **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 three piece bathroom suite bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin, and WC, which looks in average condition, subject to some day-to-day wear and tear, as one would expect. We noticed some mould in the bathroom.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please note our comments with regard to improving the extract fan system in the bathroom which we feel is poor for an internal bathroom.

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 one inspection chamber / manhole.

#### **Inspection Chamber / Manhole One (front)**

We duly lifted the cover and found it to be free flowing at the time of our inspection.

From what we could see it is brick built.



Manhole one

We have only undertaken a visual inspection of the property's foul drains by lifting covers and running water from the taps within the house.

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

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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.

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## 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.

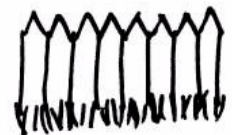
### PARKING

Parking is on roadside on a first come first serve basis. There is a resident parking permit scheme.



Parking restrictions

### EXTERNAL AREAS

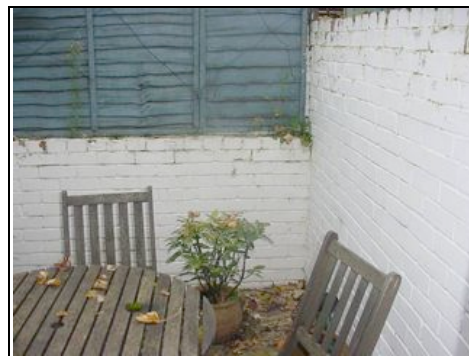


#### Front Garden

There is a small front garden.

## **Rear Garden**

The garden to the rear is small and paved.



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.

## **Neighbours**

### **Left Hand Neighbours**

When we knocked at the door at the time of the survey no one was in.

### **Right Hand Neighbours**

We found the right hand neighbour very chatty and very complementary about the area.

## **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.

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- k) Confirm from enquiries that no underground tunnels, wells, sewers, gases, mining, minerals, site reclamation/contamination etc., exist, have existed or are likely to exist beneath the curtilage of the site upon which the property stands and which could affect the quiet enjoyment, safety or stability of the property, outbuildings or surrounding areas.
- l) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.
- m) Any outstanding Party Wall Notice or the knowledge that any are about to be served.
- n) Most Legal advisors will recommend an Envirosearch or a similar product is used by you to establish whether the area falls within a flood plain, old landfill site, radon area etc. If your Legal Advisor is not aware of Envirosearch or similar please ensure that they contact us and we will advise them of it. Any general findings should be brought to their logical conclusion by using appropriate specialist advisers.

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

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

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

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

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



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

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## **REFERENCES**

The repair and maintenance of houses

*Published by Estates Gazette Limited*

Life expectancies of building components

*Published by Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and  
Building Research Establishment*

Surveying buildings

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

House Builders Bible

*By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press*

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# APPENDICES

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## **LIMITATIONS**

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

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

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

## **ENGLISH LAW**

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

## **SOLE USE**

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

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

## **WEATHER**

It was dull and overcast at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

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 due to us not opening up the floors and due to us not having full access to the roof and having a limited view due to the mass of stored items.



Mass of stored items in roof

## **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

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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.



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

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

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

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

## INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[www.motleyfool.co.uk](http://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](http://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](http://www.zoopla.co.uk)

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

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## **Condensation and Damp Walls**

### ***Why are my walls damp?***

Damp walls occur for many reasons. They can be very inconvenient, not only damaging the wall paper or the paint finish, also mould can occur on clothing and can also be bad for your health. We have seen dampness at high level, it can be leaking roofs, gutters or hopper heads. These tend to occur around the top of the wall and the ceiling. At mid-level to the property it could be the central wall, this is often caused by leaking downpipes or defective pointing, or poorly fitted windows or a missing damp proof course to the windows, and at ground level rising damp tends to get blamed for all problems, but as you will see from reading this article and contacting us on our free phone number, 0800 298 5424, dampness at ground level can be for many reasons, everything from drains and gutters and gullies blocking, to downpipes discharging against the wall, or a high water table level. Whatever the reason, it can cause a situation that is very unpleasant to live in.

### ***Dampness put simply***

To establish exactly why a wall is damp you do need to consider many possibilities. Some of these you can effect by altering how you use the property and some of them you cannot. So, it makes sense to look at the damp problems that you can resolve.



### ***Dampness that you can help to solve***

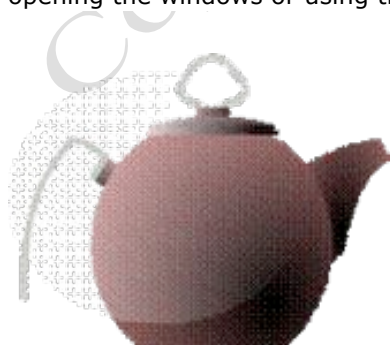
Probably the most common cause of dampness is condensation and this can be resolved or reduced considerably by changing the way that you use the property.

### ***Identifying condensation***

Tell tale signs of condensation are mould on the walls and furniture and on clothes and literally windows that are dripping wet. Condensation is where the moisture content of the air meets a cold surface, such as a window, and then the dampness occurs. This is very easy to see if it is on a window where it causes a misting effect, but it can be virtually detectable at first if it is onto a papered wall and often the first signs are when the mould occurs. It tends to occur more within the corners of the property in areas that are colder.

### ***So what can I do about condensation?***

To reduce condensation you need to increase the flow of air in the property. This can be as simple as opening the windows or using the trickle vents that are on the windows (small vents that open, often set at the top of windows) or using any vents that are set in the walls.



Condensation has become more common as we have made our houses more airtight. This was never a problem in years gone by, when we had rattley old sliding sash windows and wooden casement windows that didn't fit properly and also there was less things causing condensation. Today we have many items such as showers, washing machines, kettles, steam cooking, etc, to add to the moisture content of the air.

It really can be as simple as opening the windows to bring in some fresh air that has less moisture content. We do appreciate that this is easier said than done during the winter

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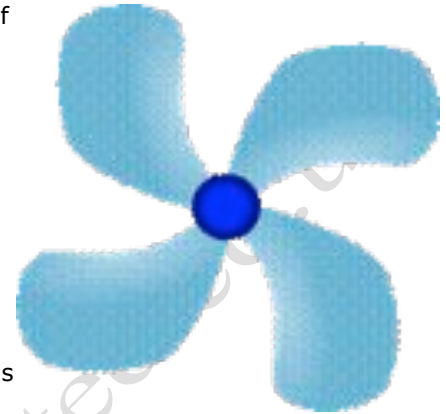
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months when it is freezing cold outside and the last thing you want to do, having warmed up a room, is to allow cold air into it. In such a case as this, if you haven't got trickle vents on the windows or a vent into the house, then you need to add them. If the problem is in an area such as the kitchen or the bathroom then you need to add extractor fans. Remember the key to using condensation is to have air that doesn't have much moisture in it.

An example of condensation that we are coming across more and more is where an extractor fan is installed to the bathroom to take away the excess moisture, but unfortunately where ceiling extractor fans are fitted and these are very popular where a light is fitted, and if they are fitted directly over the shower it makes sense to have one fitted, then the extract flue is left to discharge into the roof space or attic, rather than taking it to a vent to outside air.

The reason this is the case is because it is much harder to get it vented to outside air. We have been into a roof where literally it was like a rain forest. You could tap the underside of the felt in the roof and get covered with water. Fortunately, we only see this once every five to ten years but we can only imagine it is going to become more common with the general increase in thermal efficiency of houses. Whilst we feel thought has been given to the air change in properties there is a big human factor in having to use the extract fans in the bathroom and kitchen and having to maintain them once they are broken.



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