

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

XXX
HARPENDEN
Hertfordshire
AL5 XXX



FOR
Mr X

Prepared by:
XXXX
INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS



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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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

The property is a detached two storey house that has been extended (garage and first floor extensions) and altered over the years.

The front garden has predominantly been given over to become a driveway. To the rear there is a patio/terraced area and a raised garden, including a shed, greenhouse and statue!

We believe that the property was built in the 1960's/1970's. It is situated in a residential estate of different styles of property.

If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal advisor needs to check and confirm all of the above.

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1960 | The average house price in England is only £2,500, wish we had bought a few! |
| 1966 | England beat Germany to win the 1966 World Cup at Wembley |
| 1969 | Neil Armstrong takes a giant leap for mankind with his small steps on the moon |
| 1971 | Decimalisation is introduced throughout the UK |
| 1975 | Microsoft founded, now a world leader in computing |
| 1976 | The first commercial Concorde flight took off from Toulouse, France. |
| 1978 | The World's first test tube baby is born in Great Britain |

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EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view



Rear view



Left view



Right view



Front garden and driveway



Rear garden

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ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

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

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Entrance Hallway
- 2) Study to the front left hand side
- 3) Lounge to the right hand side
- 4) Kitchen and breakfast room area to the rear left hand side
- 5) Downstairs cloakroom
- 6) Lean-to to the rear right hand side



First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Master bedroom with en-suite on the front left hand side
- 2) Bedroom to the rear left hand side
- 3) Bedroom to the rear middle
- 4) Bedroom to the rear right hand side
- 5) Bathroom
- 6) Landing area where access can be gained into the roof



Outside Areas

The property has an integral garage to the left hand side and the driveway gives off-road parking. There are good sized gardens to the front and rear, all sitting on a sloping site. The rear garden has a shed, greenhouse and a statue.

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.

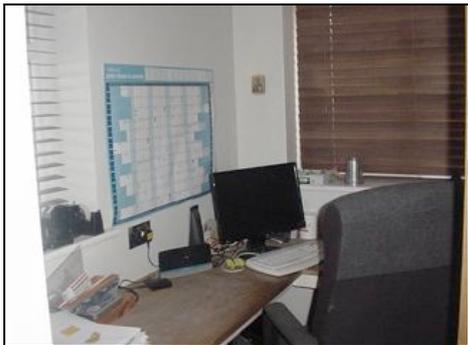
Ground Floor



Entrance Hall



Cloakroom



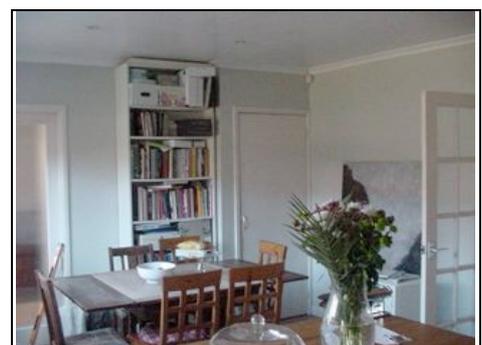
Study to front left



Lounge to front right



Kitchen to rear left



Dining area to rear left

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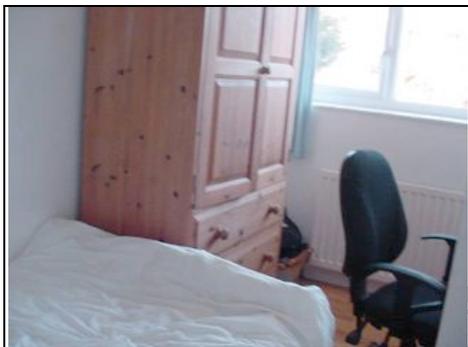
First Floor



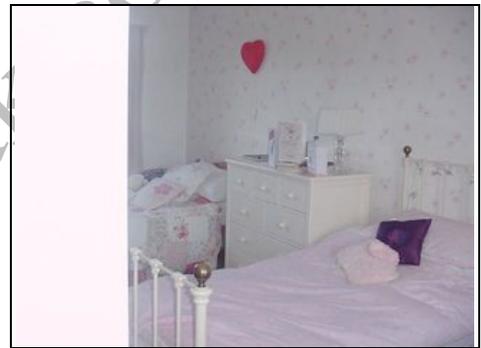
Master Bedroom



Cupboard/Door to En-suite Shower Room



Rear Left Hand Bedroom



Rear Right Hand Bedroom



Middle Bedroom



Bathroom

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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Chimneys:	One central brick chimney
Main Roof:	Concrete tiled roof with valley gutters
Main Roof Structure:	Cut timber roof with hessian based felt as a protective underlayer
Lean-to Roof Structure:	Polycarbonate roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	Painted aluminium and plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Stretcher Bond Brickwork; it is present in two different types of brickwork particularly noticeable to the left hand side (assumed) Vertical tiling
Wall Structure:	Cross wall construction (assumed)
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber - unvented
Windows and Doors:	Plastic double glazed windows with and without trickle vents

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Internal

Ceilings:	Plasterboard / proprietary board (assumed)
Walls:	Mixture of solid and hollow/stud (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Suspended floor (assumed)
First Floor:	Joists and floorboards on joist hangers (assumed)
Extension to the left hand side:	Joist and floorboard sheets

Services

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

Heating:	There is a Baxi boiler located in the garage.
Electrics:	The electrics are 1980s/1990s and are located in the garage.
Gas:	The consumer unit was not located.
Drainage:	The manholes are located left side and rear

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

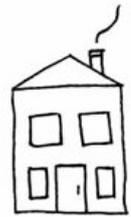
ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor needs to check and confirm the above and advise us of anything they require further clarification on before legal commitment to purchase the property.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 400 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 got potential with a slightly dated interior.
- 2.0) It has potential for an extension to the front, but remembering it has already been extended to the front it may be considered over development and generally extensions to the front of properties tend to be hard to get passed by the Planners. From a construction point of view there will need to be some clever designs to ensure you do not get awkward roof detailing.

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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) General information on construction

Before we begin this section we first of all wish to explain that this property is what is known as a cross wall construction, which was a popular construction between the 1960s to the 1980s. It was driven, as with many innovations in the building world, by the economics/cheapness of construction.

Traditionally when we build all the outer walls are supporting walls, with some of the inner walls (known as structural walls). In cross wall construction it tends to be the walls running on the sides and centrally in the property that are structural, with the other walls, such as the vertically tiled walls, being effectively walls which are non-structural and cladding.



Cross wall construction



Cross wall construction - structural wall on the side of the property with tile cladding to the front

The construction needs to be borne in mind when carrying out any extensions or alterations to the property. We are not classifying this as a defective form of construction but are just bringing it to your attention.

Please see the Walls Section of this report.

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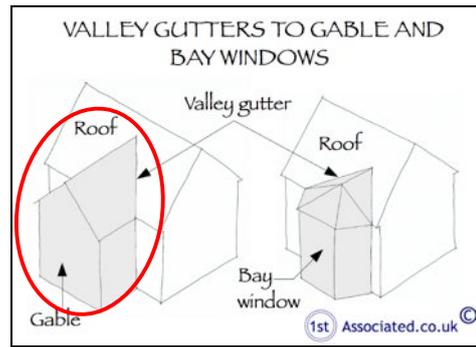
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2.0) Valley Gutters

The front extension shows a good example of why extensions have to be thought through as there is an awkward/problematic valley gutter detail. Here we can see the concrete fillers have come out of the valley gutters, which in turn will lead to dampness getting in to the structure.



Valley gutters



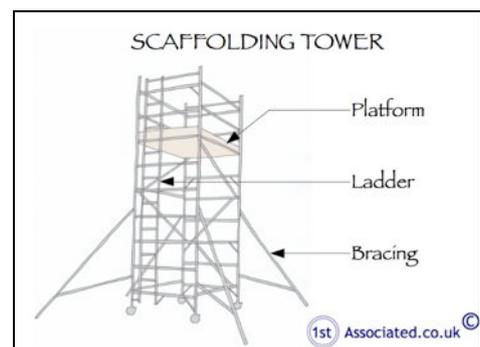
Valley gutter



Close up of valley gutter where concrete fillets have come out

ACTION REQUIRED: Repairs are needed to stop water getting into the roof structure. We would take the opportunity to check all the valley gutters.

ANTICIPATED COST: The most expensive part will be actually getting access to the valley gutters. Expect costs in the region of £750 to £1,500. You do need to ensure that the builders have good access as this will mean they will carry out a good job. It may well be worth insisting that they use a tower scaffold to access the area rather than ladders and crawler boards.



Tower scaffold

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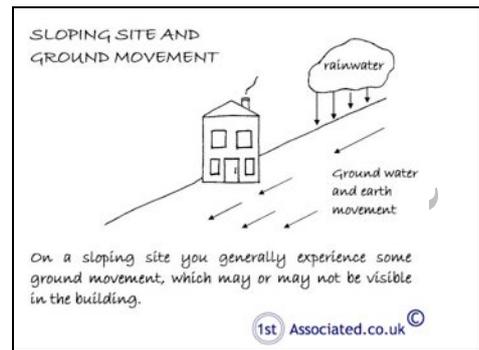
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Please see the Roofs Section of this report.

3.0) Slight sloping site

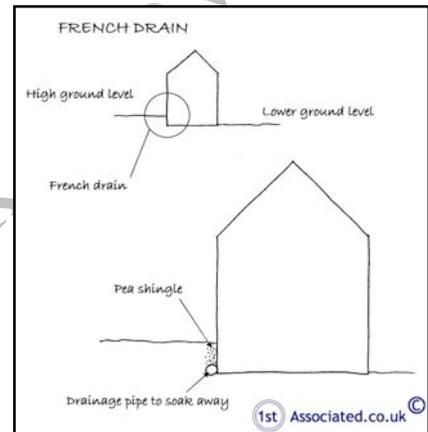
The property sits on a slight sloping site. This can particularly be seen in the rear garden which discharges water towards the patio area. You may wish to add a running gully or a French drain to limit any water building up against the back of the property.



Sloping site

ACTION REQUIRED: Before you do anything we would live in the property and see if water does accumulate to the rear when it rains. At the time of inspection the garden was very muddy.

ANTICIPATED COST: Difficult to say as it depends upon whether a running gully or French drain is more appropriate (we can advise on this once you see how much water travels towards the house – it may be that nothing is necessary). Costs for a French drain range to the rear of the property from £1,000 to £3,000; please obtain quotations.



French Drain



Running gully

Please see the Outside Areas Section of this report.

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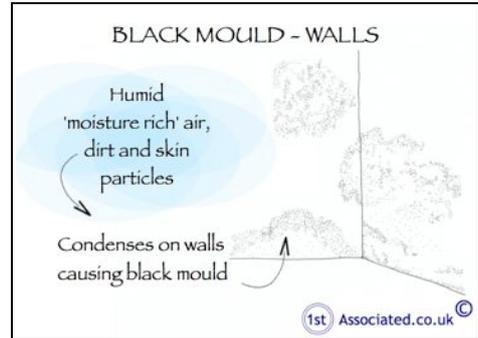
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4.0) Black Mould and Condensation

There is potential for black mould and condensation due to lack of air within the property and extract ventilation. When we went around the property we were surprised to see some areas, which seems to be being affected by condensation and black mould. This normally occurs due to lack of air circulation and extraction of humid air within a property.



Black mould



Blocked high level air brick



Paint is coming off which is a sign of condensation



Black mould on window sill

We would always start by adding large humidity controlled extract fans to the kitchen and bathroom areas and see if this improves things. It could be just the way the existing family is living in the property, i.e. drying washing on radiators without ventilating the house, or heating the house without airing it by occasionally opening windows.

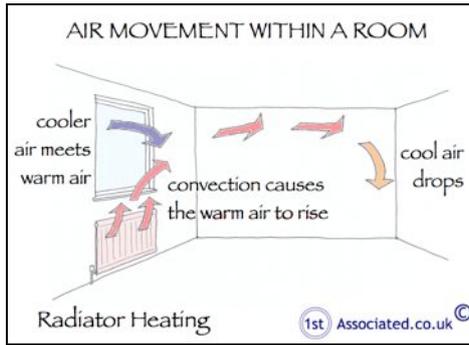
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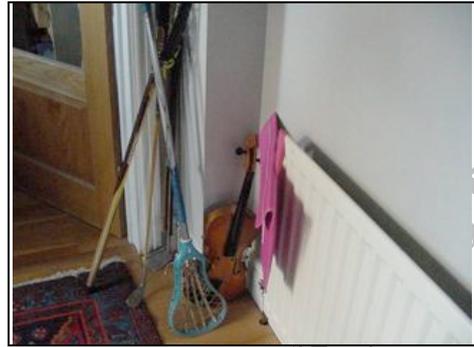
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Other factors that affect air movement in a house is having windows without trickle vents and internal radiators.



Radiators on outside walls give good air flow



Internal radiator

ACTION REQUIRED: Add large humidity controlled extract fans to kitchen, bathroom and any areas used for drying clothes.

ANTICIPATED COST: Costs in the region of £150 to £200 per extract fan; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness Section of this report.

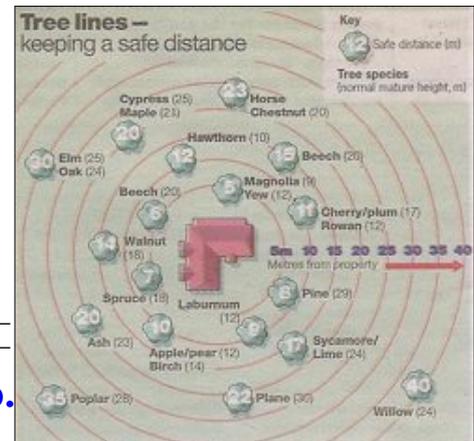
5.0) Trees

There are overgrown conifers in the rear garden. Ironically at one time conifers seemed to be the answer to everything for a quick growing tree, but are now said to be one of the biggest reasons for neighbourhood disputes.



Over grown conifers

ACTION REQUIRED: Have a chat with the neighbours you share the conifer fence with prior to committing to purchase the property to see if they are happy and amenable for them being maintained and reduced in size occasionally.



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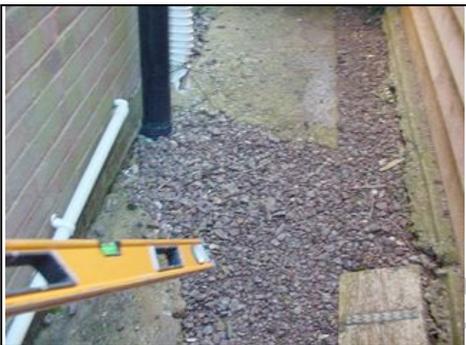
One of the main problems with having trees surrounding a property that are too high is that they reduce the light. Luckily conifer trees have a relatively small root ball for their height and they are unlikely to affect your foundation.

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.

Trees influencing distance to a house

6.0) Drains

On the left hand side, there looks to have been some work to the drains. We assume these are new, added in or altered drains when the extension was carried out on the left hand side. This can often lead to an awkward drainage run that can block from time to time.



Alterations to the drains



Rear right hand drain



Left hand side drain

ACTION REQUIRED: Awkward drains following an extension we believe in this instance have to be considered as a characteristic of the property due to the extension and limited space available on the left hand side to put the drainage run in.

Please see the Drainage Section of this Report.

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7.0) Awkward high level drainage run

An awkward high level drainage run has been incorporated in with the extension to form the en-suite bathroom and there also looks to have been alterations to the original bathroom drainage. Only time and usage will tell as to whether this works satisfactorily. We noted a rodding eye to one end of the high level drainage which will help should it become blocked.



View of left side of property with awkward horizontal drainage run



Awkward soil and vent pipe with rodding eye

ACTION REQUIRED: Use the bathroom and en-suite and see if it works. We ran the taps in this area for about 15 minutes without any build up or back up but this is completely different to actually utilising the bathrooms.

Please see the Gutters and Downpipes and Drainage Sections of this report.

8.0) Services

8.1) Electrics

The electrics look slightly dated; probably original, though it may have been updated when there were alterations. There are better fuseboards



Fuse board

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are available. If you have young children in the house we would look to be changing it.

ACTION REQUIRED: If you have young children or elderly people in the house we recommend changing the fuseboard as soon as possible.

You may also wish to add extra electrical points.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £250 to £300 for a new fuseboard; please obtain quotations.

8.2) Elephant's Trunk Vent System

There are some awkward details that have come about due to the extension, one of these is the extraction which has resulted in this Elephant's trunk vent in the roof, which we are not certain is working that successfully.



Elephant's trunk vent system

ACTION REQUIRED: We would look at extracting directly outside the property with large humidity controlled extract fans going through the walls. This would avoid any problems of the Elephant's trunk extraction leaking condensation into the roof and causing mould and deterioration.

ANTICIPATED COST: As mentioned, costs in the region of £150 to £200 per extract fan; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

8.3) Ceiling lights

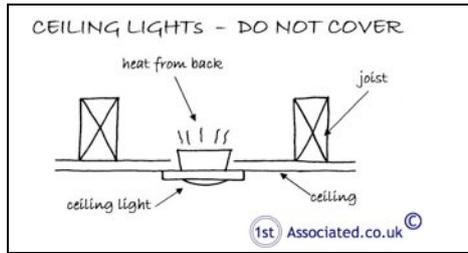
There are older style ceiling lights, which can get warm and overheat.

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Ceiling lights



Old style ceiling lights

ACTION REQUIRED: Replace with modern ceiling lights.

ANTICIPATED COST: Couple of hundred pounds; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

The Ugly

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

There is nothing, which we feel falls within this section providing you are happy with the characteristics and associated costs of the property which we have mentioned throughout the report and that you are happy to carry out the work and the investigations that we have recommended.

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Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Maintenance

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

Services

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

Electrics

The electrics are dated and ideally we would recommend replacement of at least the fuseboard. You may also wish to upgrade the socket points and the system in general.

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.

Heating

The heating was on during the course of the survey and the house was pleasantly warm, however we would advise that cross-wall construction can sometimes be considered as a colder construction as the front and rear of the house are effectively cladding panels, although in this case you do have brickwork.

We would also add that during the Era this type of property was built (1960's/1970's) we had little insulation compared with today.

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We would recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

Drainage

As mentioned you have awkward drainage due to the way the property has been extended and altered; it was running freely at the time of our survey with no build up or back up when we ran the taps for 15 minutes.

Whilst we have lifted the manhole covers to the rear and left hand side the only true way to find out the condition of the drains is to have a closed circuit TV camera report to establish the condition of the drains. In this age of property there have often been leaks over the years.

Water Supply

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

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

DIY/Handyman Type Work

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

Purchase Price

We have not been asked to comment upon the purchase price in this instance, we have however referred you to sources of general information on the

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housing market within the Information on the Property Market Section, which can be found in the Appendices at the end of the Report.

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Estimates of Building Costs

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

If you obtain builders estimates that vary widely, we would advise the work is probably difficult or open to various interpretations and we would recommend 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:

If extending the property is essential to you purchasing the property we would suggest that you carry out negotiations with the Planners before you legally commit to purchase. We would be more than happy to carry this out for you if you advise us in writing if you wish us to look into this matter further.

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

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

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

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MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT

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

TENURE – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)

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

ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

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

SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR

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

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS

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

OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION

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

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



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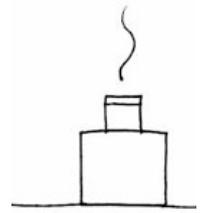
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EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS



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

There is one chimney to this property located centrally (all directions given as you face the property).

Chimney One - Centre

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

There is an aerial attached to the chimney which we do not recommend as it can cut into the brickwork rather like a cheese wire cutting into cheese. Given the height of the aerial (and next door's aerial) we wonder whether there is a problem with getting a reception in this area.



Central Chimney



Tall aerials

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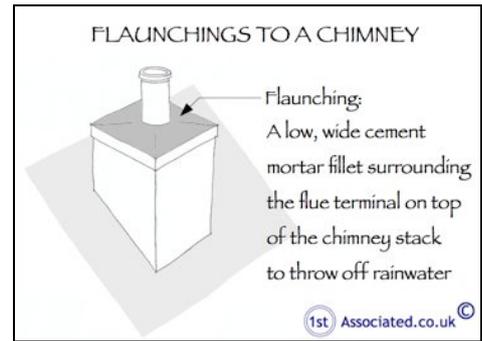
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Unfortunately we were unable to see the top of the chimney properly known as the flaunching, we therefore cannot comment upon them.

ACTION REQUIRED: Periodically inspect the chimney.



Flaunching

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.

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

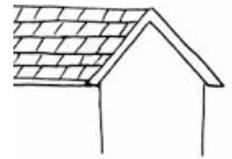
Please also see Chimney Breasts, Flues and Fireplaces Section of this Report.

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ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS

The Roof Coverings and Underlayers section considers the condition of the outer covering of the roof. Such coverings usually endure the extremes of climate and temperatures. They are susceptible to deterioration, which ultimately leads to water penetration. Dependent upon the age of your property and the type of construction a protective underlayer may or may not be present, please read on:

We will consider the roofs in five areas: main roof, front pitched garage/study roof, front porch roof, rear polycarbonate roof and rear pitched extension roof.

Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad with a concrete tile and from ground level this looks in average condition considering the roofs age type and style. There is a light covering of moss, which often occurs on concrete tiles. This can ultimately lead to a problem where moss/lichens fall into the gutter and blocks it. If it does get to this stage we recommend you brush it with a soft brush in the summer months (we would not recommend chemicals).

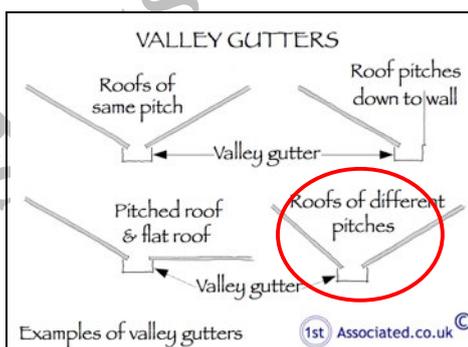


Main Roof

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

Valley gutters

The property has valley gutters, which are often problematic areas as they are often difficult to access.



Valley gutters



Concrete fillets have come out of the valley gutters

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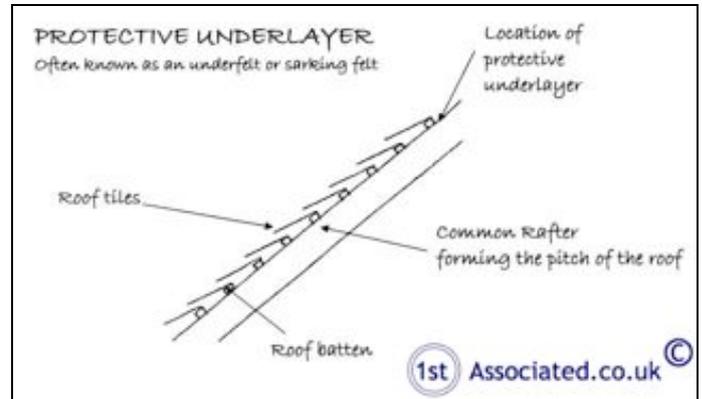
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ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

From the 1940s onwards felts were used underneath tiles/slates to stop wind damage and water penetration, these in more recent years have been replaced with plastic equivalents. These are commonly known as underfelts but now the name is not really appropriate, as felt is not the only material used.



Protective underlayer

When we inspected the loft space we found a Hessian base Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s. We generally found it to be in average condition, with damage in some areas, which is what we typically find.



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

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Low Level Roofs – Single Storey Roofs

Front pitched garage/study roof

This is pitched clad in the same concrete tiles as the main roof and is in average condition for its age, type and style.

ACTION REQUIRED: Periodic inspection.



Garage/study roof

Front Porch Roof

There is a small pitched porch roof to the front, clad with a small concrete tile. The sides of the porch are painted timber.

ACTION REQUIRED: Periodic inspection and redecoration of timber.



Front porch roof

Low level roofs

Interestingly, both of the low level pitched roofs are gutterless. We much prefer to see gutters even on the smallest of roofs.

Rear pitched kitchen extension roof

This is pitched and clad in the same concrete tiles as the main roof and is in average condition for its age, type and style.

ACTION REQUIRED: Periodic inspection.



Rear kitchen extension roof

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Rear Lean-to Polycarbonate Roof

There is a shallow pitched lean-to polycarbonate roof to the rear of the property. It has moss sitting on it.



Polycarbonate roof



Poor flashing

Assuming we are accepting this is a below average quality rear lean-to it is the join where it meets the roof that is probably the problem area as this is likely to leak when it rains.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to decide whether you want the lean-to or not. In the short term we would put a product such as Flashband along the join with the wall.

Flashband Defined

Flashband is a sticky backed felt which is best used for temporary repairs only.

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

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

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ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT

(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

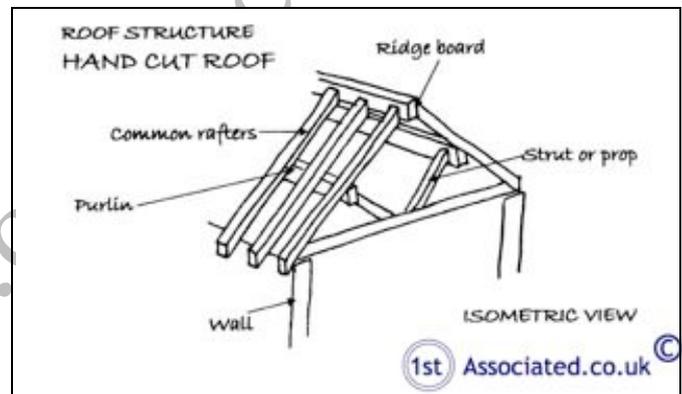
The roof structure or framework must be built in a manner which is able to give adequate strength to carry its own weight together with that of the roof covering discussed in the previous section and any superimposed loads such as snow, wind, foot traffic etc.

Roof Access

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing. There is a loft ladder, electric light and secured floorboards. The loft perimeter has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly.

Roof Structure

This type of roof structure has what is known as a cut timber roof. This is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects; however it is in line with what we typically see.



Cut timber roof

Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

- 1) Serious active woodworm
- 2) Structurally significant defects
- 3) Structurally significant dry rot
- 4) Structurally significant wet rot

Our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof, the insulation and stored item.



For some reason the purlin has been cut

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What we could see was generally found to be in average condition for its age, type and style. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden. We did note that the purlin has been cut.

Purlin defined

A horizontal timber that gives support to the common rafters. The common rafters are the timbers that form the pitch of the roof that the roof covering ultimately sits on via battens, etc.

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

Water Tanks

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

Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

Electrical Cables

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

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

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

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GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

Gutters and Downpipes

The property has a mixture of painted aluminium and plastic downpipes and gutters. As mentioned earlier some of the low level roofs do not have gutters.

Painted aluminium

It is fairly unusual these days to have painted aluminium and you may wish to look at replacing these.

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



Downpipe



Leaking downpipe



Leaking gutter

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.



Soil and vent pipe



Soil and vent pipe – awkward configuration

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary about the awkward high level drainage, which has been added as part of the extension into the en-suite bathroom and bathroom on the left side of the property.

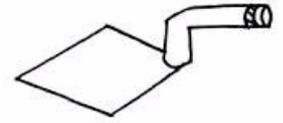
Finally, gutters and downpipes and soil and vent pipes have been inspected from ground level. As it was not raining at the time of the inspection it is not possible to confirm 100 per cent that the rainwater installation is free from blockage, leakage etc. or that it is capable of coping with long periods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

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WALLS

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

The walls are constructed of stretcher bond brickwork with some vertical tiling.

Cross wall construction

We believe this to be originally a cross wall construction which was a 1970s/1980s way of having a cheap construction. The weight tends to be taken on the side walls as opposed to a traditional property where the weight is taken on all the walls.



Cross wall construction - structural wall on the side of the property with tile cladding to the front

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

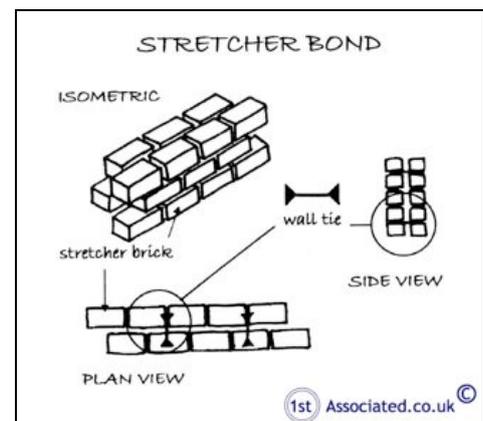
Brickwork

The property is built in Stretcher bond brickwork.

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



Weathering to pointing



Stretcher Bond brickwork

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Cavity Walls

Cavity walls were first used in Victorian times. It originates from solid walls not always being waterproof against driving rain and not providing a good degree of thermal insulation. The design of cavity walls makes them relatively unstable and they depend upon the wall ties.

Wall Ties

Walls of cavity construction should incorporate ties to hold together the inner and outer leaves of masonry. We would typically see horizontal cracking where there are problems. In this case we have not noted any cracking however wall tie failure is a progressive problem. We would add as there is no access to the cavity it has not been inspected and we cannot comment on the presence or condition of wall ties. As such we cannot be hundred per cent certain with regard to this problem unless we open up the structure.

From what we can see externally it appears not to have any problems.

We usually look for horizontal lines where there is older style stretcher bond brickwork, such as this, to see if the wall ties are rusting and forcing open the brickwork. In this instance we could not see horizontal lines.

Pointing

The pointing is of a sandy mix. We did note some weathering to the pointing.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would suggest you inspect the pointing in the summer of 2015 and ad hoc repointing is worth carrying out when you carry out the repair work to the roof verge.



Weathering to pointing

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Vertical Tiling

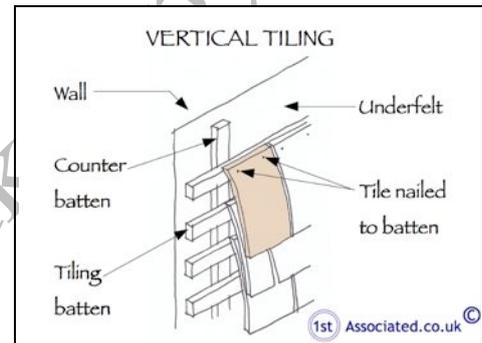
There is vertical tiling to the front of the property and what looks to be in-fill brickwork to the rear (as the brickwork is in a different colour). This is fairly common with cross-wall construction. The vertical tiling is effectively cladding.



Vertical tiling to front

What is behind the vertical tiling?

The main question we ask where there is vertical tiling is what is behind it? These areas can lack insulation and sometimes they do create a colder property than you would expect. We are aware of people who have removed the vertical tiling adding insulation and replacing them,



Vertical tiling

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

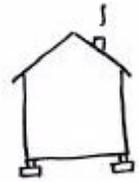
Our comments have been based upon how the brickwork / vertical tiling / plaster has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork / vertical tiling / plaster would be if it were opened up for this age, style and type of construction. We are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

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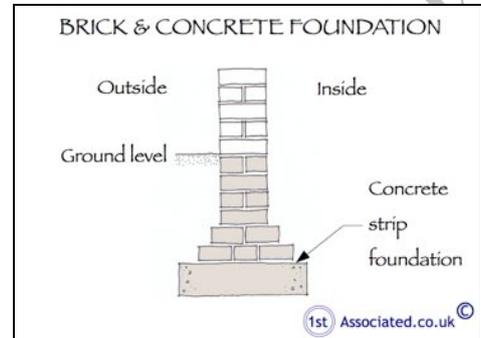


FOUNDATIONS

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

Foundations

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



Strip concrete foundation

Suspended Floor

We do note that you have a suspended floor which means there may be clay in the area.

Clay defined

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 water course, 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.

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

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

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

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

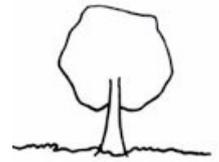
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TREES

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

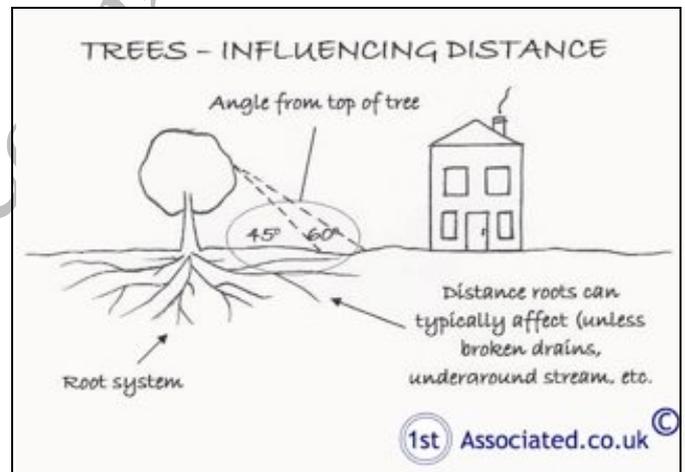
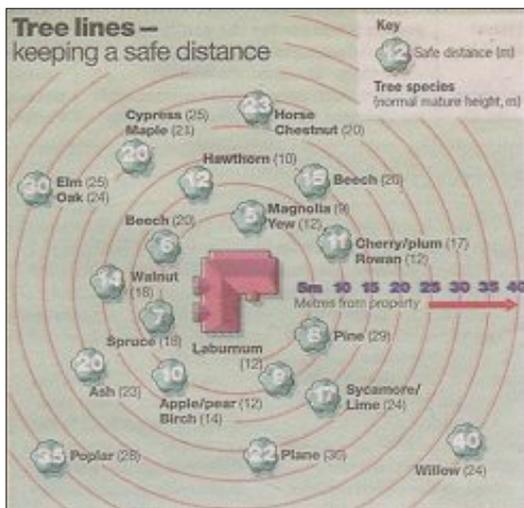
There are no trees within what we would term as influencing distance but you do need to speak to your insurance company as they may have a different interpretation for insurance reasons.



Conifers to rear of property

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary regarding conifers.

Large conifer bushes



Influencing distance of trees to a property

Influencing Distance Defined

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

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

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Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

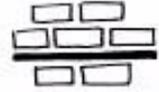
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DAMP PROOF COURSE

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

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, we believe it has been built in as work proceeded. There is a slight thickening of the mortar joint in some areas which we believe is where the DPC is.



Thickening of mortar joint
near air brick

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.

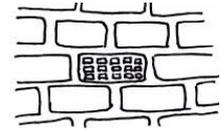
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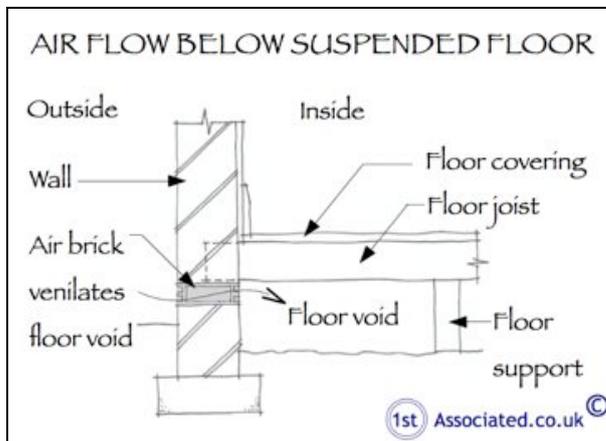
AIRBRICKS



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 could see some air bricks which indicate a suspended floor, which could be concrete or timber. Unfortunately we were unable to find any exposed areas of flooring to check.



Suspended floor



Air brick

Suspended timber floors were common before the War years and in more recent years have only really been used where there has been difficult ground conditions, such as there being an element of clay in the soil, which may be why it has been used in this instance.

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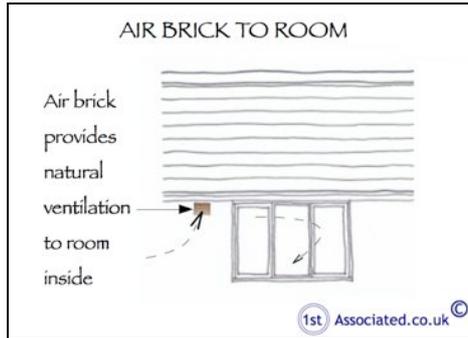
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High Level Air Bricks

In the 1950's and 1960's it was relatively common to have high level vents in rooms to help reduce condensation. These vents were then carried on in some cases to later design. We can see a high level vent in this instance to the left side of the property, which has been blocked up. We are a great believer in good ventilation in modern properties as we are now insulating to such a high level and also heating to such a high level we need air movement to minimise condensation.



High level airbrick



Blocked high level airbrick

ACTION REQUIRED: Add large humidity controlled extract fans, as described elsewhere within this report. If you still get condensation we would then add/open up high level air bricks.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary about black mould.

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 walls/floor, unless we have specifically stated so in this section.

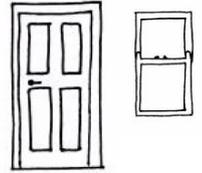
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FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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

Fascias and Soffits

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

The lean-to to the rear is generally in a poor condition, including the fascias and soffits.

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



Vent in fascias and soffits

Windows and Doors

The property has plastic double glazed windows; some with and some without trickle vents, which generally look to be of average quality.



Window with trickle vent with vent visible in the soffit



Windows without trickle vents

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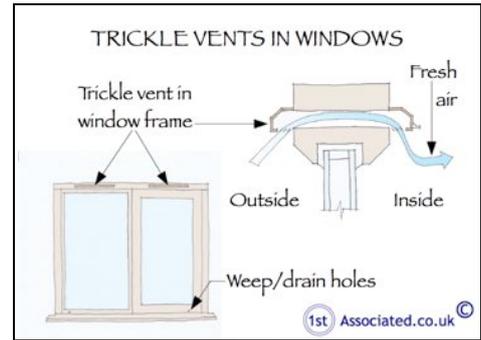
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Trickle Vents Defined

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



Trickle vents

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

Transferable Guarantees

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

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.

Ideally the fascias and soffits would benefit from redecoration in the summer of XXXX. We would also suggest that you consider adding a vented soffit to help with air circulation in the roof space and also the lean-to needs repair and redecoration.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

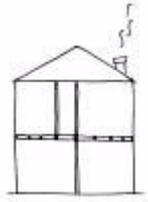
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INTERNAL



CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be plasterboard or there may be proprietary boarding as this was fairly common in this era of property.

Plasterboard Defined

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

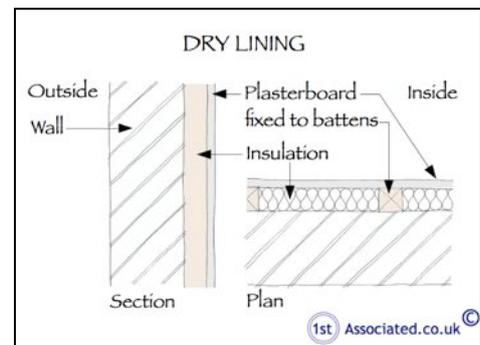
Internal Walls and Partitions

These are, we believe a mixture of solid and studwork construction. It is of course impossible to determine the construction without opening up the walls and we have therefore taken an educated guess that they are blockwork with a plasterboard finish.

Perimeter Walls

We believe the walls are dry lined, although we cannot be 100% certain of the wall construction without opening them up which goes beyond the scope of this report.

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



Dry lining

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

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

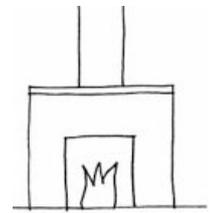
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CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES

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

The chimney breasts are located to the centre of the building (all directions given as you face the front of the property), visible within the roof space where we could see it is rendered, which was a system used years ago as a secondary defence in case hot ash, etc, escaped from the fire. The chimney now looks to have been lined as we can see a flue at roof level.

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.

Any chimneys you do intend to use should be swept and a check should be carried out that a lining is in place.

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

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

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

Please also see the Chimney Stacks, Flues Section of this report.

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FLOORS

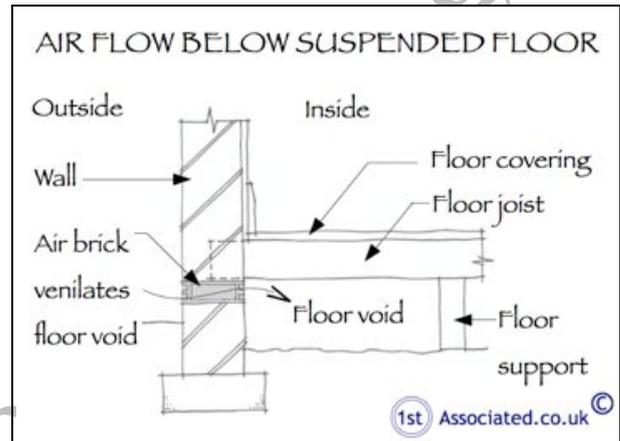


Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.

Ground Floor

The floors are suspended floors. We were unable to identify whether they were timber or concrete.

ACTION REQUIRED:
Further investigation needed.



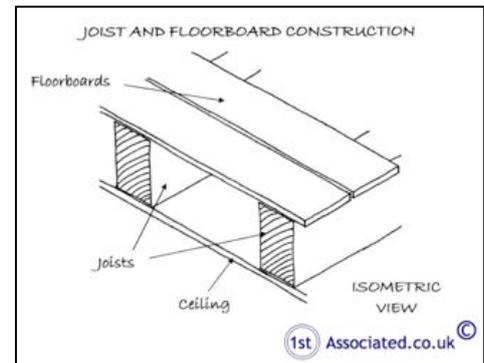
Suspended floor

First Floor

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

Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



Joist and floorboards

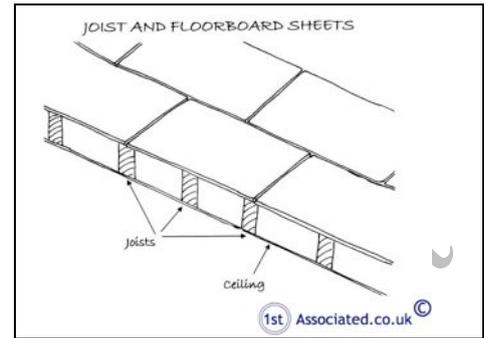
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To the newer extension we believe the floors are joist and floorboard sheets.



Joist and floorboard sheets

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

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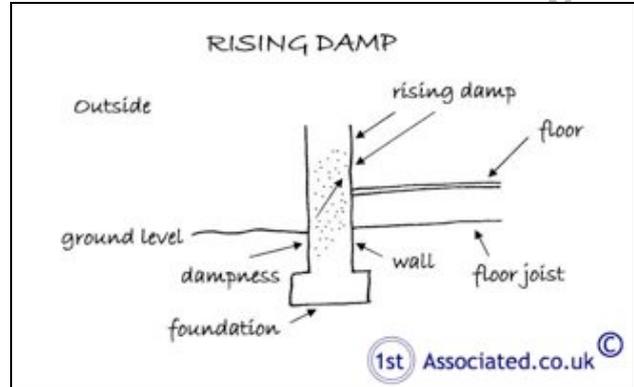


DAMPNESS

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

Rising Damp

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

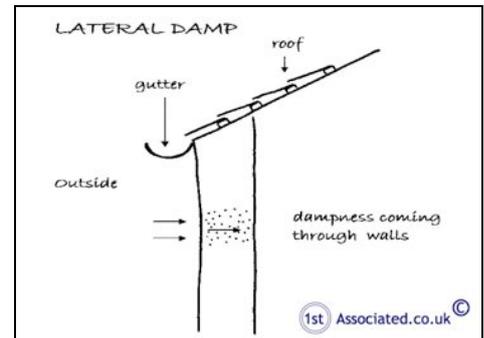


Rising damp

A visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we were unable to get any readings due to the walls being dry lined.

Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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



Lateral damp

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Again, we were unable to get resistance damp meter readings as the walls were dry lined.



Testing for lateral dampness

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Condensation

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

At the time of the inspection there were signs of condensation in the property, for example the paint coming off to the window sill, which is often a sign of water ponding on the window sills.



Paint is coming off which is a sign of condensation

Condensation 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.

Black mould

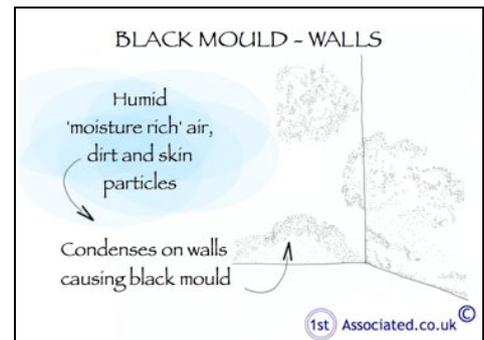
Minor black mould was found to the windows. There seems to be a problem in the property with condensation, which is



Black mould on window sill

creating minor black mould. It may be how the present occupiers are living in the property. We have suggested some ways to help improve the ventilation in the property which should help reduce condensation.

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



Black mould

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Extract fans in kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas

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

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

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

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INTERNAL JOINERY



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

Doors

The property has a mixture of older and newer style doors, together with some older style glazed doors, which you may wish to replace as they are unlikely to have safety glass.



Painted hollow core door



Older style glazed door

Staircase

We were unable to examine the underside of the stair timbers due to it being lined, which precluded our inspection, so we cannot comment further upon the stair structure. We can, however, say that the lining gives a resistance to the spread of fire if such circumstances were to occur.

Kitchen

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

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

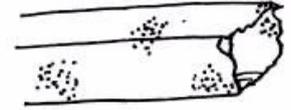
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TIMBER DEFECTS



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

Dry Rot

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

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

Wet Rot

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

We have not visually seen any signs of significant wet rot during the course of our inspection. However, there may be some to the rear lean-to.

Again, we would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had a limited view of the roof.

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Woodworm



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

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the roof we found no obvious visual signs of significant woodworm activity or indeed past signs of significant woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage. In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection is usually restricted by insulation covering some of the timbers and general stored items in the roof, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings.

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

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

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

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INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

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

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

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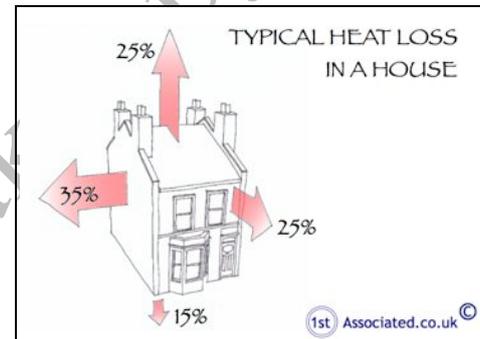
THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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

Roofs

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 300mm. In this instance there was approximately 300mm.



Typical heat loss

Walls

The property has a stretcher bond construction. In this age of property there is usually insulation but we cannot be 100% certain without opening up the walls.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Adviser to check and confirm if there is insulation within the walls and whether it was installed originally or not.

Windows

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

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

Summary

Assuming the above is correct, this property is average compared with what we typically see. Please note we have not seen the Energy Performance Certificate. The problem we consider here is the condensation issues.

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

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

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

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

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

HIPs

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

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

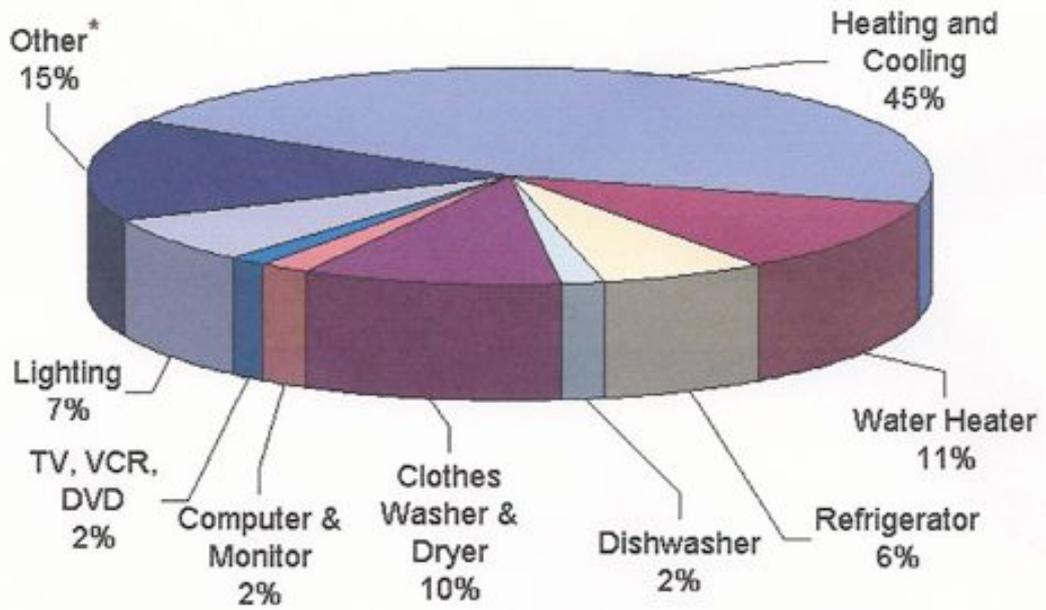
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What does my energy bill pay for?



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

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OTHER MATTERS

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

Security

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



Alarm box to front of property

We did not have to deal with the security system as someone was in the property at the time of the survey so we cannot comment further.

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

Fire / Smoke Alarms

Some smoke detectors were noted we believe these to be battery operated. The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply.

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

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Insurance

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

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

Asbestos

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

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

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

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

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SERVICES

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

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

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

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The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the garage. The fuse board looked to be from the 1980's/1990's and we believe better are now available and we would be surprised that it was not changed when the extension was carried out.



Fuse Board

ACTION REQUIRED: If there is information from the current owners as to when the fuseboard was changed and this needs to be taken into consideration.

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.

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

As the property is changing occupancy an Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) test and report and any recommendations should be carried out by a NICEIC registered, or equivalent, approved electrical contractor or similarly approved.



Earth test

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.

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

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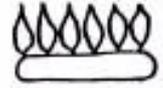
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GAS



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

We believe that the property has mains gas. All gas appliances, pipework and flues should be the subject of an annual service by a competent engineer, i.e., a member of Gas Safe; works to gas appliances etc., by unqualified personnel is illegal. Unless evidence can be provided to confirm that there has been annual servicing we would recommend that you commission such a service prior to use to ensure safe and efficient operation.

ACTION REQUIRED: As a matter of course it is recommended that the entire gas installation is inspected and made good, as necessary, by a Gas Safe registered contractor. Thereafter the installation should be serviced annually.

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PLUMBING AND HEATING



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

Water Supply

The controlling stopcock was not located. It is important that its presence is established in case of bursts or leaks. The stopcock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ask the owners or Estate Agent to show you where it is, although we would not expect most Estate Agents to know where it is.

Water Pressure

When the taps were run to carry out the drainage test we checked the pressure literally by putting a finger over the tap and this seemed average. The Water Board have to guarantee a certain pressure of water to ensure that things like boilers, particularly the instantaneous ones have a constant supply of pressured water (they would blow up if they didn't!).

Cold Water Cistern

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

Hot Water Cylinder

There is a hot water cylinder located in the airing cupboard. It is factory insulated, which indicates that it is relatively new (in this case we mean in the last 30 years). This cylinder will therefore have a good thermal efficiency, although not as good as the more modern hot water cylinders.

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Plumbing

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

Heating

The Baxi boiler was located in the garage.

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

The heating was on during the course of the survey and it was pleasantly warm.

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

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

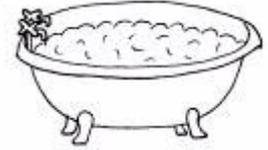
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BATHROOM



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

Bathroom

The property has a three piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin and WC, which looks fairly new, with some day-to-day wear and tear, as one would expect. Please see our comments with regard to the soil and vent pipe configuration.

En-Suite Shower Room

The en-suite shower room is hidden behind the cupboard units in the front master bedroom. Again, please see our comments with regard to the soil and vent pipe.

We would comment with regard to both areas that we would add large humidity controlled extract fans.

Elephant's Trunk Ventilation System

We can see the Elephant trunk ventilation system travelling through the roof. We would much prefer to see this going directly out through the wall, as there is the chance of condensation occurring within the roof space, as roof spaces can be cold or warm areas depending on the time of year.



Elephant's trunk vent system

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

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

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MAIN DRAINS

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

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

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

Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We have identified two inspection chambers / manholes.

Manholes Defined

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

Inspection Chamber / Manhole One, located to the left hand 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 brick built.

It looks like there have been alterations to this drain.



Left hand drain

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

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Inspection Chamber / Manhole Two, located to rear right

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

From what we could see it concrete built.

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.



Rear right drain

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. It is likely to be into a shared drain.

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.

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

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OUTSIDE AREAS

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

GARAGES/ OUTBUILDINGS / PARKING



There is a built in garage to the front left of the property. There is also off road parking.

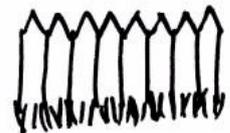


Garage



Inside garage

EXTERNAL AREAS



Front Garden

There is a reasonable sized front garden with a fall. We were pleased to see a running gulley to stop water discharging onto the road, which you can be liable for.



Front garden and driveway

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Rear Garden

There is a good sized garden to the rear which is on a slight sloping site.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary with regard to adding a French drain/running gully.



Rear Garden

Trees

There are some conifers in the rear garden and there looks to be an apple tree.

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

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

Finally, whilst we note the boundaries, these may not be the legal boundaries. Your Legal Advisor should make further enquiries on this point and advise you of your potential liability with regard to any shared structures, boundary walls and fences.

Neighbours

Left Hand Neighbours

No-one answered the door when we knocked.

Right Hand Neighbours

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No-one answered the door when we knocked.

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) Cavity wall insulation and cavity wall tie repairs.
 - iv) Double glazing or replacement windows.
 - v) Roof and similar renewals.
 - vi) Central heating installation.
 - vii) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
 - viii) Removal of any walls in part or whole.
 - ix) Removal of any chimneys in part or whole.
 - x) Have there been any structural problems referred to insurance companies, any insurance claims, monitoring or underpinning, etc.
 - xi) Drainage repairs
 - xii) 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.

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- h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- i) General development proposals in the locality.
- j) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.
- 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.

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

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

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

Please do not hesitate to contact us on

For and on Behalf of
XXXX

This Report is dated: XXX

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REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses
Published by Estates Gazette Limited

Life expectancies of building components
*Published by Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and
Building Research Establishment*

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

House Builders Bible
By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

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LIMITATIONS

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

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

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

ENGLISH LAW

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

SOLE USE

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

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 early spring day 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.

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (and amendments) empowers local councils and the police to issue community protection notices to require someone to control or prevent the growth of Japanese knotweed which is rather an invasive non-native plant capable of causing serious problems to communities. We still believe that prevention is better than cure. Full checks should be carried out.

INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been limited as:

- 1) We did not have a full view of the roof due to the insulation covering the ceiling joists and general configuration of the roof.
- 2) We did not open up the walls as we could not see a way of doing this without causing damage.
- 3) We did not open up the ground floor or the first floor as we could not see a way to do it without causing damage.
- 4) We did not have the benefit of talking to the owners, however their son was at the property during the survey.
- 5) We didn't have the benefit of meeting you at the property to talk about your specific requirements.

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BUILDING INSURANCE

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

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

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

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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

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APPENDICES

1. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
2. Information on the Property Market
3. French Drain Article

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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, 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.

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French Drain

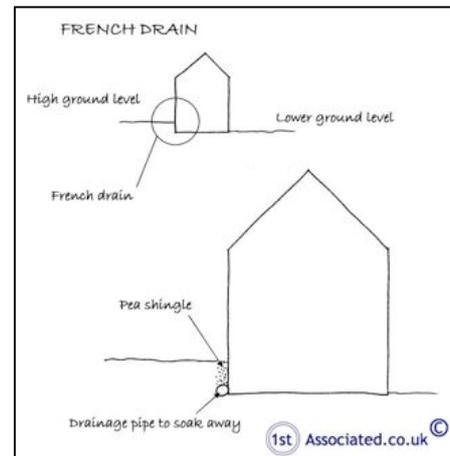
Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

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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