

JOB REFERENCE: XXXX

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

XXXX

**Leytonstone,
London.
E11 XXX**



FOR

Mr X

Prepared by:

XXXX

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS



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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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:

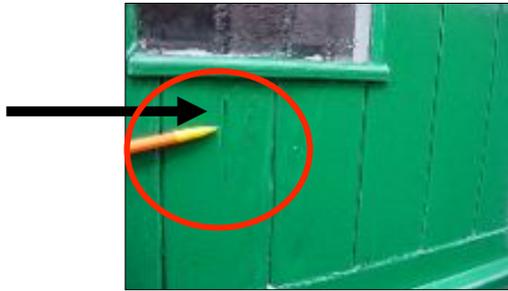
GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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 mid terraced two storey property situated in a residential area of similar properties with a small garden to the front and a reasonable sized garden to the rear. There is on road parking on a first come first served basis; no parking permits as far as we could see.

We believe that the property was built in the late Victorian/Edwardian 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:

1878	Electric Street Lights are installed, lighting the way for Londoners
1896	The first modern Olympic Games in Athens was a great success
1900	Max Planck formulates the Quantum Theory
1901	England calling, Marconi receives wireless signals in Canada!
1904	Number plates introduced in the United Kingdom
1905	Einstein proposed his Theory of Relativity
1907	Picasso introduced Cubism
1908	The fourth Summer Olympics is held in London, a celebration for the nation
1910	Halley's comet is photographed for the first time.

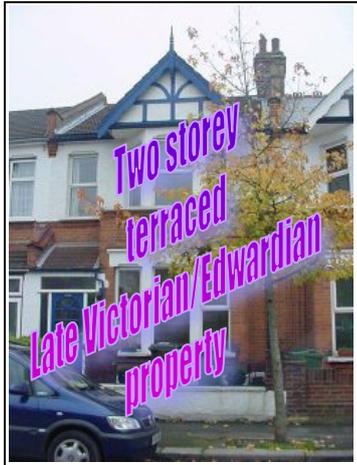
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EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view



Rear view - top



Street view



Rear view - bottom



Small front garden



Rear garden



Home office in 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
- 2) Through lounge
- 3) Kitchen rear

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Study front left
- 2) Double bedroom front right
- 3) Double bedroom rear right
- 4) Bathroom rear left

Outside Areas

There is a small garden to the front and a reasonable sized garden to the rear. There is on road parking on a first come first served basis; no parking permits as far as we could see.

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

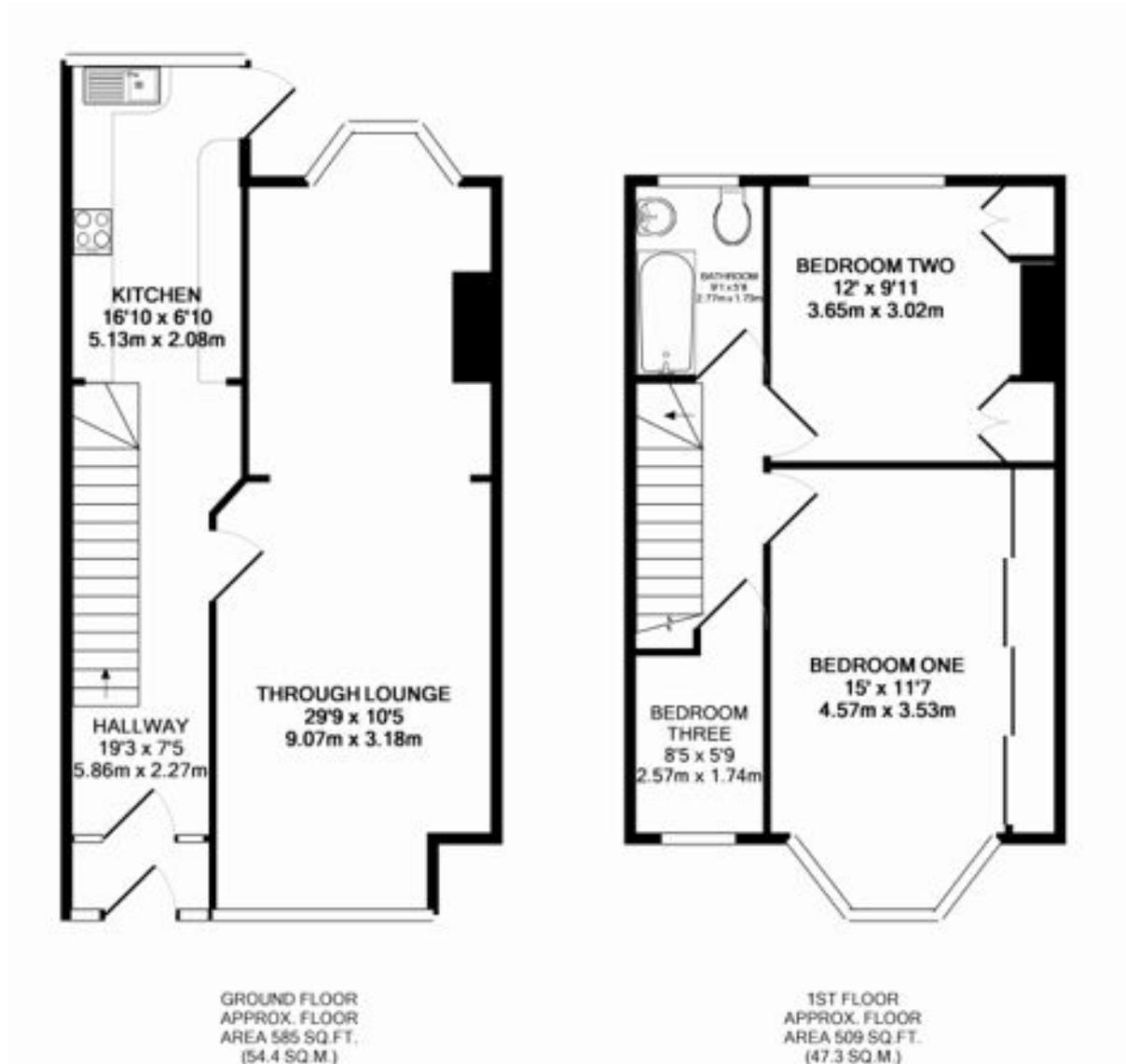
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FLOOR PLANS



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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



Entrance lobby



Stairway and hall



Kitchen



Through lounge front



Through lounge rear

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First Floor



Bedroom front right



Bedroom rear right



Study/bedroom front left



Bathroom

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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION



External

Chimneys:	Brick chimneys
Main Roof:	Pitched, clad with concrete tiles
Parapet Walls:	Brick with render finish and coping stone and lead flashings
Main Roof Structure:	Original cut timber roof with additional structural support we assume following the adding of the concrete tile roof.
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic, possibly cast iron to the rear
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Cast iron and Plastic
Walls:	Front upper level: rough cast render with feature timbers Front lower: Flemish bond brickwork Rear: Render
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Plastic double glazed windows Timber front door

Internal

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

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Services

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (all assumed). The electrics are located in the cellar and there is a Worcester boiler located in the rear right bedroom.

We have looked at the BritishListedBuildings.co.uk website and cannot see your property as listed. We have only made Internet enquiries on this website; there are however anomalies and admissions to this website. Your legal adviser needs to check and confirm this.

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

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

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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 300 photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if an issue has not been discussed that you are interested in or concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it; if we have not we will happily go back.

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

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

The Good

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

- 1.0) The property has potential.
- 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) Front right chimney breast removed

The front right chimney breast has been removed and the rear left chimney has been removed at the top and bottom. We couldn't see any supports.



Chimney



Rear chimney removed



Chimney breast in roof space.
Rear chimney has crack in it
front, no support can be seen



No chimney at first floor level
front



Chimney breast removed to front

ACTION REQUIRED: In theory building regulations should be obtained when a chimney is removed. Your legal advisor to check and confirm. In practice we would not be happy with the situation where the front chimney breast has been removed in case your neighbouring property removes the front chimney breast as well.

You do need to visit number 156 as well. We knocked on the door at

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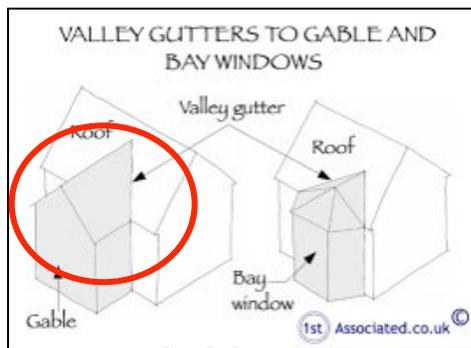
the time of the survey but there was no response. We would recommend you advise number 156 in writing that your chimney breast has been removed if you do proceed; in theory this should also have had a party wall notice.

ANTICIPATED COST: Building Regulations would require a modern lintel to be put in place however probably the most important thing is to check whether your neighbour has the remains of this chimney in place.

Please see the Chimney stacks Section of this Report.

2.0) Valley gutter leaking

We can see within the roof space that the valley gutters are leaking. There are no obvious visual signs of where this was externally although we would say that sometimes it is the cement rendering to the side.



Valley gutter



Green to the edge of the valley gutter



Valley gutter leaking



Valley gutter leaking

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ACTION REQUIRED: You need to put a long ladder or tower scaffold up to have a close inspection of the valley gutters and carry out repairs to make watertight.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £750 to £2,000 depending upon the amount of work required; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Main Roof Section of this Report.

3.0) Cracks front and rear

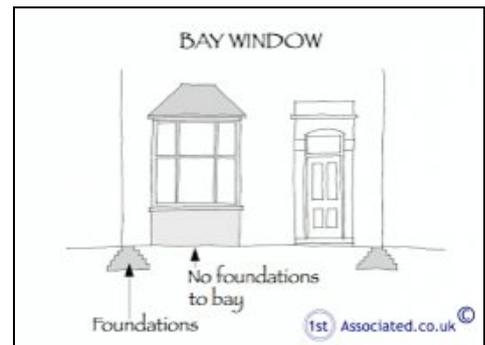
(all directions given as you face the front of the property)

There are cracks visible to the front and a large number visible to the rear of the property.

Please also see the Ugly Section of this report. We consider this to be a major problem.

Front Cracking

To the front of the property the cracks are over the bay window. Typically in this age of property there is a timber lintel which can deteriorate over the years and give slightly. Also we find that bay windows have little foundations underneath them which is part of how they were built.



Rear Cracking

This can be seen both in the render at ground level and also the neighbouring property particularly number 156 which is the right hand side as you face the properties. We noted approximately four or five of the buildings have been re-rendered which could be to hide cracking/make watertight.

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Crack to rear



Cracking to next door



Nearby properties that have been re-rendered



Cracking below window



Cracking



High level cracking

What is causing the cracking?

We believe there may be drainage problems with the drains leaking. Cracking was noted to the rear garden path which would be consistent with next door having cracks as well. Unfortunately we could not find a manhole to check the condition of the drains.



Cracking in rear garden path likely to be from drains

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Crack in kitchen

We also noted a crack to the beam in the kitchen which we believe relates to a leak in the bathroom above.



Crack in beam in kitchen

ACTION REQUIRED: Close circuit TV camera report of drains. Your legal advisor needs to specifically request in writing if there have been any structural problems with the property and you also need to write to insurance companies to see if they are aware of problems in the area. The main problem in our experience with drains is that if they are not resolved then they will continue to leak and this can affect the clay soil that we have in London as well as eroding ground.

ANTICIPATED COST: For investigation work a few hundred pounds to be carried out by your solicitor. This is something you need to consider very carefully as many people would be not want to purchase a property with these issues; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

4.0) Leaking gutters

The gutters are leaking to the rear, pattern staining can be seen. We wouldn't normally comment upon leaking gutters however in this instance we feel they could be contributing to the cracking of the render as the render is soaking up the water from the drains like blotting paper.



Leaking gutters to rear

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ACTION REQUIRED: It is essential that the gutters and downpipes are checked and made watertight.

ANTICIPATED COST: £1,000 to £2,000 depending upon whether repairs or complete replacement is necessary; please obtain quotations.



Pattern staining to rear

Please see the Gutters and Downpipes Section of this Report.

5.0) Parapet walls

There are parapet walls to the main roof and also to the rear roofs.

Main parapet walls

These are built in a soft red brick that does absorb a lot of dampness. We can also see that there is a straight flashing joint rather than a stepped flashing joint that follows the line of the brickwork which we generally find aren't as good.



Red – straight flashing to parapet wall
Green – stepped flashing to chimney which is how it should be done

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Rear parapet walls

We can see to the rear roofs that plants are growing from them which of course means that dampness is within the parapet wall. There looks to be relatively new render.



Rear parapet walls



Plant growing from parapet wall

ACTION REQUIRED: Repair parapet walls.

ANTICIPATED COST: A few hundred pounds to repair the low level parapet walls. To repair the high level parapet walls will be much more expensive. We would add that we can't see any excessive dampness getting into the structure at present but it is a potential problem. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Chimney Stacks Section of this Report.

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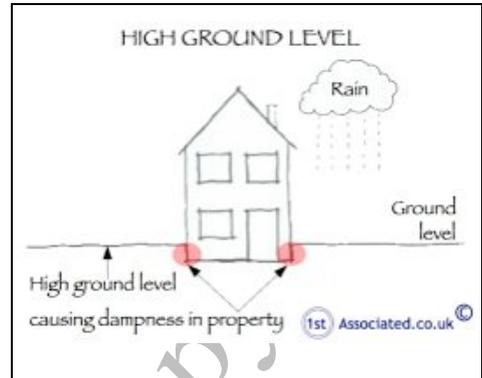


6.0) High ground level

The property has a high ground level to the front and rear.



High ground level



High ground level

ACTION REQUIRED: Ideally the ground level needs to be lowered at the front and rear.

7.0) Dampness within kitchen

We found dampness within the kitchen that exceeded normal levels. We believe this is due to high ground level. It also may be due to poor construction without a damp proof course present. It is not possible to see if there is a damp proof course because there is a rendered finish to the wall.

It could be argued this isn't a habitable room so it is acceptable however it will contribute to dampness as a whole in the house.

The moss in the adjacent photograph indicates that water is going towards the wall.



Dampness



Not possible to see whether there is a damp proof course due to the render

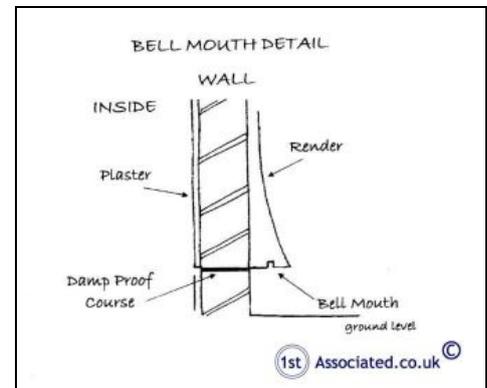
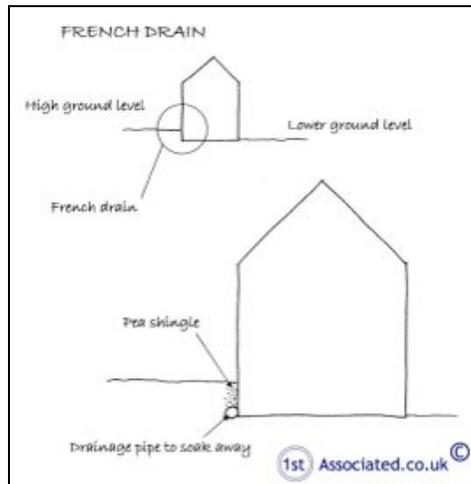
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ACTION REQUIRED: Adding a French drain and a bell mouth would be ideal to reduce the dampness in this area.



ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £1,000 - £3,000; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

8.0) Condensation

The property has a higher than average chance of condensation which is due to there being no mechanical extract fans in the bathroom and kitchen although they do have a natural high level wall vent.



Bathroom wall vent

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ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend large humidity controlled extract fans are added.

ANTICIPATED COST: It really does depend upon the wiring but we would expect costs in the region of £250 to £500 per extract fan; please obtain quotations.

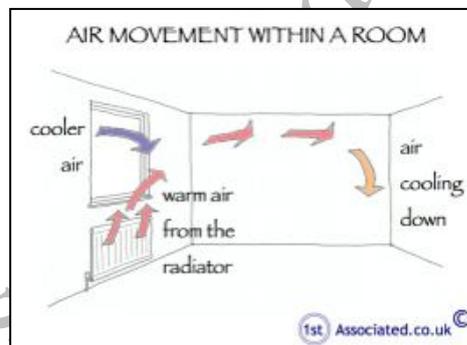


Air cleaner in kitchen needs cleaning

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

9.0) Internal radiators

Another thing related to the higher chance of getting condensation would be that 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.



Internal radiator

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.

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10.0) Wall removed on ground floor

We can see that the wall has been removed in the through lounge without getting Building Regulations permission. This doesn't mean necessarily that there is a structural problem with the beam, it certainly doesn't mean that the house is going to fall over as it has stood the test of time; it literally means it doesn't meet Building Regulations requirements which came in as a national requirement in 1948 so this may well have been carried out prior to that.



Wall removed without building regulations

There is slightly more deflection that we would expect due to the removal of the wall.

ACTION REQUIRED: Revisit the property and check that you are happy with the deflection. Your legal advisor to check and confirm that Building Regulation approval has been obtained.

Please see the Internal Ceilings and Walls Section of this Report.

11.0) Polystyrene tiles

Polystyrene tiles are generally by most mortgage companies requested to be removed as they can be a fire hazard. It can also mean that the lath and plaster ceiling behind them is in poor condition as they were also used to cover things up.



Polystyrene ceiling tiles

ACTION REQUIRED: The polystyrene tiles should be removed as they are a fire hazard. You may then have a problem with the ceiling so the other option is to plasterboard over them.

Please see the Ceilings Section of this Report.

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12.0) No safety glass in doors

We have been unable to find a kite mark on the doors which indicates that they are not safety glass.



Not safety glass

ACTION REQUIRED: Replace with safety glass.

Please see the Internal Joinery Section of this Report.



Door not safety glass

13.0) Cellar

The cellar floor is propped up with bricks to the front left side. We would prefer to see these securely positioned



Bricks propping up joist that is holding the floor.

ACTION REQUIRED: Bed in cement mortar. Also use an angle bracket to hold the joist in place.

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Please see the Cellar Section of this Report.



Underside of ground floor

14.0) Office/outbuilding

There is a home office/outbuilding in the garden of a substantial size. We would comment that larger units such as this one can require planning permission and building regulations (regardless of what the sellers of the product say).



Office/outbuilding



Side of outbuilding



Inside outbuilding

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal advisor to request in writing confirmation whether planning permission or building regulations has been obtained.

Please see the External Areas Section of this Report.

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15.0) Services

15.1) Dated electrics

The electrics are dated.

ACTION REQUIRED: Replace and upgrade the electrics.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £250 to £500; please obtain quotations.



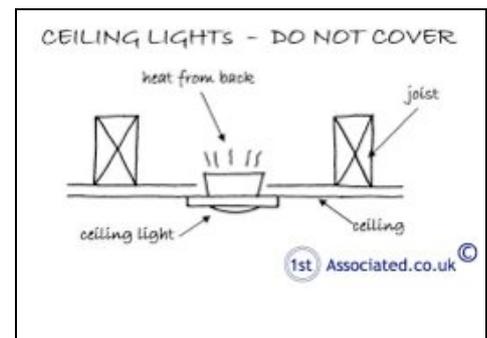
Dated electrics

15.2) Ceiling lights

The property has electric lights to the ceiling. In some instances these can cause problems as the heat given off has in some cases lead to outbreaks of fire; these tend to be in the older type of ceiling lights and we recommend that where ceiling lights are used that the rear of the light is not covered.



Ceiling lights



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15.3) Boiler

The property has a Worcester boiler in the bedroom. A boiler within a bedroom could be considered as a problem.

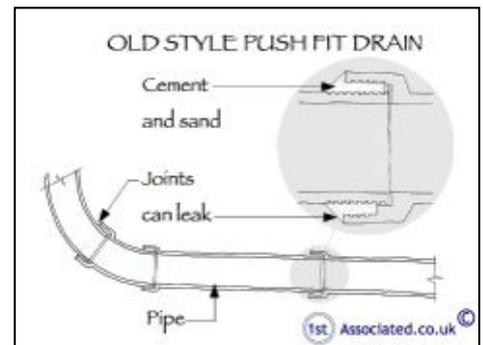


Flue from Worcester boiler

15.4) No manhole found

Manholes are used where there is a change in direction of pipes or new pipes join the main run. It is therefore a good location for clearing any blockages. In this case we were unable to see any manholes.

The drainage may relate to the cracking to the rear of the property. 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%



Push fit drain

certain of the condition of the drains is to have a closed circuit TV camera report.

Please see our earlier comments with regards to the cracking to the rear of the property.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend a closed circuit TV camera report of the drains.

Manholes Defined

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

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Please see the Services Section of this Report.

The Ugly

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

We have found more than the average number of things that we would classify as bad. We would specifically comment that the movement to the rear of the property we would classify in our Ugly Section. This together with the other things within the bad section 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 such as painting the render.

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.

With a Victorian/Edwardian property the main and most expensive maintenance tends to relate to high level areas such as the chimneys, roof and the gutters. We have duly commented on these areas throughout the report.

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 are dated. 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 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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Drainage

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Water Supply

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

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

DIY/Handyman Type Work

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

Purchase Price

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

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

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Estimates of Building Costs

Where we have offered an estimate of building costs please remember we are not experts in this area. We always recommend you obtain quotations for the large jobs before purchasing the property (preferably three quotes). The cost of building work has many variables such as the cost of labour and estimates can of course vary from area to area when giving a general indication of costs. For unskilled labour we currently use between £75 and £125 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

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

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SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



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

We would reiterate that we feel the cracking to the rear of the property could relate to structural movement which is likely in turn to relate to the drains. The difficulty with trying to resolve drainage problems is that the whole of the drain needs to have work carried out on it not just your section.

Our other concern is that we can see four of five properties that have been rendered to the rear in this vicinity which may well be as a best case scenario to help protect them against dampness getting into the property, in a worst case scenario could be to cover up cracking within the building. Please have another look at the rear of the building and here is the crack in next doors property.



Cracking to next door

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

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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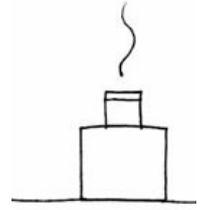
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EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS, FLUES AND PARAPET WALLS



Chimney Stacks

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

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

Chimney One - located to the right

This chimney is brick finished with a lead flashing and you have two chimney pots. From what we could see from ground level it looked in average condition considering its age, type and style although the rendering of the adjoining chimney does indicate to us that there are problems with dampness getting into these chimneys which can often be the case where a softish red brick is used.



Front of chimney

Please see more about this in the Walls Section.

We would also refer you to our comments in the Executive Summary about the chimney beneath it being removed to the front and to the rear there being a crack present.



Crack to chimney

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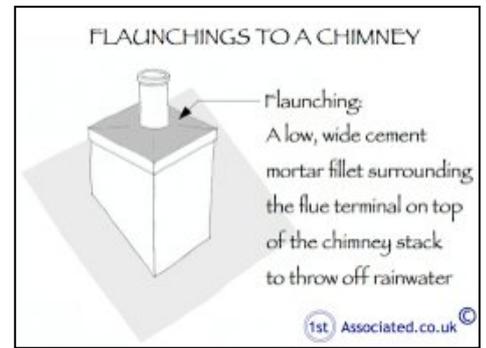
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Unfortunately we were unable to see the top of the chimney known as the flaunching, we therefore cannot comment upon them.

ACTION REQUIRED: Periodically inspect the chimney.



Flaunching

Chimney Two – Located to the rear

When these properties were built originally they would have had all the rooms heated via a chimney and they would normally have a chimney to the rear of the property. In this case there was a rear chimney which has been removed below roof level; no evidence can be seen of this being supported or equally any signs of deflection in the ceiling.

ACTION REQUIRED: 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 and rear which are brick built with a coping stone and a straight flashing.



Rear left parapet wall



Plant growing from parapet wall



Flashing to parapet wall rear right side

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary

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

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Party Walls

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

Specifically in this case we would comment the removal of chimneys and similar amendments should have had a party wall notice. Your legal advisor should be able to check and obtain this.

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

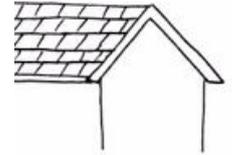
Please also see Chimney Breasts, Flues and Fireplaces Section of this Report.

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ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS

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

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

We will consider the roofs in four areas, the main roof, the bay window roof, front porch roof and the rear single storey 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. We could see venting indicating that it is a relatively new roof (the last fifty or so years).



Main roof

A heavier concrete tile has replaced the original slate and therefore there should be additional roof support which there is in this case.

With this age of roof there will usually be a few missing or displaced tiles, this is nothing unusual.

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

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Valley gutter

This property has valley gutters. Valley gutters are formed where two roofs meet and these are generally problematic.



Leaking valley gutter



Valley gutter

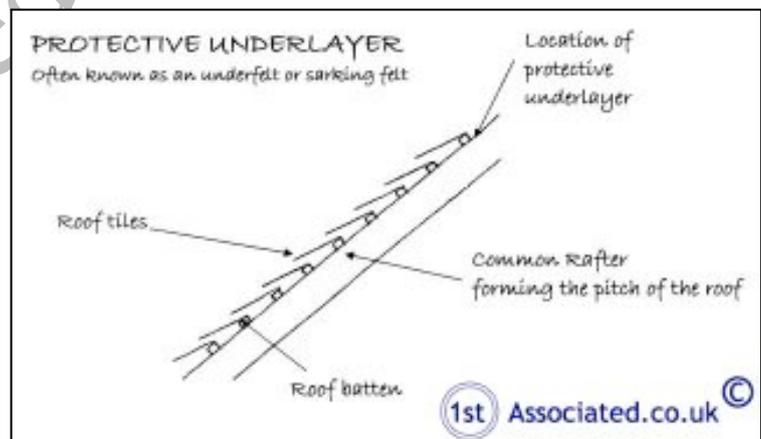


Valley gutter

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

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

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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

To the front of the property there is a square bay window. Bay windows are great for bringing light into the property. We can see some movement to the front of the property which in turn could have moved the roof slightly.



Concrete sills around bay window



Area over bay window where leaks are

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments with regards to the valley gutters and also our comments on bay windows in the Walls Section.

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Front porch roof

The front porch roof has a small tile and we were pleased to see it has a stepped flashing. Note our comments with regard to the parapet wall straight flashing.



Front porch roof

Rear roof

The rear roof is a mixture of older tiles, modern concrete tiles and plastic corrugated sheet. Please see our comments with regards to the parapet walls and the flashing. We expect repairs to be carried out.



Rear roofs



Concrete flashing

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

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

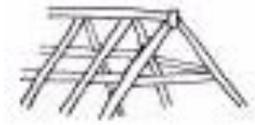
For further comments with regard to ventilation please see the Roof Structure and Loft Section.

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ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT

(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

Main Roof

Roof Access

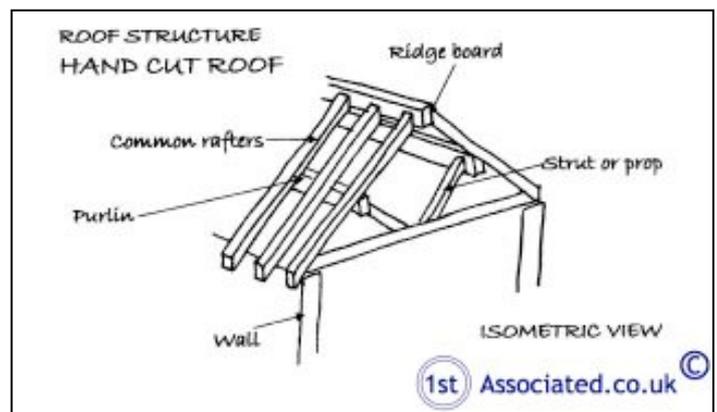
The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing but unusually over the stairs so it does make it more awkward than usual to access and we feel a bit more dangerous than usual as you are literally over the stairs. The insulation is over the joists so you need to take extra care when in the roof.

There is no loft ladder, electric light or secured floorboards. We recommend that these be added, as it will make the loft space safer and easier to use.

The whole of the loft has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly.

Roof Structure

This type of roof structure has what is known as a cut timber roof with additional structural support we assume following the adding of the concrete tile roof. This is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects; however it is in line with the sort of amendments that we see in a roof that has had heavier concrete tiles added.



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



New timbers

Our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof and the insulation. What we could see was generally found to be in average condition for its age, type and style with the exception of the crack in the chimney, please see our comments on this in the Executive Summary. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.



Purlin sitting onto brick which is reasonable

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 in the roof tiles although on the day of the survey there was no draught.



Vents

Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

Electrical Cables

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

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

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

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GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

Gutters and Downpipes

The property has plastic gutters and downpipes with possibly some cast iron to the rear.

They are in below average condition for their age, type and style with pattern staining visible to the rear.



Leaking gutters



Pattern staining

The pipe discharging onto the ground may cause dampness into the front of the property.

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



Downpipe discharging onto ground

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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 plastic soil and vent pipes. The securing bracket to the soil and vent pipe has come away and needs refixing as does the birdcage at the top of it.



Plastic soil and vent pipe coming away



Securing bracket coming away from soil and vent pipe

ACTION REQUIRED: Re-secure.

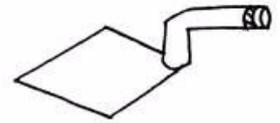
Finally, gutters and downpipes and soil and vent pipes have been inspected from ground level. As it was not raining at the time of the inspection it is not possible to confirm 100 per cent that the rainwater installation is free from blockage, leakage etc. or that it is capable of coping with long periods 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 rough cast render with feature timbers and flemish bond brickwork to the front and render to the rear.

Structural problem

The cracking to the rear we believe is a structural problem probably caused by the drains.

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

Render

The external walls are finished in a painted roughcast render to the upper parts with feature timbers to the front and render to the rear. Adjoining properties have a stucco render (lines made lightly into the render). In this case the render has been added at a later date; we believe to help improve the water tightness of the building and also may be to hide the cracking to the rear. We find with render that there can be problems with deterioration and it does need regularly checking.



Render to top of property



Roughcast render with feature timbers



Render to rear

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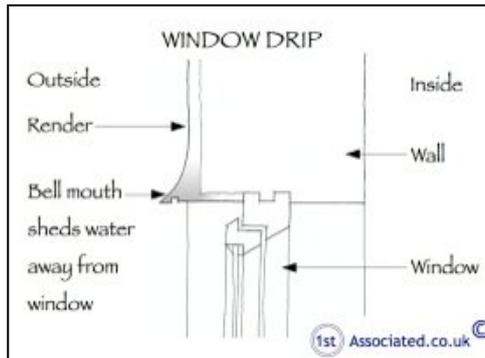


Render Detailing

You can normally tell whether the render is good or not by the drip detail over the window and the bell mouth to the base of the property.

Window drip detail

In this case we found a timber drip detail to the windows. We prefer these to be formed in the render but anything is better than nothing.

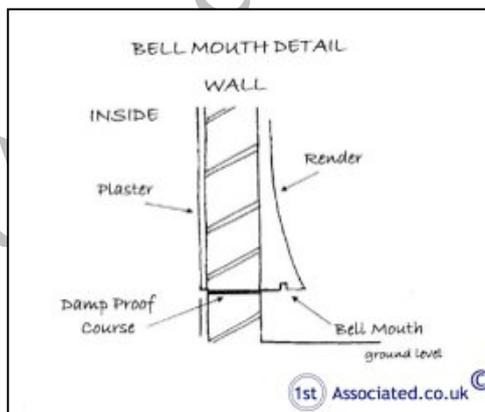


Timber drip over windows

Window drip

Bell mouth to base of property

To the base of the render there was an attempted bell mouth detail which was not properly formed. Interestingly this is the area that is getting dampness in the kitchen.



No bell mouth

Bell mouth detail

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Cracking - rear

We would remind you that any hairline cracks that appear need to be sealed as soon as possible to stop dampness and water getting in and causing blisters and hollow areas.

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

Painted render/painted walls

Do not underestimate the amount of time/cost it will take to repaint the property particularly as there is high level work which is likely to need scaffolding which can be expensive.

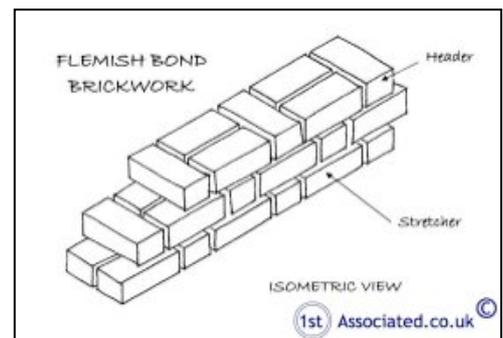
Brickwork

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

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



Brickwork



Flemish bond brickwork

Timber lintels and bonding timbers

Before the 19th Century, the practice of building timbers into external walls

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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.

Penetrating dampness

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

Cracking - front

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

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

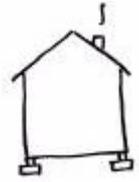
Our comments have been based upon how the brickwork / render / plasterwork has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork / render / plasterwork would be if it were opened up for this age, style and type of construction. We are however aware that all is not always 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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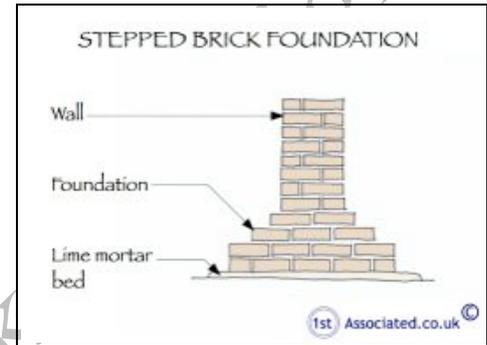


FOUNDATIONS

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

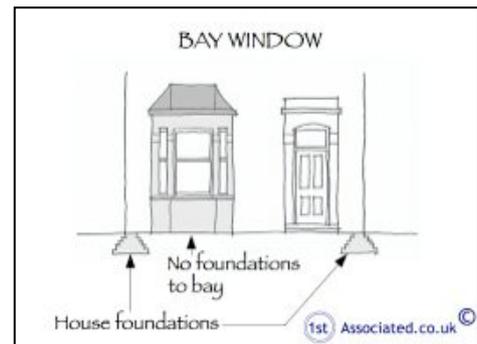
Given the age of the property you may find different depths of foundations. We would expect to find a stepped brick foundation possibly with a bedding of lime mortar.



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 excessive and unnecessary.



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.

Cracks

Please remember to talk about any cracks identified within the property. Often insurers will refer to progressive and non-progressive cracking. Unfortunately this is something we are unable to comment upon from a one-off inspection; the Building Research Establishment recommend a year of monitoring of any cracking.

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

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

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

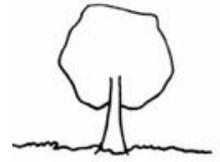
As no excavation has been carried out we cannot be 100 percent certain as to how the foundation has been constructed and we can only offer our best assumptions and an educated guess, which we have duly done.

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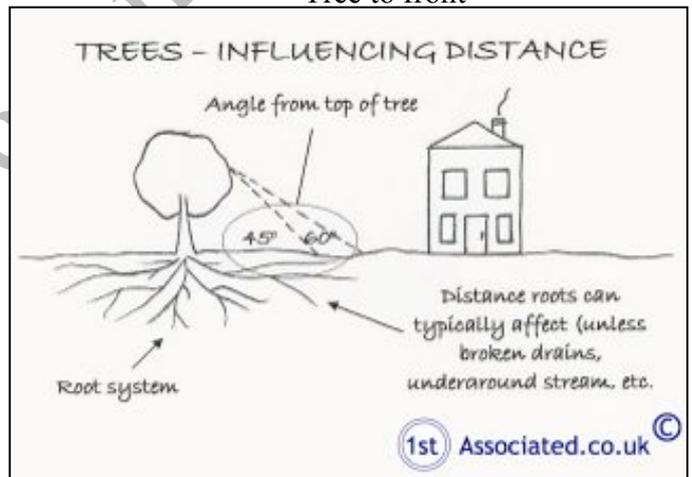
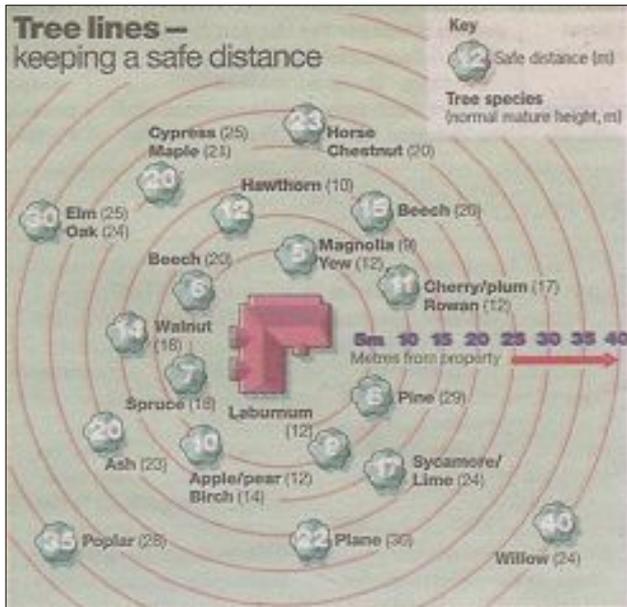
TREES

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

There is a small tree within what insurance companies would term as influencing distance of the property. Your insurance company may want to know about this. The root ball is unlikely to affect the property.



Tree to front



Influencing distance of trees to a property

Influencing Distance Defined

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

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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.

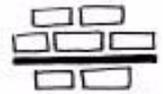
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DAMP PROOF COURSE

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.

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, we cannot see a DPC.



DPC not visible

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.

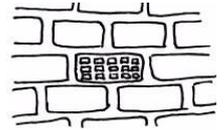
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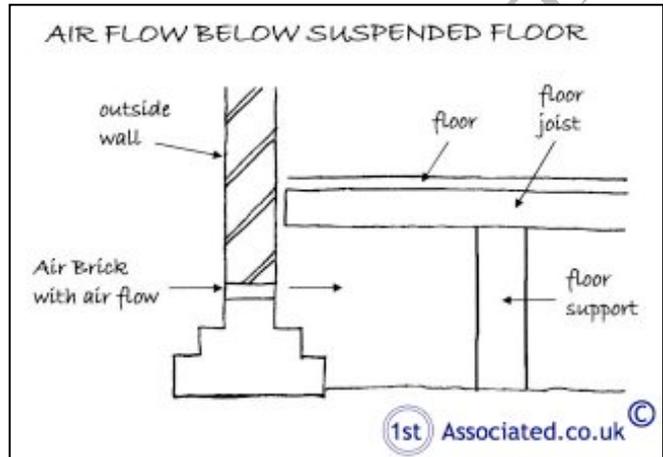
AIRBRICKS



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 were noted. The front air brick is acting as a gutter and water is likely to be going into the cellar area and possibly affecting the timbers in this area. Note we were not able to view the timbers in this section but we could see that they were embedded in the walls from the cellar area.



Suspended timber floor

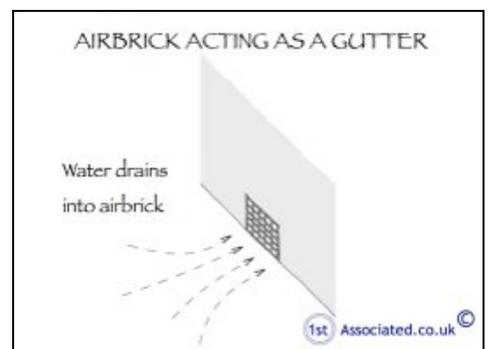
Air bricks are essential to have a through flow of air as this helps to reduce the chances of wet rot, dry rot and woodworm.



Air brick under front door



Front air brick



Air brick acting as gutter

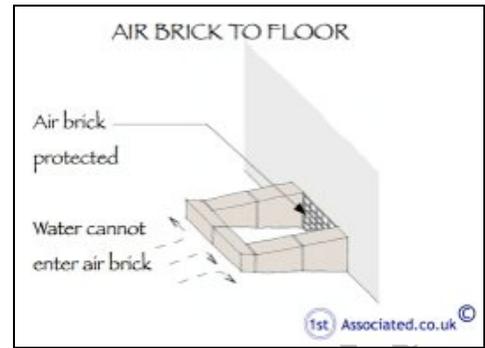
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ACTION REQUIRED: Protect
airbricks.



High Level Air Bricks

There are vents at high level.

High level air bricks are to help air circulation within the property.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ensure the air bricks are clear. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



High level air vent in bathroom

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.

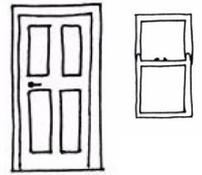
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FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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 property has decorative fascias which are a nice feature to the property. The fascias and soffits are timber. They are painted and we would comment they are in average to slightly below average condition for their age, type and style.



Decorative fascias

ACTION REQUIRED: Redecorate in the summer of 2014. Make sure gutters and downpipes are watertight before carrying out any work on fascias and soffits.



Painted timber fascias and soffits

Windows and Doors

The property has double glazed plastic windows from the cheaper end of the market without trickle vents; better windows are now available.

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.

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Double glazed windows



Close up of rear double glazed windows

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.

Trickle Vents Defined

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

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.

Do not underestimate the amount of time/cost it will take to repaint the property particularly as there is high level work which is likely to need scaffolding which can be expensive.

Cracks

We would remind you that any hairline cracks that appear need to be sealed as soon as possible to stop dampness and water getting in and causing blisters and hollow areas.

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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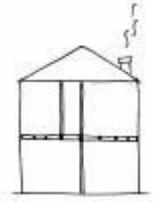
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INTERNAL

CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES



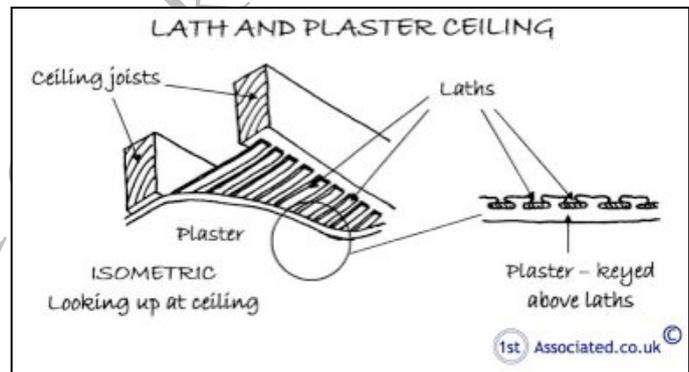
In this section we look at the finish applied to the structural elements such as the plasterwork applied to the ceiling joists, walls or partitions, together with the construction of the internal walls and partitions.

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 and plasterboard. We note our comments with regards to polystyrene tiles could be hiding defective ceilings.

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

Lintels

There are lintels where walls have been removed.

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



Lintels in rear lean-to

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Internal Walls and Partitions

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

Please see our comments with regards to walls removed.

Perimeter Walls

Originally these would have been constructed with a wet plaster, possibly a lime plaster. We now believe they have been skim coated with a gypsum plaster.

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.

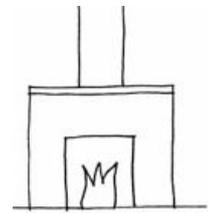
We cannot comment upon the condition of the structure hidden behind plaster, dry lining, other applied finishes, heavy furniture, fittings and kitchen units with fitted back panels.

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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 front right chimney breast has been removed and the rear left chimney has been removed at the top and bottom. We couldn't see any supports.

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

At the time of the survey no chimneys were in use. The rear chimney is the only chimney that can be used as the front part of the front chimney has been removed and the rear chimney has been removed completely.

Any chimneys that you do not propose to use should be capped and ventilated to prevent dampness.

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

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

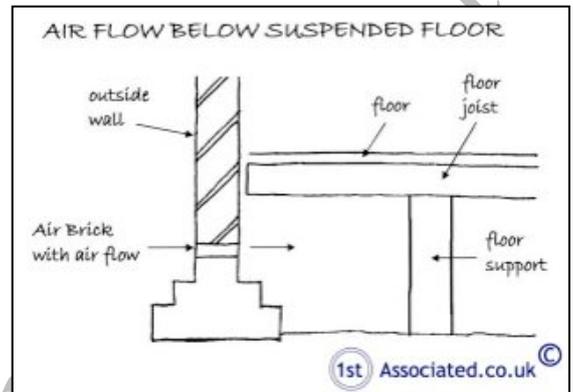


Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.

Ground Floor

The floors of the property are partly suspended timber floors which require air movement underneath to minimise wet rot, dry rot and woodworm and partly joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (over the cellar area). It was disappointing that we couldn't see the floor as the laminate

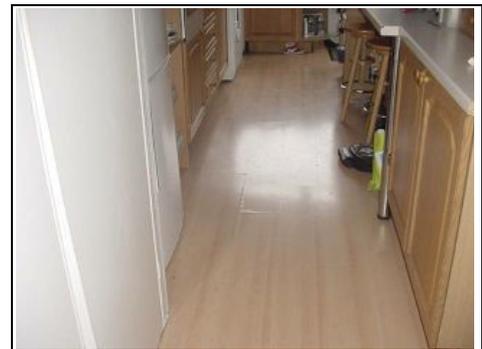
hides it; it was a poorer quality laminate. Where we could see the ground floor joists we could see there was some gaps which is not unusual in this age, type and style of property.



Suspended timber floor



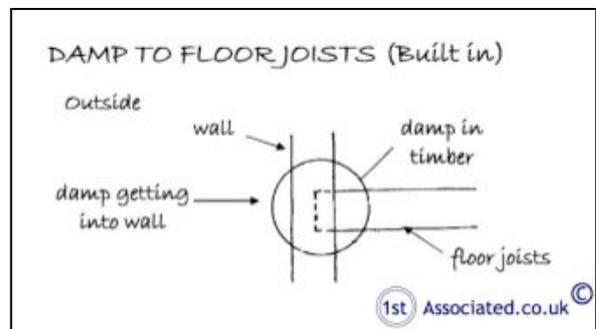
Floor slightly opened up on ground floor



Laminate floor hides condition of 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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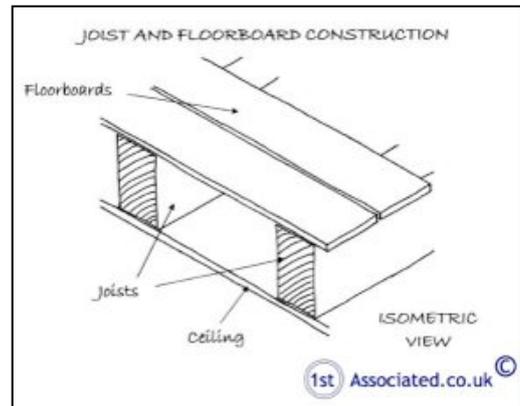
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Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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

Finally, we have not been able to view structural floor itself due to it 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.

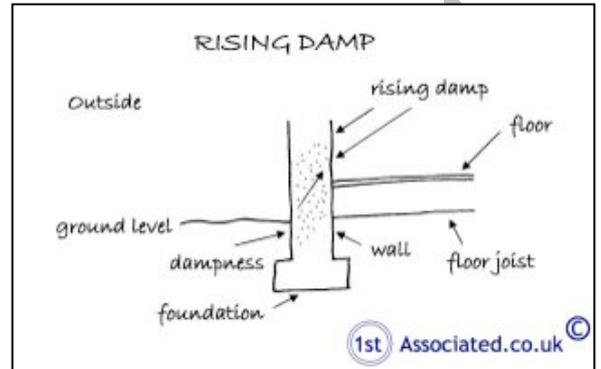
Rising Damp

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.

A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we have found significant rising damp to the rear of the property in the kitchen area and slightly high to the front of the property.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see the Executive Summary.



Rising damp

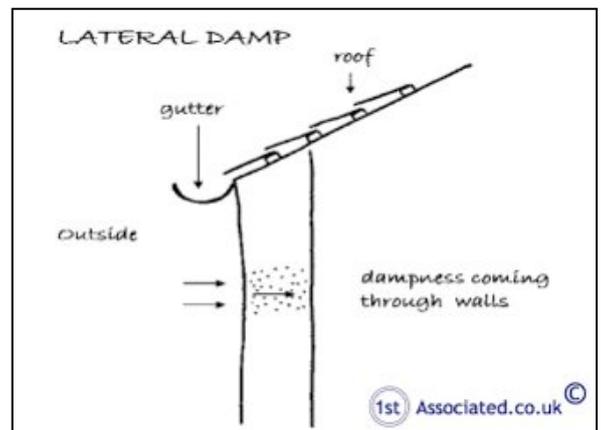


Testing for rising damp to front of property

Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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

We used a resistance meter on the external walls. We found it to be in line with what we would expect for this age, type and style of property.



Lateral dampness

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Testing for lateral dampness

Cold Bridging

The property does have potential for cold bridging.

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



Testing for cold 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 the property has a higher than average chance of having condensation due to the lack of extract fans.

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. Normally opening windows first thing in the morning resolves most 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 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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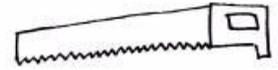
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INTERNAL JOINERY



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

Doors

The doors are stripped panel doors which are popular in this era of Victorian property although not original.



Door

No safety glass to doors

We have been unable to find a kite mark on the doors which indicates that they are not safety glass which means that if it breaks it shatters and can be dangerous.



Door not safety glass



No safety glass

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

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Staircase

We noted that the underside of the staircase was exposed. 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.



Understairs not lined

Kitchen

We found the kitchen in below average condition, subject to a lot of wear and tear such as the painted tiles and the condition of the cooker for example which would benefit from a clean.

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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



Condition of appliances



Painted tiles

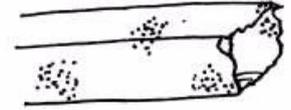
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TIMBER DEFECTS



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 seen wet rot within the roof and there are problems with the valley gutters.

Woodworm



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

The roof / cellar is the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the roof / cellar we found no obvious visual signs of significant woodworm activity or indeed past signs of significant woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage. In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection is usually restricted

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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 it 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 with some worn areas and some areas which were not painted at all such as within the cupboards.

You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste.



Damage within cupboard area needs redecorating

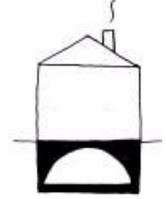
Finally, we would draw your attention to the fact that removal of existing decorative finishes may cause damage to the underlying plasterwork necessitating repairs and making good prior to redecoration.

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CELLARS AND VAULTS

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

The cellar floor is propped up with bricks to the front left side. We would prefer to see these securely positioned.

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



Bricks propping up joist that is holding the floor.



Cellar



Cellar



Surprisingly dry in basement, expected readings of 60 plus, obtained reading of 42

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

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THERMAL EFFICIENCY



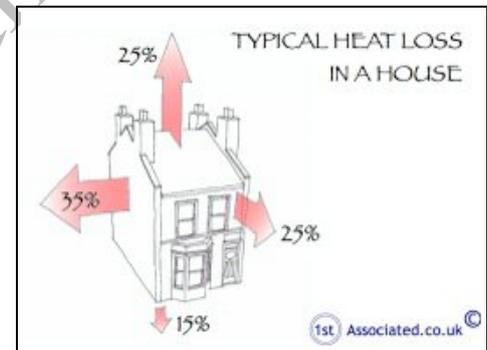
Up until the mid 1940s we did not really consider insulation in properties, for example it was only in the 1960s that we started putting insulation in the roof and then it was about 50mm, in the 1970s this was upgraded to 100mm. Then we started to think about double glazing and cavity wall insulation.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

HIPs

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

Roofs

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 300mm.



Typical heat loss

Walls

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

Windows

The windows are poor end of the market double glazing and therefore will have average thermal properties.

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Services

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

Summary

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

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

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

or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

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

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

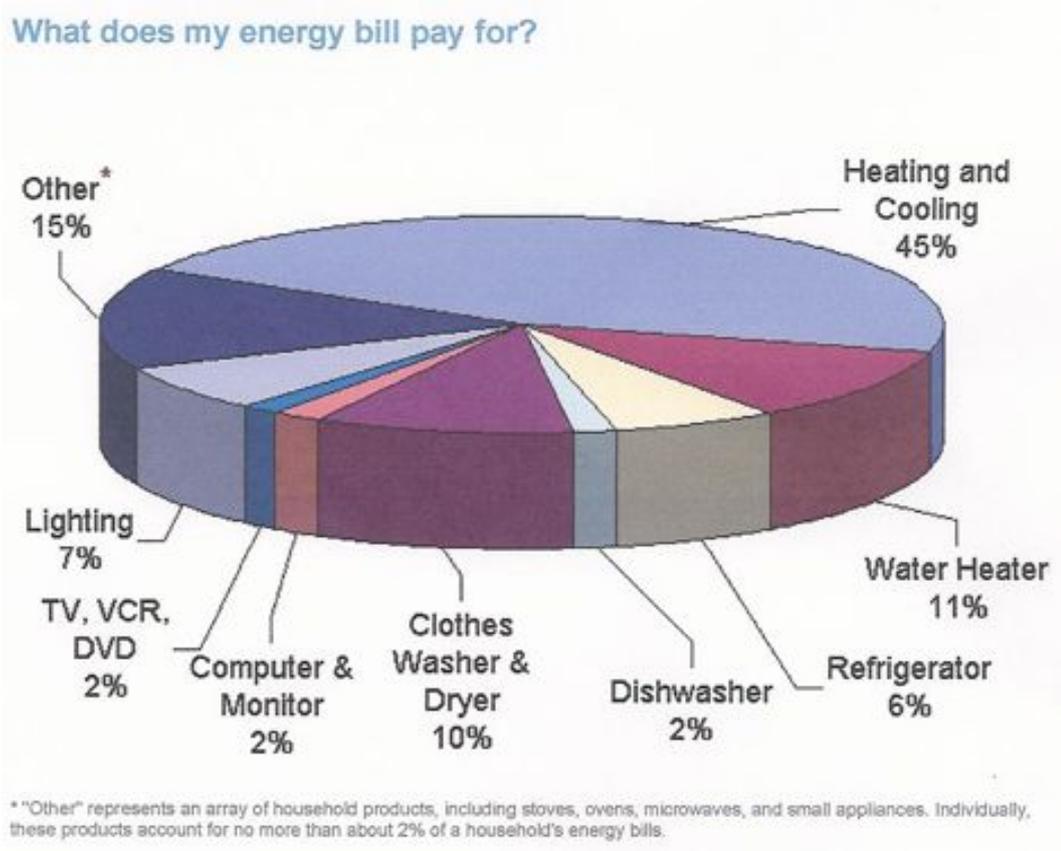
Finally, we would comment that energy we feel will become a major consideration in years to come, particularly with the greater focus in modern buildings on energy efficiency.

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

Insurance

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

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

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Asbestos

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. In this case we have not noted asbestos.

Asbestos was commonly 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.

Our insurance company requires us to advise that we are not asbestos surveyors.

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

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SERVICES

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

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

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ELECTRICITY



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

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



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

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

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

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

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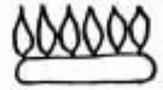
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GAS



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

We are advised that the property has mains gas. The consumer unit is located in the cellar.

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.



Gas

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!).

Cold Water Cistern

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

Plumbing

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

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Heating

The boiler was located in the rear right bedroom which is not ideal; it is manufactured by Worcester.

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



Boiler vented to outside air

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

Ten Minute Heating Test

The heating wasn't on during the course of the survey but it was relatively warm.

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

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

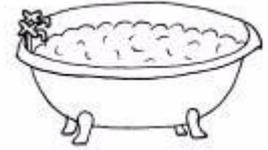
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BATHROOM



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

Bathroom

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



Bathroom

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

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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.

No Manholes Found

In older properties often there were no manholes. Drainage was a relatively new invention that has been added at a later date.

Manholes are used where there is a change in direction of pipes or new pipes join the main run. It is therefore a good location for clearing any blockages. In this case we were unable to see any manholes.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend a closed circuit TV camera report of the drains and investigations by your legal advisor with regard to problems with this property and also investigations by yourself with regard to insurance companies in the area and whether they are willing to insure. There looks to be a structural problem.

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Manholes Defined

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

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

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.

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

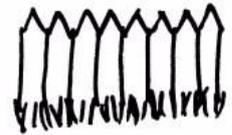
The main focus of this report has been on the main building. If you wish us to do a specific report on the other buildings then you need to instruct us for this separately. We are offering here a brief overview.

OUTBUILDINGS/ PARKING



Parking is roadside parking on a first come first serve basis. There were no parking permits as far as we could see.

EXTERNAL AREAS



Front Garden

There is a small front garden. The boundary wall render is coming away and damaged and would benefit from repair.



Small front garden



Cracking to front wall



Render coming away to front boundary wall

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Rear Garden

There is a reasonable sized back garden which has an outbuilding. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Rear garden



Office/outbuilding

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

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.

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

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

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

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

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

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

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XXX, Leytonstone, London. E11.

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

If you would like any further advice on any of the issues discussed (or indeed any that have not been discussed!) then please do not hesitate to contact us on **0800 298 5424**.

For and on Behalf of
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 XXXX and should be regarded as a comment on the overall condition of the property and the quality of its structure and not as an inventory of every single defect. It relates to those parts of the property that were reasonably and safely accessible at the time of the inspection, but you should be aware that defects can subsequently develop particularly if you do not follow the recommendations.

ENGLISH LAW

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

SOLE USE

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

ONLY HUMAN!

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

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

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WEATHER

It was a dry and cold winter's day 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.

INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been limited as:

- 1) We did not have full access to the roof.
- 2) We didn't open up the ground floor or the first floor.
- 3) The property was empty we did not have the benefit of talking to the owners or them answering our usual question and answers.
- 4) We didn't have the benefit of meeting you at the property to talk about your specific requirements.

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BUILDING INSURANCE

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

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

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

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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

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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. Condensation and 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.

INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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

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

www.hometrack.co.uk

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

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www.motleyfool.co.uk

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

www.rightmove.co.uk

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

www.zoopla.co.uk

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

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French Drain

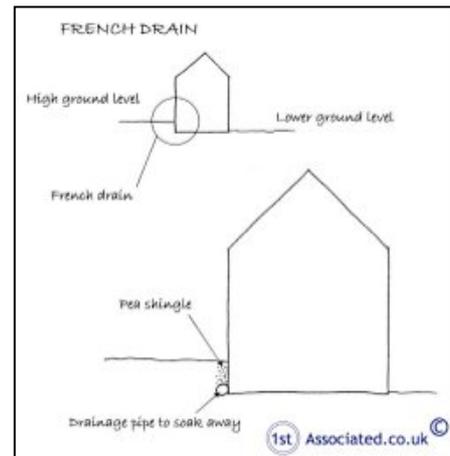
Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

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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Condensation and Cold Bridging

What is Cold Bridging?

What is cold bridging and how does it work?

Cold bridging is a term and a problem we feel will become much more common in years to come. We are finding more and more examples of Cold Bridging. This happens in certain types of property and to some extent it could be argued that it is a characteristic of that type of property and quite a complex issue to resolve. Unfortunately it means condensation is more likely.



Post war / 1950's property that cold bridging can be a problem in.

Cold Bridging

Cold bridging is caused by a colder element in the structure or fabric of the building allowing coldness to pass through. When warm moist air is present in the property and it passes through the colder elements of the structure we have what is known as Cold Bridging. This is often caused by a combination of issues. It can occur from things such as having a shower or a bath, cooking or clothes washing, particularly if you are drying washing on the radiators. It could, in commercial properties, be a large gathering of people breathing (this can cause a lot of humidity) in a building that has stood cold and empty for some time such as a church, village hall, sports centre or a crèche. These human atmospheres create a climate which can result in condensation on the cold elements of the structure and fabric if the room is not ventilated properly.

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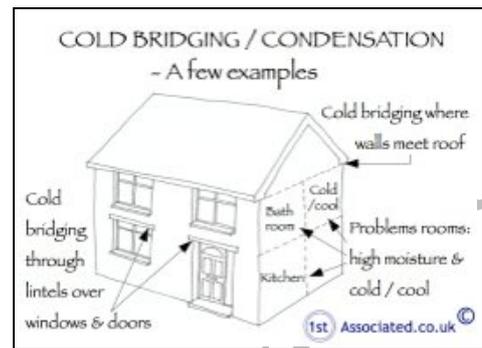
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Certain types of buildings are more susceptible to Condensation and Cold Bridging

Here is our sketch on Cold Bridging

This is a good indication of the typical things that cause Cold Bridging in a house and how extraction from humidity generating areas such as the kitchen and the bathroom can reduce problems. You do need to look at how you live in the house.



Cold Bridging isn't just about condensation on mirrors

Cold Bridging isn't just about condensation on mirrors. Not only can it be an original characteristic of the building it can be encouraged by all types of extension and alterations.

Cold bridging is far worse than condensation as it is caused by an element in the structure which you can do very little to change without great expense. If you buy a 1960's property for example, with concrete lintels that cause cold bridging, this is a characteristic of the property and it is very difficult to change. However not only could it be a characteristic of the building it could also be caused by alterations that you make to the building.



1960's properties built with concrete lintels that can cause Cold Bridging

To give you some examples of Cold Bridging

As mentioned above typically Cold Bridging can be caused by lintels and also by beams (which effectively are big lintels). These were very commonly used in 1960's and 1970's buildings and can lead to condensation over doors and windows. We mentioned a 1960's building but here are some examples of concrete lintels that were commonly used in the 1970's and which today have caused cold bridging over the door and which in turn has led to condensation and deterioration of the paintwork.

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A rear door to a 1970's building.
Can you tell where the cold bridging would be in this photo?



A close up view showing there is a concrete lintel over the door and window.
This is where the cold bridging occurs causing condensation inside

Cold Bridging can also occur on metal lintels. We note that some modern metal lintels now have insulation in them which we assume is to reduce cold bridging.

Commercial properties suffer from Cold Bridging too

Commercial buildings are often built using structural frames. These frames are usually constructed of concrete or metal or sometimes both. The structural frame forms the skeleton of the building as you can see in the adjoining photo. Sometimes the structural frames, particularly, the concrete ones can suffer from Cold Bridging which causes blackening of the concrete frame. This can look like the roof has leaked and can lead to wrongly diagnosing a problem as being a roof leak. This can result in great time and expense being wasted repairing a roof that was not leaking and indeed in some cases has led to a new roof being fitted which has costs tens of thousands of pounds. This happened because it wasn't understood what the problem was.



Cold Bridging in a commercial property with a concrete frame.

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When is Cold Bridging Likely?

In our experience we have seen cold bridging occurring in

1. Georgian and Regency properties
2. Victorian and Edwardian properties
3. Pre-war properties
4. War years construction properties
5. Post war construction properties up to the 1980's.
6. Commercial properties that use structural frames particularly concrete frames.

We find that cold bridging and condensation occur most commonly where a property has a relatively high heating level, a good level of insulation and where it has many occupants.

Problems with 1970/1980 era properties relating to Cold Bridging

Let us take a look at the 1970's/1980's era of property to give an example of the problems we have come across with this era.

The 1970's is an era where we had just begun to think about insulating due to the oil crisis and where we added insulation into our structures



Georgian style properties can suffer from cold bridging and condensation. However in our experience it is more likely to be the new extensions or alterations that are added to them



Post war 1960's properties with plastic double glazing without trickle vents that have been added can cause condensation.



1970's property with cold bridging to the roof beams and the lintels

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For example with:

1. cavity wall insulation or
2. double glazed windows.

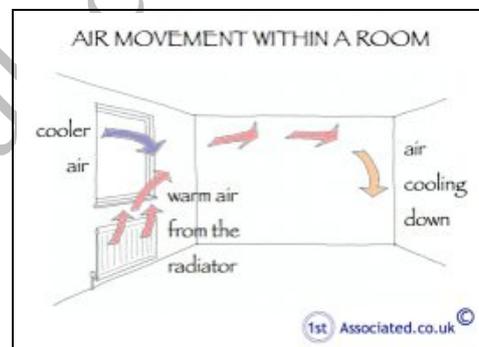
This meant they were warmer which has meant the significance of a lintel, over a door or window, being colder and allowing the transfer of coldness becomes much more important. This results in condensation that we commonly see above windows in this age and era of property.



1980's property, cold bridging was found in the lintels

How to solve Cold Bridging

The difficulty is resolving cold bridging. Normally, where condensation is involved, if you get the balance of warm and coolness of the air, ventilation and movement you can reduce considerably the chances of condensation. Airing the room by opening the windows, which seems to have gone out of fashion, can help considerably.



Where do we most commonly find Cold Bridging?

Our thoughts on this have very much changed as we used to say that cold bridging was typically found in properties from the 1960's/1970's. However we are increasingly finding it in a broader range of properties, particularly Victorian properties, where people are trying to live to modern standards of heating and insulation without understanding that the properties need to breathe as well. We have also found cold bridging in properties where extensions have been carried out and where the extension has been built to a different standard to the original property.



Victorian properties that have been extended and altered over the years with new thermal properties that can cause Cold Bridging because of the mix of old and new standards

Is your life style a factor in Cold Bridging?

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This is often a contentious and difficult question, particularly where the occupier is a tenant and there is a disagreement between the landlord and the occupier as to why there is mould in the property. In our experience the major factor is the size of the family living in a property. This is especially the case with large families with young children and where in turn there is a lot of washing of clothes being done. This is particularly the case in the winter months, with the wet washed clothes being dried on radiators. Also general hygiene washing and not to mention cooking to feed everyone all lead toward a more humid atmosphere.

This is generally known as the lifestyle of occupants and can be a major factor particularly where there are legal cases as to the problems within a property.

Expert witness case, what is an expert witness?

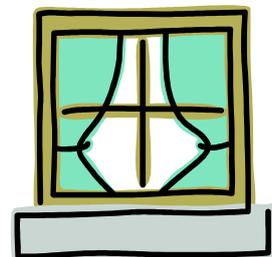
This is where you employ someone who is a specialist within a field, such as us as Chartered Building Surveyors, who comment on problems of condensation within the property. We have been involved in several court cases as expert witnesses where landlords are being taken to court over the condensation that is occurring in their property. The expert witness case looks at how this condensation is occurring and if it relates, for example, to the occupiers' lifestyle or whether it relates to the way the building was constructed and where there are, for example, cold bridging elements. When discussions of this nature take place in court they can be very expensive.



Older style London converted flats with property problems such as Condensation and Cold Bridging

Is Cold Bridging and Condensation a design problem or a lifestyle problem?

This really is a difficult question to answer. We have been involved in a number of cases as expert witnesses or advocates and the answer can vary. We would comment that there are factors that can be changed and factors that can't be changed. For example, the occupiers lifestyle can in most cases be amended. This may involve the occupier having an understanding of the problems they are causing. For example, drying lots of washing



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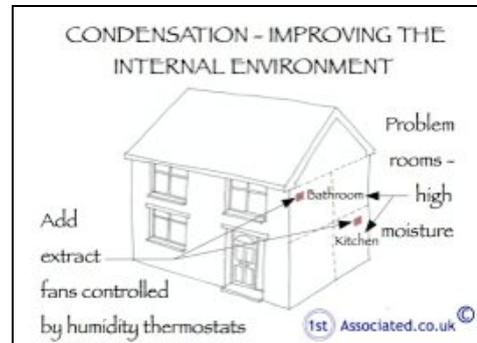
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on a radiator inside may be causing excessive moisture in the atmosphere. Equally not opening the windows and closing or sealing up vents can be a problem.

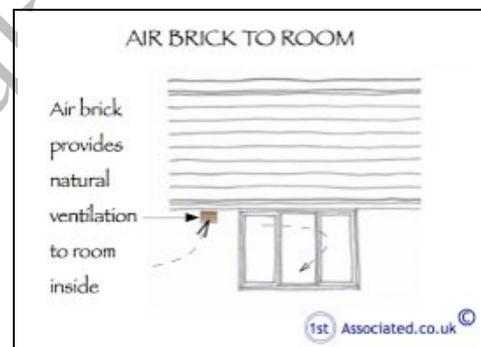
Design of the Building

Sometimes it really is down to the design of the property. Where there are cold elements in it, such as a concrete structural frame or concrete lintels, when these are in contact with moist air condensation occurs. Sometimes this is impossible to stop but often it is possible to reduce it by having a better circulation of air with a better heat and coolness balance and the removal of any moist air.



Things to remember about an air brick

If you are thinking about adding an air brick then you need to be aware that airbricks don't actually allow that much air through. Although externally a nine by three air brick has a lot of gaps, as these gaps taper, it is generally considered that only about one inch square of air regularly passes through the grills.



Air brick may not ventilate room enough

What's happening in brand new housing?

It could be argued that we still do not know what is happening in brand new houses that are highly insulated. We have been involved in one legal case where a modern heat exchange system was being used where it was simply not possible to have a shower in the property without causing condensation, even with the windows open and taking other measures. Our concern is what is happening to this condensation? It was not visible on the surface so is it visible as interstitial condensation? We still think there will be problems to be found in modern properties.



As Chartered Surveyors we like to see things that have been in use for some time work before we would recommend them.

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In the winter we have condensation problems but in the summer we don't

The different seasons mean that the building reacts differently. Anyone who has lived in an old property will know that windows and doors particularly sliding sash windows will swell during the winter months.

There can be similar issues with a property where, regardless of your lifestyle, during some of the different seasons, for example the winter or a wet spring, taking a shower can relate in condensation even with extract fans running (although this is far less likely).

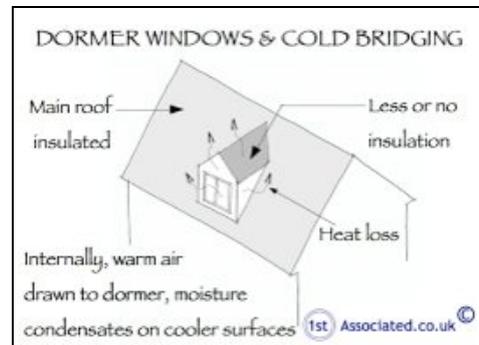
It also depends on what the humidity level is outside as this can be greater than inside. The moisture/humidity will then seek out colder rooms such as spare bedrooms and the corners of cupboards. When you open these at a later date you will be surprised to find black mould.

Extensions and Cold Bridging

Increasingly we are coming across problems where properties have been extended and it has not been planned or thought through properly. We have come across dormer roofs that simply have no insulation so any heat in the property is going straight out of the dormer roof. We have also come across property problems where an extension has resulted in colder areas within the property and which although not problem areas, as such, our clients have found them not nice areas to be in. It is not a great outcome if you have just spent tens of thousands of pounds on a new extension that you are not happy with.



Sliding sash windows can swell in the winter months



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