

JOB REFERENCE: XXXX

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

XXXX
Odell
Bedford
Bedfordshire
MK43 XXX



FOR

Mr and Mrs X

Prepared by:

XXXX

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS



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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION
REPORT FORMAT
SYNOPSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS, PARAPET WALLS,
ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS
ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT SPACE
GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES AND SOIL AND VENT PIPES
EXTERNAL WALLS
WINDOWS AND DOORS
EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

INTERNAL

CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES
CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES
FLOORS
DAMPNESS
INTERNAL JOINERY
TIMBER DEFECTS
INTERNAL DECORATIONS
WELLS
THERMAL EFFICIENCY
OTHER MATTERS

SERVICES

ELECTRICITY
OIL
PLUMBING AND HEATING
BATHROOMS
MAIN DRAINS

OUTSIDE AREAS

OUTBUILDINGS / PARKING
EXTERNAL AREAS
POINTS FOR LEGAL ADVISOR

APPENDICES

LIMITATIONS
ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS
GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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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 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 two storey detached property that has been extended into the roof space, with an adjoining barn of a similar size.

The property has gardens to the rear and side and outbuildings. There is a shared road giving access to the property and parking is to the front.

The property is Grade II Listed; for details please see the information overleaf. The property has a Victorian entrance to the rear of the property.

We believe that the property was built in the 17th Century. If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

This property once formed part of the Odell Castle Estate; there are various reports available on the worldwide web. There was a general sale in 1934 when we believe this property was sold off. From what we understand there are minimal records available of the Odell Castle Estate.

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

1605	Gunpowder plot discovered
1642	English Civil War begins
1665	Plague sweeps through England
1666	The Great Fire of London
1681	Oil powered street lights are put up in London
1694	Bank of England founded
1750	The start of the Industrial Revolution
1783	Britain recognised American Independence
1793 – 1800	The Grand Union Canal was built



Aerial view



Victorian entrance to rear

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XXXX Odell, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK43 XXX

XXXX, Odell

DESCRIPTION: Village Farmhouse

GRADE: II

DATE LISTED: XXXX

ENGLISH HERITAGE BUILDING ID: XXXX

OS GRID REFERENCE: XXXX

OS GRID COORDINATES: XXXX

LATITUDE/LONGITUDE: XXXX

LOCATION: XXXX Odell, Bedford Borough MK43 XXX

LOCALITY: [Odell](#)

COUNTY: [Bedford](#)

COUNTRY: [England](#)

POSTCODE: MK43 XXX

Listing Text

ODELL XXXX

XXX (XXX Side)

XXX Village Farmhouse

XXXX

GV II

C17 farmhouse, gable end to road. Coursed limestone rubble, thatched roof. Three brick stacks. Two storeys and attics, stone coped gables. East elevation has three recessed dormers with old clay tiles under, three first floor and four ground floor windows. West elevation has four windows each floor. Two windows in south gable end. All under timber lintels and modern. Late C19 gabled porch hood on brackets. Substantial interior timber frame.

Listing NGR:XXXXX

This text is a legacy record and has not been updated since the building was originally listed. Details of the building may have changed in the intervening time. You should not rely on this listing as an accurate description of the building.

Source: English Heritage

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XXXX Odell, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK43 XXX

Barn XXX, Odell

DESCRIPTION: Barn XXXX

GRADE: II

DATE LISTED: XXXX

ENGLISH HERITAGE BUILDING ID: XXX

OS GRID REFERENCE: XXX

OS GRID COORDINATES: XXX

LATITUDE/LONGITUDE: XXX

LOCATION: XXXX Odell, Bedford Borough MK43 XXX

LOCALITY: [Odell](#)

COUNTY: [Bedford](#)

COUNTRY: [England](#)

POSTCODE: MK43 XXX

Listing Text

ODELL XXX

XXX (X Side)

XXX Barn at XXX

XXX

GV II

C17 threshing barn immediately north of farmhouse and on same axis. Coursed limestone rubble, pantiled roof. Stone coped gable end, northern with three slits and prominent putlogs. Five bay interior with queen post roof, double purlins and straight braces.

Listing NGR: XXXX

This text is a legacy record and has not been updated since the building was originally listed. Details of the building may have changed in the intervening time. You should not rely on this listing as an accurate description of the building.

Source: English Heritage

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EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view



Rear view



Left gable



Right gable (barn)



Utility room



Access road looking towards main road



Garden to left hand side with obelisk



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) Hallway
- 2) Kitchen
- 3) Utility room
- 4) Dining Room
- 5) Drawing Room
- 6) Sitting Room
- 7) Office area under the stairs
- 8) Cloakroom



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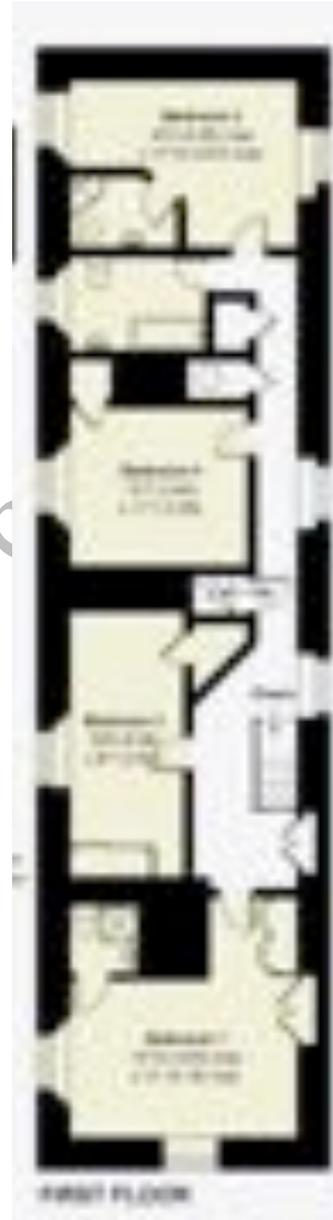
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First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Far left hand bedroom with shower room
- 2) Left bedroom
- 3) Middle room being used as a study
- 4) Right hand side bathroom
- 5) Right hand side bedroom with shower room



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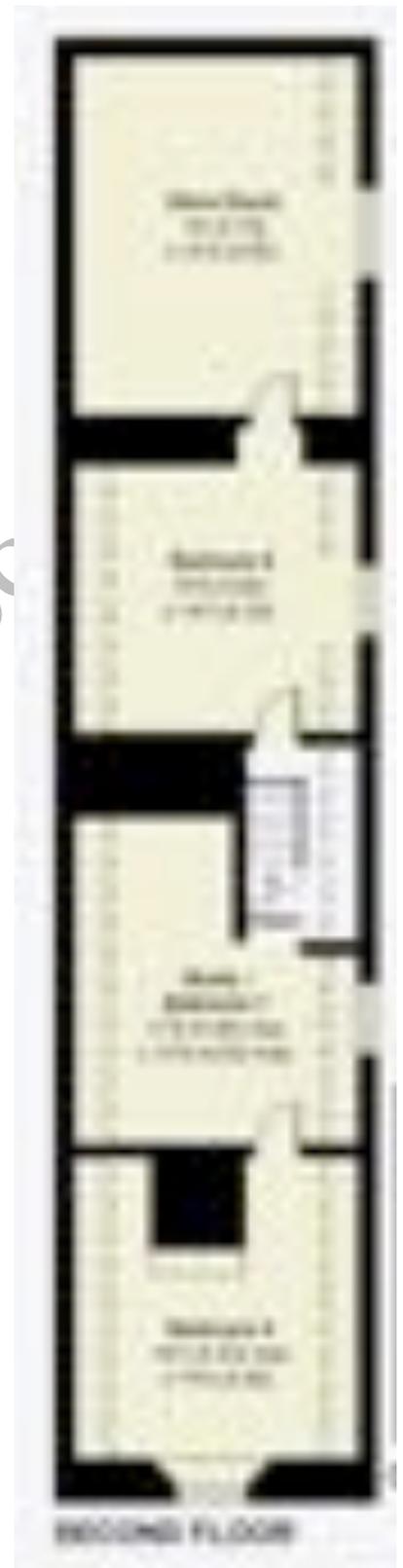
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Top Floor (rooms in the roof)

The top floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Staircase on the right hand side
- 2) Left hand bedroom
- 3) Middle work area
- 4) Right hand bedroom
- 5) Far right hand storage area (adjacent to the barn)



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The Barn

The barn accommodation consists of:

- 1) Open plan area with first floor level to the far right hand side

From what we understand there are covenants relating to developing this area so there is a percentage fee payable to the previous owner; details to be confirmed by your Legal Advisor.



Outside Areas

The property has gardens to the rear and side with outbuildings. We believe there is further extensive land to the property (which we have not inspected).

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

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INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

The following photos are of the internal of the property to help you recall what it looked like and the general ambience (or lack of). We have not necessarily taken photographs of each and every room.

Ground Floor



Hallway and stairs



Kitchen



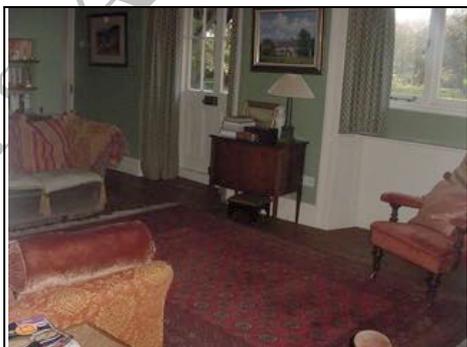
Kitchen



Inglenook fireplace in Dining room



Dining room



Drawing room



Drawing room

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Ground Floor (cont'd)



Sitting room



Middle office under stairs



Utility room



Cloakroom

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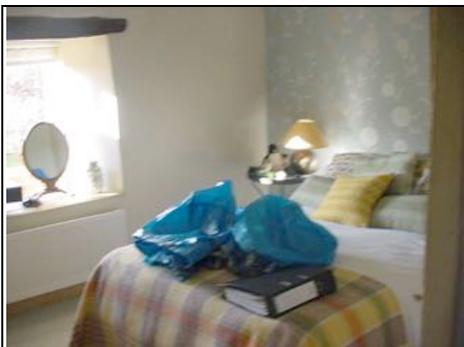
First Floor



Far left bedroom



En-suite shower room



Left bedroom



Bedroom/studio



Master bedroom right



Master bedroom right



En-suite shower room

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First Floor (cont'd)



Bathroom



Bathroom



Hallway



Airing cupboard

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Top Floor (rooms in roof)



Walk through room/open plan work area



Open plan work area



Left bedroom



Right side bedroom



End storage room right hand barn end

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THE BARN - EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view



Rear view



Right gable



Where barn meets the house



Gate adjacent to barn, which needs further investigation regarding rights of access, etc.

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THE BARN - INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Internal



The old bathroom



Queen post roof



First floor



Stairs have become uncoupled with ladder access

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OUTBUILDINGS - EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view



Entrance to outbuilding



Rear view



Left view

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OUTBUILDING - INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Outbuilding



Outbuilding



Chimney breast

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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

Main Dwelling

External

Chimneys:	Three stone chimneys
Main Roof:	Thatched roof
Main Roof Structure:	Cut timber roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	None
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic to rear
Walls:	Rough cut coursed limestone in cement mortar Stone parapet walls to the end gables Likely to be rubble wall construction (all assumed)
Windows and Doors:	Timber windows with slim line double glazing added, which looks like single glazing Single glazed windows within the top floor

Internal

Ceilings:	Lath and plaster and plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Lath and plaster and gypsum plaster (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Mixture of a suspended timber floor and solid floor (assumed)
First Floor and Top Floor:	Joist and floorboards with end bedded timbers (assumed)

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Services

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

Heating:	Aga located in the kitchen. Modern hot water cylinder located on the first floor in the airing cupboard
Electrics:	The electrics are located under the stairs in the downstairs office
Drainage:	The manholes are located at the front of the property
Oil Tank:	The oil tank is located at the front of the property

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

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor needs to check and confirm the above and advise us of anything they require further clarification on before legal commitment to purchase the property.

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The Barn

External

Main Roof:	Tiled roof
Main Roof structure:	Cut timber queen post roof structure
Walls:	Rough cut coursed limestone in cement mortar Stone parapet walls to the end gables Likely to be rubble wall construction (all assumed)
Windows:	Window openings (slits)

Internal

Ceilings:	Exposed structure
Walls:	Stonework
Floor:	Ground floor: Trodden/compacted earth
	First floor: Platform to the right hand side with end bedded timbers

Services

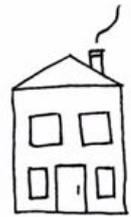
The barn has its own electric supply.

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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 500 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 many of the original features left, which add to the overall character of the property.
- 2.0) The property is spacious.
- 3.0) The top floor is utilised with vaulted ceilings which have the advantage of a spacious feel but can be expensive to heat.

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

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The Bad

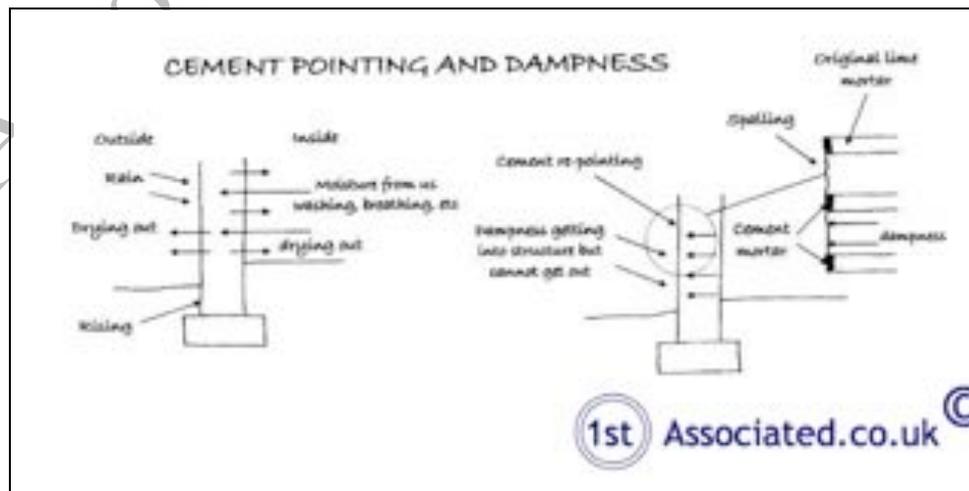
Problems / issues raised in the 'bad' section are usually solvable, but often need negotiation upon. However, a large number of them may sometimes put us off the property.

1.0) Re-pointed wrongly in cement mortar – prone to dampness

Originally this property would have been built in stone on a bed of lime mortar. The advantage of lime mortar has over cement mortar is that it allows the structure to breathe. With older buildings such as this the outer wall gets wet and then dries out/disperses dampness over time. This is sometimes known as the overcoat type system referring to the way an overcoat works where the outer section gets damp and then dries out. This is as opposed to a modern property that uses cement mortar and repels/deflects the rain similar to a raincoat. The reason why this is important is when you get a mixture of old and new construction such as this it effectively stops the property from breathing, which means in turn it is susceptible to dampness. Unfortunately in this particular case the property has been wrongly repointed in a cement mortar which means this building will be more prone to having and holding dampness as the building simply cannot breathe to allow the moisture out.



Wrongly repointed in cement mortar



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1.1) **Other problems caused by cement mortar**

An additional problem caused by cement mortar unfortunately is that the stone weathers more quickly than with a lime mortar. This is because the cement mortar is stronger than the stone and does not absorb the rain and moisture and passes it onto the stonework, which then deteriorates.



Deterioration

The good news is there is relatively little deterioration in the form of concaved hollowing of the stone that we sometimes find. The not so good news is that the stone is weathered over and above what we would normally expect.

1.2) **The only good thing about cement mortar on an old property is...**

Is that sooner or later it falls out on its own. However having spoken to the owner they advised that they did not carry out the cement repointing (it was a very popular thing to do in the 1970's). Unfortunately in this case the cement mortar seems to be staying longer than we would expect.

We would add that approximately thirty percent of buildings that we come across are wrongly repointed in cement mortar.

1.3) **At the time of the Survey**

At the time of the survey the building didn't seem particularly damp but having said that all the fires were on and the building was fairly warm even though it was a cold winter's day.

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ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend that you find the oldest stonemason you can and every summer for the foreseeable future employ them to use a soft brush to remove any defective cement mortar and replace it with lime mortar. Then gradually over the years you will improve the situation albeit a slow process.

1.4) Plant life growing on stone

There is ivy and other forms of plant life growing on the building, which unfortunately can cause further deterioration to the stonework. Having said all of that, the stonework, all things considered, does look in average to above average condition.



Plants to stone

1.5) Would the building be damp with the ivy and leaves?

With the building covered in the spring/summer months, leaves, etc tend to hold water against the structure and can cause dampness to get into it. We would normally be able to see signs of this affecting the property inside which we cannot but equally from our experience we cannot see how this property cannot be affected by dampness.



Plant life causing damage

ACTION REQUIRED: Ideally we would recommend that trellis work is inserted between the wall and the ivy, etc to reduce damage.

You need to understand the issues and decide if it is a characteristic of owning this older property and that you are happy with it.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

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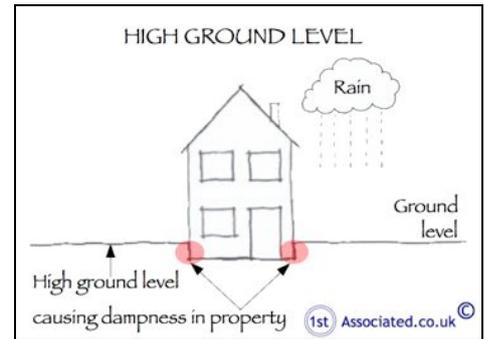
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2.0) High ground level and Rising Damp

Around the property the ground level is slightly high. We are very keen on adding French drains where at all possible and/or lowering the ground level around the property.



High ground level



High ground level

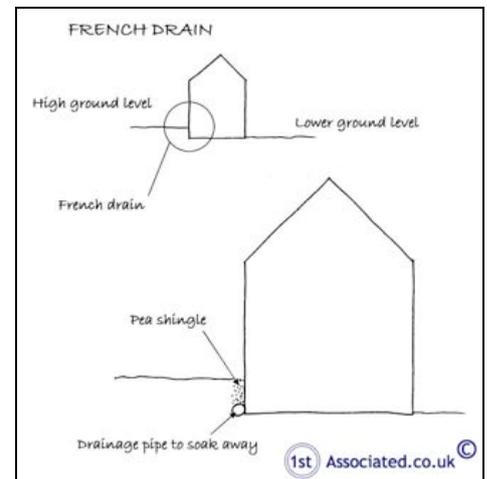


High ground level to doorway and building as a whole

ACTION REQUIRED: Add French drain.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £2,500 - £5,000; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.



French drain

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3.0) **Structural Repairs carried out by existing owner**

Between the farm house and the barn within the top floor roof area the present owner advised that when they had their survey carried out it deemed that there was not suitable structural support in this area and they have added structural support. From what we could see the timber sizing used would not be what we would have used given the timber characteristics of the rest of the building. Having said that, it seems to have been satisfactory for twenty odd years however our concern is that the new thatch may be hiding movement in the gable ends of the property.



Structural repair

Please see our comments with regards to the gable ends.

4.0) **Gable End Cracking to the Barn area**

We would not normally mix the dwelling and the barn section but in this particular case we feel that one has an impact on the other. We can see to the far end of the barn that there is cracking to the gable which has been repaired and then re-opened up which indicates to us that the right hand gable is moving and in turn it is possible given the old repairs that we have just mentioned that the right hand gable of the house is also moving.



Cracking

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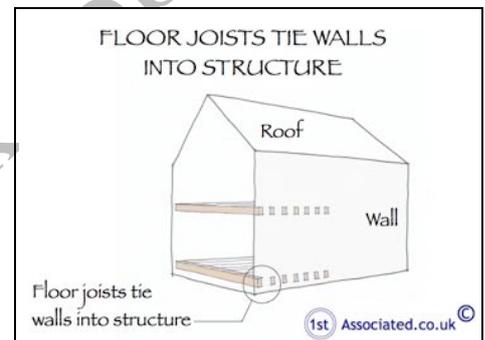


Cracking in gable between house and barn



Cracking on rear right hand corner

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend the existing owner places an insurance claim, which you then take over. Your legal advisor to check and confirm that this is legally binding. This would then limit your liability to the excess on the insurance and ensure in the possibility that there is movement in this area that you have insurance against this.



Gable end wall not tied in

ANTICIPATED COST: This would cost the owners nothing more than time to make the claim.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

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5.0) **Roof structure – a few thoughts**

The roof structure is very important within this property as within the farmhouse it has been amended and adjusted to allow the forming of the bedrooms and the top floor rooms. Within the barn it has been left in a dampish environment, which is ideal for wet rot and woodworm.

5.1) **Farmhouse roof**

As with many older properties, particularly listed buildings, the roof is unlikely to meet current building standards and we feel has not got any lateral restraint, i.e. can move to the left and right which we think is maybe what was happening when the previous owners purchased the property and their surveyor advised to add extra timbers (to the junction between the farmhouse and the barn).

5.2) **Barn roof**

There is a substantial queen post roof in the barn, which as far as we can see is relatively intact subject to some alterations as these roofs often are. From the presentation of the roof there seems to be relatively little movement in the roof, assuming it has not been re-roofed in the past ten years or so, however there is the movement to the gable end, which we have mentioned earlier within this report. As with the farmhouse roof it has woodworm and also wet rot.

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5.3) Active woodworm or not?

Most buildings of this age would have had woodworm, the question is whether it is active or not? During our question and answer session we discussed this matter with the owners who advised that they had woodworm treatment and also deep woodworm treatment (which we must admit that we are generally sceptical about). Although the guarantee is now void they advised that they did believe that the woodworm treatment has been effective.



Checking for active woodworm

In our experience woodworm can hang around for a long time and can be activated by changes of occupants due to the different levels of heating that different people require in a building.

We would suspect there is active woodworm within the barn; we think it is likely there is some woodworm within the main house. We have not been able to find any frass to substantiate this however having said that from the general standard of the house we would not have expected to.

Frass defined

The chewed up sawdust that the beetle leaves behind. A light coloured dust and a light coloured hole indicates this is relatively recent. Obviously if it is a darker coloured frass, or darker coloured hole, it means it is older and the woodworm may have gone.

5.4) Should you not buy the property because it has woodworm?

In our experience very rarely do you have what we would term as structurally significant woodworm and in this instance we cannot see any what we would term structurally significant woodworm at present.

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5.5) **Wet rot to the roofs**

Within the farmhouse we could not find wet rot to the roofs but we did find it within the barn roof.

Not surprisingly in an unheated area, the timber is suffering from wet rot. We would add also that this environment is perfect for active woodworm and active woodworm should not be discounted. It really depends what you intend to use the barn for. Please see our comments within the Barn section.



Wet rot



Wet rot

Please see the Woodworm and Timber Defects Sections of this Report.

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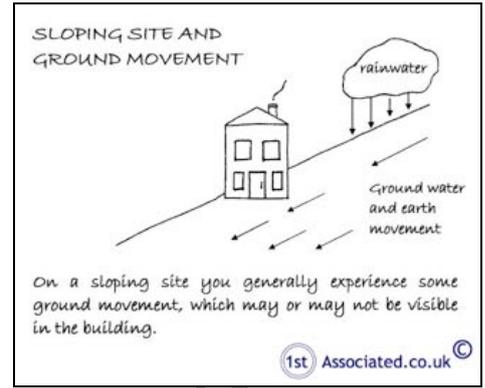
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6.0) Floors

The property has a mixture of different floors and also the property sits on a sloping site. With a sloping site the water needs to get from the top to the bottom and as such it will travel underneath your building.

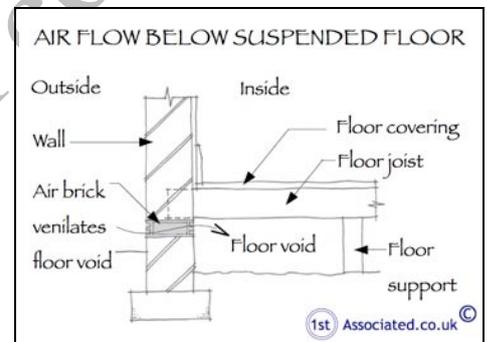
Within the building there are different types of floors, one of which we believe to be a suspended timber floor.



Sloping site

6.1) Suspended timber floor

There is a part suspended timber floor to the middle of the property which we suspect there will be wet rot within this area (we have not opened it up as there is no way from what we could see of doing this without damaging the property). We believe it is a suspended timber floor because of the airbricks that we can see outside to the front of the property. Unfortunately we can also see that there are downpipes discharging close to the property as well.



Suspended timber floor



Airbrick



Sloping site.
Downpipe discharging (circled)

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ACTION REQUIRED: Unfortunately this is something that you will have to accept is a characteristic of this property and live with it. We could not find any undue deflection within the floor indicating that it would be an imminent problem.

Please see the Floors Section of this Report.

7.0) High Level of Maintenance

You need to appreciate there will be a high level of maintenance internally, generally with re-decorating of the walls and particularly the re-decorating between the joists in the rooms in the roof, which can be very time consuming.

ACTION REQUIRED: This is a characteristic of this property. We would add that the beams, of course, make a great feature to the property.



Ceiling in end bedroom

Please see the Internal Decorations Section of this Report.

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8.0) Rights of access

As with many older properties you need to clarify exactly what you do and do not own and exactly what other people do and do not own and what you have shared rights to. We believe the road is one of these and probably the drains as well.

On the rear right hand side, there is a gate next to the barn, which looks to go into the Grange property area; you need to have clarification with regards to rights of access.



ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal Advisor needs to check and confirm.

Is there a right of way to the gate?

9.0) Thermal efficiency

This is more an information point than a positive or negative. You do need to consider how thermal efficient an older property will be, which has had a roof conversion in this form which is many years old and will be unlikely to have any insulation. Particularly with the cathedral ceilings you are effectively heating an area above your head.

In theory the thatch acts as a good insulation, you also have thick solid walls and thin glazed double glazed windows (which the owners during our question and answer session said made a considerable difference) within all areas except the rooms in the roof where from discussions with the owner, a secondary glazing system is used during the winter months.

However you do need to be aware, particularly if you have not owned a property of this age before, that the building requires constant heating which enables the walls to warm up over time and then give back the heat as opposed to a more instantaneous heat you get in a more modern

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property. By a modern property, we mean up to one hundred years old or so!

As far as we are aware there has been very little research with regard to the thermal efficiency of older properties with the exception of SPAB (Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings), which we will contact to discuss this matter further and we can discuss this when we discuss the property as a whole.

10.0) Services

10.1) Heating and Radiators

Heating requirements for different people vary considerably. You may have completely different heat requirements to the existing owners; in fact males and females have different heat requirements. We are drawing this to your attention as we can see there are many single panel radiators within the property, which means it can take time to warm the property although obviously you do have the individual fires throughout the property. However having said that, you may wish to upgrade the single panel radiators to double panel convection radiators, which are a more modern efficient radiator.

ACTION REQUIRED: Upgrade radiators to double panel convection radiators.

ANTICIPATED COST: To replace the radiators £100-£200 per radiator; please obtain quotations.

Please see our comments on thermal efficiency.

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10.2) Old style light points

You may or may not have noticed that there are not any ceiling lights to most of the ground floor and the lights come from ground floor level using an older style socket point with a circular pin. We would also draw your attention to the number of socket points.



ACTION REQUIRED: An Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) test and report and any recommendations to be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

Sockets for lights

You may wish to add additional socket points as part of having a general upgrade on the electrics.

ANTICIPATED COST: For a test in the region of £200-£500; please obtain quotations

10.3) Good fire alarm system

Where there is a thatched roof and open fires, regardless of whether the chimneys are lined, which we are advised they are in this case, we would always recommend a good fire alarm system, ideally one which identifies where the fire is occurring. We have seen thatched roof fires and they can be devastating.

ACTION REQUIRED: Obtain specialist advice.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

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The Barn

1.0) Gable end cracking to the barn

We have already brought this to your attention earlier but we do need to reiterate it, as it is such an important point. There is cracking within the barn area that looks to have been repaired over the years.

ACTION REQUIRED: An insurance claim we believe is essential to purchasing this property. The reason behind this is partly we believe that the gable end is not tied in. There may also be what is often known as a domino effect being caused by the building leaning slightly.

The insurance company would monitor for a year which is typically recommended by the BRE (Building Research Establishment) which may then result in the gable wall being tied in, it may result in buttresses or it may result in foundations being added although we must admit we would resist the latter as often buildings in this era of property were built without foundations and we feel it simply adds extra weight to the property and causes displacement in the structure as a whole. We would be more than happy to help you with any future insurance recommendations giving independent advice – most loss adjusters are working for insurance companies.

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2.0) Soft Rot/Wet Rot to the Queen Post Structure within the Barn

Wet rot was noted to the barn roof structure.



Wet rot



Wet rot

Please see our earlier comments.

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The Ugly

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

This is a slightly high-risk purchase and the barn is a relatively high-risk element of this purchase.

We have found more than the average number of things that we would classify as bad. We would specifically draw your attention to the roof structure and movement in the property. Please see our comments with regards to ways to resolve this matter.

We would add it is very difficult from a one off inspection to be one hundred percent certain.

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Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Maintenance

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

This type of property will require ongoing maintenance and repair and a budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in good condition. This will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration. In this case we believe there has been maintenance carried out to some extent however the property is suffering from things being carried out prior to the present owner's ownership of the property.

Getting to know more about older properties - SPAB course

We would recommend that you go on a Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) weekend course on looking after and maintaining older properties. Even if you do not intend to carry out the work yourself it does give you a far better idea of what work should be carried out. The website for this is www.SPAB.org.

Services

Whilst we have carried out a visual inspection only of the services within the property and we would always recommend you have your own specific testing for each of the services. We also need to advise you of the following:

Electrics

Where there is an older property such as this with a thatched roof we would always recommend that the electrics are tested. We would also advise the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) 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.

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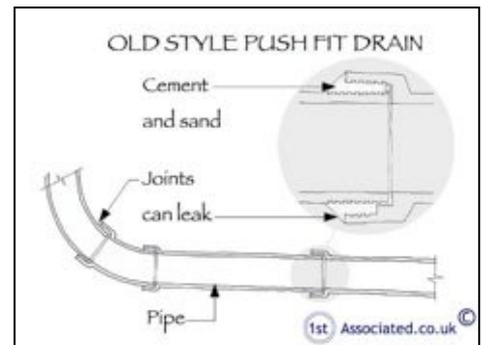
Heating

You really need to make sure the heating is suitable for the way you wish to live and your heat requirements. In our experience the only way to do this is to literally live in the property. We had the heating turned on during the course of our survey; the radiators warmed with the exception of one on the top floor. This does not mean that the property will be suitably heated for your requirements.

We would always 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 and that you obtain information from the existing owners. We would also recommend in this particular case that you ask to see a year's worth of heating bills.

Drainage

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 5 minutes in the bathroom without any build up or blockages the only way to be 100% certain of the condition of the drains is to have a closed circuit TV camera report.



Push fit drain

Whilst we have lifted the manhole covers, we noted these were in the shared road which you need to clarify.

The only true way to find out the condition of the drains is to have a closed circuit TV camera report to establish the condition of the drains. In this age of property there have often been leaks over the years.

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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 writing the second or third draft a few days after the initial survey when we have had time to reflect upon our thoughts on the property. We would add the following in this instance:

We would refer you to our comments in the Executive Summary, 'Good', 'Bad' and 'Ugly' Section and ask that you re-read these. We recommend that we have discussions with regard to the property once you have read this report.

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

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

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MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT

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

TENURE – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)

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

ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

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

SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR

To carry out your legal work you can use a solicitor or a legal advisor. We have used both terms within the report.

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS

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

OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION

Our aim is for you to be completely happy with the service we provide, and we will try and help you in whatever way possible with your property purchase - just phone us.

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

From our investigations the property is Grade II Listed and/or falls within a Conservation Area (your Legal Advisor should confirm this and make their own enquiries) and as such it will require various permissions to be obtained before work is carried out, over and above that normally required and possibly the use of appropriate materials for the age, type and style of property.



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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 are three chimneys to this property they are located to the left, middle and right (all directions given as you face the property).

Chimney One – located to the left

This chimney is brick finished with a cement flashing and one chimney pot/flue. From what we could see from ground level it looked in average condition considering its age, type and style.



There is some minor moss on the tops of all the chimneys indicating that the pointing may be starting to go.

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

Chimney one



Flaunching

ACTION REQUIRED: Periodically inspect the chimney.

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Chimney Two – located to the middle

This chimney is also brick built with one chimney pot/flue and is in average condition.

ACTION REQUIRED: Periodically inspect the chimney.



Chimney two

Chimney Three – located to the right

Again, this chimney is also brick built as the first two chimneys with one chimney pot/flue and is in average condition.

ACTION REQUIRED: Periodically inspect the chimney.



Chimney three

Flashings Defined

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

Flaunchings Defined

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

Cement Fillets/Cement Flashings Defined

This is where cement has been used to cover up or fill the junctions between two areas, for example between a roof and a wall to help prevent dampness. Cement is a brittle material and prone to cracking which in turn allows dampness into the structure. We would always recommend the use of lead flashings.

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Flues

Flues offer ventilation to things like boilers and soil and vent pipes and usually come through the roof covering, which can often also be a weak area.

We understand that all three chimneys have been lined and that checks have been carried out on these recently. Obviously it is important with a thatched property that the linings are checked and re-checked.

Please also see our comments with regards to adding a good quality fire alarm system.

Parapet Walls

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

Where the properties meet and to the right hand side of the barn there are exposed parapet walls. The parapet is in a susceptible position and is exposed to the elements. There looks to have been repairs to the very tops of the parapet walls and they form part of the gable ends. Please see our comments with regards to the gable ends. In all cases where the parapet walls meet the roofs there are cement fillets. From ground level we cannot advise whether these have an element of lime but they do look as if they have been carried out in cement, in which case they will in due course tend to crack as they cannot cope with the movement in older properties and leaks will occur.



Left hand gable



Parapet between barn and main building



Stone parapet wall to barn

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We would add that the cement mortar looks relatively new so this could be a re-occurring repair problem. Also, we would advise you to see our comments with regards to potential movement and how to resolve this.

Cement Fillets/Cement Flashings Defined

This is where cement has been used to cover up or fill the junctions between two areas, for example between a roof and a wall to help prevent dampness. Cement is a brittle material and prone to cracking which in turn allows dampness into the structure. We would always recommend the use of lead flashings.

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

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

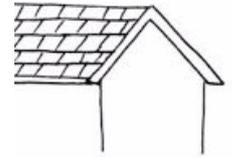
Please also see Chimney Breasts, Flues and Fireplaces Section of this Report.

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ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS

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

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

We will consider the roofs in four areas, the main thatched roof, the tiled roof to the barn, the tiled roof to the outbuilding and the slate roof to the utility room.



Various roofs

Main Roof - thatched

Thatch was the most common form of roofing in Britain until about the 17th Century on domestic structures, particularly in the South East of England. Its use was limited by legislation due to the risk of fire, initially in the City of London, which in turn, was followed by larger cities/towns, and eventually considered good building practice.

For example, in London, it was compulsory by 1212 to give thatch a coat of white wash to protect it from sparks, and new houses were not allowed to be thatched from this date. However, this legislation took some time to be adopted in other areas, but by the early/mid 18th Century, thatch was generally prohibited from use.

There are three main types of thatch common in England; Long straw, Norfolk reed and combed wheat reed all usually laid on a pitch of about 55°. Each have different characteristics, last different lengths of time and also vary in cost.

The main roof is finished in Long straw and is typified by its "shaggy" soft look. It is typically considered to have a life of between 10 and 20 years from new, depending upon the original quality of workmanship. However, it will require some maintenance throughout this period.

This type of thatch was generally considered to be traditionally in Bedfordshire and tends to have to be carried out to recommended standards

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and detailing. We are advised the thatching was carried out in the last few years and therefore is likely to be subject to some type of guarantee/warranty.



Thatched roof



Fill in between thatch and the main building



Join of thatch to tiles

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal advisor to check and confirm.

Tiled Areas

There are tiled areas beneath the dormer windows on the thatched roof. They have a slight moss covering.

The next time it rains heavily you need to check how the guttering is working to the tiled areas. If we recall correctly there was no guttering to the right hand side.



Tiled roof within thatch roof

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the guttering section.

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Barn roof - Tiled

The barn roof to the right hand side of the property (all directions given as you face the front of the property) is pitched and clad in roman tiles/pantiles. From ground level, this looks in average condition considering the roofs age type and style. Please see our comments with regards to the parapet wall detailing.

We would also advise that some of the guttering does not look even and there is an end cap missing which may be allowing water to discharge down the property. You need to inspect it when it is next raining.



Tiled roof



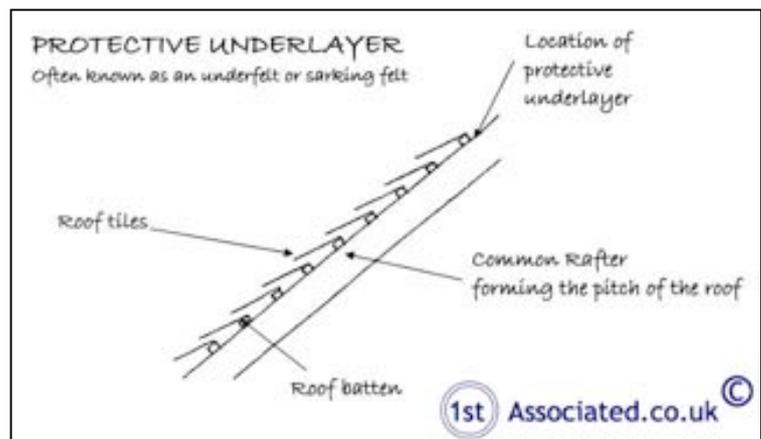
Close up of tiles



Tilting fillet at base of tiled roof

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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In the farmhouse it is not possible to see whether there is a protective underlayer.

In the barn 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.

Slate roof to Utility room

The roof to the utility room is shallow pitched and clad in slates and looks in average condition for its age, type and style.



Slate roof to utility room

Outbuilding roof

The outbuilding roof is pitched and clad in roman tiles/pantiles. It looks in average condition for its age, type and style.



Outbuilding roof

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

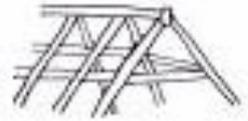
For further comments with regard to ventilation please see the Roof Structure and Loft Section.

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ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT

(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

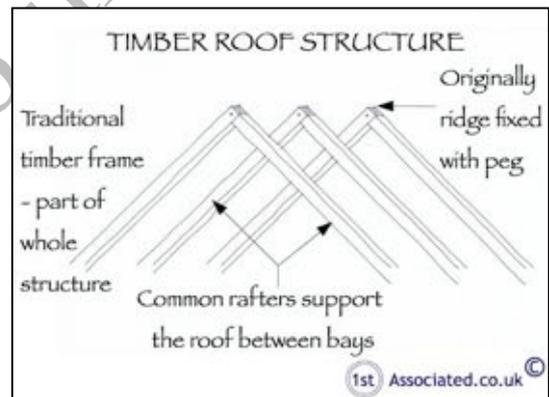
Main Roof

Roof Access

We were unable to view the roof structure due to the rooms formed within the roof.

Roof Structure

As mentioned we were unable to view the roof structure due to the rooms formed within the roof however we can take an educated guess that the roof structure is a traditional coupled roof.



The roof will have been hand cut and purpose made, with the trusses of the building normally being prefabricated on the ground floor, being lifted into place. Between the roof trusses, as you can see in the sketch, common rafters were fitted and this was typical construction of centuries gone by.

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Additional support added

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

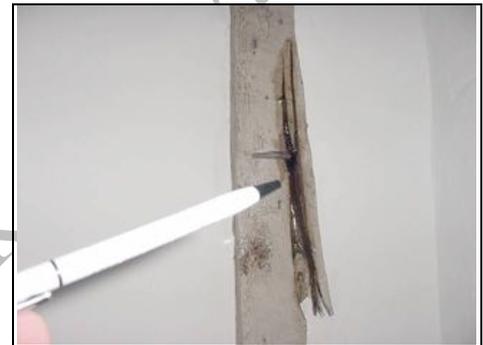


Additional support added

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



Damage to common rafter

Our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof and the plastering. What we could see was generally found to be in average condition considering its age.

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

Common rafters defined

Timbers, which form the pitch of the roof.

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Woodworm in the Barn roof structure

We believe there may be some active woodworm in the barn. The barn roof structure was viewed from ground level; it would need access from scaffolding or a lifting device for a close inspection. It was only closely inspected from a platform to the right hand side where we could see there was woodworm evidence and also soft rot to the timber.



Queen post roof structure in barn

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

Ventilation

No ventilation was noted.

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

Farmhouse

To the thatch, as is traditional, there is no guttering or fascias and soffits; the water literally runs on and through the thatch discharging at the perimeter. This can lead to some water running down the face of the property during severe conditions or wind driven rain.

Barn

The guttering is plastic and would benefit from being given extra support. We can see an end cap missing and also various dips in it, which we feel may lead to water discharging down the property.



End cap missing to guttering on barn

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

We 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.

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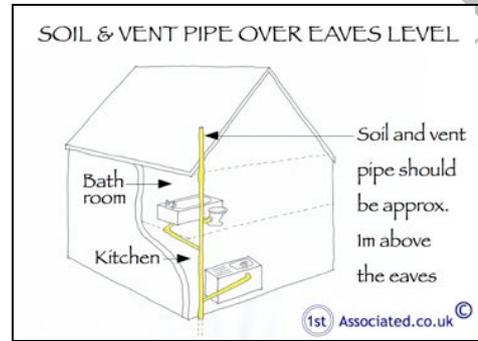


Soil and Vent Pipe

The property has plastic soil and vent pipes to the rear, which looks relatively new. This should in theory discharge above the height of the eaves but obviously this is very difficult with a thatched property.



Plastic soil and vent pipe



Soil and vent pipe over eaves

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

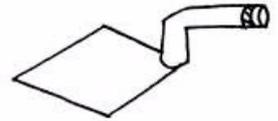
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WALLS



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.

Stonework

The property is built in rough cut coursed limestone in a cement mortar probably in a rubble wall construction (assumed).

Rubble wall construction defined

Outer and inner wall with rubble and lime mortar between and bonding stones, which are timbers that cross the wall. There may be bonding timbers.



Wrongly re-pointed in cement mortar

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

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

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

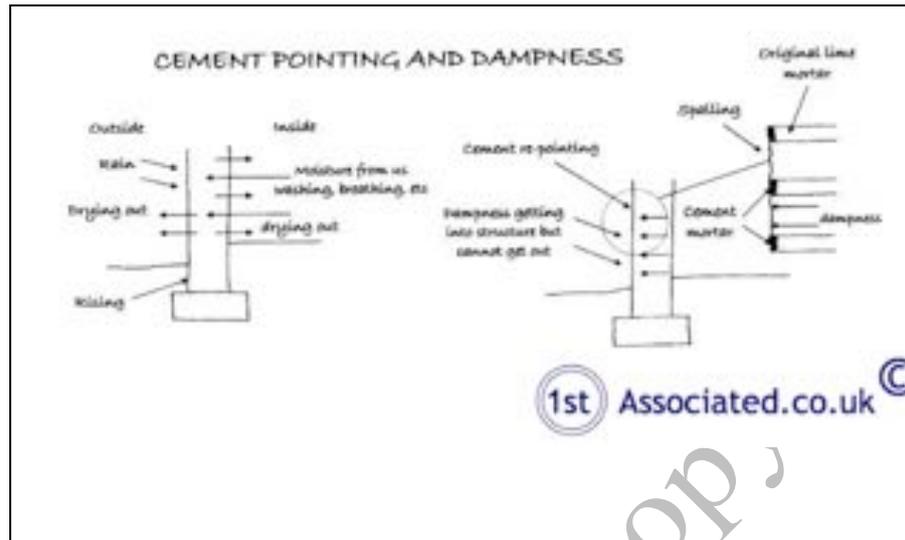
The use of cement mortar causes deterioration to stonework and does lead to the face of the stone deteriorating, which in turn, leads to dampness. This is a very important point.

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Timber lintels

Before the 19th Century, the practice of building timbers into external walls was almost universal as they were aware of the strength of stone being good in compression but not in tension. Some of the timber lintels did not seem to have that much end bearing. Having said that, we assume that when the new windows were put in, if there was rot it would have been repaired.



Timber lintel over window



Timber lintels with poor end bearing

ACTION REQUIRED: Obtain details with regard to the window replacement to see if it included for lintel repair and replacement. As shown in the photo there does look to be relatively poor end bearing to some of the lintels.

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Cracking – the barn

We would remind you that any hairline cracks that appear need to be sealed/repointed 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.



Cracking to far right of barn

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

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FOUNDATIONS

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

Foundations

Given the age of the property we would expect the property to have been built off the ground on a bedrock course.

Clay

This property stands on clay. The Bedfordshire area generally can have a clay content although it is often said that this area is more limestone.

Clay has two properties; one of which is it retains water and the other is that it moves depending upon its water content. It is therefore more susceptible than most conditions should drains leak or trees be allowed to overgrow, or if it is within a watercourse, etc. It is not unusual to have some settlement in properties built in clay.

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;

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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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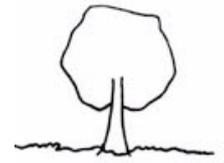
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TREES



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

There are trees that have come down to the front of the property. Ivy is growing to the front of the property; please see our comments in the Executive Summary with regards to damage that can be caused by ivy and how water can sit against the property and get into the property.



Ivy to front of property

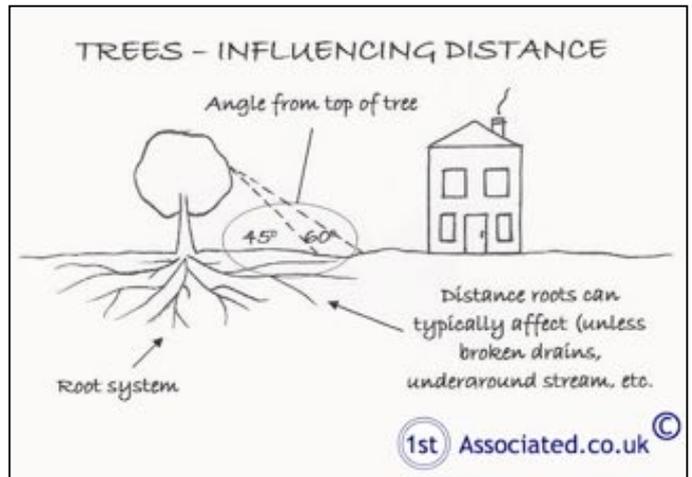
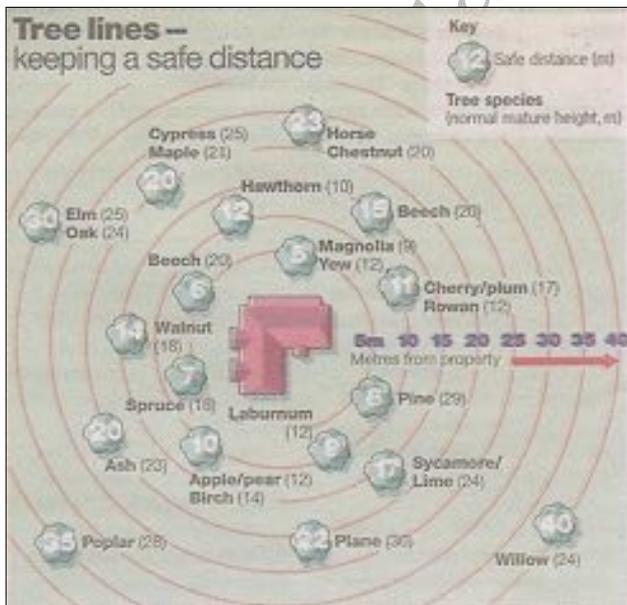


Tree damaged from scaffolding for thatching which duly died and was cut back



Plants growing on walls

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



Influencing distance of trees to a property

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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.

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

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DAMP PROOF COURSE

The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required various other basic standards. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout London and then the country as a whole, although this took many years for it to become standard practice.

In properties of this age it is unlikely that a damp proof course would have been built in originally. We would not recommend adding a damp proof course, just lowering of the ground level, which we consider to be slightly high.

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

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

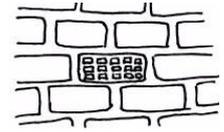
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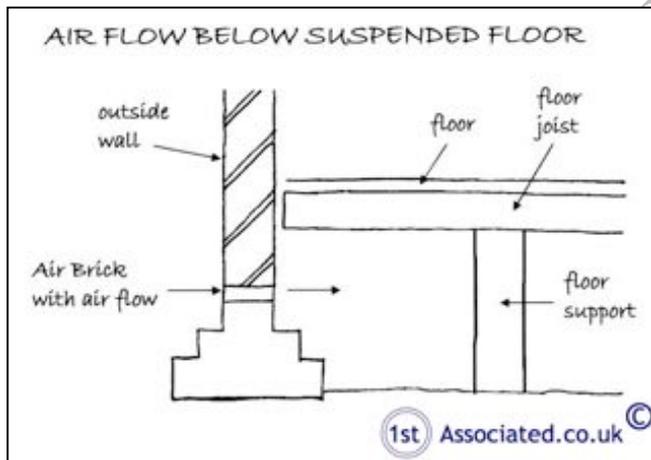
AIRBRICKS



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

Low Level Air Bricks

Air bricks are essential to have a through flow of air as this helps to reduce the chances of wet rot, dry rot and woodworm. In this case we found airbricks to the rear but none to the front of the property.



Suspended timber floor



Air brick to rear

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

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

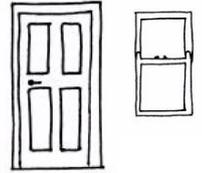
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WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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.

Windows and Doors

The property has timber windows with slim line double glazing which looks like single glazing. There are single glazed windows within the top floor which the owners advised that secondary glazing is added to during the winter months.

ACTION REQUIRED: Make enquiries with regards to transferable guarantees.



Typical window and reveal

Knife Test

We have tested the windows by pushing a knife into a random selection. We generally tend to do the lower windows as access is easier.



Checking the window

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.

The external decorations were generally in average condition.

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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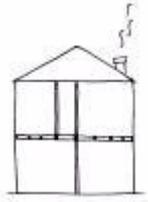
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INTERNAL



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.

Ceiling Construction

The ceilings have exposed timber beams, the main larger beams are known as the spine beams, with the inter-connecting ceiling / floor rafters.

Often these timbers are re-used timbers, used sideways as it was more practical but this leads to higher levels of deflection than usual in modern properties.

The infill panels can be made from a mixture of materials such as a plaster in this case. We noted that some of the beams were painted. From what we understand the owners cleaned/sanded the beams.

In some areas there are simple spine beam and lath and plaster ceilings. This is based upon a visual inspection from the unevenness of the ceiling. We believe that some of the timbers may be newish or reclaimed, nevertheless they give the impression of a timber framed property.



Ceiling in end bedroom



Ceiling in lounge



Timbers

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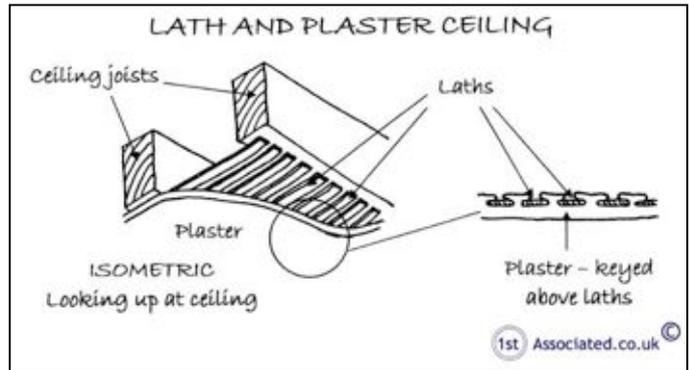
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Lath and Plaster Defined

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



Lath and plaster ceiling

Plasterboard Defined

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

Rooms in the roof

Within the roof we could see the common rafters. Some of these timbers were darker indicating to us that there may be some dampness getting in but in this case the timbers may still be drying out from when the thatch was added. There was no area where we could physically see the thatch. If you wish, and obtain permission in writing, we would be more than happy to employ a builder on your behalf to remove the plasterboard in the end right hand room. We do think this would be particularly useful as there are areas of water staining to the timbers.



Timbers in room in roof



End right hand room



Water staining to timbers

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Internal Walls and Partitions

These are, we believe a mixture of solid and studwork construction. We asked the owners had they changed the studwork during their time at their property and they advised they had not. We would say this studwork looks relatively new and not typical of what we would expect in this property.



Example of studs on first floor where studs can be seen

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

Perimeter Walls

Originally these would have been constructed with a wet plaster, probably a modern plaster as it looks too smooth to be a lime based plaster. It is very difficult to confirm by eye; we cannot be 100% certain of the wall construction without opening them up which goes beyond the scope of this report.

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

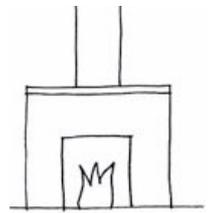
We cannot comment upon the condition of the structure hidden behind plaster, dry lining, other applied finishes, heavy furniture, fittings and kitchen units with fitted back panels.

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CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES

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

The chimney breasts are located to the left hand side, middle and right hand side (all directions given as you face the front of the property). There are nice fireplace features.

At the time of the survey no chimneys were in use. Any chimneys that you do not propose to use should be capped and ventilated to prevent dampness. We have been advised that they have been tested recently.



Fireplace in dining room

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal Advisor needs to check and confirm.

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

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

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

Please also see the Chimney Stacks, Flues and Parapet Walls section of this Report.

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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.

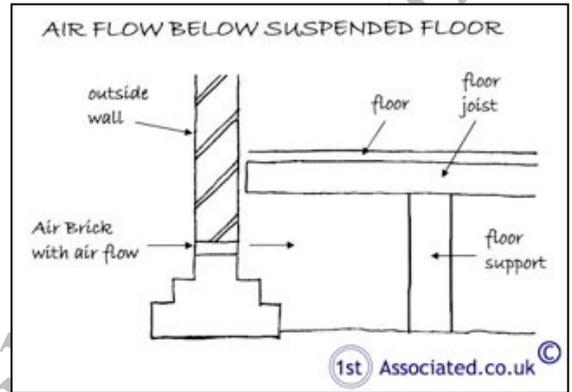
Ground Floor

As with most older properties, the ground floor is not level and true.

There is a mixture of solid floors with a suspended timber floor centrally as far as we can see.

Suspended timber floors require air

movement underneath to minimise wet rot, dry rot and woodworm; however, we have not opened up the floors or lifted the carpets/floor coverings.



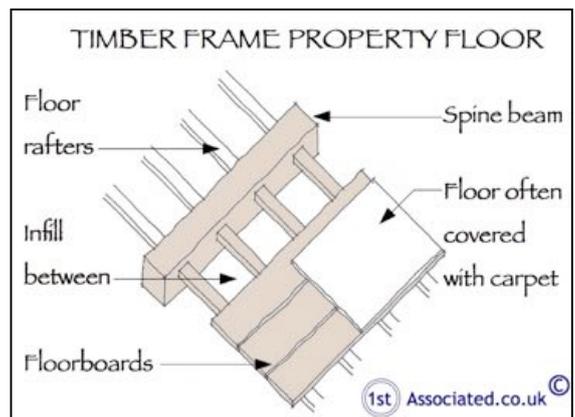
Suspended timber floor

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

First and Second Floor

The first and second floor construction is exposed timber beams, with the main spine beam and inter-connecting floor joists making the structural frame. This then is covered by floor boards. Originally these floor boards were wider than we typically have today.

There can be more deflection to this type of floor than in a modern floor due to the use of timber on the side in the floor construction as it was more practical way to build. As with most older



Traditional timber frame floor

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properties the floors are uneven and you may need to pack underneath the furniture. This is caused by general settlement and movement within the property over the years.

The Barn

Ground floor

The ground floor construction is trodden earth as you would expect in a barn.

First floor

The first floor sits on substantial timber beams which in turn are supported by brick piers.

You would normally get lateral support on a property formed by floors, without it you can get bellying in the walls. Without opening up the stone walls it is not possible to say whether there are such problems in this case. From a visual inspection the walls seemed relatively true.



Timbers of first floor in barn

Please note our comments with regard to the crack on the right hand side. As mentioned elsewhere within this report the barn is a relatively high-risk element of this property.

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

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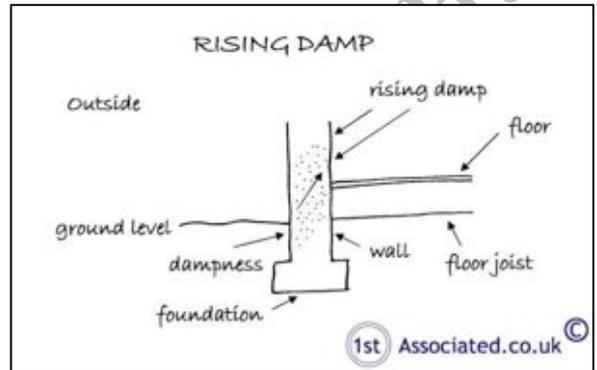


DAMPNESS

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

Rising Damp

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



Rising damp

A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we have found relatively minor rising damp, we were surprised it was not higher.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see the Executive Summary.



Testing for rising damp

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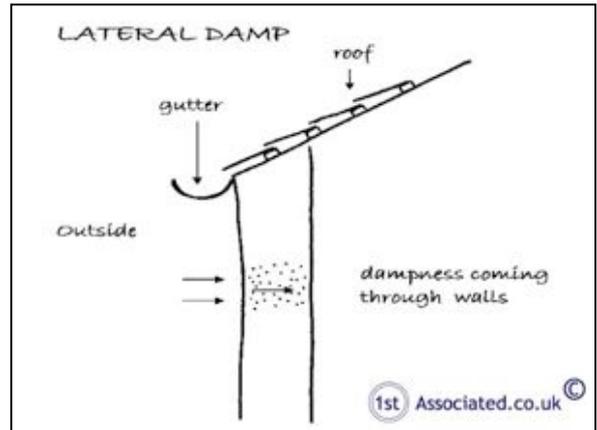
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Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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

We used a resistance meter on the external walls. We have found minor lateral dampness. Again, we were surprised it was not higher.



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



Testing for lateral dampness

Condensation

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

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

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

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Extract fans in kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas

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



High level vent to shower room

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend large humidity controlled extract fans be added to kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas. These would need to be carried out in sympathy with the building being listed. Also, we would recommend that you check with the Listed Building Control Officer that they are happy for you to carry out the work.

Finally, effective testing was prevented in areas concealed by heavy furniture, fixtures such as kitchen fittings with backboards, wall tiles and wall panelling. We have not carried out tests to BRE Digest 245, but only carried out a visual inspection.

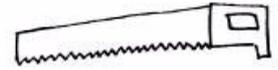
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INTERNAL JOINERY



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

Doors

The property generally has ledge and brace doors.



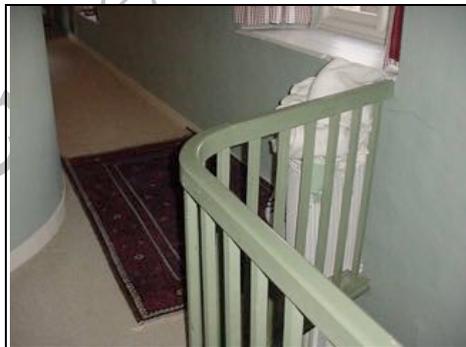
Ledge and brace door

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.



Staircase not lined



Handrail on first floor



Stairs from first floor to top floor

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Kitchen

We found the kitchen in average condition. It benefits from an Aga. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

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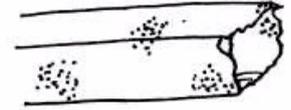
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TIMBER DEFECTS



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

Dry Rot

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

We have not visually seen any 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 due to the rooms formed within it.

Wet Rot

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

We noted wet rot within the queen post roof of the barn. We have also seen some discolouration to the timbers in the cathedral ceiling of the room in the roof of the farmhouse which could mean that dampness is getting through.

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Woodworm



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

As with any property of this age there is woodworm present. Please see our comments within the Executive Summary.

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. In this case our inspection is restricted by the plastering between the common rafters and the floor coverings and general stored items within the various rooms.

We have been advised that woodworm treatment has been carried out in the past and that they literally could hear the woodworm and this died off literally after a while.

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

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

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

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INTERNAL DECORATIONS



With paints it should be remembered that up to 1992 lead could be used within paint and prior to this most textured paints (commonly known as Artex) contained an element of asbestos up to 1984, so care should be taken if the paintwork looks old and dated.

Internal decorations are in average condition. We noted a good collection of Farrow and Ball paints.

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



Farrow and Ball paint

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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WELLS



In older properties it is very common to have a well, either within the bounds of the property or a shared well.

In older properties there are often wells. In this case there may well have been a spring water supply. You need to make sure that it is now coming from the mains.

Finally all older properties would have had a water supply nearby often a well. Where we have not found a well it may be because the well has been filled in many years ago, or built over when amending or extending the property.

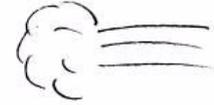
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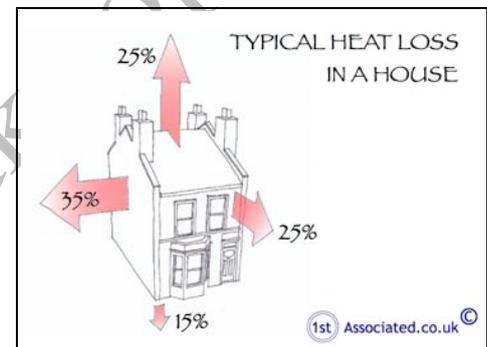


THERMAL EFFICIENCY

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

Roofs

It is always very difficult with old buildings to comment on thermal efficiency. Current Building Regulations require 300mm of insulation. You have of course in this case a thatched roof.



Heat loss from a house

Walls

The walls to this property are solid. It is very difficult to improve thermal efficiency in solid wall construction without major alterations particularly as the building is listed. These will usually affect the external appearance or reduce the internal space – best left alone.

Windows

The windows are predominantly slim line double glazed and single glazed to the rooms in the roof and therefore will have above 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.

Heating bills

We would recommend heating bills are obtained.

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 (Centre for Alternative Technology)

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

It is worth watching the video How Many Light Bulbs? by David J C MacKay – can be viewed on YouTube

SPAB (Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings are currently researching how best to insulate older properties and it is worth checking their website for the latest information at www.SPAB.org

HIPs

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

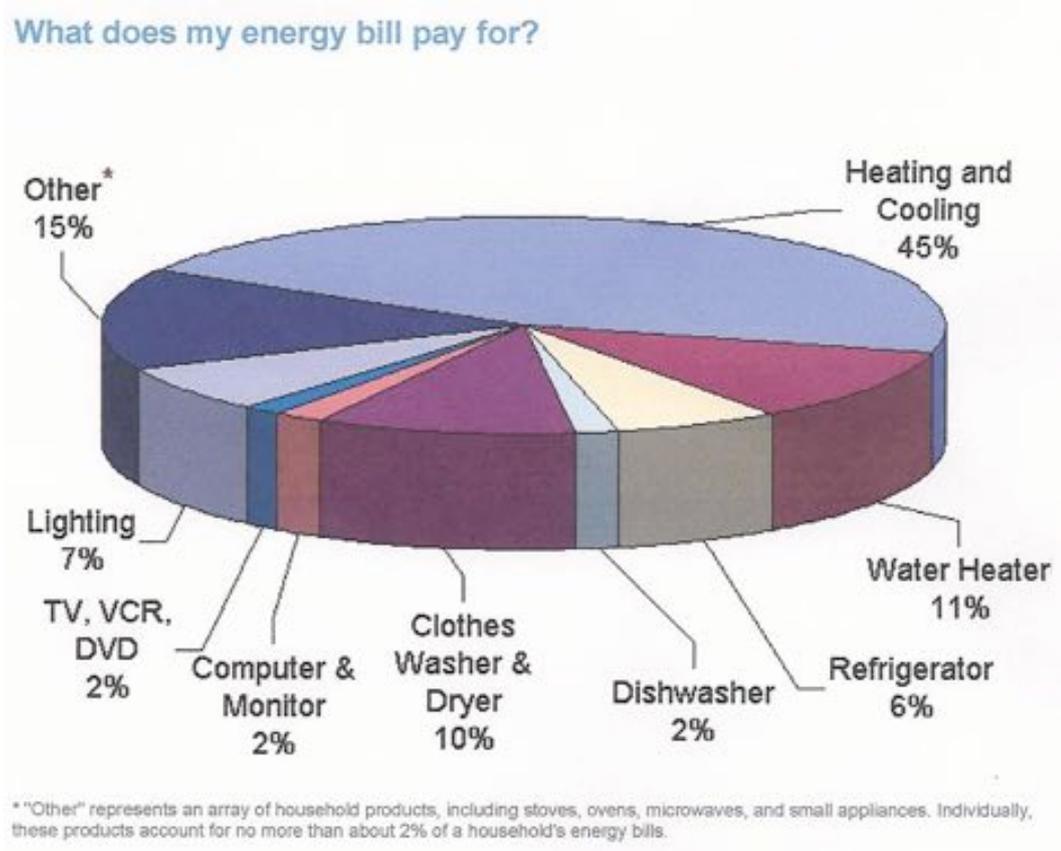
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Finally, we would comment that energy we feel will become a major consideration in years to come, particularly with the greater focus in modern buildings on energy efficiency.



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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 in the form of alarm boxes; there may be a discreet alarm system within the property.

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.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ask the existing owners.

Fire / Smoke Alarms

Some smoke detectors were noted. The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary with regards to improving the fire detection system.

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

Insurance

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

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

Asbestos

In this case there is an outside chance that asbestos is used although we have not visually seen any.

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 has still been 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

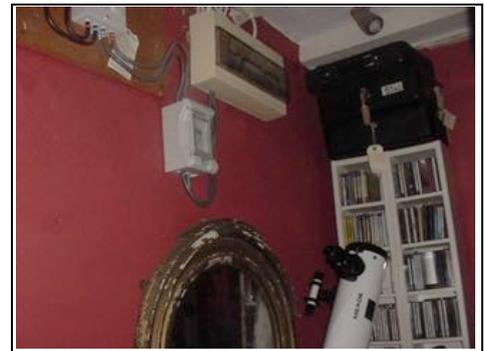


It is strange to think that electricity only started to be used in domestic properties at the turn of the 19th century with gas lighting still being the norm for a good many years after.

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 Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) recommends that inspections and testing are undertaken at least every 10 years (we recommend every five years) and on change of occupancy. All electrical installation works undertaken after 1st January 2005 should be identified by an Electrical Installation Certificate.

Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located under the stairs on the ground floor. The fuse board looked 1980's/1990's and better are now available. In an older property, particularly where it is thatched, a defective fuse board can be particularly dangerous.



Fuse Board

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend replacement with a modern fuse board.

There are many single socket points which you may wish to upgrade.

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Earth Test

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



Earth test

ACTION REQUIRED: As the property is changing occupancy an Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) 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.

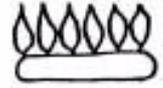
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OIL



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.

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

Oil Tanks

We were pleased to see that the oil tanks are plastic. These usually replace the older metal tanks that can rust and they typically have a double lining, meaning that if they leak they leak into the outer lining.



Plastic oil tank

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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!).

Hot Water Cylinder

There is a Modern hot water cylinder located on the first floor in the airing cupboard, which will have good thermal efficiency.



Megaflow hot water cylinder

Plumbing

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

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Heating

The aga was located in the kitchen. There are many single panel radiators within the property, which you may wish to up-grade to double panel convection radiators.

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

Ten Minute Heating Test

We had the heating turned on during the course of our survey; the radiators warmed with the exception of one on the top floor.

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.

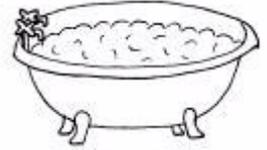
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BATHROOM



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 and En-suite shower rooms

The bathrooms and en-suite shower rooms within the property are in average to above average condition.

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 five minutes in the bathroom. No build up or back up was noted.

Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We have identified four inspection chambers / manholes.

Inspection Chamber / Manhole One located opposite the barn

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

From what we could see it is brick built.



Manhole opposite barn

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Inspection Chamber / Manhole Two located in the middle of the road

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

From what we could see it is concrete built.



Manhole in middle of road

Inspection Chamber / Manhole Three located to the front right side

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

From what we could see it is concrete built. This is a modern manhole cover which may have been added in recent years.



Manhole to front right side

Inspection Chamber / Manhole Four located to the left of the rear garden

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

From what we could see it is brick built.



Manhole rear garden left side

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

Finally, it must be emphasised that the condition of the property's foul drains can only be ascertained by the carrying out of a test; such a test has not been undertaken. Should there be leaks in the vicinity of the building then problems could occur, particularly with respect to the stability of the 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. The drains are likely to be discharging into the ground and is likely to cause dampness into the kitchen area.



Downpipe discharging into ground

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. We have taken a cursory inspection of the outbuilding and would be happy to return and carry out a survey of so required.

PARKING



Parking is available to the front of the property.



Parking to front

Access road



Access road looking up the road



Access road looking down the road

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal Advisor needs to check and confirm your rights and responsibilities.

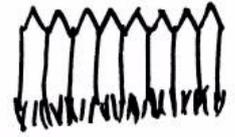
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EXTERNAL AREAS



Gardens

We have only looked at the gardens immediately around the farmhouse and the barn. We also believe there is some additional land with the property.



Terrace to rear



Garden



Middle of garden



Garden beside barn

An obelisk has been erected to the left hand side of the property by the present owners to commemorate the Millennium.



Obelisk

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OUTBUILDINGS

Guttering

The guttering to the outbuilding looks to be leaking and the stonework beneath is weathered.



Gutter leaking onto wall



Gutter leaking on outbuilding

ACTION REQUIRED: Replace gutters.

ANTICIPATED COST: A few hundred pounds; quotations required.

Walls

The walls are built in stone with corrugated iron to the rear. There is weathering to the stonework.



Weathering to wall



Corrugated iron to the rear of outbuilding

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

You need to clarify exactly what the boundaries/right of ways are.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal Advisor needs to check and confirm.



Is there a right of way to the gate?

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

We have not visited the neighbours; we would always recommend that you visit the neighbours before you legally commit to purchase the property.

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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) Approvals in relation to Listed Building consent.
 - viii) Removal of any chimneys in part or whole.
 - ix) Have there been any structural problems referred to insurance companies, any insurance claims, monitoring or underpinning, etc.
 - x) Drainage repairs
 - xi) 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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It is our policy not to offer a conclusion to ensure that the Building Survey is read in full and the comments are taken in context.

If you would like any further advice on any of the issues discussed or indeed any that have not been discussed!

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

For and on Behalf of
XXXX Limited
Independent Chartered Surveyors
XXXX

This Report is dated: XXXX

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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.

APPROVALS/GUARANTEES

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

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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.

LAYOUT PLAN

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

WEATHER

It was a cool winter's day with showers at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

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

NOT LOCAL

It should be noted the surveyors may not be local to this area and are carrying out the work without the benefits of local knowledge on such things as soil conditions, aeroplane flight paths, and common defects in materials used in the area etc.

OCCUPIED PROPERTY

The property was occupied at the time of our survey, which meant that there were various difficulties when carrying out the survey such as stored items within cupboards, the loft space and obviously day-to-day household goods throughout the property. We have, however, done our best to work around these.

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JAPANESE KNOTWEED

We have not inspected for Japanese Knotweed. We would advise that we are finding that some mortgage valuation surveyors are setting valuations at zero on any property with Japanese Knotweed and are reluctant to lend where it is present.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to carry out your own investigations on this matter before you commit to purchase the property and be aware that it could be in neighbouring properties which you do not have direct control over.

INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been limited as:

- 1) We did not open up the roof as we could not see a way to do it without causing damage.
- 2) We did not open up the walls as we could not see a way of doing so without causing damage.
- 3) We did not open up the ground floor, first or second floor as we could not see a way to do it without causing damage.
- 4) The stored items limited our view.



Stored items limited view



Bookcases limited view

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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. Certificates for woodworm and chimney sweeping
2. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
3. Information on the Property Market
4. French Drain Article
5. Condensation Article

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CERTIFICATES

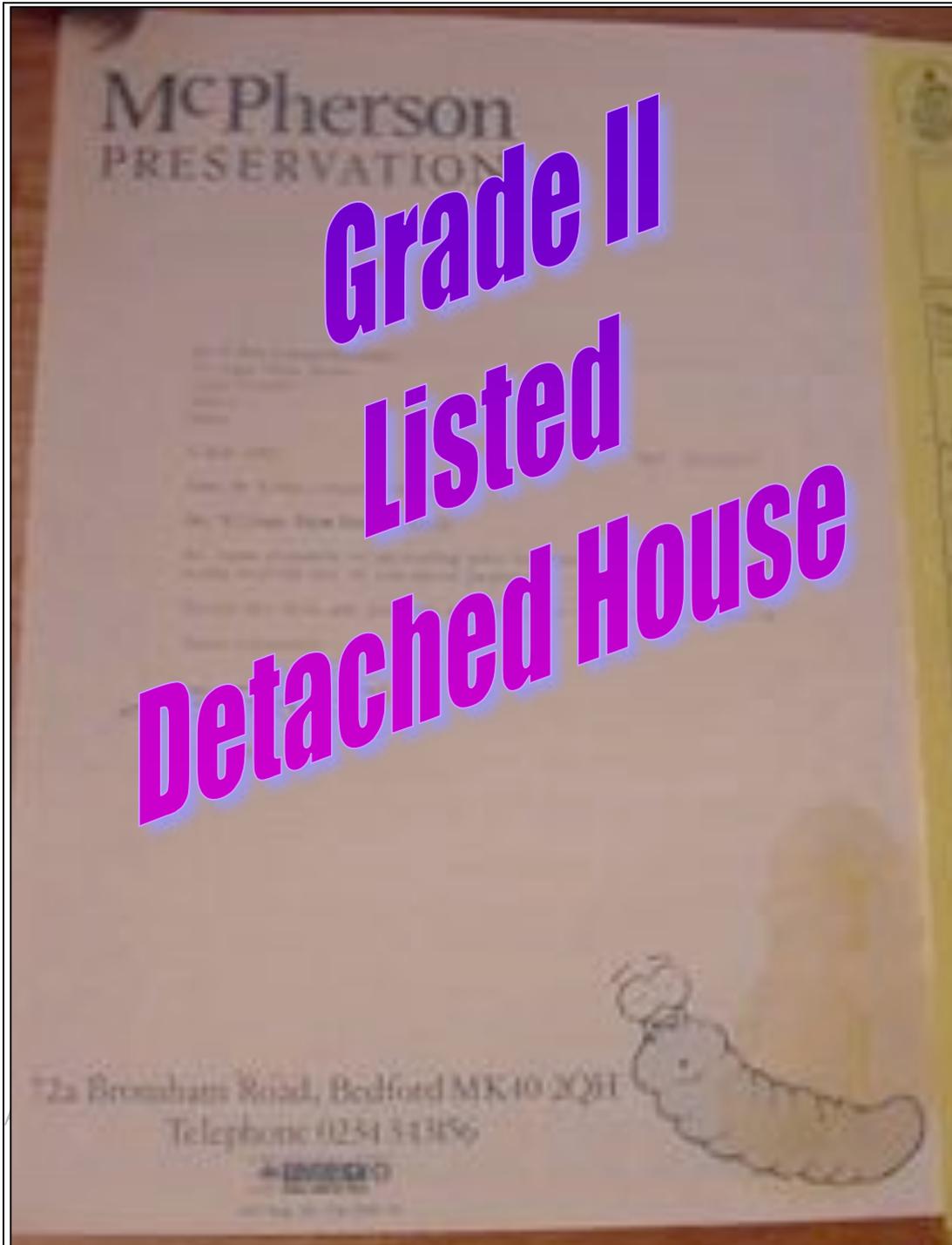


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Certificate for woodworm – we believe the guarantee is out of date



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

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

Work You Cannot do Yourself

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

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INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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

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

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www.hometrack.co.uk

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

www.motleyfool.co.uk

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

www.rightmove.co.uk

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

www.zoopla.co.uk

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

www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk

This is a good website for establishing if the property is Listed and general information on British Listed buildings.

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French Drain

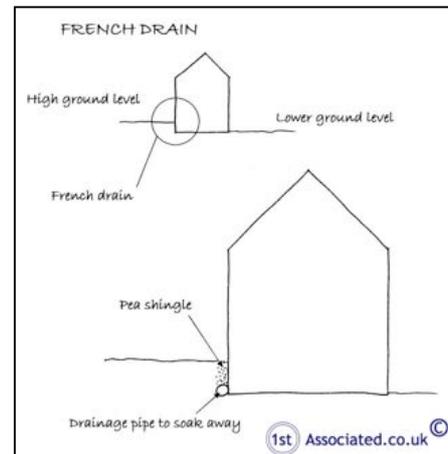
Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

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 other issues are much more likely and are hard to resolve

What is cold bridging and how does it work?

Cold bridging is a term and a problem we believe will become 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.

Cold Bridging

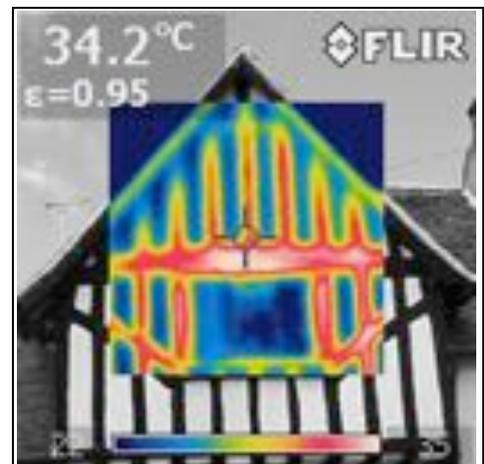
Cold bridging is caused by a colder element in the structure or fabric of the building allowing coldness to pass through. When warm moist air is present in the property and it passes through the colder elements of the structure we have what is known as Cold Bridging. This is often caused by a combination 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.

Commercial properties and cold bridging

We appreciate it is unlikely that you will find many commercial properties that are constructed in the Tudor era. 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,



Timber framed Public House
Thermal image showing heat loss



Thermal image showing heat loss
around window of timber frame pub

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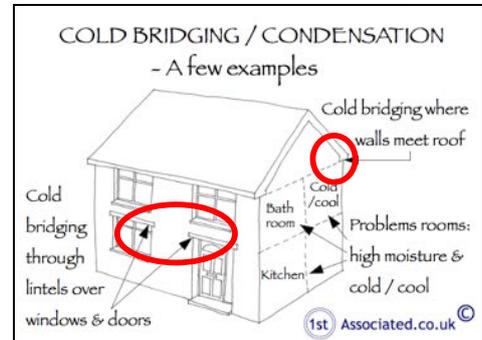


sports centre or a crèche. These human atmospheres create a climate, which can result in condensation on the cold elements of the structure and fabric if the room is not ventilated properly.

Condensation and Cold Bridging the problems explained

The adjacent sketch is a sketch we have drawn to try to summarise the issues of cold bridging to help identify some of the problems relating to cold bridging and condensation.

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/condensation

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.

When is Cold Bridging Likely?

In our experience we have seen cold bridging occurring in:

- 1) Eras of properties where there are warm elements and colder elements to the building.
- 2) Where you have a mixture of warm rooms and cold rooms.



Cottage thermal image showing no roof insulation

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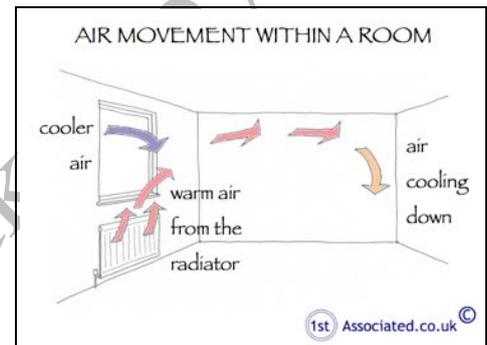


For example: Lounges and main bedrooms tend to be warmer than guest or spare bedrooms most of the time. Also sometimes rooms can warm up due to large areas of glass and thermal heat gain, which is very true in some conservatories also.

- 3) Humidity internally is high
- 4) Where it is colder but by no means very cold outside

Can Cold Bridging be solved?

In some ways it is very simple and in some ways it is very difficult to resolve 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.



Air movement within a room

Airing rooms just like in the good olde days

Airing the room by opening the windows, which seems to have gone out of fashion, can help considerably.



Old style diamond panel lead light in cast iron window opened to air room

Is your lifestyle a factor in Cold Bridging?

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

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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.

Airing clothes in winter months

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.

Drying washing on radiators can cause condensation

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 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.



Tudor timber frame property

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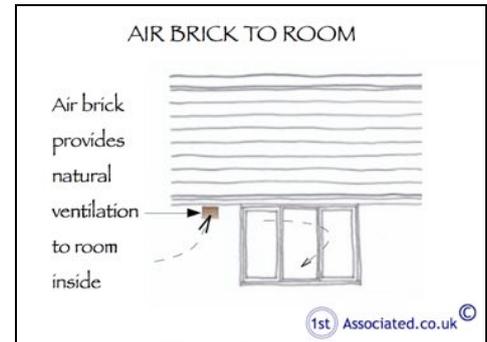
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Things to remember about an air brick

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.



Apologies our sketches are depicting a modern property rather than a Tudor timber frame property.

Air brick may not ventilate room enough

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.

The photograph to the right shows a Tudor pub in snowy weather conditions, the property has been extended and altered over the years, which means that there is different heat loss in different areas of the property.



Tudor pub

Seasonal changes

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

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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.

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