

JOB REFERENCE: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

xxxxxxxxxxxxxx,
Wandsworth,
London,
SW18 xxx



FOR

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Prepared by:

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Marketing by:

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INTRODUCTION

Firstly, may we thank you for using our services once again and your kind instruction of xxxxxxxxxx; we have now undertaken a Building Survey (formerly known as a Structural Survey) of the aforementioned property. This Survey was carried out on xxxxxxxxxx.

As you may recall 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.

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

As always we recommend that you set aside time to read the report in full, consider the comments, make notes of any areas that 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 house 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:

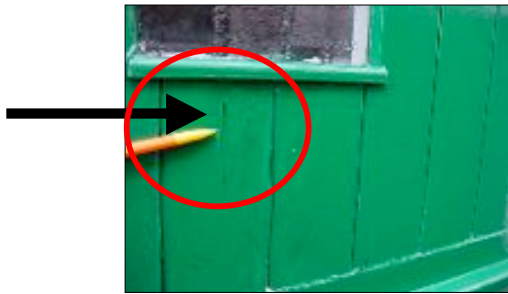
GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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, pen, circle or arrow 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 three storey town house style property with a single storey extension to the rear and a garage to the lower ground floor. The property is part of a fairly modern residential development.

There is a garden to the rear of the property (which is partly covered by the single storey kitchen extension) and parking spaces to the front, although parking did seem limited on the day of our survey.

We have been advised that the property was built in 1999. 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:

1989	Unforgettable time in history, the Berlin Wall falls reuniting a country
1992	The Queen celebrates her Ruby Jubilee, long live the Queen!
1994	The Channel Tunnel is opened, connecting two nations
1997	Animal cloning, Dolly the sheep is born.
Late 1990s	Property Boom in Britain, average house prices almost treble!
2000	Broadband becomes widely available giving constant connection to the internet
2004	The Queen Mary II ship is christened by Queen Elizabeth II
2006	Celebrations at Windsor castle, Queen Elizabeth II turns 80

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EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



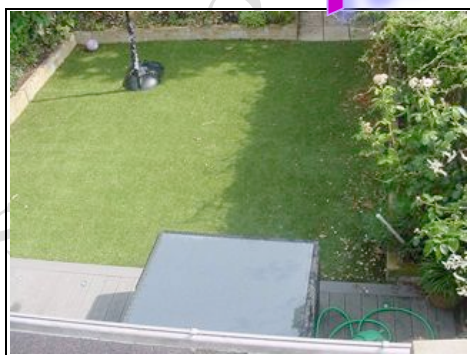
Front elevation



Rear View



Front view



Rear garden



Rear garden looking towards the property (with Max the dog!)

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

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

Lower Ground Floor

- 1) Kitchen/dining area/ lounge area (rear)
- 2) Utility room (front left)
- 3) Garage (front right)

Upper Ground Floor

- 1) Lounge/reception room (rear)
- 2) Study/bedroom (front right)
- 3) Cloakroom (front left)

First Floor

- 1) Master bedroom (rear right)
- 2) Dressing room (rear left)
- 3) En suite bathroom (internal, right middle)
- 4) Bedroom (front right)
- 5) Family bathroom (front left)

Second Floor

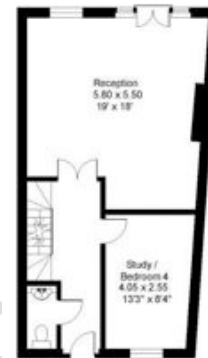
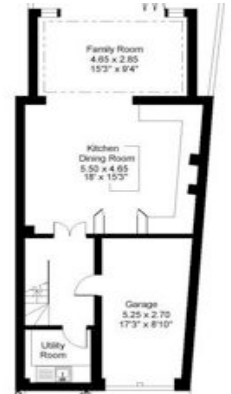
The second floor accommodation is built partly within the roof and consists of:

- 1) Bedroom
- 2) En suite shower room

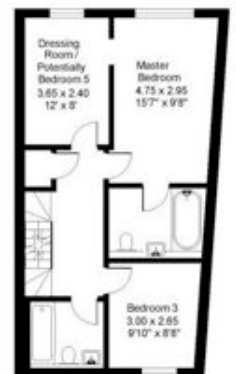
Outside Areas

The property has a garden to the rear and parking space to the front which gives access to the lower ground floor garage. As mentioned there was very little parking available to us on the day we carried out the survey, this may or may not be important to you.

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



Ground floor



First floor



Second floor

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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.

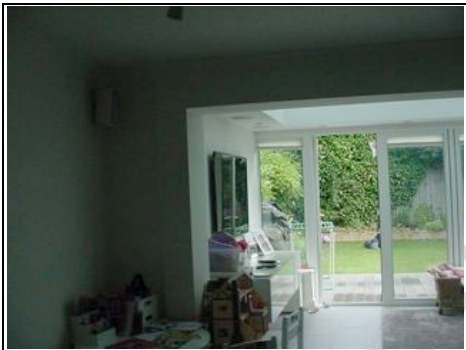
Lower Ground Floor



Hallway



Utility Room (front left)



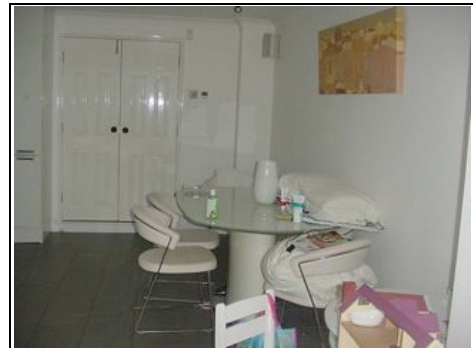
Dining area



Lounge area



Kitchen area



Breakfast area

Upper Ground Floor



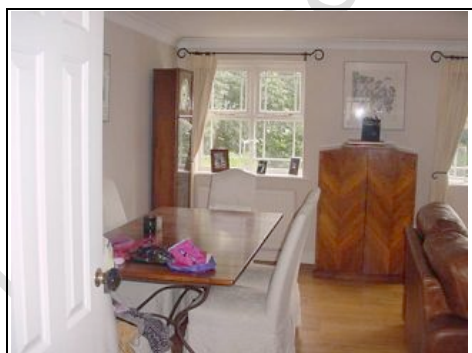
Hallway



Cloakroom (front left)



Study (front right)

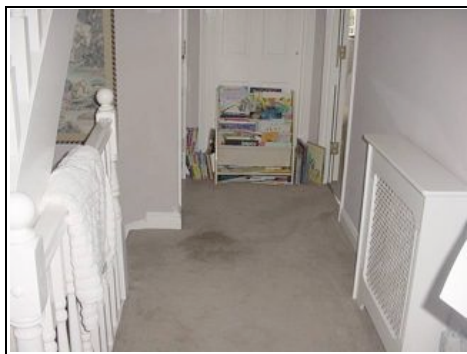


Lounge / reception room (rear)

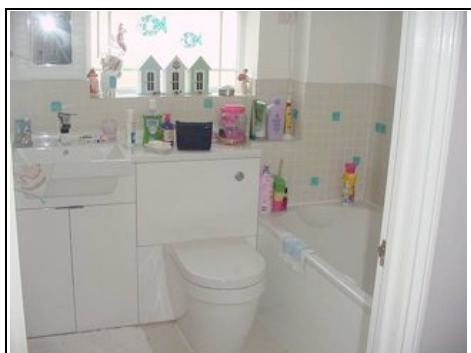


Lounge/reception room (rear)

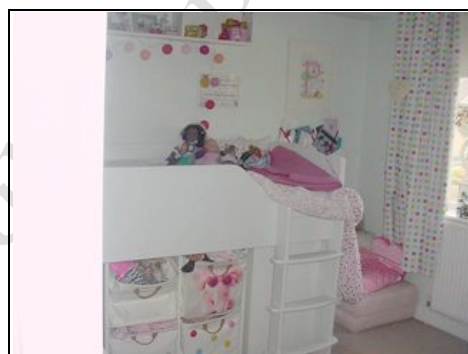
First Floor



Landing



Family bathroom (front left)



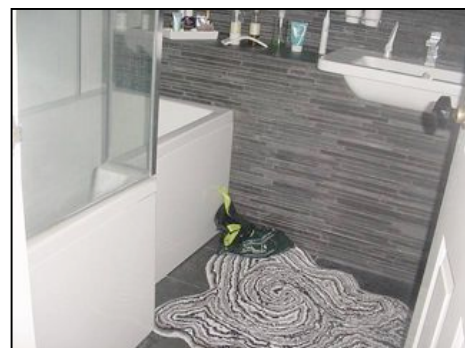
Bedroom (front right)



Dressing room (rear left)

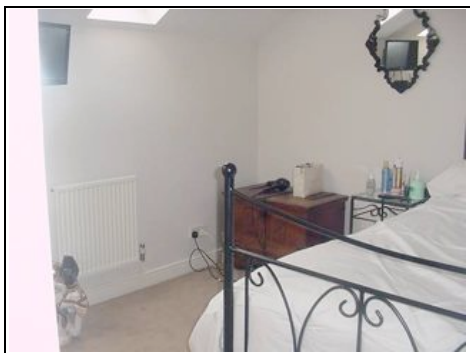


Master bedroom (rear right)

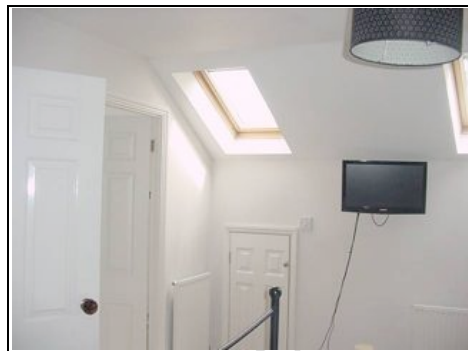


En suite bathroom (internal)

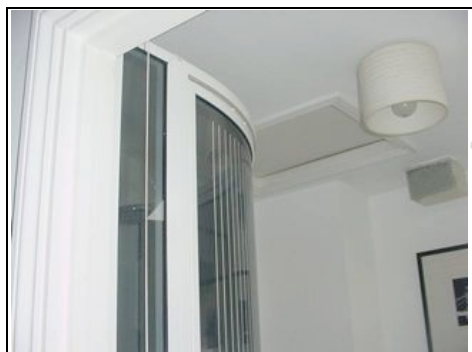
Second Floor



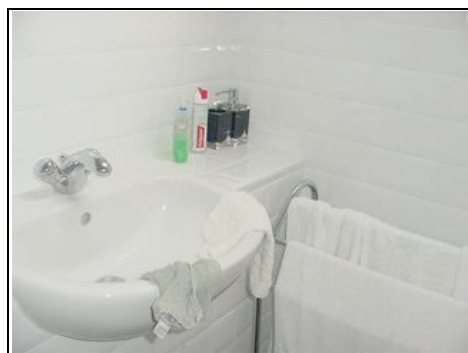
Bedroom (front)



Bedroom (front)



En suite shower room



En suite shower room

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Chimneys:	Brick chimney
Main Roof:	Pitched, clad with manmade slate
Main Roof Structure:	Prefabricated roof truss with a cut timber roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic profile
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Internal
Walls:	Stretcher Bond Brickwork
Structure:	Timber frame structure (assumed)
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Timber double glazed windows

Internal

Ceilings:	Plasterboard (assumed)
Walls: Perimeter	Dry lined (assumed)
Internal	Predominantly studwork (assumed)
Floors: Lower Ground Floor	Concrete (assumed)
Ground Floor	Joist and floorboards with joist hangers (assumed)
First Floor	Joist and floorboards with joist hangers (assumed)
Second Floor	Joist and floorboards with joist hangers (assumed)

Services

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (all assumed). The two electric fuse boards are located in the garage and the Worcester wall mounted boiler is located in the study.

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

Finally, your Legal Advisor needs to check and confirm the above and advise us of anything they require further clarification on before legal commitment to purchase the property.



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 300 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.

Once you have read the report we would recommend that you revisit the property to review your thoughts on the building in light of the comments we have made in this survey.

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) You advised us that the property is in a good location for you.
- 2) The property is spacious particularly with the adding of the rear extension.
- 3) The garden is still of a reasonable size even though there has been an extension added. It is only overlooked by the surrounding property as there is a school field/playing field to the rear.

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

The Bad

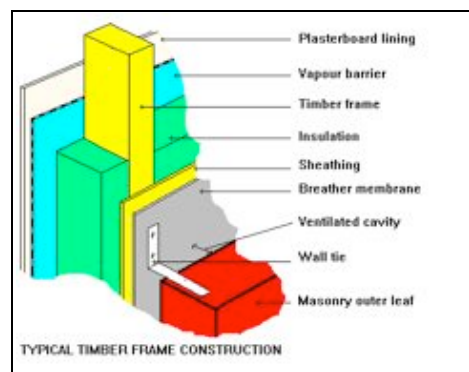
Problems / issues raised in the 'bad' section are usually solvable, but often need negotiation upon. However, a large number of them may sometimes put us off the property.

1.0) Timber framed property

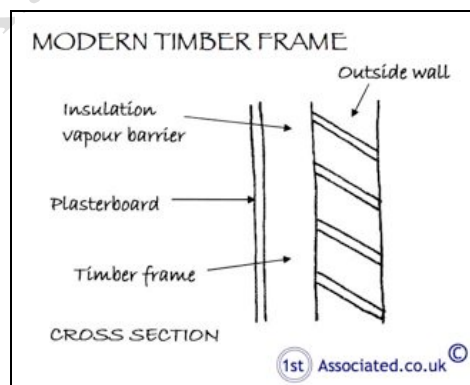
You may or may not be aware that this appears to be a timber framed property which is a non-traditional way of building houses that has been used through various eras of construction.

However, it is generally considered that the latest timber framed properties are built to a good standard. Unfortunately we do not have evidence in situ of this, as yet, as the houses are relatively new in property terms, i.e. twenty to thirty years old, whereas with property we generally like a hundred years before we pass comment.

We do not know in the long term if they will last as well as a traditionally built house. Please see our article in the appendices regarding timber framed construction.



Typical timber frame construction



Modern timber frame

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to be aware that this is a timber framed construction and that this may put some purchasers off buying it. This type of construction is also sometimes known as non-traditional construction although that term is predominantly used for properties built during the post-war period.

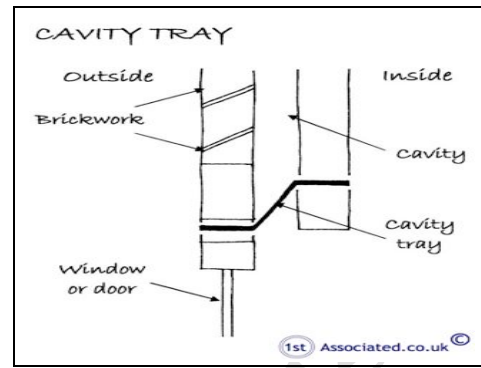
Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

2.0) Rear extension, does it have a cavity tray?

What we have found quite a few times with modern timber framed properties that have been extended in this way is that the builder has not understood the construction of the building and as such has not added a cavity tray where the extension meets the main building.

Cavity tray defined

A cavity tray transfers any water that has made its way into the structure back out of it via weep holes.



Cavity tray

ACTION REQUIRED: It is essential that your Legal Advisor checks and confirms that the Building Regulations have been complied with including the adding of a cavity tray. We are more than happy to comment on any drawings that you provide for us electronically.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

3.0) Efflorescence

We find it fairly common for efflorescence to be visible on timber framed properties to the brickwork. This can appear in white powder form in patches or large areas.



White powdery effect known as efflorescence



Efflorescence generally to the rear of the property

Efflorescence Defined

Efflorescence is the white salt found on brickwork/stonework. It is a natural phenomenon which is where the minerals in water as they dry out come to the surface of stone or brick and leave a white crystallised powder, almost flour like. On a red brick it can stand out considerably, almost appearing bright white on a lighter white or yellow brick it can almost disappear

ACTION REQUIRED: You can use a brick cleaning product for this in fact some developers use this whilst trying to sell the property. Unless all surrounding properties use the same product then this can mean the house stands out from the others. We have come across people that grow to like the efflorescence effect.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

4.0) Rear extension roof

The extension to the rear of the property that forms the kitchen/living area has a flat roof around the perimeter with a central glazed section. We have several comments about this roof.

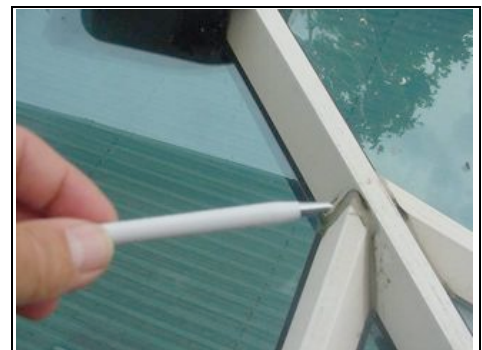
4.1) There are flat spots on the flat roof which means that water sits against the central double glazed area. We can see that moss is forming in this area.

4.2) We can also see to the glazed areas that there have been some repairs over the years.

4.3) We would also comment that in our experience the heat gain during the warmer months and the heat loss from the colder months (see below) can be considerable with this type of extension.



Flat areas on the roof with moss forming



Mastic repairs

- 4.4) We noted there was a fair amount of water sitting in the gutters of this roof indicating to us that the roof is not of the best quality as it is fairly basic thing for the gutter to allow the rainwater to run away.

We appreciate that glazed areas are put into this type of extension to add natural light into the area but the consideration should be on how the area is heated, cooled and ventilated as these areas can suffer with heat loss and heat gain (see the next section).

4.5) Heat loss in winter to the kitchen/dining/lounge area

We feel that the kitchen/dining/lounge area will suffer from heat loss during the winter months due to both the glazed roof area and also the sliding doors. Although both these areas have blinds we noted that they are standard blinds with little thermal insulation that will not prevent cold coming in or heat going out.



Large area of glazing can cause heat loss



Glazed area of roof can cause heat loss in winter.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend that you either replace the blinds with insulated blinds or add to the blinds with curtains or wooden shutters to keep these areas warm during the winter and cool during the summer.

Please see the Roof and Thermal Efficiency Sections of this Report.

5.0) Running gulley to garage

There is a slope towards the garage ending with a running gulley. In our experience this will need regular cleaning if not the water will end up in the garage which can be a problem if you store valuable or perishable goods in the garage.



Running gulley

ACTION REQUIRED: Next time it is raining check that the running gulley works sufficiently.

Please see the Outside Areas Section of this Report.

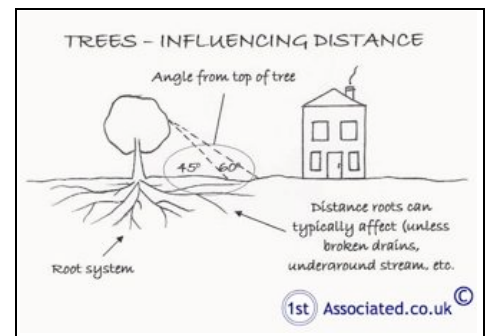
6.0) Large Tree

There is a large tree to the rear of the property in a neighbouring garden which we assume was taken into consideration when the property was originally built. However, with the adding of the new single storey extension to the rear of the property the tree may, or may not, have not been taken into consideration.



Large tree

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor to check with Building Regulations to ensure that foundations have been built adequately with consideration for the tree to the rear.



Influencing distance of trees

Please see the Trees Section of this Report

7.0) External joinery and the railings

The property has timber double glazed windows in a mock sliding sash style, timber fascias and soffits and railings which would all benefit from re-decoration in the summer/warm dry weather of 2013 or the summer/warm dry weather of 2014.



Timber to porch



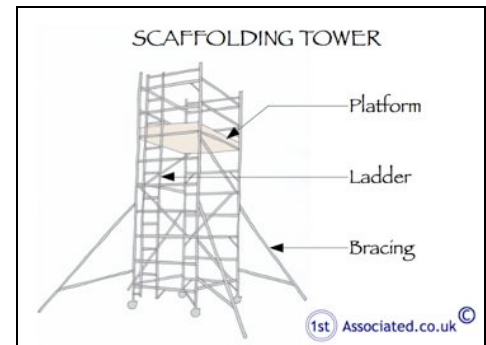
Timber windows



Railings need re-decoration

ACTION REQUIRED: Re-decorate all external joinery including windows, fascias and soffits and any metalwork such as the railings to the stairs.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £2,000 to £3,000, possibly more due to the fact that it is high level work that may need scaffolding. This work could possibly be carried out utilising a tower scaffold; please obtain quotations.



Tower scaffold

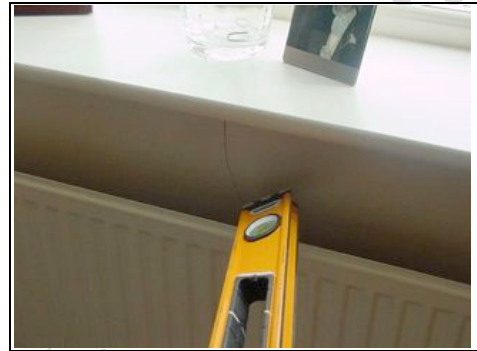
Please see the Windows and Doors and Fascias and Soffits Section of this Report.

8.0) Cracking internally

We noted a crack to the wall below the lounge window. We believe this crack may relate to the alterations to the ground floor to allow access into the new extension. If you can imagine, the ground floor wall has effectively been taken out.



Hairline crack



Hairline crack

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor to confirm that full Building Regulations and Planning Permission was obtained for the extension.

9.0) Fire standards and top/ second floor access

We noted that the second floor does not have the best standards from a fire safety point of view if you can imagine trying to get out of the room in a worst case scenario of a fire occurring (remembering this is a timber framed property).

It would be usual to have a fire door closer on this bedroom door. We noted a smoke alarm outside the door but we have not checked that this works.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to check that the smoke detectors work and add door closers. You also need to consider alternative ways of exit.

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

Please see the Other Matters Section of this Report

10.0) Leak in the upper ground floor lounge

We noted signs of a leak in the lounge on the upper ground floor, around the bookcase area, which we believe is coming from the master bedroom internal en suite bathroom. This could be a plumbing leak when the bath is used or it could be the overflow. Unfortunately the owners were not present for us to ask.

ACTION REQUIRED: We believe the owners are aware of this leak as it appears to have been painted over. You need to specifically ask the owners about the problem regarding leaking from the en suite bathroom.

ANTICIPATED COST: This depends upon the problem but if it is a plumbing leak then in the region of £100 to £300. We would always recommend re-masticing around any shower units and baths that are used as showers, as in this case; please obtain quotations.

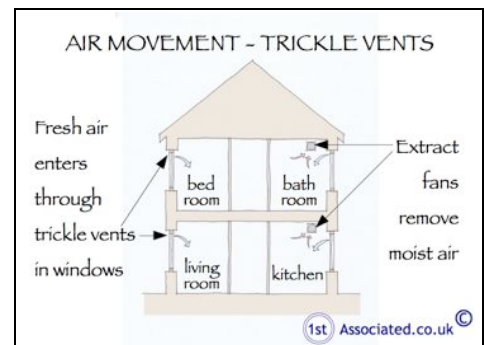
Please see the Internal Ceilings Section of this Report.

11.0) The property is very warm

On the day of the survey the property was very warm. We believe this was due not only to the hot weather conditions but also the lack of open windows in the property.



Neighbours window open,



Air movement via trickle vents in windows

We noted that although the windows have trickle vents they appeared to be quite small. Also the way that the windows open any heat in the property cannot leave that easily as it effectively hits the window. Having said that if it was a problem we believe that residents in the area would have changed the style of the windows, please see the next section.

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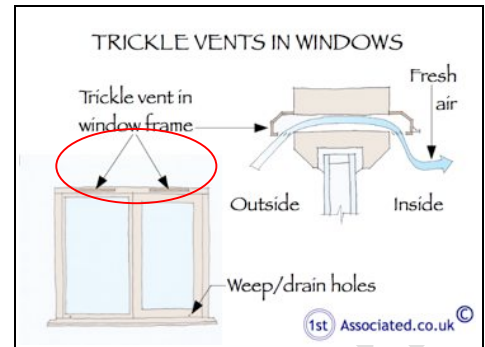
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Hidden trickle vent



Trickle vents allow air flow through the property

Trickle Vents Defined

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

Please see the Windows Section of this Report.

12.0) Conservation area

We believe that the property is in a conservation area and as such this limits how you can change and amend the building which may be why the windows have not been changed and why they are styled as traditional timber sliding sash windows.



Victorian sliding sash window

Please see the Windows Section of this Report.

13.0) Services

13.1) Pipework

We noted a combination of copper and plastic pipework in the garage.

We have recently, in the last six months, experienced problems with this type of system which we believe relates to differential movement/expansion between the two materials. This is both during the hot weather where pipes crack and in the colder weather where the pipes contract causing leaks.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would look at converting the pipes to copper and in the meantime would also look at giving more support to the plastic pipes. We noted that the plastic pipes are now used for both cold and hot water.



Copper and plastic pipe work



Pipe work in garage

13.2) Electric Fuse Boards

We noted two fuse boards in the garage, we are not certain why this is? One appeared to be older than the other.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor to enquire in writing why there are two fuse boards.



Two fuse boards

Please see the Services 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 feel falls within this section providing you are happy with the characteristics and associated costs of the property which we have mentioned throughout the report and that you are happy to carry out the work that we have recommended.

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Other Items

Building Warranty

You need to check/confirm whether or not this property is covered by an NHBC/Foundation 15 agreement or a similar type of warranty from the builder. You also need to check if the extension has some form of insurance backed warranty/guarantee with regards to the quality of the work.

Moving on to more general information.

Maintenance

This type of property is modern (i.e., less than one hundred years old) but nevertheless still requires ongoing maintenance and repair. A budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in a good condition. This will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration.

Services

Whilst we have carried out a visual inspection only of the services within the property and we would always recommend you have your own specific testing for each of the services.

Electrics

We carried out a basic test without any problems. The Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE) recommend a test and report whenever a property changes occupancy. This should be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

Heating

The Dog Sitter was unsure of how to turn the heating on. You do need to see that this working before you exchange contracts and that you see the service history. We would also recommend that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

Under floor heating in the kitchen

As you are aware we were unable to establish if this is under floor heating. We would recommend that you revisit when the owners are back from their holidays and ask them to demonstrate how the heating works. It would be beneficial to see electric bills as we have heard that running costs for electric under floor heating can be expensive.

Drainage

Whilst we ran the tap for 15 minutes without any build up or blockages the only way to be 100% certain of the condition of the drains is to have a closed circuit TV camera report.

ACTION REQUIRED - SERVICES:

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 would add that the property will look very different without the furniture in it. 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 Building 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 £125 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

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

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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:

Our final thought would be to make sure you are happy to purchase a modern timber framed constructed house.

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

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

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

MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT

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

TENURE – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)

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

ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

It is important to remember that the estate agents are acting for the seller (usually known as the vendor) and not the purchaser and are therefore eager to sell the property (no sale – no fee!). We are employed as Independent Chartered Surveyors and offer an independent point of view.

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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EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS AND ROOF WINDOWS

Chimney Stacks



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

There is one chimney to this property which is located to the right hand side (all directions given as you face the property).

Chimney One - right

This chimney is brick built finished with a lead flashing and two chimney pots/flues. From what we could see from ground level it looked in average condition considering its age, type and style. We were pleased to see the lead flashing on a modern construction.



Chimney (right)

Unfortunately we were unable to see the flaunching, we therefore cannot comment upon them.

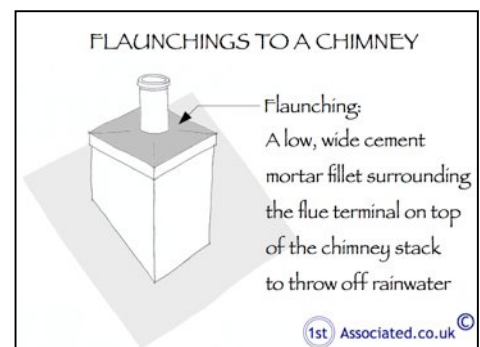
ACTION REQUIRED: Periodically inspect the chimney.

Flashings Defined

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

Flaunchings Defined

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



Flaunchings

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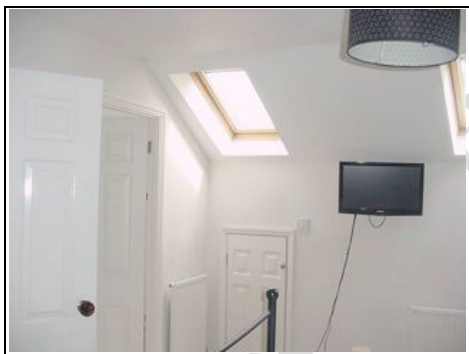
Roof Windows

The roof windows are difficult to see externally due to the angle of the roof. They are purpose made roof lights as we would expect in this era of property and looked to be in average condition with some slight staining on them. We believe this may relate to condensation.

The important factor with roof lights is the flashing around them; in this instance we would comment on the roof lights that we could see by standing on ladders that there were no obvious signs of defects to the flashings. We would add that there is some mould on some of the windows which probably relates to the adjacent shower room not extracting the moist air quickly enough.



Roof windows are difficult to see



Roof window in bedroom,
on second floor



Minor signs of mould

Finally we would add that it seems inevitable with roof windows that they will sooner or later leak. If this doesn't occur then they seem prone to condensation particularly where a shower is close by as in this case. Keep a cloth handy!

Party Walls

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

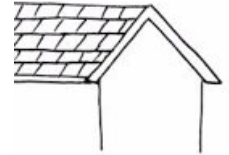
A structure that both parties enjoy the use of or benefit from. An example of this would be where both parties gain support from a wall or utilise a chimney or chimneys.

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 roof windows from the parts we could see above roof level. The inspection was made from ground level within the boundaries of the property (unless otherwise stated) using a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. A closer inspection may reveal latent defects.

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

ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

We will consider the roofs in three areas,

1. The main roof
2. The flat and glazed roof
3. Small porch 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, although there is some minor moss.

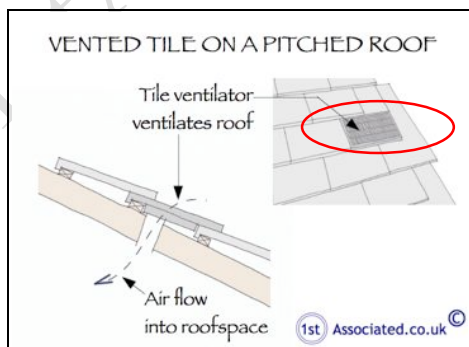
We could see some slates that had lifted slightly but there did not appear to be any replacement slates on the roof. We have also found that manmade slates get lighter in colour/turn grey/white over time.



Manmade slate
Minor moss visible

Roof vents

We were pleased to see vents in the roof both at base level and high level.



Roof vent



Main roof, manmade slate
with tile vent

ACTION REQUIRED Carry out periodic inspections and maintenance of the roof, as required. When these roofs do eventually require work it will be slightly difficult due to their high level. The new extension to the rear also adds a new dimension to carrying out roof work.

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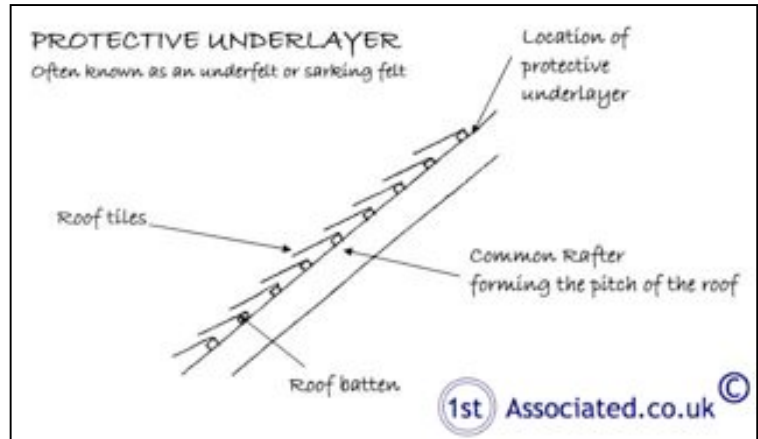
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Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)

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.



Protective Underlayer

Our view was limited due to rooms partly formed in the roof.

We could see the protective underlayer to the rear of the property and above the shower room. We noted a Hessian base Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s. We generally found it to be in average condition, with damage in some areas which is what we typically find.



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

Small porch roof

There is a small porch roof to the front of the property which we believe may be a Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) roof but cannot be one hundred per cent certain. We were pleased to see a lead flashing where it meets the walls.



Small porch roof

Extension roof to the rear

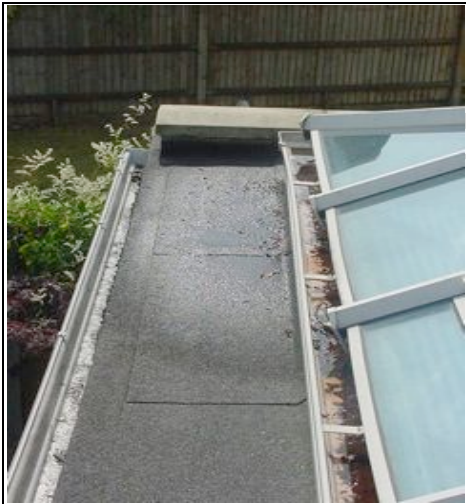
This consists of a flat roof with a glazed section to the middle.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments within the Executive Summary as we do not believe the construction is particularly good.

Our other concern is we do not believe it has been thought through properly with regard to heat gain and heat loss although we were pleased to see that there are windows that can be opened in the roof.



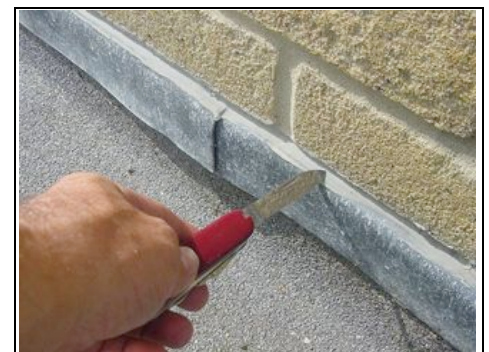
Rear extension roof



Rear flat roof



Circles represent windows we believe can be opened



We were pleased to see that Mastic has been used to bed in the lead which is our preferred method for this age, type and style of property

Fly problem in the blinds of the glazed roof section

We are sorry but we really do not have a solution for this problem!

Insulation

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 eighty percent of the main roof from ground level via our ladder or via any other vantage point that we managed to gain. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see, however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

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

ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

Main Roof

Roof Access

We have had a limited view due to rooms partly formed in the roof.

There are two points of access via a loft hatch in the shower room and the cupboard in the bedroom.

An electric light would be beneficial above the shower room although this area is too small to be of much use but there is also the rear roof/storage area.

Both the loft perimeters have been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly.

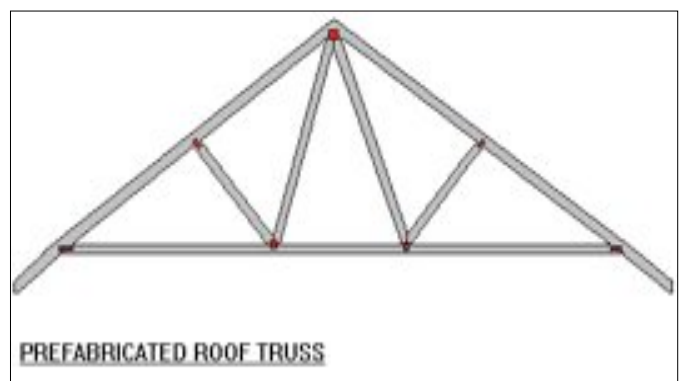


Access to the roof

Roof Structure

The property has a pre-fabricated trussed roof rafter with a cut timber roof. We believe the combination of both types of roof have been used to allow the curve to be formed in this crescent shaped area.

Pre-fabricated truss roofs are made in a factory and transported to site and then lifted into place.



Pre-fabricated roof truss

Cut timber roofs are made on site.

Without the manufacturers calculations, installation details and a copy of the drawings we cannot comment categorically that the roof structure other than to say the pre-fabricated truss roof is in line with what we typically see but we would reiterate we had a limited view.

Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

1. Serious active woodworm
2. Structurally significant defects to the timbers
3. Structurally significant dry rot
4. Structurally significant wet rot



General view of inside of the rear area of the roof

Our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof, the rooms formed in the roof, the insulation and stored items in the rear part of the roof. What we could see was generally found to be in average condition for its age, type and style. We could see approximately only thirty percent of the roof timbers and our comments are based upon this. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.

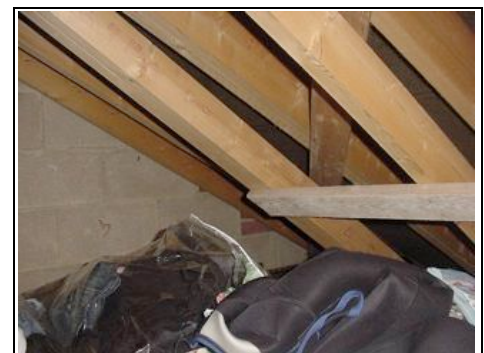


Insulation in the roof space above the shower room

ACTION REQUIRED: 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). The firewalls are also Party Walls.



Firewall

Fire Walls Defined

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

Ventilation

We could see ventilation externally in the roof via the vented roof tiles and vented soffit boards. As mentioned we would prefer to see ridge vents but could not see them in this case.

Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

Electrical Cables

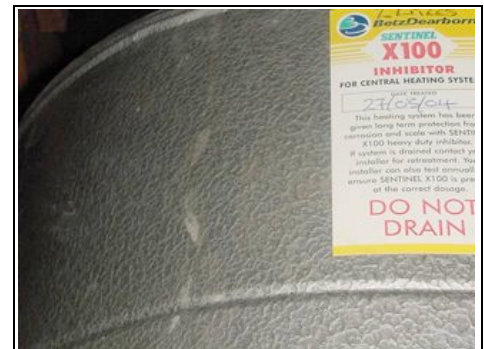
We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of wiring found in the roof. In this case we could not see it due to the mass of insulation.

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.

Water Tanks

We noted, we believe, a top up water tank for the central heating.



Water tank for central heating

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GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

Gutters and Downpipes

The property has plastic profile gutters and downpipes.

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

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

We 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.



Gutter and downpipe, leaking slightly indicated by staining to the swan neck



Profile plastic gutters

Soil and Vent Pipe

The property has internal soil and vent pipes.

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Soil and vent pipe boxed internally



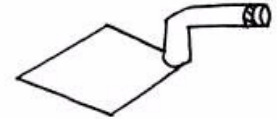
Automatic inlet valve in roof space

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

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WALLS

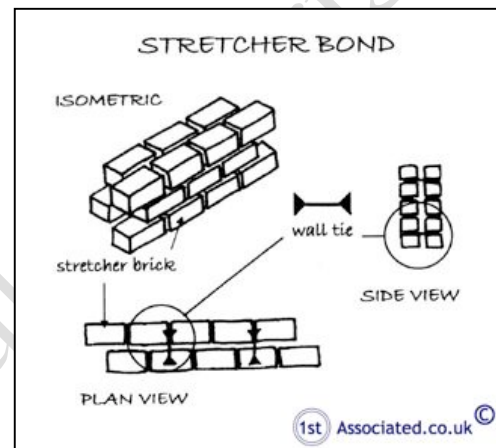


External walls need to perform a variety of functions. These include supporting upper floors and the roof structure, resisting dampness, providing adequate thermal and sound insulation, offering resistance to fire and being aesthetically presentable.

The walls are faced in brickwork with a timber frame construction internally.

Brickwork/outer walls

The outer face of the wall is constructed in Stretcher Bond brickwork. The term "Stretcher Bond" means that from the outside of the property, you can see a row of the sides of the bricks (known as "stretchers") followed by a course above of the same stretch of bricks set off so the joint is centrally above the "stretcher". This pattern would repeat throughout.



Stretcher Bond brickwork

Cavity Walls

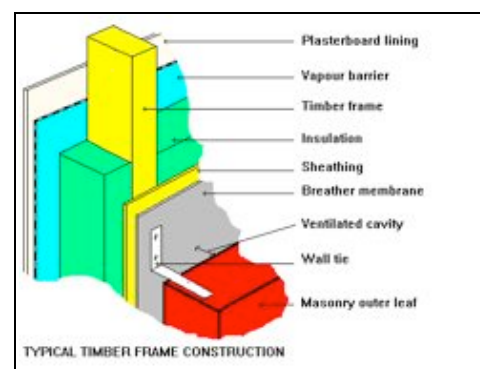
Cavity walls were first used in Victorian times. It originates from solid walls not always being waterproof against driving rain and not providing a good degree of thermal insulation. With a timber framed property it also offers a protective area between the possibly damp walls and the timber frame.



Stretcher bond brickwork

Timber frame

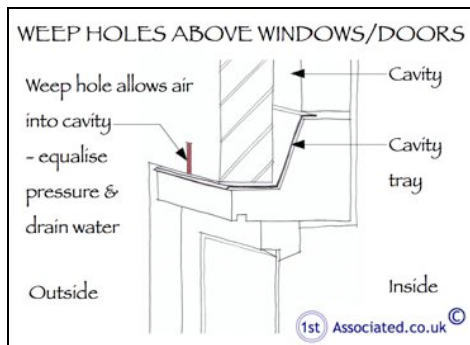
What is not visible with this property is the inner timber frame which is tied to the outer brick work. If you look to our sketch the red area is the outer stretcher bond brickwork. The inner areas are what you cannot see until you are inside the property where there is plasterboard lining.



Timber frame construction 44

Weep holes

The outer brickwork course effectively gets wet and this is why there are weep holes in various areas.



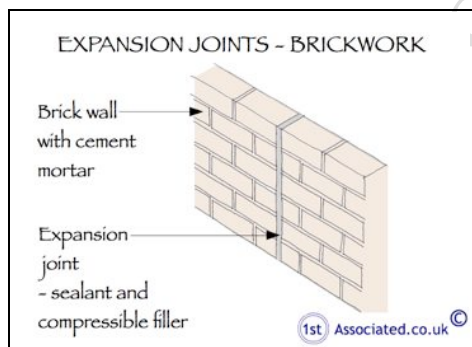
Weep holes



Weep holes above the window

Expansion joints

We were pleased to see the expansion joint in the brickwork behind the downpipe. This then allows the building to expand and contract which happens in this style of building.



Expansion joint in brickwork



Expansion joint

Wall ties

Just a quick comment with regards to the wall ties that hold the brickwork to the timber. We have generally not come across problems with these, with one exception where the wall ties were not screwed in correctly and there was literally a rattling noise in the house which no one knew the cause of. We had to thermal image the property to identify that the brackets were not secure properly.

It was not possible to thermal image this property on the day of the survey with it being such a warm day and there not being a differential in the heat between the outside and the inside (it is not always guaranteed that you can see this even with a thermal image camera).

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 / timber frame / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age 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 /timber frame / plasterwork have been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork / timber frame/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

We would expect to find a concrete foundation typically known as a 'deep strip concrete' foundation going down to a metre or slightly deeper dependent upon the age of the property.

London Clay

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

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.

Cracks

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 recommends a year of monitoring of any cracking. Please see the Executive Summary.

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

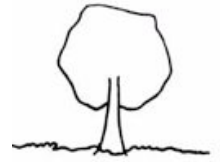
Finally, we have not excavated the foundations but we have drawn conclusions from our inspection and our general knowledge of this type, age and style of property.

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



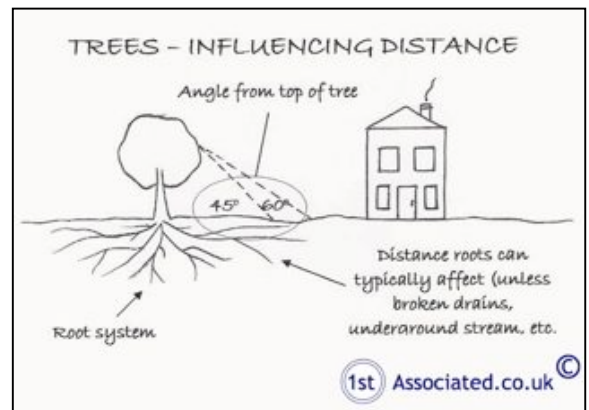
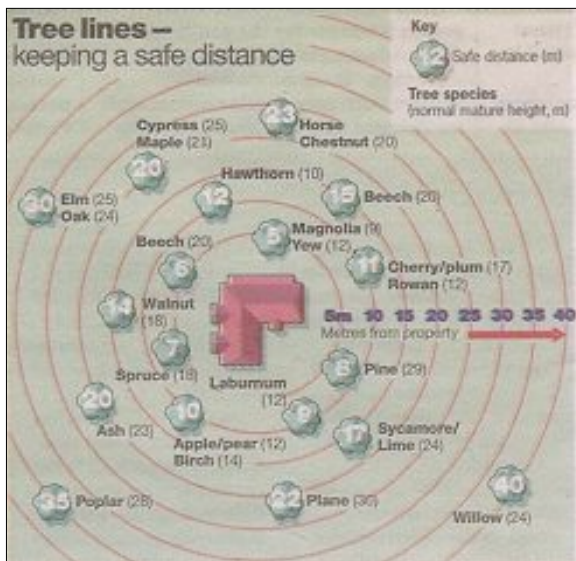
Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.

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

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



Large tree



Influencing distance of trees to a 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.

Ivy

We would always recommend that Ivy is cut back and put on a trellis to prevent damage to the brickwork.



Ivy growing on brickwork

Please also refer to the External Areas Section

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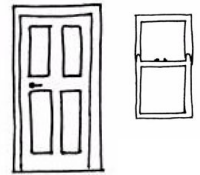
DAMP PROOF COURSE

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, with this age of property it would have been built in as work proceeds.

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

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



FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS

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

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

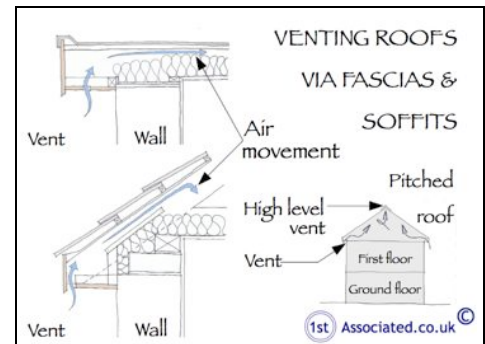
Fascias and Soffits

The fascias and soffits are timber. They are painted and we would comment they are in slightly below average condition for their age, type and style.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments within the Executive Summary regarding redecoration in the warmer months of 2013 or 2014. Make sure gutters and downpipes are watertight before carrying out any work on fascias and soffits.



Vented soffit board



Vented soffit board

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Windows and Doors

The property has timber double glazed mock sash windows, with trickle vents, which generally look to be of an average quality. We believe they have followed this sash design due to the conservation area the property is within. This limits the way property in an area can look as the aim is for it to keep the historic characteristics of the area.



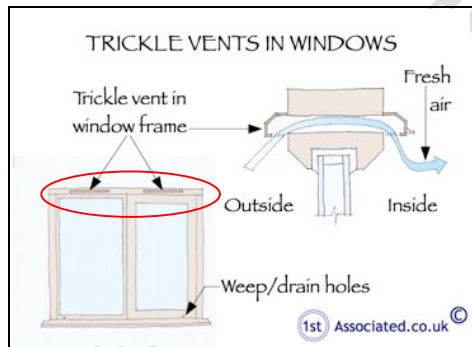
Traditional sash window



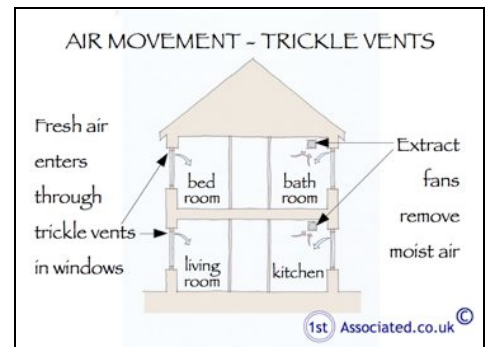
Timber double glazed mock sash windows

Trickle Vents Defined

Trickle vents allow a trickle of air through, therefore stopping/reducing the likelihood of condensation occurring within the property.



Trickle vents



Air movement

Knife Test

We have tested the windows by pushing a knife into a random selection. This was satisfactory apart from the paintwork that was weathered and in need of redecoration.



Knife Test

Limited life of double glazing

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.

Transferable Guarantees

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.



EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

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

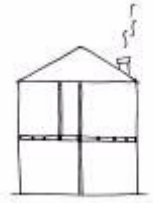
The external joinery and the metal railings will need redecoration before the end of summer 2014.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments regarding redecoration within the Executive Summary.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

INTERNAL



CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

Ceilings

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be plasterboard.

Plasterboard Defined

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

Internal Walls and Partitions

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

Perimeter Walls

The perimeter walls are dry lined which would hide any cracking in the brickwork / blockwork. We would refer you to our comments in the external wall section.

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

Dry Lining Defined (Modern Properties)

Within modern properties, dry lining is a technique used on what are known as non-traditional housing such as timber frame and proprietary systems. This will consist of timber battens which are lined with plasterboard.

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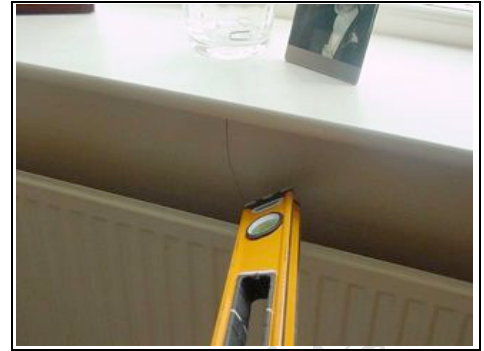
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Hairline crack

We note a crack below the window in the lounge.

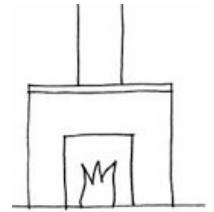
ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments within the Executive Summary.



Hairline crack

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

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



CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES

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

The chimney breasts are located to the right hand side (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.



Fireplace in lounge

ACTION REQUIRED: Ask the owners/Estate Agents to show you the fire in operation.

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

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 and Parapet Walls section of this Report.

FLOORS



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

Lower Ground Floor

The floors felt solid under foot so we have assumed that they are constructed in concrete.

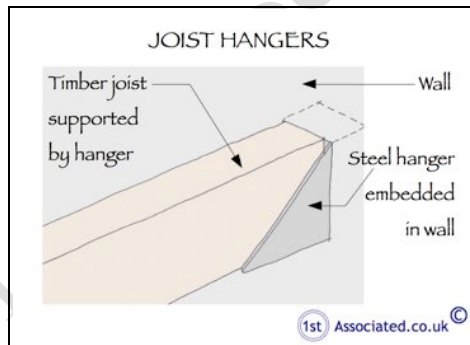
Our investigation has been restricted due to us not opening up the floor or lifting the carpets/floor coverings. Our only comment would be that as the ground falls/slopes towards the front of the property the concrete slab may have absorbed water if the running gully is leaking.

Upper Ground Floor, First Floor, Second Floor

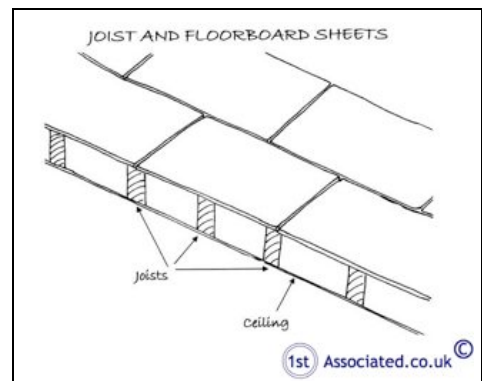
We have assumed that the upper ground floor, first floor and second floor construction is joist and floorboard sheets on joist hangers, as this is typical in this age of property.

Joist and Floorboard sheet 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 floorboard sheets fixed down upon it.



Joist hangers



Joist and floorboard sheets

Tiles on a timber floor

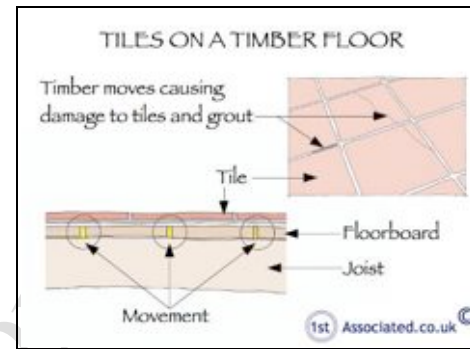
We noted tiles onto a timber floor in the bathrooms/shower room. With a wooden floor you will always get some movement/deflection, however minor. This movement/deflection in the floor will ultimately mean that the tiles will need re-grouting or may crack.



Tiles in the en suite bathroom
First Floor



Tiled floor ,en suite shower
room, second floor



Tiles on timber floor

ACTION REQUIRED: Re-grout when necessary.

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

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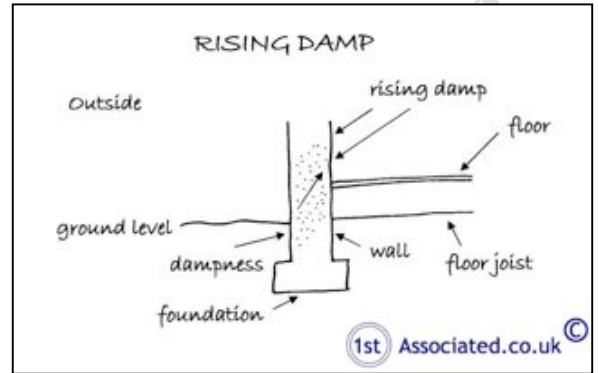


DAMPNESS

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

Rising Damp

Rising damp depends upon various components including the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation of the material, amongst other things. Rising damp can come from the ground, drawn by capillary action, to varying degrees of intensity and height into the materials above. Much evidence points towards there being true rising damp in only very rare cases.



Rising damp

In this particular case the walls are dry lined which prevents us from testing for rising damp.

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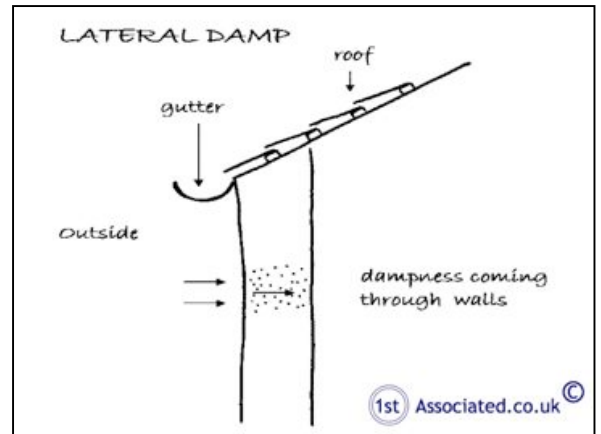
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Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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.

In this particular case the walls are dry lined which prevents us from testing for lateral damp.



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 signs of condensation.

Lifestyle and condensation

We have come across condensation caused by over-insulated houses and en suite bathrooms etc. It is therefore important that moisture is removed from the property as quickly as possible.

Condensation also depends upon how you utilise the building. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating, cooling and ventilation of properties and opening windows to air the property regularly.

Extract fans in kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas

A way of helping to reduce condensation is to have good large extract fans with humidity controlled thermostats within the kitchens and bathrooms and also in any areas where you intend to dry clothes which are moisture generating areas.

ACTION REQUIRED: We much prefer larger humidity controlled extract fans in the kitchen, bathrooms and drying areas, by large we mean 150mm plus, rather than the smaller extract fans that are in this property, however we would advise it is normal to see smaller extract fans in properties.

ANTICIPATED COST: Likely to be a few hundred pounds per extract fan as the electrics should already be in place and it will just be a case of making a wider opening.

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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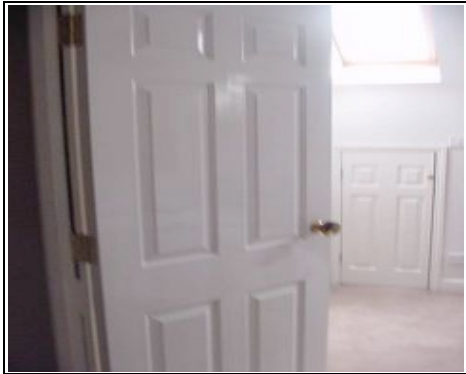
INTERNAL JOINERY



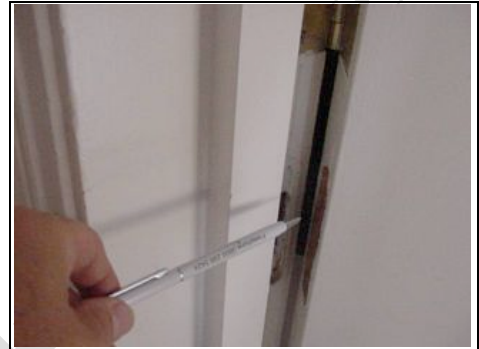
This section looks at the doors, the stairway, the skirting boards and the kitchen to give a general overview of the internal joinery's condition.

Doors

The doors to the property are modern hollow core doors and some do not have door closers.



Hollow core door



Perko door closers missing lower ground floor

Perko door closer defined

This is an internal door closer generally in the centre of the door or there about.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend a door closer is added to the top floor door. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary regarding fire safety.

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 to be in a relatively new condition and believe this to be a feature of the house.

The only things we would draw your attention to are the lack of natural light in the kitchen itself and whether the heating is under floor and if so what type, i.e. water or electric, this needs to be checked with the owners. We have come across problems with water floors and electric floors are relatively expensive to use.

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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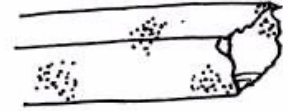
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TIMBER DEFECTS



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 we had a limited view of the roof due to the rooms formed partly within it. It is unusual in this era of property to find dry rot.

Wet Rot

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

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

We would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had a limited view of the roof but it is unusual to find wet rot in this era of property.

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Woodworm

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

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the small area of the roof we could see 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 it is also restricted by the rooms formed within the roof.

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.

Timber frames and woodworm

Your husband asked (not present at the survey) - do timber frames suffer from woodworm? The answer is generally 99 percent of the time they do not, as the modern timbers used for the construction are pre-treated against this type of problem. A more likely occurrence is interstitial condensation.

Interstitial Condensation Defined

This is where moisture is present within the structure of a building. The more moisture it contains, the bigger the vapour pressure and the smaller amount of moisture, the less vapour pressure.

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.

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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.

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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. It is very difficult to advise on how frequently redecoration should take place. This very much depends upon the use and abuse the decoration gets, for example, within hallways this tends to be greater than, for example, within a spare bedroom.

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



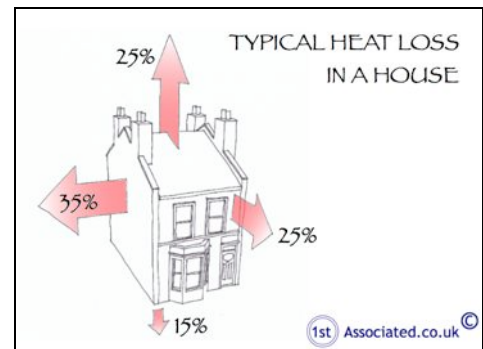
Up until the mid 1940s we did not really consider insulation in properties, for example it was only in the 1960s that we started putting insulation in the roof and then it was about 50mm, in the 1970s this was upgraded to 100mm. Then we started to think about double glazing and cavity wall insulation. 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 it looked as if spare insulation had been left in the roof.



Typical heat loss

Walls

The property has a stretcher bond construction externally and a timber frame internally and likely to be insulated to a good standard.

Windows

The windows are double glazed and therefore will have reasonable thermal properties. We have found problems with timber double glazed windows where the timber, if it is not regularly painted, can move slightly causing the seal on the double glazing unit to fail.

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Services

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

Summary

Assuming the above is correct, this property is average compared with what we typically see. The property was very warm on the day of our survey, please see our earlier comments in the Executive Summary.

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

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

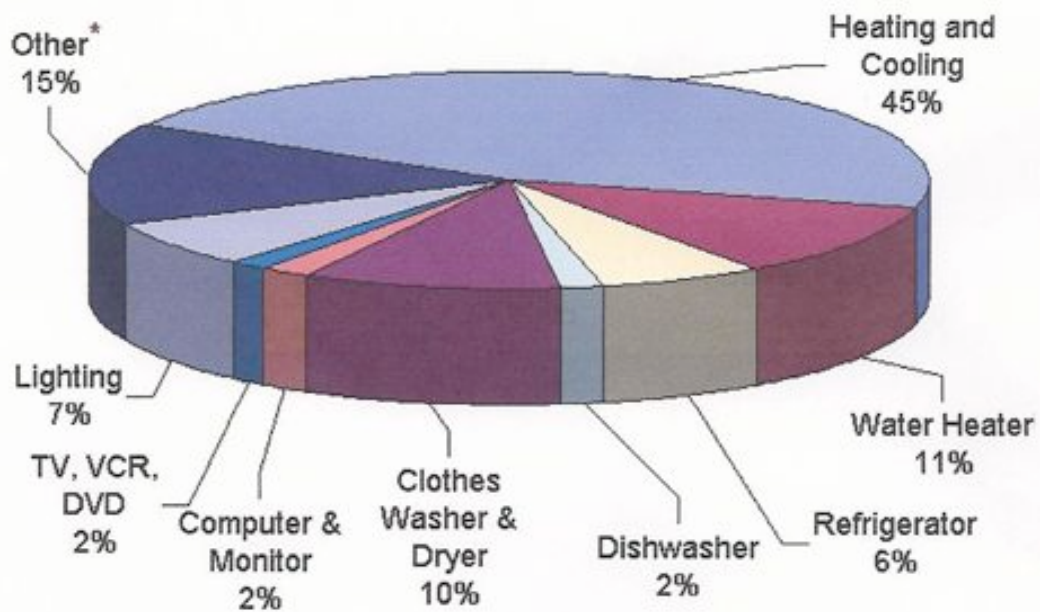
or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

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

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

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

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



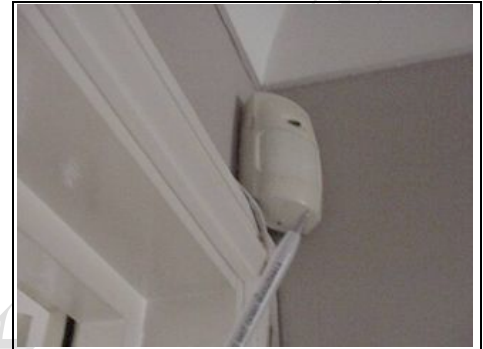
In this section we put any other matters that do not fit under our usual headings.

Security

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



Security alarm box



Movement sensor

ACTION REQUIRED: Further information should be obtained from the vendor.

Fire / Smoke Alarms

We noted that the fire/smoke alarm system looks to be original and as such has been hard wired into the house as a whole. Hard wiring means that the wires are hidden and lead back to the mains electricity rather than requiring batteries.



Smoke alarm

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.

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 19th century with gas lighting still being the norm for a good many years after.

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

Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the garage. There appear to be two fuse boards, we are not certain why this is?

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



Two fuse boards

Earth Test

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



Earth test

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

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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 1st January 2005. Any comments made within this report or verbally do not change this requirement.

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

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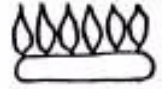
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GAS



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. We believe the consumer unit is located in the cupboard under the steps to the front of the property.

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.

All appliances, pipework and flues should be subject to an annual service by a competent OFTEC registered engineer. Unless evidence can be provided to confirm that there has been annual servicing, we would recommend that you commission such a service prior to use to ensure safe and efficient operation.



PLUMBING AND HEATING

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

Water Supply

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 or Estate Agent 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!).

Plumbing

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

We also noted some awkward piping just as we entered the loft storage area so be careful not to tread on these as it could cause a water leak.



Plastic and copper piping

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

Heating

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

Our limited inspection of the hot water and central heating system revealed no evidence to suggest any serious defects but we would nevertheless recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.



Worcester Boiler

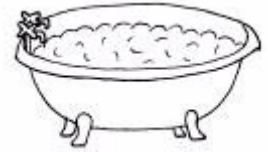
Ten Minute Heating Test

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. The Dog Sitter advised they were on holiday. You need the owner or estate agent to show you this in working order.

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

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

BATHROOM



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

Family bathroom (first floor)

The bathroom has a three piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin and WC, which looks in average condition.

En suite Bathroom (first floor)

The en-suite has a three piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin and WC, which looks in average condition. We would comment that this bathroom is internal and we believe has leaked into the lounge.

En-suite shower room (second floor)

The shower room has a three piece suite, consisting of a shower cubicle, wash hand basin and WC, which looks in average condition.

Cloakroom (ground floor)

The cloakroom has a W.C. and a wash hand basin.

We would recommend that all seals around baths and showers are checked and re-masticed as in this type of property there can be thermal movement and expansion.

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, and 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 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.

No Manholes Found

Manholes are used where there is a change in direction of pipes or new pipes join the main run. It is therefore a good location for clearing any blockages. In this case we were unable to see any manholes, which is unusual. Cars were parked to the front of the property which could have concealed a manhole.

Manholes Defined

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

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

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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. Normally in a property of this age the rainwater drains discharge into a soak away.

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

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

OUTSIDE AREAS

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

GARAGES/PARKING



The property has a garage and parking space to the front



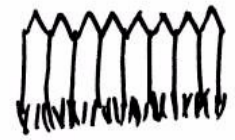
Garage with parking space



Running gulley to garage



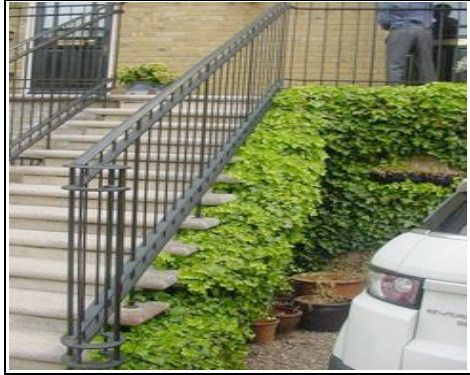
Inside garage



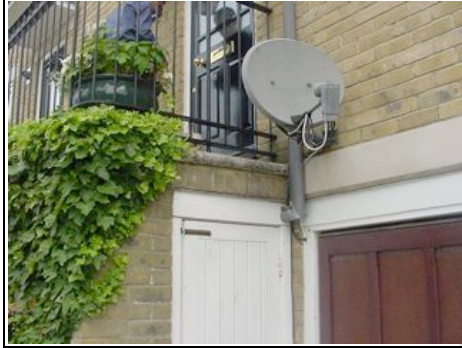
EXTERNAL AREAS

Front area

The property is accessed via steps to the front. There is a storage cupboard under the steps.



Steps leading to property



Storage cupboard under the steps.
We normally find dampness
can get into these.



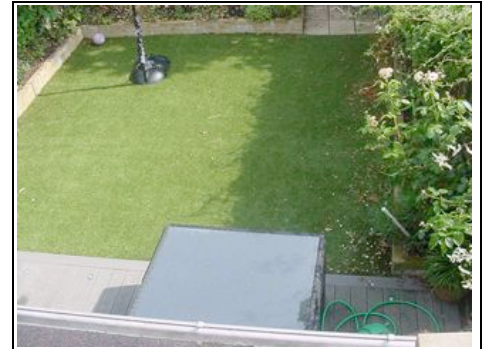
Storage cupboard

Rear Garden

The property has a rear garden laid with artificial grass and a decking area.

Decking

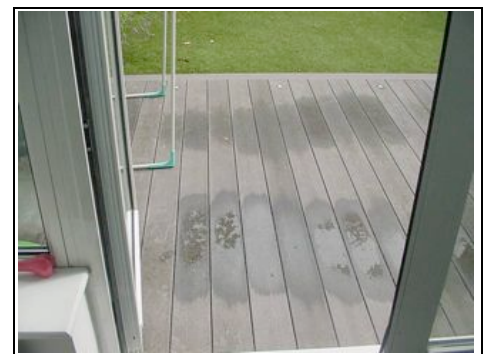
We are finding decking can become slippery over the years when not regularly maintained and can also be an ideal space for living under for wildlife.



Rear Garden



Artificial grass



Decking area



Large tree to the rear



School field/playing field at
end of 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

We knocked on the door but no one answered the door.

Right Hand Neighbours

We knocked on the door but no one answered the door.

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POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) It needs to be queried if an NHBC or Foundation 15 or equivalent warranty/guarantee is available on the original property or the new extension building. Your Legal Advisor should advise you further in respect of the duration of this Agreement and whether any claims have ever been made either against the builder/developer or the NHBC themselves. Your Legal Advisor should confirm that the Agreement is transferable and enforceable.
- d) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:
 - i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
 - ii) Rising damp treatments.
 - iii) Cavity wall insulation and cavity wall tie repairs.
 - iv) Double glazing or replacement windows.
 - v) Roof and similar renewals.
 - vi) Central heating installation.
 - vii) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
 - viii) Removal of any walls in part or whole.
 - ix) Removal of any chimneys in part or whole.
 - x) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
- e) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- f) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.
- g) Liabilities in connection with shared services.
- h) Adjoining roads and services.

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

However, with regard to Envirosearch or similar general reports please see our article link on the www.1stAssociated.co.uk Home Page.

- p) 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.

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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 **0800 298 5424**.

For and on Behalf of
Independent Chartered Surveyors

This Report is dated: xxxxxxxxxxxx

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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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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 xxxxxxxxxxxx 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 a very warm 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 the surveyors may not be local 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 limited by: -

1. We did not have full access to the roof due to rooms formed within the roof.
2. We did not open up any of the floors.
3. We did not have the benefit of talking to the owners or them answering our usual question and answers.
4. There were a lot of stored items in the garage.

We would like to thank you for meeting us at the property to talk about your specific requirements.

BUILDING INSURANCE

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

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

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

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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

APPENDICES

1. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
2. Information on the Property Market
3. Modern timber framed construction article

THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

Work You Cannot do Yourself

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

INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

www.halifax.co.uk and www.nationwide.co.uk

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

www.hometrack.co.uk

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

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www.motleyfool.co.uk

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

www.rightmove.co.uk

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

www.zoopla.co.uk

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

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Timber frame structures

We believe that the timber frame world divides into three areas:

1. Traditional timber frame structures
2. Modern timber frame structures
3. Modern, modern timber frame structures



Traditional timber frame



Modern timber frame

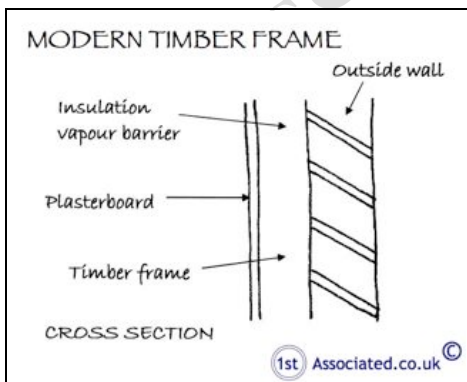


Modern, modern timber frame

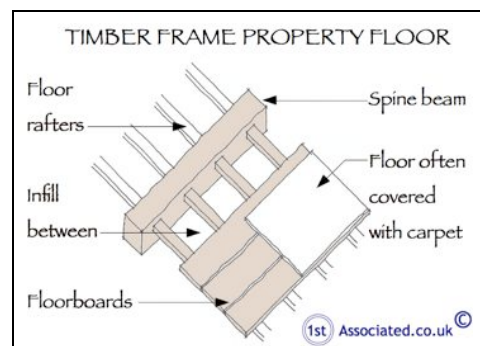
Modern timber frame structures

This particular article deals with modern timber frame structures and modern, modern timber frame structures.

All of these different types of timber structural frames have very different characteristics and your Building Surveyor needs to understand exactly what they are looking at with this type of specialist structure.



Modern timber frame



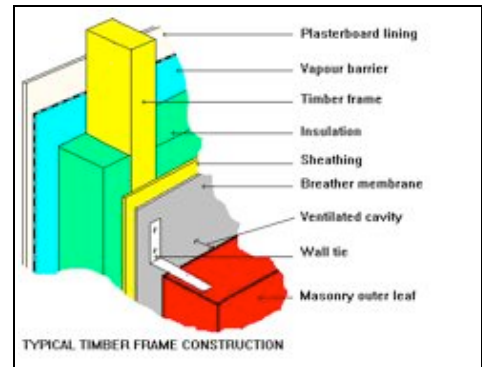
Timber frame floor often found in Tudor properties

Timber frame property defined

This property is timber framed, which means that the inside walls are formed of timber (traditionally they would have been formed of stonework, brickwork or blockwork).

Modern timber frame construction that looks like a traditional house

From the 1970's onwards we used modern timber frame construction which was a totally different way of building even though it looked like a traditional house, by this we mean you can see brick walls and tiled roofs. However, the modern timber frame is the new way of building.



Timber frame construction

Unfortunately we cannot call on past experience because traditional timber frame properties, such as Tudor properties with exposed timber frames, are not in common use today other than by a few specialist timber frame tradespeople.



Tudor property

The return of the popularity of timber construction in the 1970's was by new-build contractors that were endeavouring to build enough properties to meet the demands of the property boom at this time.

However the building of timber frame properties came to a drastic halt when the World in Action BBC television program 'exposed' the bad and poor practices that were taking place on building sites. Things such as leaving the timber frame out in the rain (wet wood is never good wood) or damage caused to the membrane that was meant to keep the timber frame dry and numerous other issues. The effect this had on timber framed properties in Britain was to almost stop the building of this type of property overnight, as no one wanted to purchase them.



Modern timber framed property, hardly distinguishable from a traditionally built house

A property we surveyed

The photos below are of a property that we recently surveyed. The entirety of this property structurally is on a timber frame.

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Modern timber framed property



Not an obvious timber frame property until you have a close look in the roof



Timber frame construction has been used to form the gable end



Modern white breathable felt,

Here are photographs of a much more obvious example from the 1960's. Again, it is only on a close inspection of the roof that you can see it is a timber frame. In this instance the property has a close boarded roof however when we crawled through the roof we came across a timber gable indicating to us that this is a modern timber frame structure. Upon further research we found information on this type of structure. On this age of construction there is likely be asbestos.



It was built by budding DIY'ers in years gone by



This timber house was advertised with a takedown interior



Close boarding to roof of a timber frame house



Timber gable of a timber frame house



Asbestos found within a 1960's timber frame house

Elements of modern timber frame construction



Signs that it is a modern timber framed property – timber found within the roof space



Close up of a modern timber frame house



The ridge and gable of a modern timber framed house

A modern timber frame building is cheap and quick but does it last for a long time?

The builders liked this type of construction as it is quick to build, does not need any drying time and is generally cheaper, and this in turn means a larger profit. However, they were also aware of the impact of the World in Action program and they stopped using it. Gradually over the more recent years, whilst the property market has boomed again, builders have started using this type of construction again.

Are builders wiser this time round and are the purchasers aware when a house is a modern timber frame?

There have no doubt been advances in modern timber frames over the years, for example ,one system that we recall came with all the elements packed within containers which were then literally unpacked in order and built in order, thereby (in theory) keeping everything watertight. So, various systems and design alterations have taken place to improve the timber frame structure although it has to be said that many of these are driven by the economics.

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That said, in our structural surveys we still may warn against buying this type of building and we would add that we personally have decided not to buy a timber framed property in preference over a traditional built property. We would summarise by saying the jury is still out with regard to modern timber frame properties.

Modern, modern timber frame

We have used the term Modern, modern timber frame as we are not aware of a term that is in common use. This is the term that we use to describe the Modern timber frame buildings that have been used since the 1990's and 2000's era as in many ways these are as different from traditional timber frame properties as they were from the 1970's properties to the trained eye however outwardly they do look like traditional houses.



Example of modern, modern timber frame property

A lot of thought has now been given to how to make timber frame buildings work. Many of them are almost indistinguishable from a traditional built house unless you have a trained eye.



Modern timber frame house

Problems with modern timber frame properties in the future?

We personally would never buy a modern or a modern, modern timber frame house. We say this because when we had the choice and option to do this we decided against it, we went for a traditional house building style. This isn't because we don't believe that modern day construction is as good as it can be, it is because quite simply as a Chartered Surveyor we as yet have not seen this type of property survive for decades and therefore we do not know the type of problems that may arise.

However, we can to some extent see the first signs of it in the rental properties that we deal with, as due to the number of people in some of them they get more use and abuse than a traditional home and as such we see that the dry lined walls regularly need more redecoration and repair than in a traditional house. You may say this may not be a fair comparison, we would say that we

are still open minded with regard to modern timber frame buildings but we do take a very slow careful look when we carry out surveys on them.

Independent Surveyors

If you truly do want an independent expert opinion from a building surveyor with experience of carrying out work or supervising work to timber frame properties, we are happy to do valuations, building surveys, structural surveys, structural reports, engineer's reports, specific defects reports, home buyers reports or any other property matters.

We feel our surveys are quite unique, as they are written by our surveyors to your level of knowledge. The surveys include photos and sketches and definitions. The survey will also include an action required section and an estimate of costs in the executive summary. Our surveyors are more than happy to meet you at the property whilst carrying out the survey to discuss any specific issues you may have or have a general chat about what we have found at the end of the survey.

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