

JOB REFERENCE: JXXXX

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

XXX
London.
E11 XXX



**Two storey
mid terraced
Victorian
property**



FOR

Mr X

Prepared by:

XXXX

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS



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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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REPORT FORMAT

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

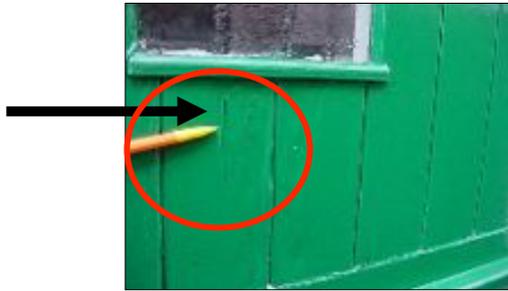
GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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.

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SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two storey mid terraced property, which has been extended, amended and altered over the years including a loft conversion. To the front is a small garden and to the rear there is a garden. There is roadside parking, which is free on a first come, first served basis.

We have carried out internet enquiries on BritishListedBuildings.co.uk website and did not find a record of the building being listed. Your legal adviser needs to check and confirm this.

We believe that the property was built in the late Victorian era. If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1872 | William Gladstone's Liberal government introduced voting by secret ballot |
| 1896 | The first modern Olympic Games in Athens was a great success |
| 1900 | Max Planck formulates the Quantum Theory |
| 1901 | The first ever Nobel Prizes are awarded |
| 1904 | Music to our ears, the London Symphony Orchestra is established. |
| 1908 | Pension scheme came into force to help the less affluent |
| 1909 | Bakelite is first manufactured, the beginning of the plastic age. |
| 1910 | Halley's comet is photographed for the first time. |

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EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view



Rear view



Street view



Front garden



Rear garden

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ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

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

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Entrance hallway and stairs
- 2) Through lounge right
- 3) Kitchen rear which has been extended into coal room to form a small breakfast area

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Bedroom front
- 2) Bedroom middle
- 3) Bathroom rear

Top Floor

The top floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Bedroom with small Juliet balcony
- 2) Small shower room

Outside Areas

To the front is a small garden and to the rear there is a garden. Parking is roadside on a first come, first served basis.

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

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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.

Ground Floor



Reception room looking towards front



Reception room looking towards rear



Kitchen



Breakfast area

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First Floor



Bedroom front



Bedroom middle



Stairs from first floor to top floor



Bathroom



Shower in bathroom

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Top Floor



Bedroom



Looking towards balcony



Balcony



En-suite shower room

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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Chimneys:	Two brick chimneys
Main Roof:	Double pitched, clad with concrete tiles Hidden flat roof to dormer
Main Roof Structure:	Cut timber roof amended
Low Level Roofs:	Front bay: Pitched clad with concrete tiles Rear Roof: Pitched clad with concrete tiles
Gutters and Downpipes:	Mixture of Metal and Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Cast iron and Plastic
Walls:	Flemish Bond brickwork wrongly repointed in cement mortar (assumed) Vertical tiling to dormer
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Double glazed plastic windows without trickle vents

Internal

Ceilings:	Lath and plaster and plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Mixture of solid and hollow (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Suspended timber floor to the front with a concrete floor to rear (assumed)
First Floor:	Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)
Top Floor:	Joist on joist hangers and floorboard sheets

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Services

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (all assumed).

Heating:	There is a Vaillant boiler located in the kitchen.
Electrics:	The electrics are dated and are located in the hallway to the left hand side.
Gas:	The consumer unit was located to the bay window to the front.
Drainage:	There is a manhole to the rear, which we were unable to lift.

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

ACTION REQUIRED: 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.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summaries are not ideal as they try to précis often quite complex subjects into a few paragraphs. This is particularly so in a summary about someone's future home when we are trying to second-guess what their priorities are, so it is important the Report is read in full.

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 250 photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if an issue has not been discussed that you are interested in or concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it; if we have not we will happily go back.

We have divided the Executive Summary into 'The Good', 'The Bad' and 'The Ugly', to help distinguish what in our mind are the main issues.

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!

- 1.0) The property has been extended and we feel this is one of the best type of loft conversions with the use of space and light and the Juliet balcony to the rear.
- 2.0) Older properties typically have more space than newer properties, both in the actual size of the rooms and the height of the rooms.
- 3.0) The property has good natural light due to the bay windows.
- 4.0) The property also has some of the original features left, which add to the overall character of the property.

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

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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.

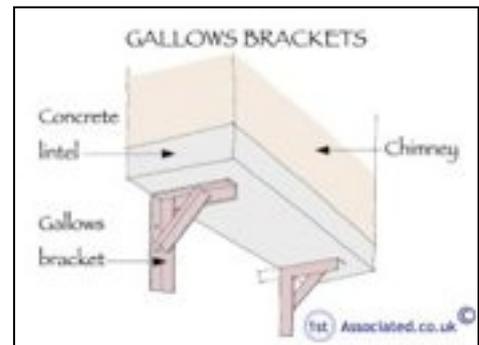
1.0) Removed chimney

The property has two chimneys, one to the front right hand side rear where there has been parts of the chimney removed. There should in theory be calculations in relation to this but very rarely do we find these have been carried out.



Chimney removed at ground level

Sometimes gallow bracket supports are added. It seems to have stood the test of time with no obvious stress marks.



Gallows bracket

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal advisor to specifically ask if the chimneys have been removed with Building Regulations permission and if Party Wall Awards have been agreed. There can become problems where chimneys have been removed where next door want to remove their chimney as well.

ANTICIPATED COST: In a worst case scenario where a lintel has to be added we would expect costs in the region of £1,000 - £2,000; please obtain quotations.

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1.2) Repointing of chimney

We would also comment that the rear chimney needs repointing

ACTION REQUIRED: Repoint and check flashings and flaunchings.



Repointing required to rear chimney

ANTICIPATED COST: £200 - £500 plus access which may require a tower scaffold; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Chimney Stacks Section of this Report.

2.0) Hidden flat roof

Even though we suspect this is a relatively new flat roof we would like to actually see it.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend a roof light is added to give access to view this roof. If a roof access is added we would be more than happy to return and inspect.



Hidden flat roof

ANTICIPATED COST: £500 - £1,000 to add roof windows; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section of this Report.

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3.0) Gutters and downpipes and soil and vent pipes

The gutters and downpipes and the soil and vent pipes are a mixture of the original metal and new plastic. We would have preferred to have seen all one or the other.

The metal rainwater pipes to the rear in particular would benefit from being improved.



Mixture of plastic (grey) and metal (green)



Metal gutter and downpipe to rear deteriorating



Leaking downpipe to front



Gulley to downpipes needs clearing

ACTION REQUIRED: General repairs recommended and perhaps replacement of the gutters and downpipes.

ANTICIPATED COST: £500 - £1,000 or if you wish to replace all the cast iron (which we would not recommend) we would expect another £1,000; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Gutters and Downpipes Section of this Report.

4.0) Parapet walls

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The parapet wall to the front left hand side we can see that the coping stones have not been bedded and that mortar has been missed in some areas.



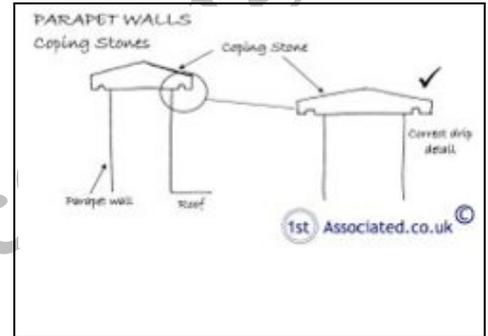
Parapet wall has mortar missing



Mortar missing under coping stones



Mortar missing between coping stones



Coping stones

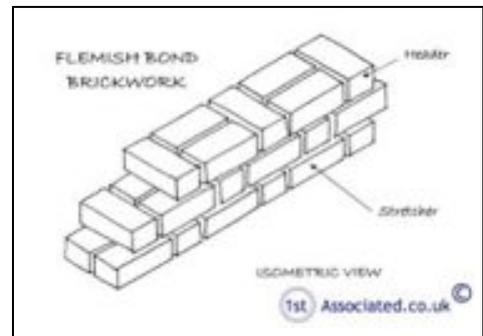
ACTION REQUIRED: Add mortar. At the same time check the other parapet wall and the rear parapet wall and chimney as it is in need of some repointing work.

ANTICIPATED COST: Due to the difficulty of access scaffolding will be required therefore we would expect costs in the region of £2,500 - £7,500; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Chimney Stacks Section of this Report.

5.0) Brickwork – what has happened?

To the rear we can see that brickwork stitching has taken place which is unusual to see in this age, type and style of property. It typically indicates where rebuilding work has taken place.



Flemish bond brickwork

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Stitching defined

When you build up three courses and then across slightly three or four courses in a straight line.



Flemish bond brickwork stitched together indicates some rebuilding has taken place



Stitching on brickwork

This, together with the unusual joint on the front bay window leads us to believe there may have been considerable rebuilding carried out on this property.



Unusual joint to front canted bay

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal advisor to specifically, in writing, ask the existing owners are they aware of any building work to the property. We would also recommend that you speak to insurance companies to check and confirm whether there have been any issues with this building.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

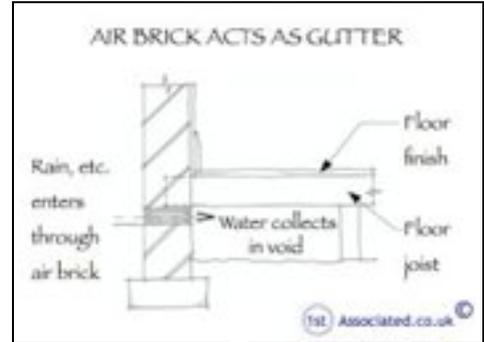
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6.0) Airbricks acting as gutters

The airbricks which should ventilate the floor unfortunately are so low they are acting as gutters particularly to the rear of the property. This property has a suspended timber floor and does need an airflow underneath it and certainly doesn't need extra dampness coming into it from the airbricks acting as gutters.



Airbrick acting as gutter



Airbrick acts as gutter



Airbrick acting as gutter

ACTION REQUIRED: Protect airbricks.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £500 - £2,000; quotations required.



Protect airbrick

Please see the Airbricks Section of this Report.

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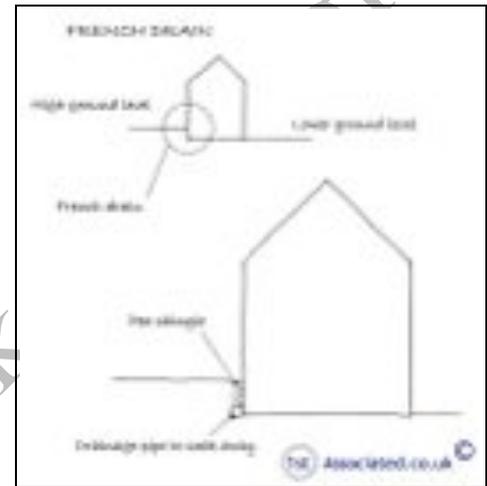
6.1 High ground level

We were surprised that the property did not have rising damp due to the high ground levels which may be because of the dry weather, but we would also recommend the lowering of the ground level around the property.



ACTION REQUIRED: Lower ground level and add French drain.

ANTICIPATED COST: DIY type job or in the region of £500 - £1,500; quotations required



Please see our French Drain Article in the Appendices of this report.

7.0) Loft Conversion

7.1) Has the loft conversion been approved

The property has a loft conversion with Juliet balcony.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal Advisor needs to check and confirm that the loft conversion has approval both from a planning point of view and building regulations.

7.2) Hairline cracks to loft conversion

We did note some hairline cracks around the doors. Where an extension like this has taken place we would advise there will be some initial settlement for many years. Also see



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Hairline cracking in the loft bedroom around door



our comments on differential settlement.

8.0) Fire regulations

Some of the doors around the staircase which we would prefer to be fire doors are not fire doors. We recommend they are fire doors as this limits the spread of fire in a worst case scenario.

ACTION REQUIRED: Improve doors.

ANTICIPATED COST: We would set aside the sum of £500 - £1,000; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Other Matters Section of this Report.

9.0) No handrail on ground to first floor stairs

There is no handrail on the staircase from the ground to the first floor which is unusual and generally considered to building regulation requirements.



ACTION REQUIRED: Add handrail.

No handrail

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £250 - £500 depending upon how difficult the fixing is; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Internal Joinery Section of this Report.

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10.0) Differential movement to top floor roof extension

Often where new and old are added and built together there can be some differential movement. This is caused by the different characteristics of the material.



Differential movement

ACTION REQUIRED: You will need to fill, possibly tape any openings up and redecorate. In our experience although this is meant to eventually stop, we have found that it keeps re-occurring.

Please see the Internal Walls Section of this Report.

11.0) Macerator in roof extension en-suite

There is a macerator in the roof extension for the W.C. which is not ideal particularly due to the noise it makes; we know that some people are unhappy with these, but as far as we can see it is the best way to get waste material to the back of the property where the drains are.



Macerator

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12.0) Wall removed

A wall in the lounge has been removed to make a through lounge. The return should be 450mm; it is nearer to 300mm.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to be aware that this is unusual. It sometimes means that the upper floors deflect slightly more which you need to accept and consider this as a characteristic of the building.



Wall removed

Please see the Ceiling and Walls section of this report.

Services

13.0) Radiators

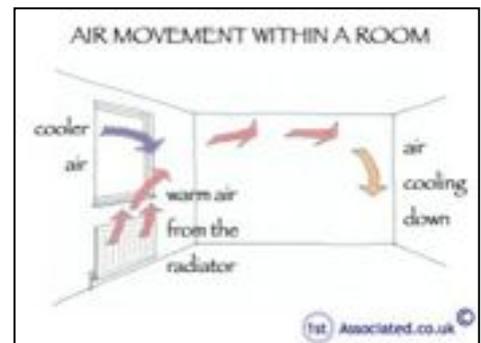
We noted the radiators are internal in some areas. This is often carried out on cheaper central heating systems to save the labour and piping costs of taking the radiators underneath the windows. However, it then reduces the air movement in the room.

In addition we noted that there are a fair number of single panel radiators. These may not warm the property to the heat that you desire. In most modern installations double panel radiators are used and often double panel convection radiators, which are more efficient, are utilised.

Having said that, please read the next section.



Single panel internal radiators



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ACTION REQUIRED: We would live in the property and then if there are problems we suggest you move the radiators underneath the windows as this gives a better circulation of air and reduces the chance of condensation.

ANTICIPATED COST: We would expect costs in the region of £700 - £2,000 to move and upgrade radiators; please obtain quotations.

14.0) Overheating of the building

The upper floors were very warm when we carried out the survey. This is generally what we are finding with modern extensions in older buildings that the top floors overheat in the summer months and you get an almost stifling heat in the upper rooms.

Again, you need to consider this as a characteristic of the property.

15.0) Lack of good extraction

There is a lack of good extraction in the bathroom, en-suite shower room and the kitchen.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend large humidity controlled extract fans be added to kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £300 - £1,000 depending upon how difficult the electrics are and drilling the holes; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

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16.0) Electrics

The property has dated socket points and a blanked off socket point within the bathroom which is not ideal.



Old socket points



Blanked off socket plate within bathroom

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend you have an Institute of Electrical Engineers test and report carried out by an NICEIC approved electrician or equivalent.

ANTICIPATED COST: £300 - £500; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

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The Ugly

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

We have found more than the average number of things that we would classify as bad. There is no one specific thing that we would put in the Ugly Section, however when putting all the items in the Bad Section together we do feel this makes this a high risk purchase.

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Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Maintenance

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

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

Services

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

Electrics

The electrics have dated fittings, please note our earlier comments. 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

We were not able to test the heating as the owners were not in. We would recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

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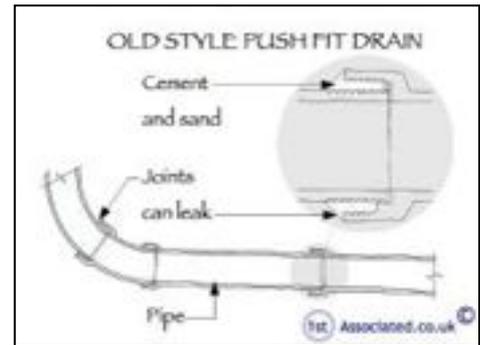
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Drainage

We were unable to lift the manhole.

In older properties, such as this, drainage was often push fitted together rather than bonded together which means that they may leak over the years. 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.



Push fit drain

Water Supply

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

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

DIY/Handyman Type Work

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

Purchase Price

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

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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 writing 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:

Some further investigation is required. Care should be taken with this purchase. As we have not met you at the property we would ask that you telephone us to have a discussion about it.

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.

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MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT

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

TENURE – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)

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

ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

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

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



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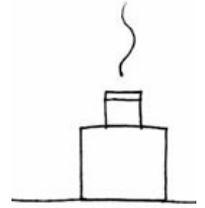
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EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS, PARAPET WALLS, DORMER WINDOWS AND ROOF WINDOWS



Chimney Stacks

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

There are two chimneys to this property they are located one to the front left and one to the rear right and sit on the Party Wall (all directions given as you face the property).

Chimney One – located to the front left

This chimney is brick finished with a lead flashing and four chimney pots. From what we could see from ground level it looked in slightly below average condition considering its age, type and style with deteriorating chimney pots.



Chimney pot deteriorating which can lead to dampness getting into the property



Lead flashing

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

ACTION REQUIRED: Periodically inspect the chimney.

Chimney Two – located to the rear

This chimney is also brick built with a lead flashing. This chimney is in below average condition and in need of repointing.



Rear chimney



Rear chimney



Repointing required to rear chimney

ACTION REQUIRED: Repoint, the difficulty is access. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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.

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Parapet Walls

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

In this case there are parapet walls to the front left built from brick with a coping stone of concrete. We can comment that generally they are in below average condition with areas of missing mortar.



Left parapet wall

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

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

Dormer Windows

Dormer windows are often used where rooms are formed within the roof space and have the advantage of allowing light into the area and also giving the head space to allow them to be stood next to.

The dormer window roof has a hidden flat roof and the cheeks of the dormer are clad in vertical tiles. The windows are plastic double glazed windows with trickle vents. Generally we could comment for their age, type and style the dormer should be in average condition as it is relatively new however we had a limited view.



Finally, Dormer windows have been viewed from ground level and literally from the dormer windows themselves.

Roof Windows

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(Also known as roof lights or Velux windows which is the trade or generic name)

The property has purpose made roof lights, which looked in average condition. The important factor with roof lights is the flashing around them; in this instance we would comment that the flashing around the roof windows looked in reasonable condition where we could see it.



Roof window

It seems inevitable with roof windows that they will sooner or later leak. If this doesn't occur then they seem prone to condensation. Keep a cloth handy particularly on the top floors where all the humidity from showers and baths and kitchens rises up to.



Small roof window to shower

Balcony

The property has a Juliet balcony to the loft conversion which is a good feature and also can cause planning problems with over viewing gardens.



Juliet balcony

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal Advisor needs to check and confirm that permission has been obtained for the loft conversion.

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Party Walls

The party wall relates to shared items, such as the chimney, the parapet wall 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.

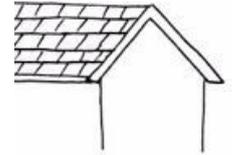
Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the chimney stacks, parapet walls, dormer windows and roof windows from the parts we would see above roof level. The inspection was made from ground level within the boundaries of the property (unless otherwise stated) using a x16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

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

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ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS

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

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

We will consider the roofs in four areas, the main roof, the hidden flat roof to the dormer, the front bay window pitched roof and the rear single storey pitched roof.

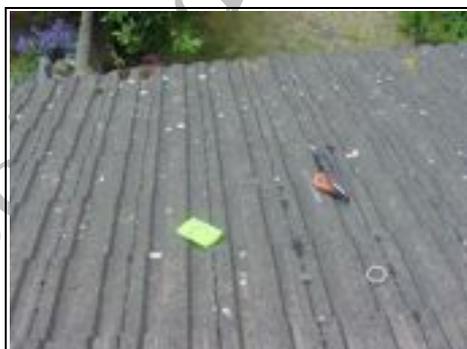
Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad with concrete tiles and, from ground level, this looks in average condition considering the roofs age type and style.

A heavier concrete tile has replaced the original slate and therefore there should be additional roof support which we cannot see in this case due to the room formed within the roof.



Concrete tiles to rear



Rear roof



Main roof discharges onto rear roof in one area. There should be wider piece of lead flashing known as deflector

ACTION REQUIRED: Carry out periodic inspections and maintenance of the roof, as required.

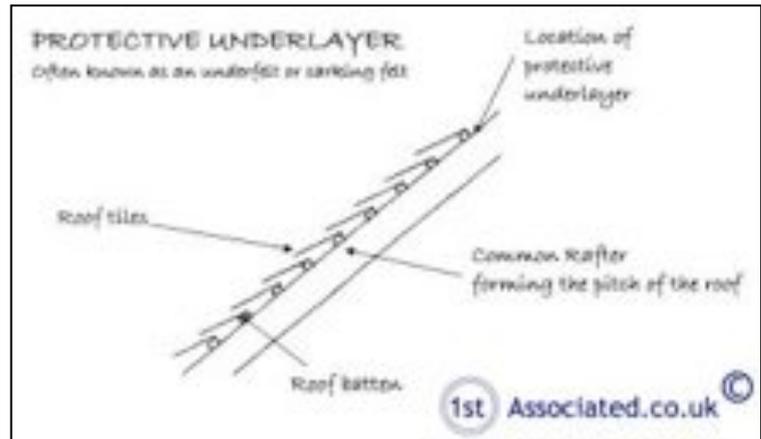
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Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)

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

When we inspected the loft space we found a Hessian base Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s. We generally found it to be in average condition, 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 protective underlayer.

Bay window roof

The bay window roof is clad in concrete tiles; originally it would have been slate.

The roof has a more shallow pitch than we are keen on for concrete tiles and you can get some wind driven rain problems.



Concrete tile to bay window

Rear single storey roof

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The rear single storey roof is pitched with a concrete tile. As above, the roof has a shallow pitch.



Rear single storey roof

Poor amendment to bay window on rear of property

We believe there was previously a bay window to the rear of the property which has been removed and a felt detail nailed in place.



Felt return possibly to removed rear bay

Flat Roofs

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

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

Flat roof to dormer

It was not possible to view the flat roof to the dormer; access hatch recommended. This roof should have been to the latest building regulations.



Hidden flat roof to dormer

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

Further information on flat roofs

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Ventilation

Building Regulations require flat roofs to be ventilated. Building Regulations are not retrospective but the reason for the requirement is to make sure that any moisture that enters the roof construction is dispelled by way of ventilation. We would suggest that if the opportunity arises ventilation should be provided.

Insulation

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

All the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera.

Finally, we were only able to see 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.

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ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT

(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

Main Roof

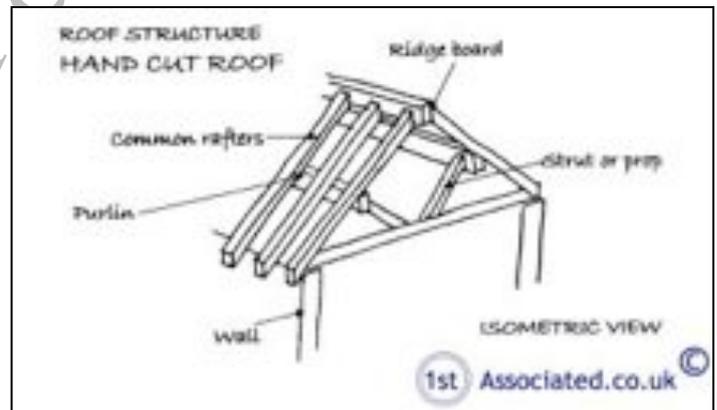
Roof Access

The main roof is accessed in the top bedroom and only allowed us to see approximately ten percent of the roof. It would have been helpful to have a light in the roof space. The roof was full of stored items which limited our inspection.

Roof Structure

Originally this property would have had what is known as a cut timber roof. The majority of this may well have been replaced with the loft conversion; we simply cannot see it. As mentioned we can only see about ten percent of the roof. We would expect them to have kept

the majority of the roof and added new timbers.



Cut timber roof

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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



Old (dark) and new (light) timbers

Our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof, the insulation and loads of stored items (we also had to move the bed out of the way to get into the area). What we could see was generally found to be in average condition for its age, type and style. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.

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

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.

Fire Walls Defined

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

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Ventilation

We were pleased to see vents to the roof which are essential to avoid condensation in the roof.



Vents to roof

Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

Electrical Cables

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

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

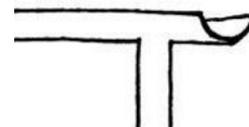
Finally, we would ask you to note that this is a general inspection of the roof, i.e. we have not examined every single piece of timber. We have offered a general overview of the condition and structural integrity of the area.

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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 a mixture of metal and plastic gutters and downpipes. The condition is fairly typical of what we see; they are in below average condition for their age, type and style.

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.



Metal gutter and downpipe to rear deteriorating

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

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

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

Soil and Vent Pipe

The property has a mixture of cast iron and plastic soil and vent pipes. Cast iron of this age can crack and rust and needs regular maintenance.



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Soil and vent pipe



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.

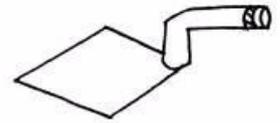
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WALLS



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 constructed of brickwork with vertical tiling to the dormer.

Brickwork

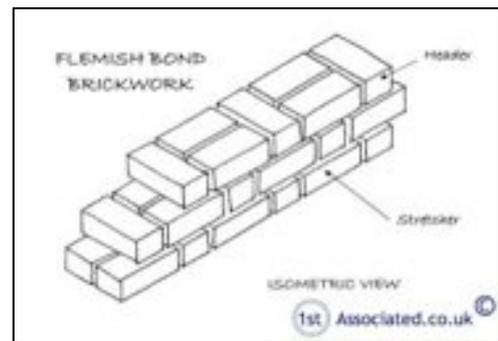
The property is built in a brick originally in a lime mortar in what is known as Flemish bond brickwork wrongly repointed in cement mortar which stops them from breathing.



Wrongly repointed in cement mortar

Flemish bond brickwork

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



Flemish bond brickwork

Timber lintels and bonding timbers

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

Condition

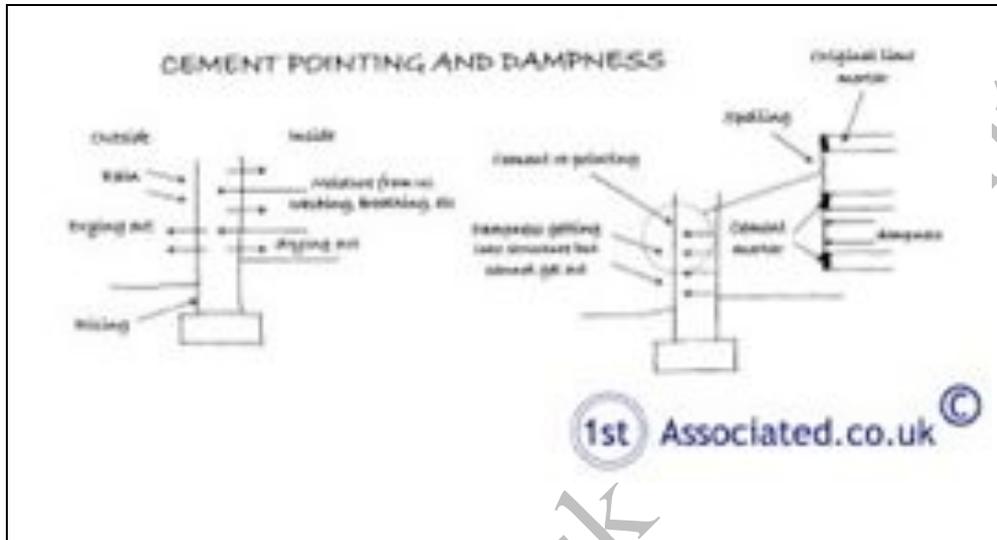
Generally Flemish Bond brickwork is liable to penetrating dampness

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internally, dependent upon the condition of the brickwork and the exposure to the weather. It is essential that external faces be kept in good condition. In this case the brickwork is in reasonable condition but the cement mortar does stop the walls from breathing.



Vertical tiling

The dormer is clad in vertical tiles. Tiles may be fixed directly to a wall or battens, or indeed counter battens. It is necessary to nail all tiles and it is also good practice to use an underfelt and lap the tiles to approximately two inches (30 mm).



Vertical tiles

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 / vertical tiling / plaster we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age timber lintels, concrete

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lintels, rubbed brick lintels or metal lintels are common, which can be susceptible to deterioration that is unseen, particularly if in contact with dampness.

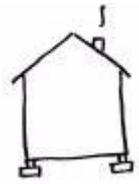
Our comments have been based upon how the brickwork / vertical tiling / plaster has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork / vertical tiling / plaster would be if it were opened up for this age, style and type of construction. We are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

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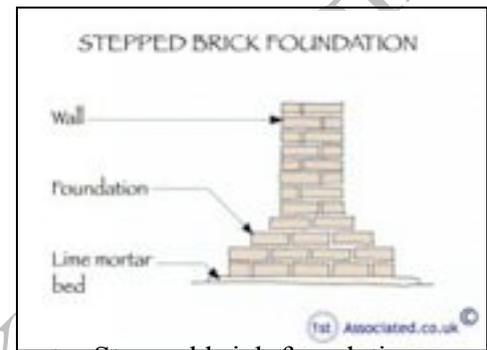


FOUNDATIONS

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

Foundations

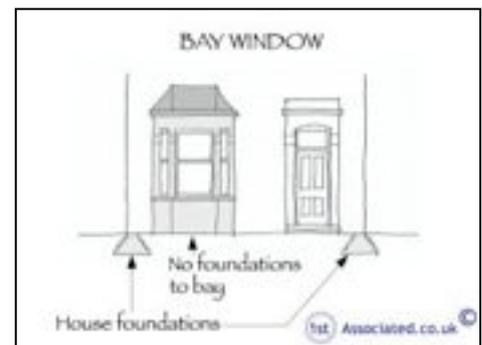
Given the age of the property you may find different depths of foundations. We would expect to find a stepped brick foundation possibly with a bedding of lime mortar.



Stepped brick foundation

Bay Windows

Bay windows in this era of property typically do not have foundations underneath them and have been subject to movement. We are aware that some insurance companies underpin bay windows with a modern foundation. We think this is often excessive and unnecessary and would be happy to comment further on this if you ever find yourself in this situation.



No foundations to bay window

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.

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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.

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.

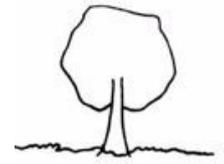
We would always recommend that you remain with the existing insurance company of the property.

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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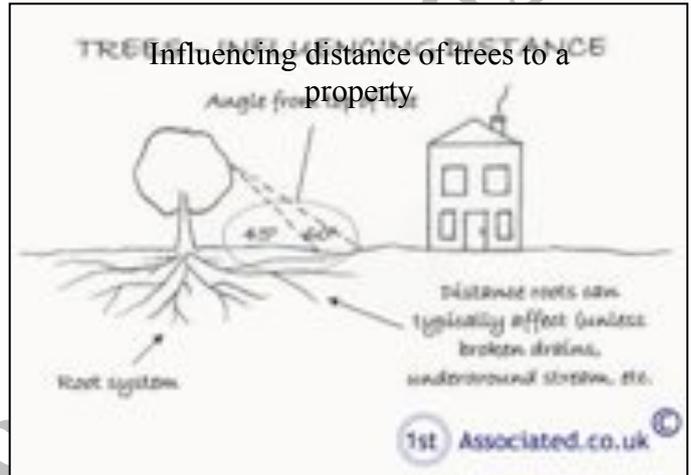
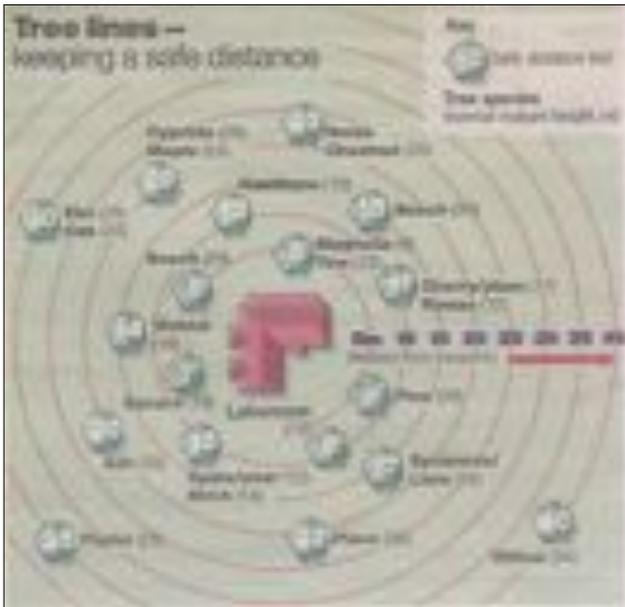




TREES

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

There are no trees within what we would term as influencing distance but you do need to speak to your insurance company as they may have a different interpretation for insurance reasons.



Influencing Distance Defined

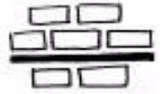
This is the distance in which a tree may be able to cause damage to the subject property. It is not quite as simple as our sketch; it depends on the tree, its maturity, the soil type etc., etc.

Finally, insurance requirements with regard to trees have varied over the years and in our opinion have got ever more onerous. We have seen the notifiable distance of a tree away from a property to have been reduced over the years and we reiterate our comments elsewhere within this report that you need to make enquiries with regard to the insurability of your property in relation to trees and other features when you purchase the property.

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

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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.

In properties of this age it is unlikely that a damp proof course would have been built in originally. However, often they have had damp proof courses added at a later date. In this case we cannot see a DPC due to the plinth.



DPC

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

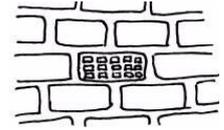
Finally, sometimes it is difficult for us to identify if there is a damp proof course in a property. We have made our best assumptions based upon our general knowledge of the age, type and style of this property.

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AIRBRICKS



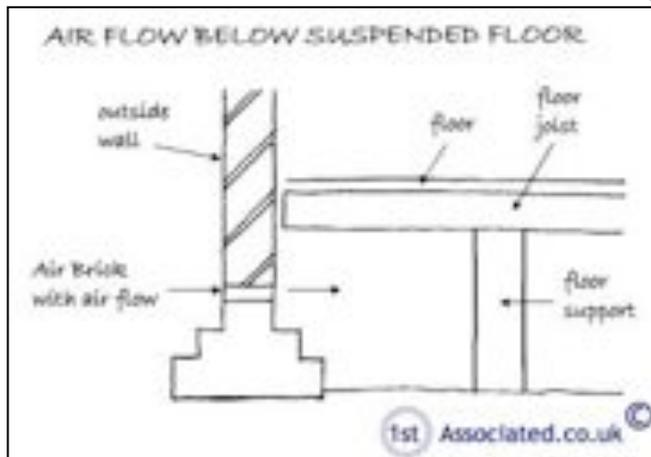
In properties with suspended floors you need to have an airflow beneath to stop deterioration. The air is allowed to pass under the property by the use of airbricks. Generally the rule of thumb is that airbricks are spaced every metre and a half approximately, but this depends upon the specific circumstances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

Low Level Air Bricks

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



Airbrick acts as gutter



Suspended timber floor



Air brick acting as gutter

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

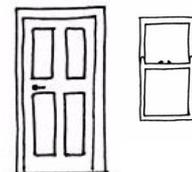
Finally, we have made our best assumptions based upon our visual inspection of the outside of the property and our general knowledge of this age, type and style of construction. We have not opened up the floor, unless we have specifically stated so in this section.

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FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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

Fascias and Soffits

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

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



Fascias and soffits

Windows and Doors

The property has plastic double glazed windows without trickle vents with the exception of the loft conversion where there are trickle vents.

We would draw your attention to the fact that sealed double glazed units can fail, particularly as a result of poor workmanship during installation. Failure of the seal leads to condensation between the two panes of glass and simply replacing the affected units may not provide a satisfactory long-term solution. In this case we were unable to open some of the windows as they were locked.



Could not open window due to locks

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Transferable Guarantees

Although these windows are old enquiries should be made as to the existence of any transferable guarantees by your legal advisor. Generally it is considered that double glazed units have a life of about ten years.

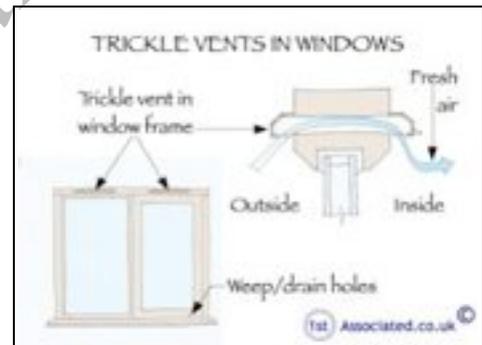
The top floor windows have trickle vents.



Trickle vent to top floor only

Trickle Vents Defined

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



Trickle vents

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

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EXTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

There is very little to decorate but the high level redecoration of the fascias and soffits can be a problem and we have noticed is often left in these properties.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

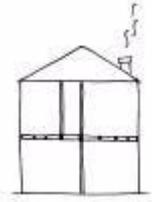
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INTERNAL



CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

Ceilings

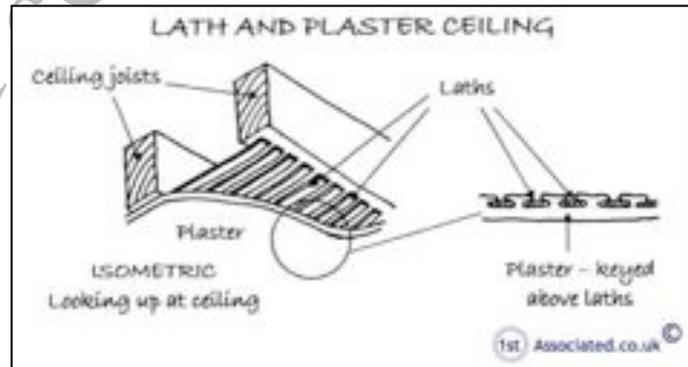
From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be lath and plaster to the older parts with plasterboard to the newer parts such as the top floor extension and the kitchen alterations.



Nice mouldings at entrance

Lath and Plaster Defined

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



Lath and plaster ceiling

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

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Hairline cracks

We did note some hairline cracks around the doors. Where an extension like this has taken place there will be some initial settlement.

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



Hairline cracking in master bedroom around door

Perimeter Walls

Originally these would have been constructed with a wet plaster, possibly a lime plaster. We now believe they are finished in a gypsum plaster with the exception of the top floor where we can see there has been dry lining taken place.

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

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

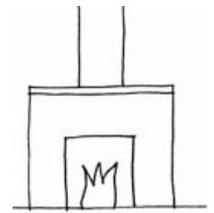
Finally, ceilings, walls and partitions have been inspected from floor level and no opening up has been undertaken (unless permission has been obtained by yourselves). In some cases the materials employed cannot be ascertained without samples being taken and damage being caused.

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

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CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES

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

The chimney breasts are located to the front right and rear left (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.



Feature fireplace to front

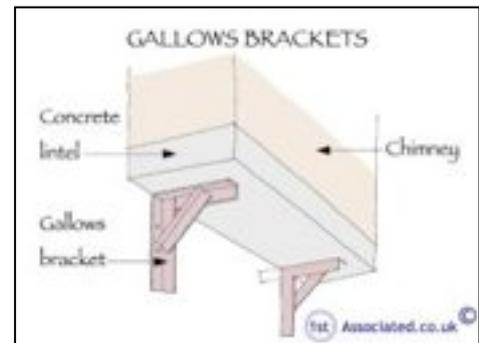


Nice use of rear chimney

Removed chimneys

We note a chimney has been removed on the front right. Sometimes gallows bracket supports are added.

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



Gallows bracket

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

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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 Section of this report.

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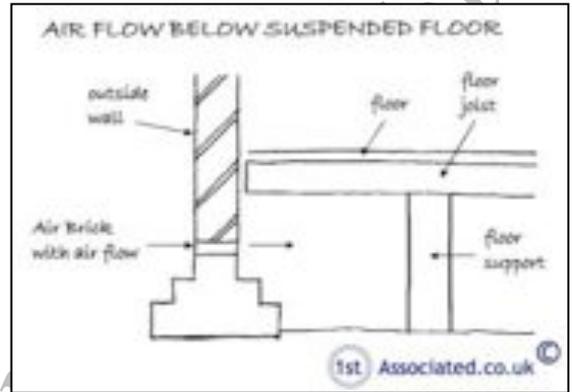
FLOORS



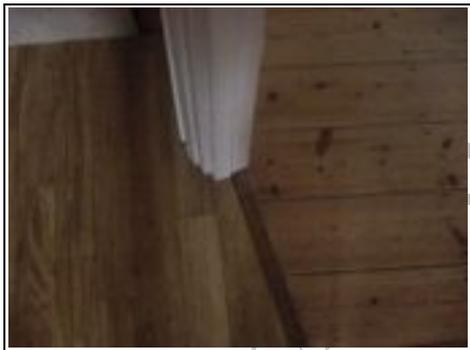
Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.

Ground Floor

There is a mixture of a suspended timber floor to the front of the property, which require air movement underneath to minimise wet rot, dry rot and woodworm, and a solid floor to the rear.



Suspended timber floor



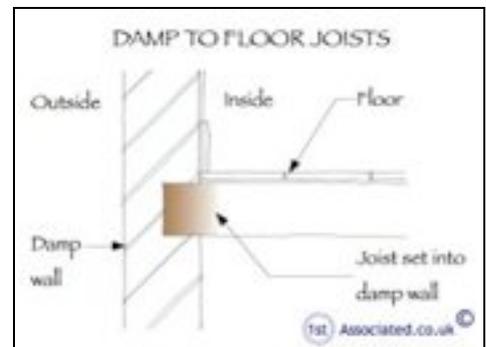
Original timbers sanded and polished



Laminate flooring over rear concrete floor

First Floor

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



Embedded timbers

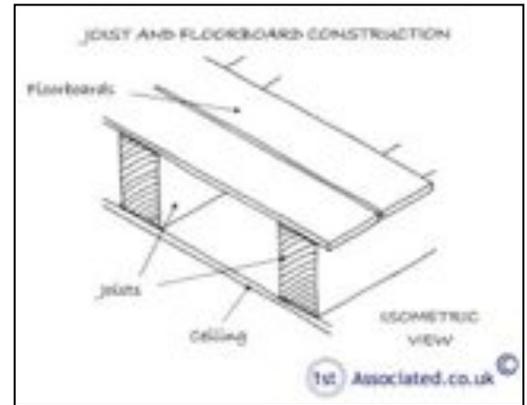
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Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

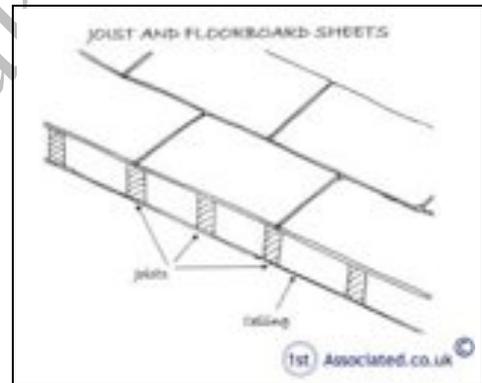
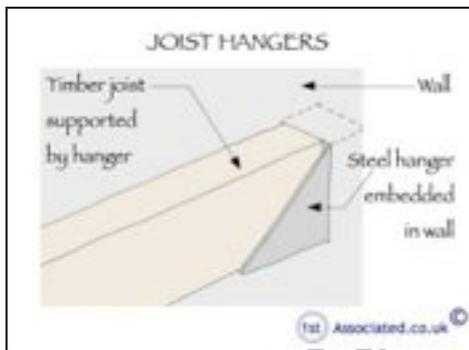
These are usually at first floor level consisting of a joist supported from the external walls, either built in or, in more modern times, sitting upon joist hangers, sometimes taking additional support from internal walls, with floorboards fixed down upon it.



Joist and floorboards

Second/Top Floor

The top floor is joist on joist hangers and floorboard sheets.



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

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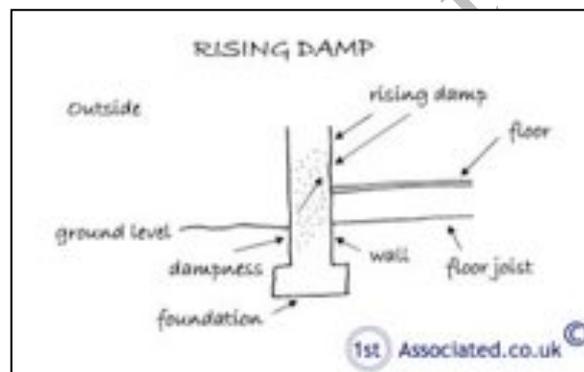


DAMPNESS

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

Rising Damp

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



Rising damp

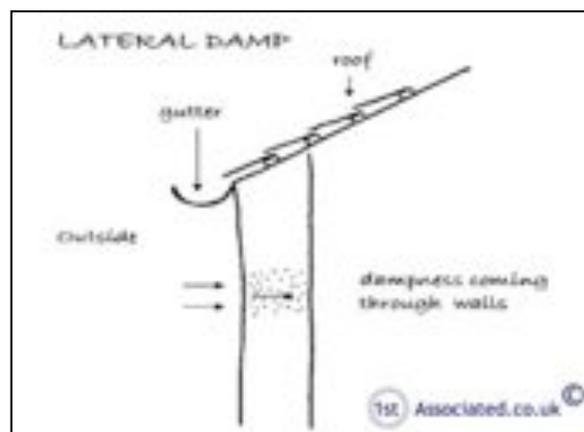
A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we have found no significant rising damp.



Testing for rising damp

Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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



Lateral dampness

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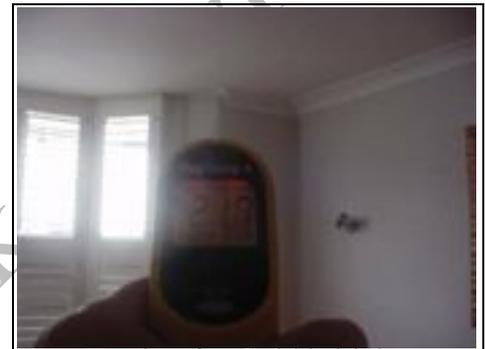
We used a resistance meter on the external walls. We have not found significant dampness.



Testing for lateral dampness

Cold Bridging

Cold bridging is a feature of this era of property particularly around the tops of windows. You need to ensure the property is kept well ventilated.



Testing for Cold bridging

Cold Bridging Defined

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



Cold bridging/thermal bridging

Condensation

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

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

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

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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 would recommend large humidity controlled extract fans be added to kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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.

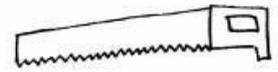
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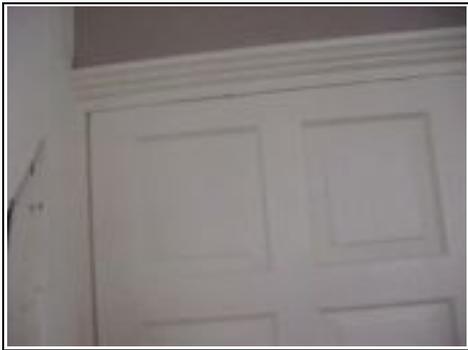
INTERNAL JOINERY



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 property has a mixture of panel doors some of which are painted or stained and newer modern pressed doors. There is damage to some of the doors.



Panel door



Damage to doors



Damage to door

Door closer

Some of the doors have central door closers known by their trade name of perco door closers.



Door closer

Staircases

We were unable to examine the underside of the stair timbers due to it being lined at the bottom, which precluded our inspection, so we cannot comment further upon the stair structure.



No handrail to stairs

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We noted that the underside of the staircase was exposed at the top. It is more normal today to have a half hour fire barrier to stop fire spreading from the ground floor to the first floor in a worse case scenario. You may wish to take a view on whether you add this.

We would also comment that there was no handrail to the staircase.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend the staircase is lined at the top. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Stairs not lined under staircase to top end

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £250 - £500; quotations required.

Kitchen

We found the kitchen in average condition. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

There are steps into and out of the kitchen.

Please see our comments with regards to dampness and the ground levels around the property.



Step down into kitchen

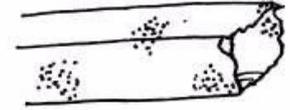
Finally, it should be noted that not all joinery has been inspected. We have viewed a random sample and visually inspected these to give a general overview of the condition. Please also see the External Joinery/Detailing section.

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TIMBER DEFECTS



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

Dry Rot

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

We have not visually seen any significant 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.

Wet Rot

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

We have not visually seen any signs of significant wet rot during the course of our inspection. Again, we would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had a limited view of the roof.

Woodworm



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

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As we could not look in the roof we looked at the floors. We found old woodworm to the floor.

There are perfect conditions for woodworm under the floor with the current airbricks acting as gutters.



Old woodworm to floor

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.

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

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

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

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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.

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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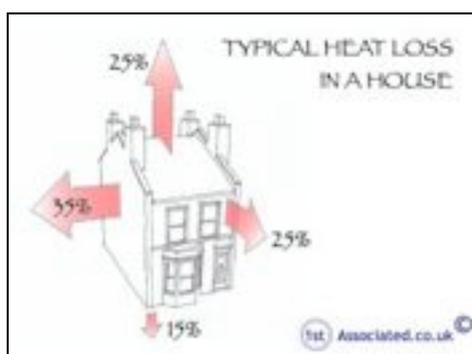
THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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.

Roofs

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 300mm. In this case we could not see the roof so can only take an educated guess that as it has insulation it has also been insulated. In the limited view of where we could see it we could see a small amount of foil backed insulation.



Typical heat loss



Foil backed insulation

Walls

The walls to this property are solid in the sense that they do not have a cavity as a modern property would have. Also they are unlikely to have any substantial insulation, however, unfortunately it is generally very difficult to improve the insulation without affecting the external or the internal appearance of the property.

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Windows

The windows are double glazed and therefore will have reasonable thermal properties.

Services

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

Summary

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

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

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

or alternatively www.cat.org.uk (Centre for Alternative Technology)

*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 – can be viewed on YouTube

HIPs

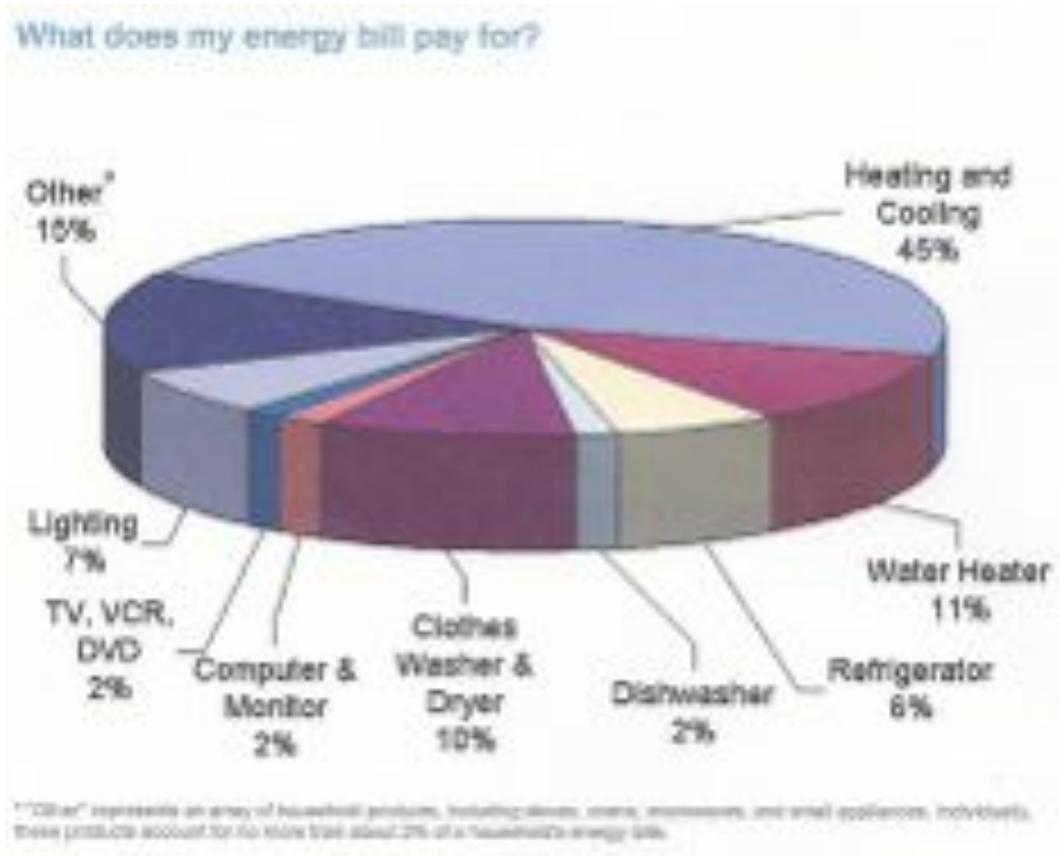
We understand that HIPs were suspended from 20th May 2010. Energy Performance Certificates are required before a sale completes.

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.

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OTHER MATTERS



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

Security

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

Fire / Smoke Alarms

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



Smoke alarm

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

Insurance

We would always recommend staying with the existing insurance company, and then if there are any problems you should not have the difficulty of negotiating with two insurance companies passing the blame between each other.

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

Asbestos

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

In years gone by asbestos was commonly used as wood and can be found in all sorts of places. Asbestos was used post war until it was banned only in the UK in the last ten years or so. It is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time where products were imported from countries where it is not banned.



Possible asbestos

We are Building Surveyors and not Asbestos Surveyors and as such the only way to be a hundred per cent certain with regards to Asbestos in a property is to have an Asbestos report carried out.

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

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SERVICES

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

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

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ELECTRICITY



It is strange to think that electricity only started to be used in domestic properties at the turn of the 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 hallway to the left hand side. The fuse board looked 1980's/1990's and better are now available.



Fuse Board

Earth Test

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



Earth test

ACTION REQUIRED: As the property is changing occupancy an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test and report should be carried

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out by a NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

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

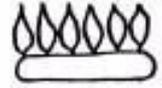
For basic general information on this matter please see the appendices at the end of this report.

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GAS

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

We are advised that the property has mains gas. The consumer unit is located to the front bay window.

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.



Consumer unit

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.

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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, although we would not expect most Estate Agents to know 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 copper piping. No significant leakage was noted on the surface, although most of the pipework is concealed in floors, walls and ducts.

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Heating

The boiler was located in the kitchen, it is manufactured by Vaillant.

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.



Vaillant 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. We recommend that you return and see the heating working.

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

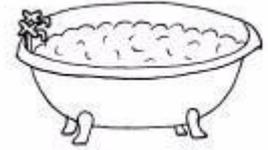
We cannot comment on the condition of the water service pipe to the building. It should be appreciated that leaks can occur for some time before signs are apparent on the surface.

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BATHROOM



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

First Floor Bathroom

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

Second Floor En-Suite Shower room

The shower room on the top floor has a W.C., shower and wash hand basin. The W.C. is a macerator system which is noisy.



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

Macerator

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.

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MAIN DRAINS

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

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

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

Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We have identified one inspection chamber / manhole.

Manholes Defined

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

Inspection Chamber / Manhole One located to the rear

We were unable to lift the manhole therefore are unable to comment further. There are sometimes problems with these manholes so we would like to have opened it up.

ACTION REQUIRED: To be 100% certain a close circuit TV camera report is necessary.



Manhole to rear

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

Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal. In this era of property they are likely to be combined/shared drains which are where the foul water and the surface water combines. These can be a problem during heavy rainfall and peak periods, such as the 9 o'clock rush to work.

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

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

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OUTSIDE AREAS

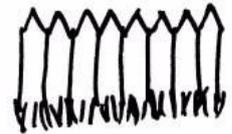
The main focus of this report has been on the main building. If you wish us to do a specific report on the other buildings then you need to instruct us for this separately. We are offering here a brief overview.

PARKING



Parking is free roadside parking on a first come first serve basis.

EXTERNAL AREAS



Front Garden

The property has a small front garden.



Front garden



Plants growing on garden wall to right side

Rear Garden

There is a small rear garden. The fencing would benefit from redecoration.

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Rear garden



Area to side

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 at the time of the inspection but there was no response.

Right Hand Neighbours

Again, we knocked at the time of the inspection but there was no response.

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POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:
 - i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
 - ii) Rising damp treatments.
 - iii) Double glazing or replacement windows.
 - iv) Roof and similar renewals.
 - v) Central heating installation.
 - vi) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
 - vii) Removal of any walls in part or whole.
 - viii) Removal of any chimneys in part or whole.
 - ix) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
- d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- e) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.
- f) Liabilities in connection with shared services.
- g) Adjoining roads and services.
- h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- i) General development proposals in the locality.
- j) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other

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Designated Planning Area.

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

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

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

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

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

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

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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!

Please do not hesitate to contact us on **0800 298 5424**.

For and on Behalf of
XXX

This Report is dated: XXX

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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 XXX 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.

APPROVALS/GUARANTEES

Where work has been carried out to the property in the past, the surveyor cannot guarantee that this work has been carried out in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations, British/European Standards and Codes of Practice, Agreement Certificates and statutory regulations.

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.

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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.

LAYOUT PLAN

We have used the estate agents floor plan as a guide to the layout of the building. We have not checked it for scale and accuracy.

WEATHER

It was warm and dry at the time of the inspection.

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.

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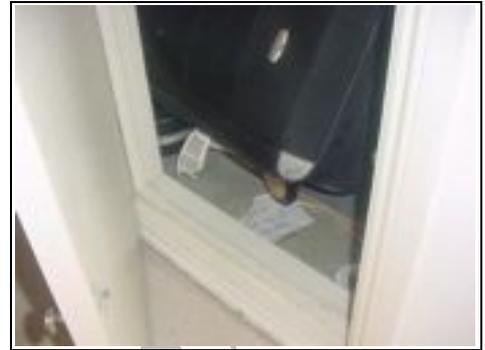
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INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been limited as:

- 1) We did not have full access to the roof due to the room formed with in. The roof space we could see was full of stored items.
- 2) On the top floor there was a cupboard that we could not get into due to a wardrobe in front of it which was packed full of clothes so we could not move without fear of breaking the wardrobe.
- 3) We didn't open up the ground floor or the first floor as we couldn't see a way to do it without causing damage.
- 4) The property was empty we did not have the benefit of talking to the owners or them answering our usual question and answers.
- 5) We didn't have the benefit of meeting you at the property to talk about your specific requirements.



Roof space full of stored items

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.

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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.

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APPENDICES

1. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
2. Information on the Property Market
3. French Drain Article
4. Thermal Bridging also known as Cold Bridging Article

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THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

1. A certificate showing the work has been done by a Government-approved electrical installer - 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.

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

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French Drain

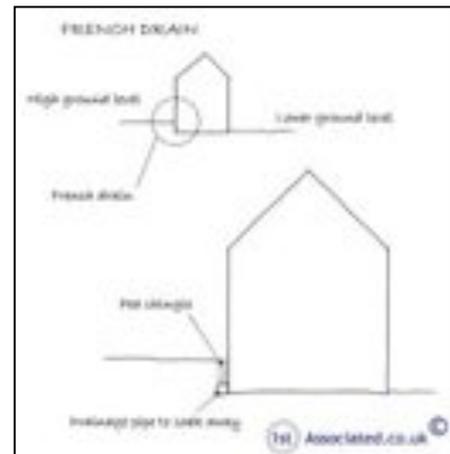
Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

We are finding where we are asked to look at damp walls and damp floors or damp problems in general that commonly it is because the external ground level is higher than the internal ground level, or airbricks have been blocked, or simply paving slabs, decking or briquettes have been used to form a patio area. This then discharges any rainwater against the building. Quite often the solution is to add a French drain.

Whilst French drains are quite simple and are basically nothing more than trenches filled with gravel, although there is a bit more to them, as we will explain, they are almost a D.I.Y. job for most people and they are relatively easy to install and are low cost. However, you do need some care and attention, otherwise you can install what we have heard referred to, as the French pond.

What use is a French drain?

A French drain is a trench, the width of approximately six inches or 300 millimetres wide, or the width of your spade, and is approximately twice the depth, i.e. 12 inches or 300 millimetres. In most cases this will suffice, however, where there is a great deal of ground water you may wish to make the trench wider and deeper.



The French drain acts as an area where water soaks away quickly. We often recommend them close to building, but not next to the building, as this helps reduce the ground level and/or take any water that is directed at that area away. For example, where a patio has been put in place which aims any rainwater at part of the wall. As mentioned, whilst a French drain is a D.I.Y. job, it does need some understanding of how it works.

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French drains must be on a slope

The piping that goes at the base of a French drain should be perforated or, as we did years ago for land drains, there should be gaps between each pipe. It should be set onto a bed of firm ground and the pipes should be on a fall to the drain. Whilst you should be able to ensure there is enough fall by sight, we also like the idea of rolling a marble from one end to the other.

You will then need to put the pipes down, fill the trench with half an inch, to an inch, of good sized gravel. You can leave it at that, or in addition you can cover with sand and then turf over. This is how a basic French drain is carried out.

The French drain system that we would recommend

This would be as described, although we would add to the base an inch or two of gravel on to which the perforated drainage pipe will rest. It will then wrap around that drainage pipe filter fabric. This is to stop the holes in the perforated pipe from blocking up. By the way, the drainage pipe should be four to six inches/100 millimetres to 250 millimetres. We would then fill with gravel. In addition to this, we would add a silt trap and this is added in the run of the pipe and is very similar to a road gully (not that's of much use if you don't understand how a road gully works). The silt trap is a rectangular box with a pipe opening at each end. The drained water passes onto this and any particles sink to the bottom of the box and then the water travels on to the other side of the box, enabling you to feed into a drain.

These are usually made of glass reinforced polyester and have been available in this form since the mid-1980's. They are normally reinforced with a steel frame for additional strength and re-bedded in concrete.

The French pond!

French drains will, over time, clog up, which is why we recommend using a filter fabric. However, even with this they will eventually clog up. Unfortunately, there is no dyno-rod equivalent, as it is normally fine sand, organic matter or clay that has clogged up the French drain. So, it is a case of digging it up and cleaning the pipework (or it may be quicker to just replace it), adding a filter fabric and re-filling the gravel.

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Thermal Bridging, also known as Cold Bridging

Not all building surveys and structural surveys are the same, they differ in quality

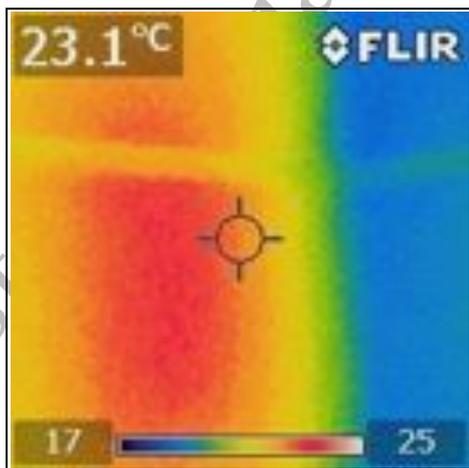
We are independent building surveyors; we are using this article as a way of promoting our system of carrying out building surveys and structural surveys. Thermal bridging also known as cold bridging is a problem which our surveyors are coming across more and more.



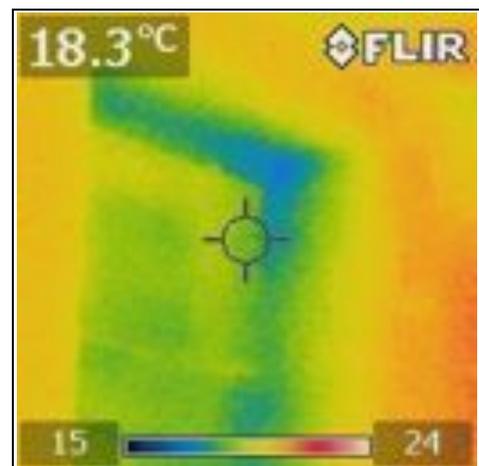
Cold Bridging/Condensation

Thermal Imaging

Thermal imaging can be very useful when looking for cold bridging or thermal bridging as it identifies where colder and damper areas are. Here is an example of our thermal image camera in action.



Thermal image



Thermal image

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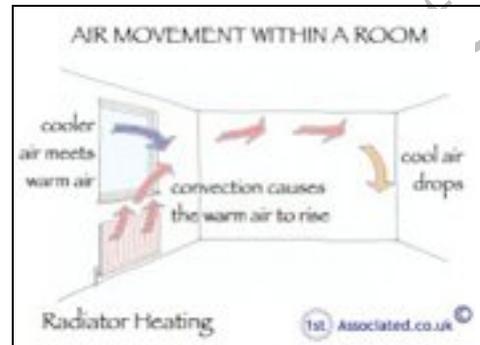
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Tropical conditions in your house

Many people now want to live in the most tropical conditions compared with what our ancestors did within their homes, looking to be wearing a t-shirt or shirt most of the time and certainly not wanting to wear big thick jumpers.

This has resulted in the heat in our homes getting higher which in turn has meant higher fuel bills which in turn has meant that we have insulated the properties more. This has had a range of affects on different buildings, depending upon the age of the buildings and how they were designed.



Air movement within a room

A house is a house is a house

At first glance houses look very similar, they have walls, a roof and windows. There are some obvious differences such as a Tudor building which will have a black and white timber frame with render or pargeting between it and a modern house will be brick or stone or render depending upon where you live within the country. Many houses are built and designed to look like older houses but they work very differently due to their high thermal standards.



Modern property

In fact building a house and then amending it is not a new thing, for example below are photos of what looks on the outside to be a Georgian property however when we started to carry out the refurbishment on the property it was soon discovered that originally it was a Tudor property.



Georgian front property



Classic Georgian windows

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Signs the property was originally a Tudor building such as the Inglenook fireplace



Reed on the first floor

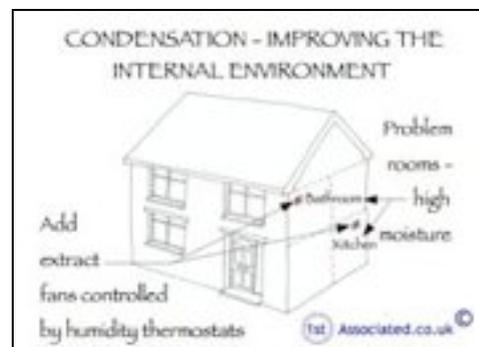
Alterations that have been made in years gone by may cause such problems as structural problems however we are now carrying out relevantly subtle alterations which are affecting the climate and the environment that we live in due to the amount of insulation in the properties. Unfortunately or fortunately we treat houses in very similar ways and our priority is to live in them as opposed to living in them in a way that doesn't affect or cause problems in the houses such as thermal bridging also known as cold bridging.

What are we doing in houses now that we didn't used to years ago?

One of the things we are doing is more regularly showering, bath and washing and we now have all sorts of appliances such as dishwashers and dryers. In the winter months we wish to carry on wearing the type of clothes that we wear during the summer months so we tend to heat houses a lot more. Equally we dry clothes inside houses as well. Where does all this lead us?

Condensation

We have found in many houses where there is central heating and shower facilities in the form of a family bathroom and then en-suites to one or many bedrooms that condensation is becoming a problem.

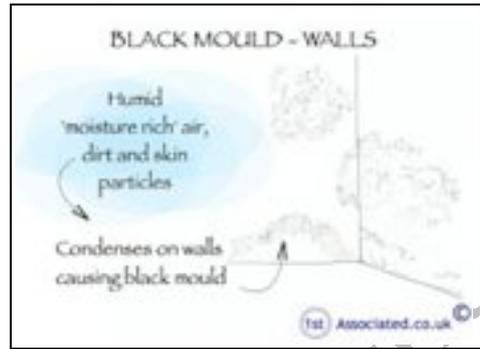


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This along with cooking and drying of clothes inside, particularly in the winter has resulted in black mould along with an unpleasant humid environment which is not pleasant to live in. We would like by way of this article to introduce you to thermal bridging or cold bridging. You need to consider how this may be affecting your property and what you can do to minimise the effects of it.



Mould to walls



Black mould



Mould

What do the red circles mean?

The red circles are a system that we used within our structural surveys, building surveys and schedules of condition to highlight problem areas so that you are not left wondering what the problem is. In addition to this if the photographs do not, we believe, explain the problem enough together with our survey report we also add in one of our own sketches.

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Thermal Bridging or Cold Bridging

Thermal Bridging or Cold Bridging is not a new phenomenon but it is a term that is not commonly used. We are coming across cold bridging more and more often as people warm their houses to what once would be considered almost tropical conditions. We almost expect to be in short sleeves whether it is summer or winter inside our homes. This combined with our wish to reduce our reliance on fossil fuel has led us to a climate where we are looking for more

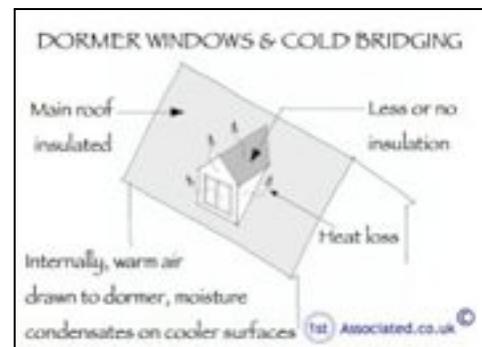


Cold Bridging/Condensation

energy efficient buildings. It seems to be working well where we are building from new however where we are converting older buildings or simply living in them, we expect them to perform like new buildings so we are getting problems. One of these problems is Cold Bridging.

What exactly is thermal bridging or cold bridging?

Thermal Bridging or Cold Bridging is where elements of the structure are colder than the main elements of the structure and condensation occurs on the surface, sometimes interstitially which is inside the surface. We have come across many examples of Cold Bridging; we will give you a few examples here:



Dormer Windows & Cold Bridging

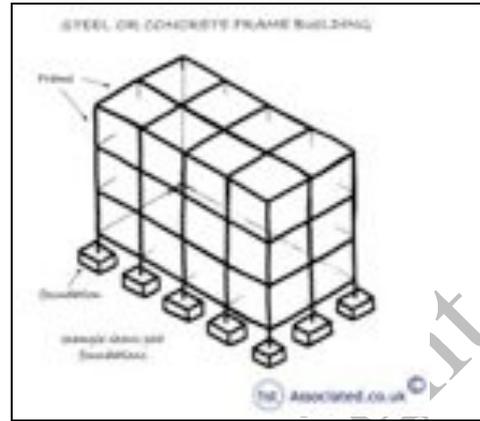
The first example is a residential house, part of a brand new development that had used a modern energy efficient heating system. Unfortunately the way the property was built Cold Bridging was being caused at floor level. This resulted in condensation at floor level which in turn meant that the floor covering deteriorated. It was first noticed in the kitchen, it also then affected the kitchen units.

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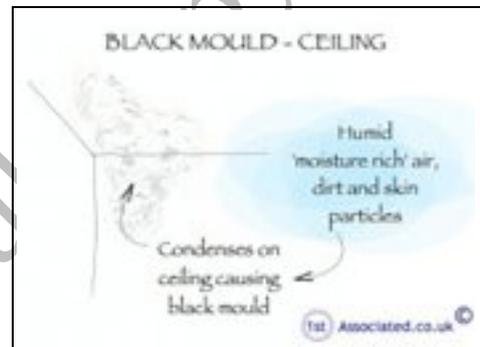
The next example we will look at was within a top floor flat where one of the residents was concerned about the black mould they found within the property. This was later diagnosed to be a concrete frame building and as such the concrete frame caused cold bridging which as the residents showered regularly without an extract fan caused mould. As well as being unsightly we would have said it was probably a health hazard too.



Concrete frame building



Mould to ceiling



Black mould to ceiling

Sloping ceilings

Thermal bridging also known as cold bridging occurs in between where the walls meet the ceiling on the sloping section and is a characteristic of this type of building.



Heat loss through sloping ceilings

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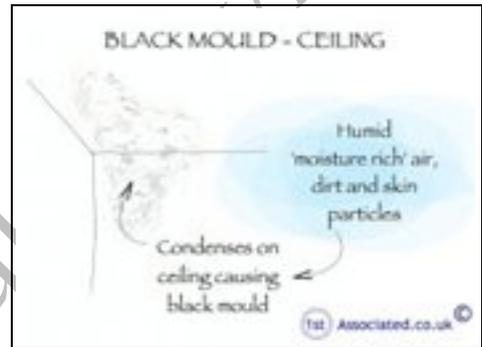
Cold bridging



Cold bridging

These cold elements then attract general dirt, dust, skin particles etc within the environment and then blackening occurs.

In this case we recommended ventilation at high level to soffits to help reduce condensation.

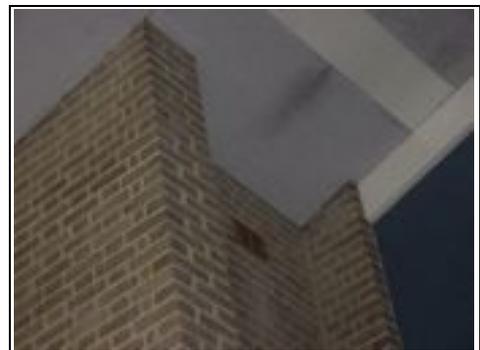


Black mould

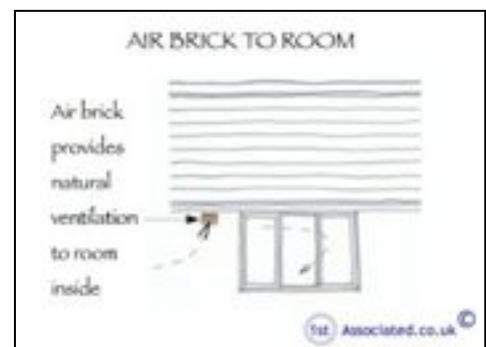
Air movement and ventilation helps to reduce thermal bridging or cold bridging

Thermal Bridging / Cold Bridging depends upon the way the building is being used, i.e. if there is not a constant warm temperature within the building and there is sudden (relatively speaking) heating of the building and increased humidity this will result in condensation to the colder elements of the structure i.e. the concrete frame.

The addition of ventilation and insulation will help this but it does need careful consideration.



High level air vent



High level air brick

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