

JOB REFERENCE: XXXXX

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

XXXX
Henlow
Bedfordshire
SG16 XXX



FOR

Mrs X

Prepared by:

XXXXXX

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS



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INTRODUCTION

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

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. Again we would stress that the purchase of a house is usually one of the largest financial outlays made (particularly when you consider the interest you pay as well).

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

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

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

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REPORT FORMAT

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

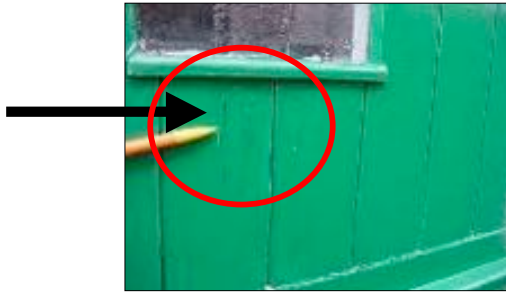
GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

This has been given in the survey where it is considered it will aid understanding of the issues, or be of interest. This is shown in "italics" for clarity.

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

Throughout the Report, we have endeavoured to define any technical terms used. This is shown in "Courier New" typeface for clarity.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



We utilise photographs and sketches to illustrate issues or features. In some photographs a pencil, pen, circle or arrow has been used to highlight a specific area. The sketches are not 100% technically accurate; we certainly would not expect you to carry out work based upon the sketches alone.

ORIENTATION

Any reference to left or right is taken from the front of the property, including observations to the rear, which you may not be able to physically see from the front of the property.

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We have used the term **ACTION REQUIRED** where we believe that there are items that you should carry out action upon or negotiate upon prior to purchasing the property.

Where a problem is identified, we will do our best to offer a solution. However, with most building issues, there are usually many ways to resolve them dependent upon cost, time available and the length of time you wish the repair/replacement to last.

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SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a large detached two storey house with rooms in the roof and a conservatory to the rear.

There is off road parking and a treble garage to the front, with access to the rear, which is a large garden with views and a good sized patio area.

We believe that the property was built in the last 10 years by Bryant Homes. Your legal advisor should check if it has an NHBC Warranty remaining on it.

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:

- | | |
|------|--|
| 2000 | Broadband becomes widely available giving constant connection to the internet |
| 2003 | England score a last minute drop goal beating Australia in the Rugby World Cup |
| 2004 | The Queen Mary II ship is christened by Queen Elizabeth II |
| 2008 | Lewis Hamilton becomes the youngest Formula One World Champion |
| 2009 | A great discovery, the Shrewsbury Hoard containing 10,000 Roman coins is found |
| 2011 | A day to remember, Prince William marries Catherine Middleton in Westminster Abbey |

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EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view



Rear view



Right view and parking
Aerial view – 360 photo



Rear garden



Street view

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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 hall and staircase
- 2) Cloakroom
- 3) Through lounge giving access to the conservatory to left
- 4) Conservatory to rear
- 5) Reception room front right
- 6) Kitchen / breakfast / dining area to rear
- 7) Utility to rear

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Bedroom to front left
- 2) Bedroom to front middle
- 3) Bedroom to front right with en-suite shower room
- 4) Bedroom to rear left with en-suite shower room
- 5) Bathroom

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Second Floor

The second floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Office to right left
- 2) Landing to middle, giving access to roof space
- 3) Shower room to rear middle
- 4) Bedroom to right

Outside Areas

There are good sized gardens to the front and rear.

There is off road parking and a treble garage to the front.

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).

Ground Floor



Reception room front right



Through lounge



Conservatory



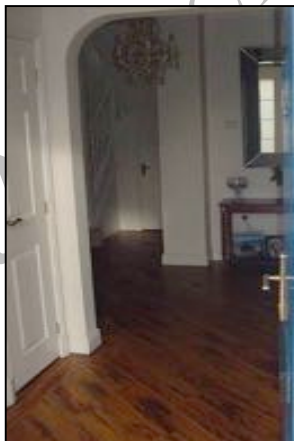
Kitchen / diner



Kitchen / diner



Utility room



Entrance hallway

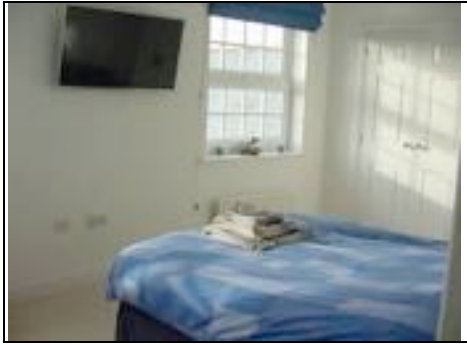


Cloakroom

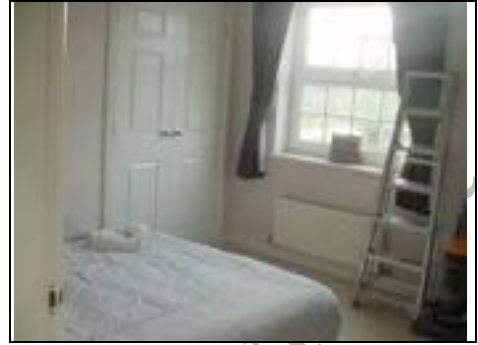
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First Floor



Bedroom front left



Bedroom front middle



Master bedroom



Master bedroom
en-suite shower room



Walk in wardrobe



Bedroom rear left



En-suite shower room
to rear left bedroom



Bathroom

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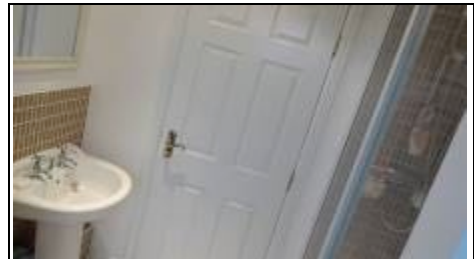
Second Floor



Office



Bedroom



Shower room

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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Chimneys:	Two brick chimneys
Main Roof:	Hipped, pitched, clad with slate Dormer windows; lead (two to front, three to rear)
Roof Structure:	Modern cut timber roof
Conservatory Roof:	Double glazed
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Internal (assumed)
Walls:	Stretcher Bond Brickwork (assumed)
Fascias and Soffits:	Plastic, mock rafter feet (assumed)
Windows and Doors:	Plastic double glazed windows with trickle vents

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Internal

Ceilings:	Plasterboard or proprietary boarding (assumed)
Walls: Perimeter:	Mixture of solid and dry lined (assumed)
Internal:	Mixture of solid and studwork (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Beam and block, concrete with airbricks (assumed)
First Floor:	Timber on to joist hangers (assumed)
Second Floor:	Timber on to joist hangers (assumed)

Services

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

Heating: There is a wall mounted Worcester boiler located in the kitchen.

Electrics: The electrics are 1990's/2000's and are located in the hallway

Gas: Not viewed

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

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

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

The Good

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

1.0) The house has potential.

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

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The Bad

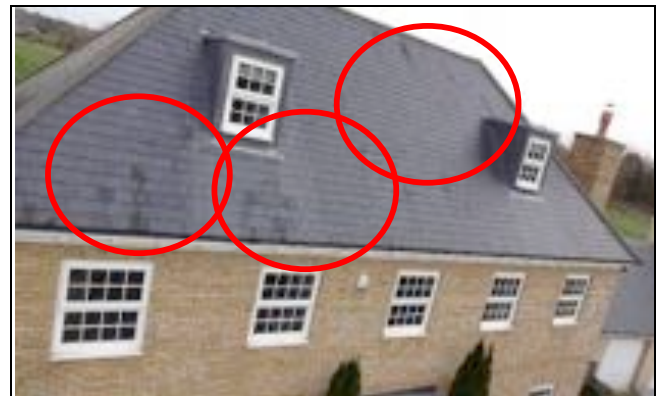
Problems / issues raised in the 'bad' section are usually solvable, but often need negotiation upon. However, a large number of them may sometimes put us off the property.

1.0) Undulating slates on high level roof – recommend a close inspection

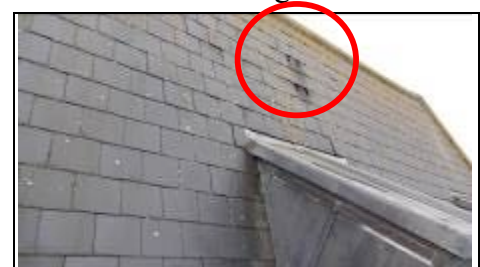
We noted an above average undulation on the slates to the main roof. There are signs of water damage inside on the rafters although this is very minor and minor staining to the top floor ceiling. Whilst we appreciate slate is a natural material and have different qualities they do look to be some darker slates which look to be deteriorating more quickly than their neighbours. It is possible there may be a defective number of slates in the batch that inadvertently have been used on the roof which is why we are recommending a roofer looks at roof level at the roof.



Undulation / lifting of slates which due to the height of the property and wind velocity could lead to lifting slates



Darker deteriorating slates?



Vent

We noted a vent at high level, which may be allowing some wind driven rain in.

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It looks like there is minor staining to the timbers indicating that some dampness is getting in. There is an outside chance it is the way the grain is but it did look to us like it was dampness staining.



Dampness to timbers

Prevailing wind

On the day of the survey there was a very strong wind in the area and it may be that the property is situated so it catches this strong wind. From time to time this will cause a few problems with wind driven rain; you will have to consider this a characteristic of living in this location.

ACTION REQUIRED: You will have to monitor the condition of the roof to see if any slates lift any further.

We would suggest that you have a roofer have a close look at the property, the sooner the better. We would not normally say this on a new roof but we would be happier if a closer inspection was carried out.

ANTICIPATED COST: A roofer to spend half a day to one day on the roof needing full high level access £200 - £500. You should ensure the roofer takes close up photographs of the slate roof particularly in the hidden areas above the dormers; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

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2.0) Dormer roof allowing water in

We can see that the front right dormer roof (all directions given as you face the property) is allowing some water in. There does seem to be a crack in the window sill board. We would not have expected so much rain in because of this however if it is in a high prevailing wind area as mentioned this could be the reason. The dormer looks to be clad with lead which is usually a good material for dormers but this may not have been lapped correctly; we simply cannot see from ground level. It is also possible there may be a defect in the slates around the dormer that is allowing wind driven rain in.



Problem with slates around front right dormer
Aerial view – 360 photo



Close up of front right dormer
Aerial view – 360 photo



Dampness coming through around front dormer



Dampness to skirting to base of front right dormer

ACTION REQUIRED: When the roofer is on the roof he needs to check the dormers particularly closely.

ANTICIPATED COST: Please see above.

Please see the Roofs Section of this Report.

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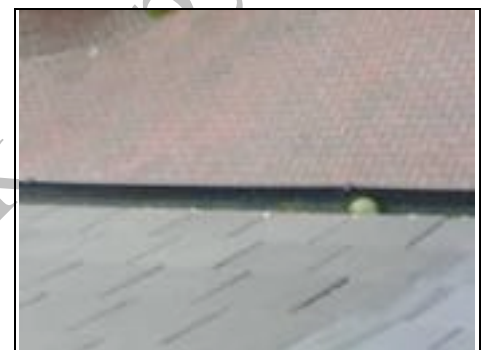
3.0) Guttering

The guttering has become uncoupled at high level to the front left side. It may be that there are other areas which have become uncoupled/not working properly. We can also see grass growing out of some gutters together with an unusually high number of tennis balls! (we assume for the dog). We would not normally mention this but it is a high level gutter.



Gap in guttering to front

Whilst we are on the subject of gutters and downpipes, the downpipes feed directly into the ground which is a practice we are not keen on, and we much prefer to see a gulley as without a gulley where there is a blockage it can cause a back-up of water in the downpipes which can ultimately come out of the joints and allow dampness to get into the walls.



Tennis ball in gutter

ACTION REQUIRED: Clear and clean gutters, check joints and ensure they are falling towards the downpipes.

ANTICIPATED COST: A few hundred pounds as high level guttering. Ideally this needs to be done as soon as possible particularly before the winter sets in; please obtain quotations.



Downpipe going directly into the ground

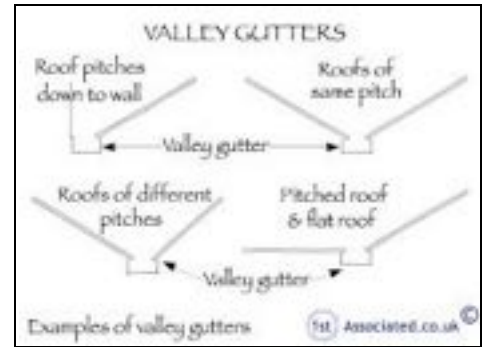
Please see the Gutters and Downpipes Section of this Report.

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4.0) Conservatory awkward roof detail

There is an awkward valley roof detail where the conservatory meets the main property wall. There tends to be problems with back up of water which ultimately can lead to dampness getting into the building.



Valley gutters



Awkward roof detail



Moss to base of conservatory showing there has been back up on this area and more tennis balls
Aerial view – 360 photo

5.0) Dampness visible in the conservatory

We noted dampness in the conservatory and we obtained high damp readings with our electronic damp meter and also thermal image pictures showed there was dampness in the area.

We believe this is due to the high ground level around the conservatory and indeed around the rear of the property where the patio has been laid. We were surprised how high the dampness reading were in the area.



Dampness to base



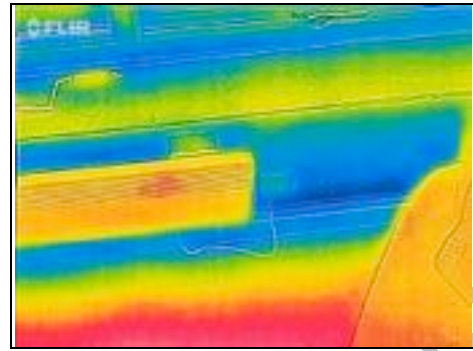
Efflorescence and moss

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High damp readings of 97 in conservatory. They should be between 30 to 60



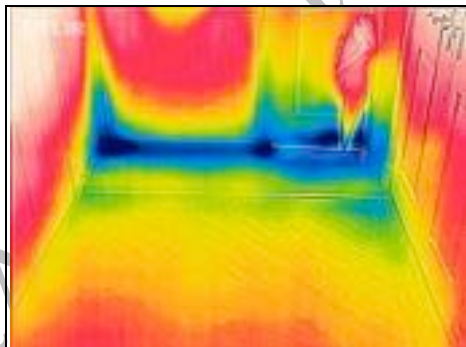
Thermal imag photo of same area. The blue shows the coldness in it, coldness can also relate to dampness



Moss around base of property



Conservatory, where meets main building on the right side corner (all directions given as you face the property). We can see the coldness/dampness



As a contrast, the entrance hallway, showing coolness coming under the front door



The front door from the outside showing heat from within on doors and windows, with the coolness to lead roof above entrance and paving in front of door

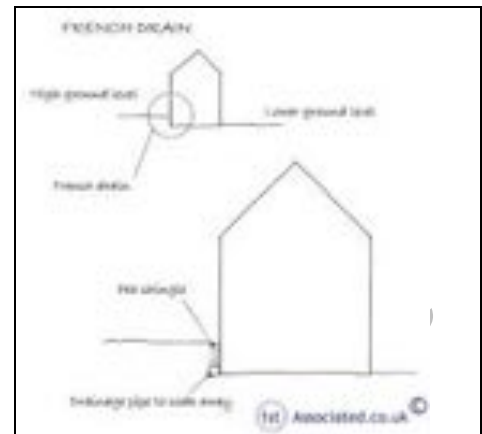
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ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend you add a French drain around the conservatory. We would ideally recommend it around the whole of the property to ensure that water is kept away.

See our article in the Appendices.

ANTICIPATED COST: £2,500 - £5,000, this should go into its own soakaway; please obtain quotations.



French drain

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

6.0) Efflorescence on brickwork

It is unusual to have efflorescence on brickwork of this Era. It may be that the brick is particularly porous but you do need to be aware that you may get the efflorescence in the form of a white powder/salt on the bricks forever and a day and it will be very difficult to remove. Even such products as a brick clean tend to be a temporary removal of such staining if the bricks are porous.



Efflorescence on brickwork

Efflorescence Defined

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



Efflorescence to base of conservatory

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ACTION REQUIRED: Ensure you are happy that you can live with the efflorescence on the brickwork.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

7.0) Timber framed property?

There is an outside chance that this property is a timber-framed property. Efflorescence is one of the common factors that we find on this type of property. Some surveyors and some people are not keen on living in timber frame properties (we are one of them).

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal Advisor needs to specifically ask if this property is timber framed.

There are numerous problems with timber frame properties that we would be more than happy to explain further if this property is identified as a timber frame property.

8.0) Airbricks acting as gutters

Air bricks are essential to have a through flow of air. In this case the airbricks to the rear conservatory are acting as gutters due to the high ground level from the patio.



Air brick



Airbrick acting as a gutter

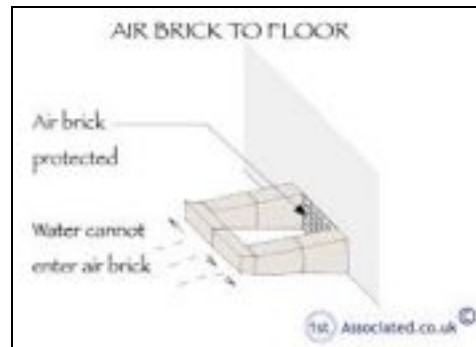


Airbrick acting as a gutter to conservatory

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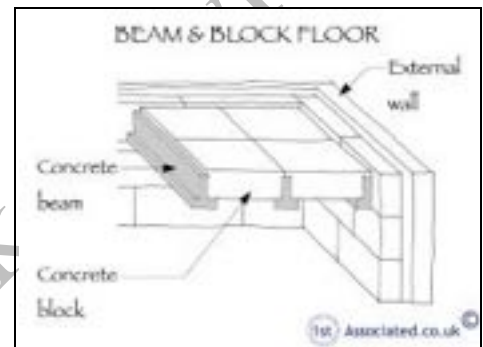
ACTION REQUIRED: Ensure the airbricks are clear and protected.



Protected airbrick

9.0) Suspended Floor

The property has a suspended floor. We believe it to be a concrete suspended floor, known as a Beam and Block floor, although we have not opened up the floor in this instance this is what is typically used in this age, type and style of property. Beam and block floors are sometimes used in areas where there are fairly poor soil conditions; you need to be aware of this.



Beam and block floor

We noted some of the airbricks that give the through flow of air underneath the property are acting as gutters and these need to be protected as well as adding the French drain that we have already mentioned.

Please see the Floors Section of this Report.

10.0) Services

10.1) Electrics

The owner said there had been a problem with the lights and they had had to call out an Electrician and the matter was now being resolved.



Light in brick pavier

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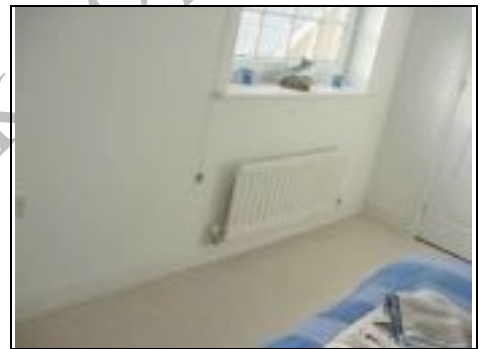


ACTION REQUIRED: The Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE) recommend a test and report whenever a property changes occupancy. This should be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

ANTICIPATED COST: We assume the existing owners will resolve this matter satisfactorily. You will, of course, need to check and confirm.

10.2) Heating – will the property warm up quickly?

We assume, as the property is quite new, it has been built to modern thermal efficiency standards. We did note that there were relatively small single panel radiators in the rooms. It is more common to have larger double panel radiators so it may take some time to warm the house up. Alternatively and what is often recommended with modern properties is you need to keep the heating on constantly at a fairly low rate.



Small single panel radiator

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend these are changed to double panel convection radiators.

10.3) Lighting

We noted dampness around the ceiling lights on the top floor – please see our comments with regards to the slates.



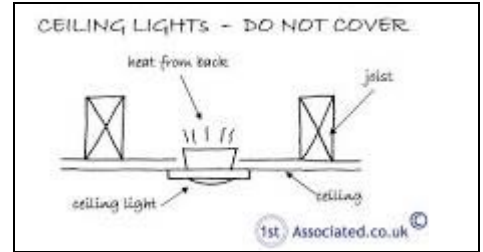
Dampness around ceiling light on top floor

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You need to be aware that there can be problems with ceiling lights particularly where dampness is getting into them.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ensure that the ceiling lights are not covered in the loft space.



Do not cover ceiling lights

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.

Characteristics of this type of property

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

Services

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

Electrics

The electrics are located downstairs in the cupboard with the alarm system. They look to be original. The Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE) recommend a test and report whenever a property changes occupancy. This should be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

Heating

Please note our comments with regard to the size of the radiators. We also noted that you had a megaflo system that we personally have found to be very good. 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

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

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

DIY/Handyman Type Work

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

Purchase Price

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

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Estimates of Building Costs

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

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

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SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



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

We have looked at the roof slate photographs again and again. There does look as if there are defects in some of the slates. In the adjacent photograph of the garage roof you can see where some slates are missing, our concern is that you will have this problem on the main roof which would be much more difficult to solve as this is a three storey property and a high main roof.



Garage roof where slates are missing

The other difficulty, as well as it being such a high roof, is with slates to access one slate often it means you have to take several off and this can be very awkward.

We would also draw your attention to the section with regard to the dampness and the moss and the efflorescence on the building. You need to be 100% certain that you are happy with this. Whilst we think that the dampness to the base of the property can be resolved the efflorescence may be a characteristic of this property which is very difficult to resolve in the long term if at all.

Construction

Further to our original comments with regard to the construction of the property we have now been forwarded drawings from the owner/estate agent who have advised that the drawings are of the subject building. If they are, then they have been drawn to show modern traditional construction which means this building is not timber frame. Please see the Appendices.

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

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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**

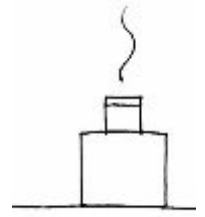


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EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS AND DORMER WINDOWS



Chimney Stacks

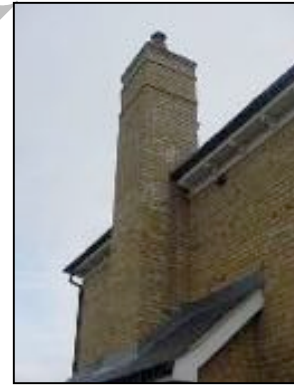
Chimneys developed originally from open fires placed within buildings. From this, the chimney has developed to its present day format where it is used as an aesthetic feature and focal point rather than purely just to heat the room.

There are two chimneys to this property, located one to the left and one to the right (all directions given as you face the property).

Chimney One, located to left

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

Efflorescence defined
White staining/salts on brickwork that are very difficult to remove.



Left chimney

We also noted that the guttering adjacent to the chimney was positioned too close in our opinion which will mean that rainwater will overflow the guttering sometimes and down the side of the chimney.



There is an awkward detail to the rear of the chimney (green circle).

Left chimney with gutter
positioned too close
Aerial view – 360 photo

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ACTION REQUIRED: Reposition guttering. Periodically inspect the chimney.

Chimney Two, located to right

This chimney is also brick built with a lead flashing and one chimney pot and is in average condition.

ACTION REQUIRED: Periodically inspect the chimney.



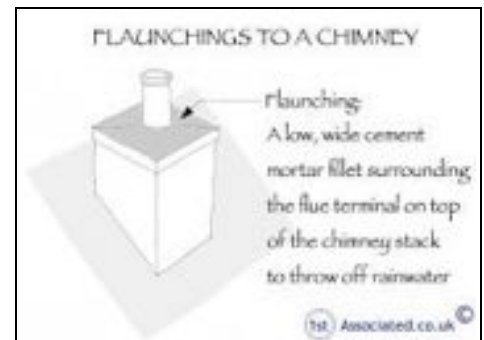
Chimney to right
Aerial view – 360 photo



Trap behind chimney where dampness tends to get in

Flaunchings

On both chimneys the flaunchings look relatively thin, we are used to seeing a thicker flaunching to hold the chimney pot in place.



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.

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Flaunchings Defined

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

Dormer Windows

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

There are two dormer windows to the front and three to the rear.

We believe the roofs are lead with lead flashings.

We would comment that there looks to be a problem with dampness getting into the front left dormer window.

There are missing and lifting slates to some of the dormers.



Front dormer windows



Rear dormer windows

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Very slight lift in slates to left side of front left dormer



Lead roof
Aerial view – 360 photo



Close up of front right dormer where dampness is coming in
Aerial view – 360 photo



Dampness internally to skirting next to front right dormer

ACTION REQUIRED: The dormers may be susceptible to wind driven rain getting in around them particularly bearing in mind our comments on the slates and what seemed to be a relatively strong prevailing wind in the area. Please see our specific comments on the front right dormer in the Executive Summary.

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

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

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

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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 three areas; main roof, front porch roof and conservatory roof.

Main Roof

The main roof is hipped and pitched and clad with a slates and from ground level this looks to be patchy. We have used this term as we have not come across a modern roof quite like this before. It looks almost like a defective batch of slates has been used on this roof and also on the garage roof.



Darker deteriorating slates?

There is the slightest of undulation in the roof.



Undulation / lifting of slates which due to the height of the property and wind velocity could lead to lifting slates



Garage roof where slates are missing

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ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary. We would be much happier if a roofer had a close up inspection of this roof so they could see exactly what was happening to the slates that look to be a different colour/darker/deteriorating. The problem with slate roofs is that it is very difficult just to remove one slate, you almost end up removing a triangle of slates which can be quite large sometimes just to repair one or two slates.

Our other concern is that we can see some water staining to the top floor which concerns us. This may be where wind driven rain is getting in and also the very small stain that we saw within the roof space.

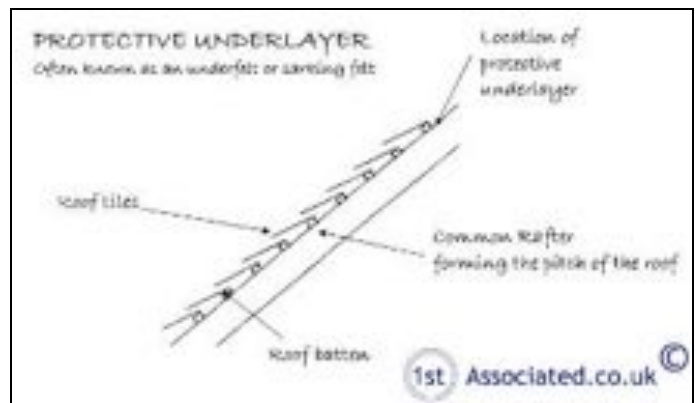


Minor dampness around light

This, combined with the dampness coming in around the dormer window does lead us to believe that there may be strong prevailing winds in the area that are allowing driving rain to get into the roof structure.

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

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



Protective underlayer

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When we inspected the loft space we found a modern breathable protective underlayer. This type of underlayer has been used since 2002 and is meant to allow the roof to breathe and to minimise condensation, which is becoming more prevalent in highly insulated properties.



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

Front Flat Porch Roof

There is a low level flat roof over the entrance porch. It is covered with lead and is in average condition.



Entrance porch roof
Aerial view – 360 photo

Rear Conservatory Roof

The rear conservatory is covered with polycarbonate, we do prefer a glazed roof. It looks in average condition.

There is an awkward valley gutter detail where the roof meets the main building.



Conservatory roof
Aerial view – 360 photo

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

Please also note our comments with regards to the high levels of dampness in the conservatory probably due to the high ground level of the patio.



Close up of awkward valley between conservatory and main building

As a general comment regarding the conservatory roof we would also say that in conservatories they can get high solar gain during the summer months and heat loss during the winter months. We have found that lots of people are using blinds in the conservatory to help shade the sun.

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

Finally we were only able to see approximately eighty percent of the main roof from ground level via our ladder. Our view was limited even with high level photography as we could not get the view of the roof we wanted however have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see, however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

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

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ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

Main Roof

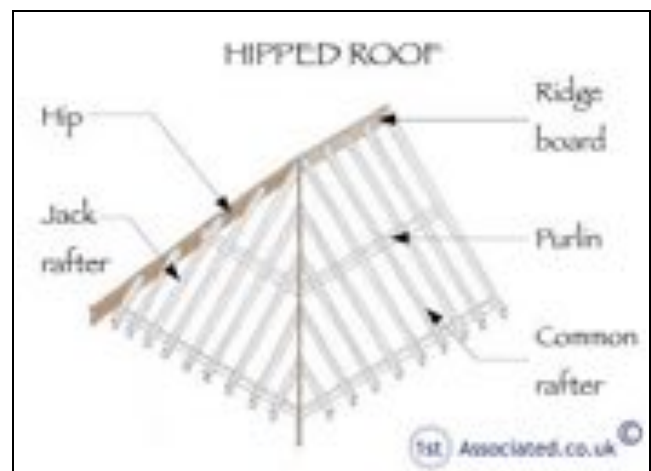
Roof Access

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the top floor landing. There is no loft ladder, electric light or secured floorboards (it was a relatively small space). We recommend that these be added, as it will make the loft space safer and easier to use.

The whole of the loft has been viewed from the loft hatch due to the restricted height.

Roof Structure

This type of roof structure has what is known as a hipped modern cut timber roof, with amendments. 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 with the exception of the slates.



Modern hipped hand cut roof

ACTION REQUIRED:

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

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

Our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof and the mass of insulation. What we could see was generally found to be in average condition for its age, type and style with the minor exception of the unusual way the ridgeboard has been built onto smaller timbers and the staining on the timbers. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.

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



General view of inside of roof



Unusual ridge board
– partially pre-fabricated



Damp staining to timbers



Mass of insulation

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Ventilation

There is a breathable protective underlayer.

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 gutters and downpipes are plastic. We noted a gap in the guttering to the front. The gutters and downpipes at high level need to work effectively as they are hard to get to. From what we can see they need some repairs, for example we noted a gap to the front and we noted grass growing from them and there is a gutter too close to the chimney.



Gap in gutter to front

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.



High level guttering



Staining



Close up

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Downpipes feed directly into the ground

The downpipes feed directly into the ground. This is a practice we are not particularly keen on; we would much prefer a gulley.

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

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

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



Downpipes feed directly into ground

Soil and Vent Pipe

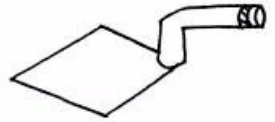
Unusually we have not been able to find the soil and vent pipes, we are assuming they are internal soil and vent pipes and that they are using air inlet valves, often known by their generic name/trade name of durgo valves. We were expecting to see soil and vents on the high level photos but have not.

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

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WALLS



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

The walls are constructed of brickwork.

Brickwork

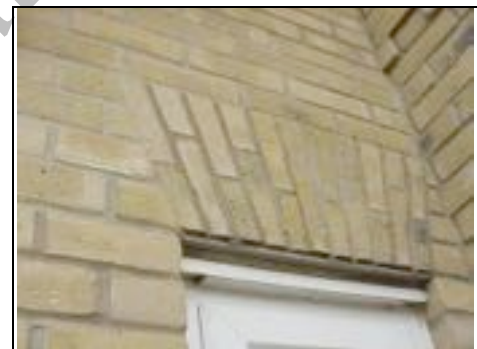
The property is built in a Stretcher bond brickwork.



Some areas of repointing to brickwork

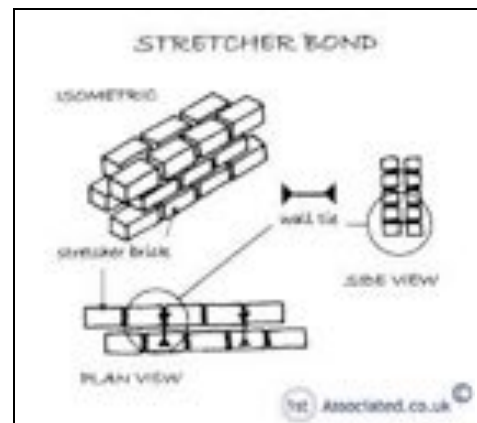


Detail on side of garage



Strange soldier course detail

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



Stretcher Bond brickwork

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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.

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.

Expansion joints

Where a long run of modern brickwork is used you can get movement. To combat this, vertical mastic joints are added. We can see that these have been added in this instance.



Expansion joint

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Efflorescence

The brickwork has efflorescence, which many people find visually unattractive. It is very difficult to get rid of particularly in this instance where it appears to be a characteristic of the brickwork. We would normally expect it to go within a year of a new property being built; there is obviously some characteristic of the brickwork in this instance that is keeping the efflorescence.



Efflorescence on brickwork

Efflorescence Defined

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



Close up

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



Efflorescence to base of conservatory

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 / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age metal lintels are common, which can be susceptible to deterioration that is unseen, particularly if in contact with dampness.

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Our comments have been based upon how the brickwork / plaster has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork / 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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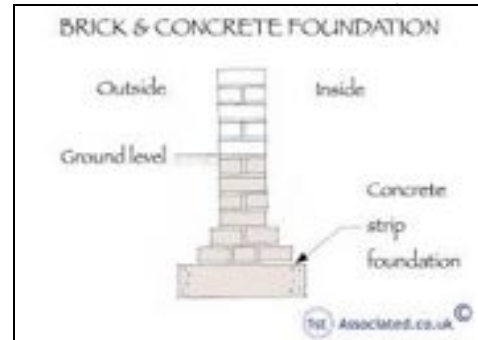


FOUNDATIONS

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

Building Insurance Policy

You should ensure that the Building Insurance Policy contains adequate provision against any possibility of damage arising through subsidence, landslip, heave etc.

It is your responsibility to check out prior to commitment to purchase that insurance is available on the property on the basis of the things we have reported in the survey. Much as we would like to we are unable to keep up with the changing insurance market and give you advice with regard to this.

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

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

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

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

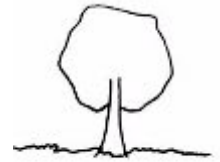
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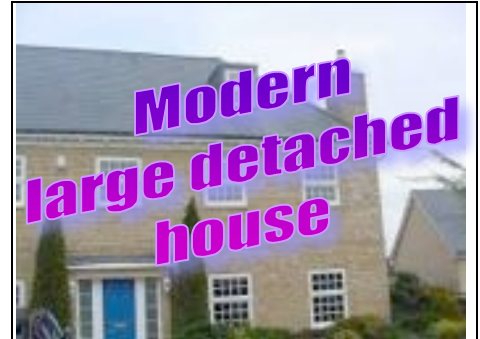


TREES

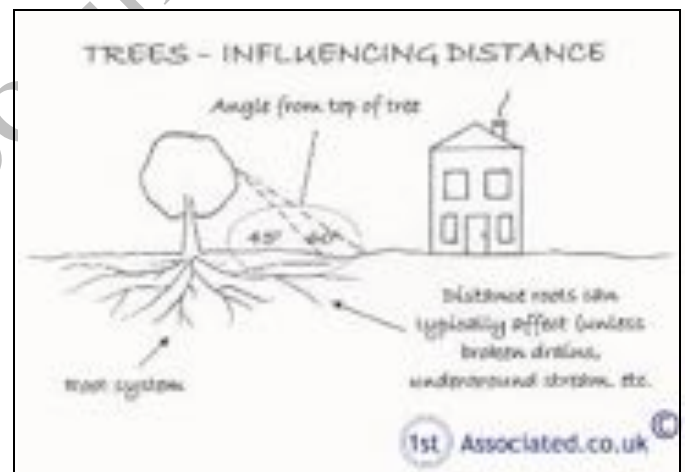
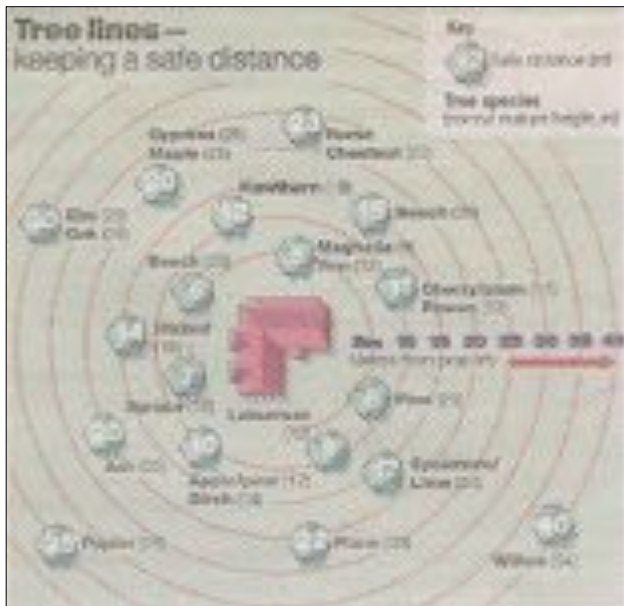


Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.

There are no nearby trees unless you count the fir trees either side of the front door 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. These trees do need to be maintained.



Fir trees either side of front door



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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DAMP PROOF COURSE

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

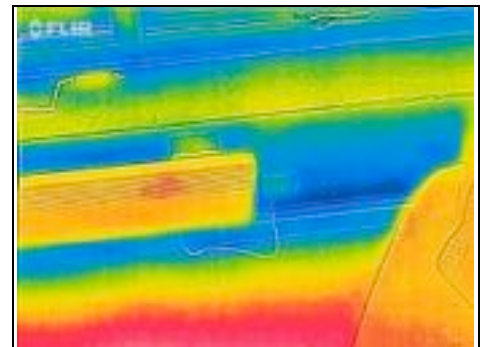
All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, we cannot see a DPC. We assume given its age, type and style that it has been built in as work continues. There are problems with dampness coming into the conservatory.



Efflorescence and moss

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.



Thermal image photo of same area.
The blue shows the coldness in it, coldness can also relate to dampness

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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.

Air bricks are essential to have a through flow of air. In this case the airbricks to the rear conservatory are acting as gutters due to the high ground level from the patio.



Air brick



Airbrick acting as a gutter



Airbrick acting as a gutter to conservatory

ACTION REQUIRED: Ensure the airbricks are clear and protected.

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.

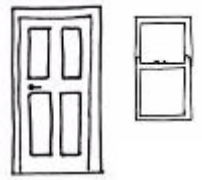


Protected airbrick

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FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND RAFTER FEET AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

Fascias and soffits and rafter feet 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 and Rafter Feet

The fascias and soffits and rafter feet are plastic and we would comment they are in average condition for their age, type and style.

Interestingly also in plastic are mock rafter feet which is quite unusual. We would say better than the proper detail as birds can nest in them and they cannot in the mock rafter feet.

ACTION REQUIRED: Clean.

Windows and Doors

The property has plastic/timber double glazed windows with trickle vents which generally look to be of average quality.

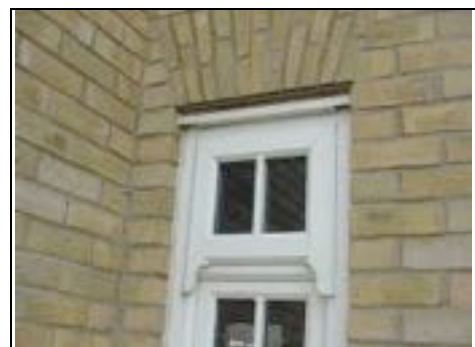
We would draw your attention to the fact that sealed double glazed units can fail, particularly as a result of poor workmanship during installation. Failure of the seal leads to condensation between the two panes of glass and simply replacing the affected units may not provide a satisfactory long-term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



Plastic fascias and soffits with rafter feet



Rafter feet
Also note gap in gutter



Window with hidden trickle vent

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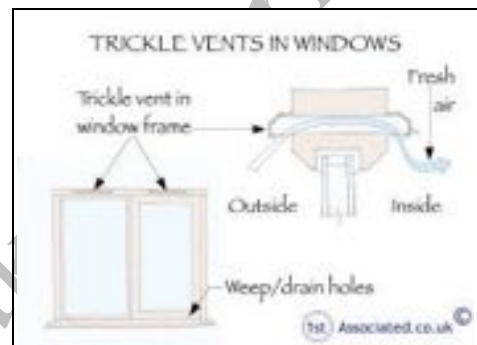
In this case we would recommend that the plastic windows are cleaned every five or so years to stop moss getting impregnated into them.

Transferable Guarantees

Enquiries should be made as to the existence of any transferable guarantees. Generally it is considered that double glazed units have a life of about ten years.

Trickle Vents Defined

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



Trickle vents

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

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EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

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

There is next to nothing to paint however please note our comments with regard to cleaning of the plastic areas as moss can get impregnated in them and they become unsightly.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

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INTERNAL



CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

Ceilings

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



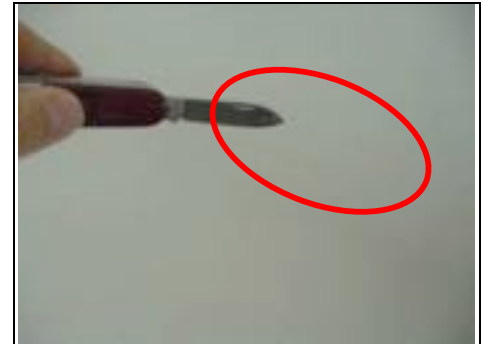
Backing to plasterboard

Damp staining

Please note our comments with regard to damp staining elsewhere within this report.

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.



Hairline crack to ceiling

Internal Walls and Partitions

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

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Hairline cracking

There is some hairline cracking in the property.



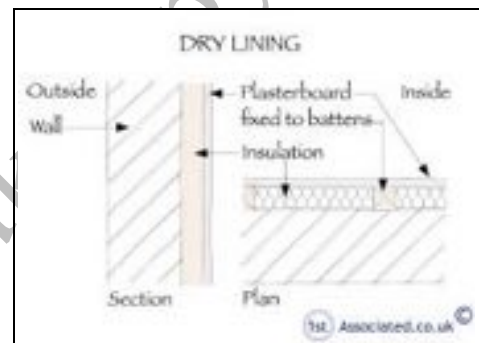
Hairline crack around one of the doors

Perimeter Walls

These are a mixture of solid and dry lined/false walls.

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

There is an outside chance that this property is timber framed. Our comments are made particularly due to the amount of efflorescence on the property.



Dry lining/false walls

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal Advisor needs to specifically ask if this property is timber framed. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

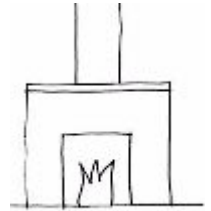
Finally, ceilings, walls and partitions have been inspected from floor level and no opening up has been undertaken (unless permission has been obtained by yourselves). In some cases the materials employed cannot be ascertained without samples being taken and damage being caused.

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

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CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

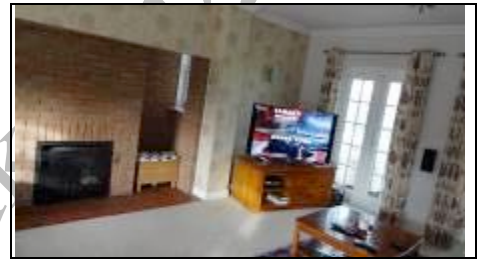
The chimney breasts are located to the left and right side of the property (all directions given as you face the front of the property). There is a feature fireplace to the left side through lounge.



Fireplace in reception room

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.



Fireplace in through lounge

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

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

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

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

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FLOORS

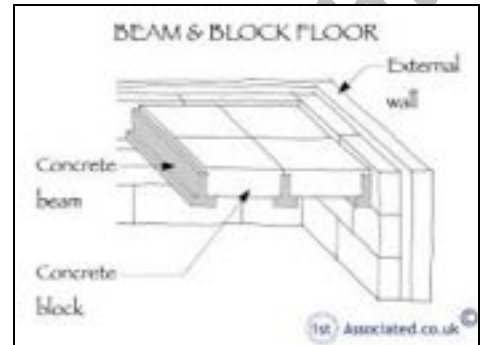


Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.

Ground Floor

The property has a suspended floor. We believe it to be a concrete suspended floor, known as a Beam and Block floor, although we have not opened it up to check, as this is typical of this Era of property.

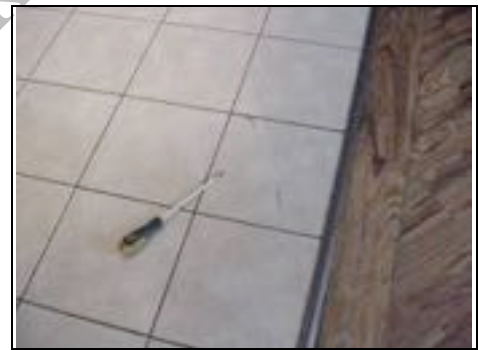
Beam and block floors are often used in areas where there are fairly poor soil conditions and you need to be aware of this.



Beam and block floor

Floor finish

There are a number of different types of floor finishes to the property. We noted that one of the dining room tiles were cracked, there may be other cracks, you need to have a close inspection as this is not normally covered in a structural survey.



Cracked tile in kitchen/diner

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

First and Second Floors

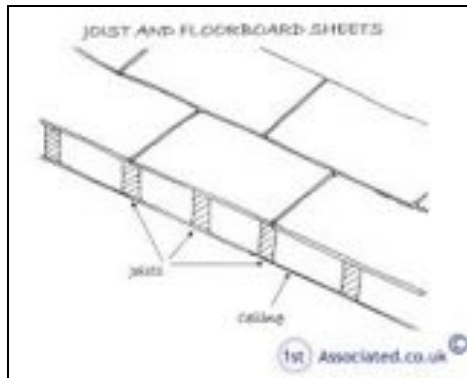
We have assumed that the first and second floor construction, are timber onto joist hangers which have floorboard sheets covering them which is typical in this age of property.

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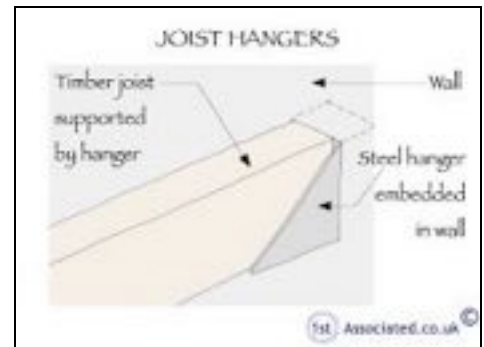
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Joist and floorboard sheets



Joist hangers

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

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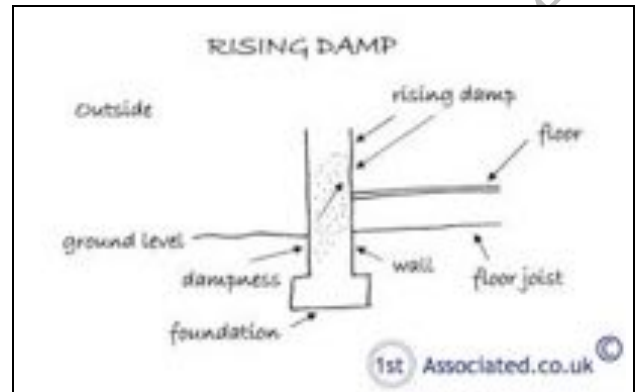


DAMPNESS

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

Rising Damp

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



Rising damp

A visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we have found significant rising damp particularly in the rear conservatory.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see the Executive Summary. Please also note our comments with regard to the airbricks acting as gutters and also note our comments with regard to the high levels of the patio and our comments with regards to a French drain.



Obtaining high damp readings in the conservatory

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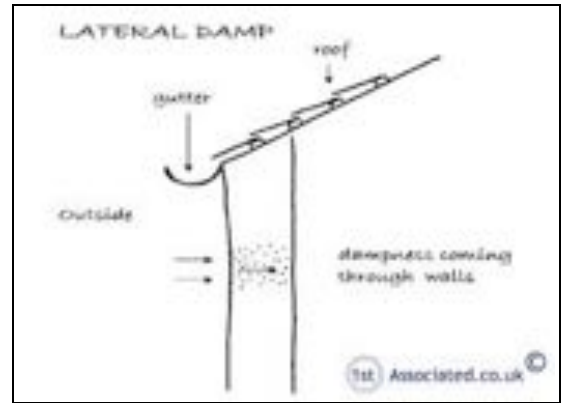
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Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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



Lateral damp

We used a resistance meter on the external walls. We found it to be in line with what we would expect for this age, type and style of property. It also indicated there is some dry lining in the property.



Testing for lateral dampness

Condensation

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

At the time of the inspection there were no signs of condensation however from what we understand there are only two people living in the property.

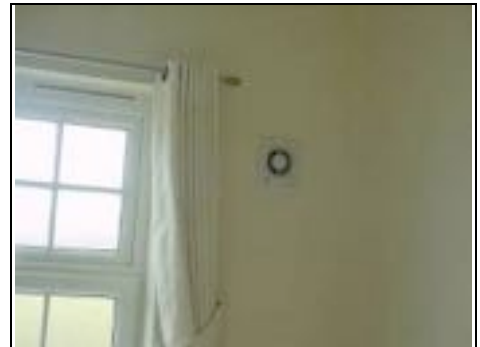
However, it depends upon how you utilise the building. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating, cooling and ventilation of properties and opening windows to air the property regularly.

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Extract fans in kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas

The extract fans are smaller than we would like to see. A way of helping to reduce condensation is to have good quality 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.



Small extract fan

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

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £150 to £300 per extract; please obtain quotes.

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

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INTERNAL JOINERY

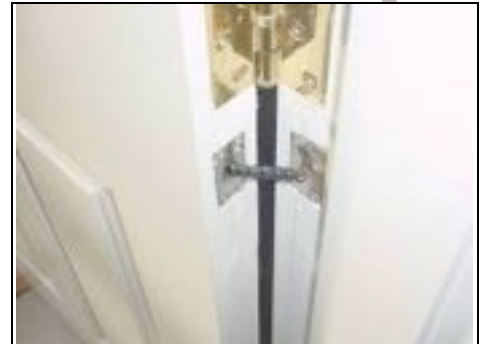


This section looks at the doors, the stairway, the skirting boards and the kitchen to give a general overview of the internal joinery's condition.

Doors

The doors are modern pressed hollow core style doors with nice ironmongery.

We noted that some of the doors were fire doors and we could see that they had internal door closers (often known by their trade name of perco door closers) which are generally required on buildings over two storey as protection from fire spreading from one floor to the next where the staircase is used like a chimney.



Perco door closer

Staircases

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

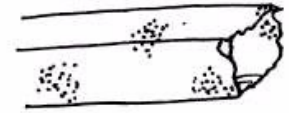
We found the kitchen in average condition, subject to some wear and tear as one would expect. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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 found a small amount of wet rot to the skirting adjacent to the front right dormer. There is potential for wet rot being created where dampness is coming into the property in the conservatory for example.

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 condition with the exception of the conservatory where it is starting to deteriorate.

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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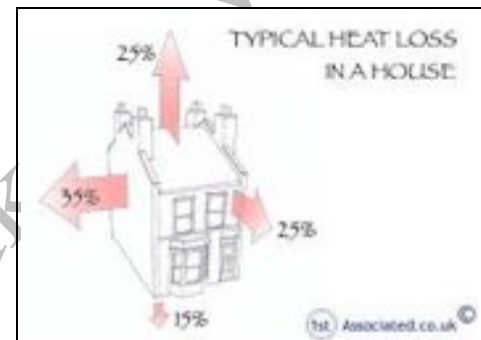
THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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 approx. 300mm in the roof.



Typical heat loss

Walls

The property has a stretcher bond construction. In this age of property there is usually insulation.

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.

Services

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

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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.

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

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

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

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

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

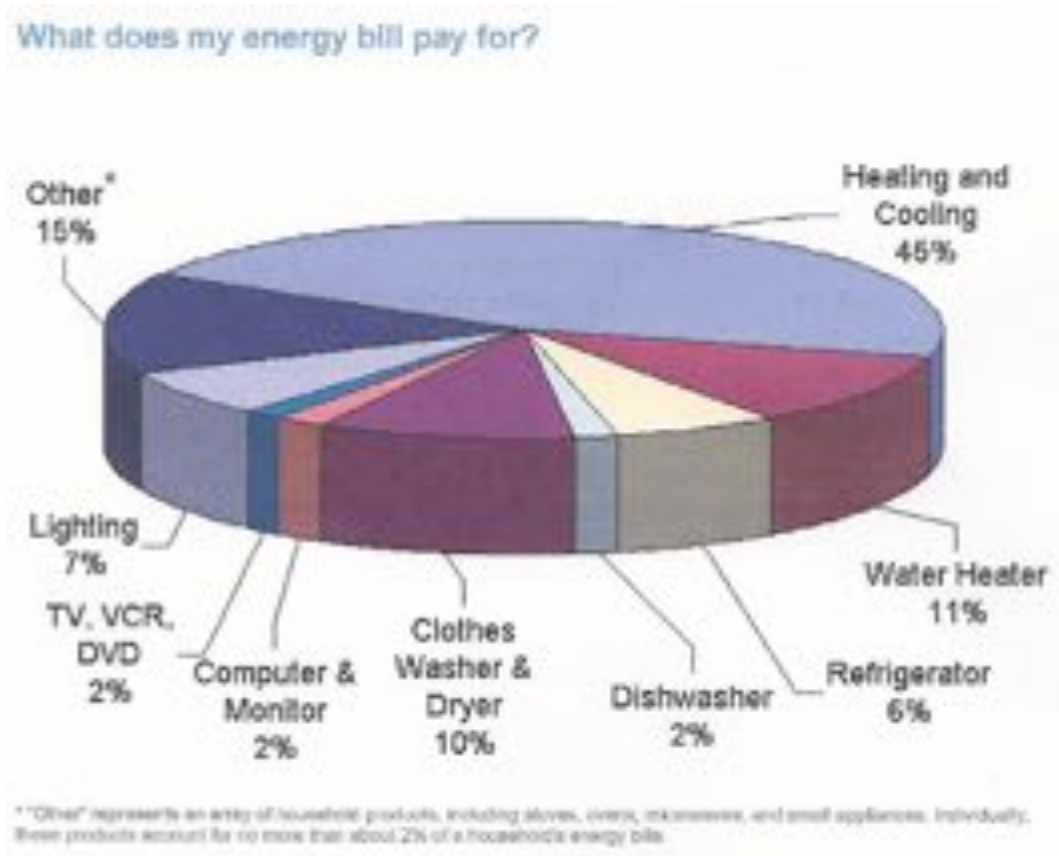
HIPs

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

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

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OTHER MATTERS



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

Security

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.



CCTV system in hallway cupboard

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.



Smoke detector

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

Insurance

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

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

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SERVICES

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

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

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ELECTRICITY



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

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

Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the hallway. The fuse board looked original.



Fuse Board

Earth Test

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

ACTION REQUIRED: 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

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

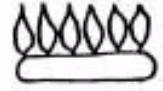
For basic general information on this matter please see the appendices at the end of this report.

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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

We were advised by the owner that the controlling stopcock is located in the kitchen.

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.

Water Pressure

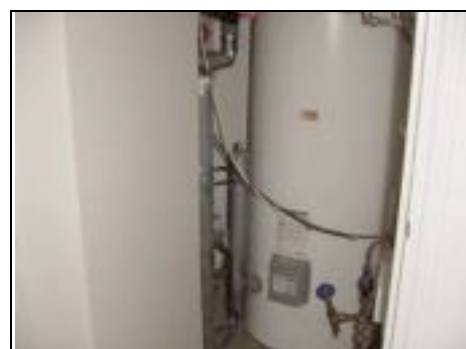
When the taps were run to carry out the drainage test we checked the pressure literally by putting a finger over the tap and this seemed average. The Water Board have to guarantee a certain pressure of water to ensure that things like boilers, particularly the instantaneous ones have a constant supply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



Testing water pressure

Hot Water Cylinder

There is a Megaflo hot water cylinder located in the first floor 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.



Megaflo cylinder

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Plumbing

The plumbing, where visible, comprises a mixture of plastic and copper piping, which we do not like as there may be leaks where the two meet. No significant leakage was noted on the surface, although most of the pipework is concealed in ducts and floors.



Mixture of plastic and copper pipes on radiator

Heating

The wall mounted Worcester boiler was located in the kitchen. We are advised this is less than a year old.

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



Worcester boiler

Ten Minute Heating Test

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

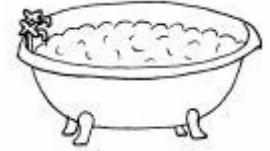
Finally, it should be noted that the supply pipe from the Water Company stopcock to the internal stop tap is the responsibility of the property owner.

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.

First Floor Bathroom

The property has a three piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin and WC, which looks in average condition, subject to some day-to-day wear and tear, as one would expect.

First Floor En-Suite Shower Rooms

There are two en-suite shower rooms to the first floor; one to the front right master bedroom which consists of shower unit, WC and wash hand basin and one to the rear left bedroom, also consisting of shower unit, WC and wash hand basin. We would comment that they are both in average condition with some wear and tear.

Second Floor Shower Room

There is a shower room on the top floor which consists of shower unit, WC and wash hand basin. It looks in average condition, again with some wear and tear.

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 three manholes.

Manholes Defined

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

Manhole One, located to rear right

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

From what we could see it is plastic built.



Rear right manhole

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Manhole Two, located to rear left

We were unable to open this manhole due to it being covered with grass so are unable to comment upon it.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend a CCTV camera report of all the drains to check their condition.



Rear left manhole

Manhole Three, located to rear near left fence

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

From what we could see it is plastic built.



Rear manhole near to left fence

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

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

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Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal. Normally in a property of this age the rainwater drains discharge into a soak away.

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

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

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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/PARKING



There is off road parking to the front of the property and a treble garage to the front right.

The garage has a slate roof. We noted areas of missing and damaged slates. The slates were very patchy as were the main roof, almost as if defective slates have been used.



Parking to front



Treble garage



Rear of garages



Missing slates to front
Aerial view – 360 photo



Missing slates to rear

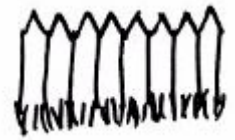


Inside garage

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EXTERNAL AREAS



Front Garden

The front garden is predominantly paved, with shrub borders and two fir trees to either side of the front door.



Front Garden

Rear Garden

There is a large garden to the rear, with grassed area and patio and shed. There is access to the land behind. Please see our comments with regard to the patio areas.



Rear Garden and patio



Shed to rear right

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



View beyond rear garden

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

Neighbours

Left Hand Neighbours

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

Right Hand Neighbours

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

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POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Check whether there is an NHBC/Foundation 15 Agreement still available on the property. Your Legal Advisor should advise you further in respect of the duration of this Agreement and whether any claims have ever been made either against the builder/developer or the NHBC themselves. Your Legal Advisor should confirm that the Agreement is transferable and enforceable.
- d) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:
 - i) Check and confirm whether the building is timber frame or not
 - ii) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
 - iii) Rising damp treatments.
 - iv) Cavity wall insulation and cavity wall tie repairs.
 - v) Double glazing or replacement windows.
 - vi) Roof and similar renewals.
 - vii) Central heating installation.
 - viii) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
 - ix) Removal of any walls in part or whole.
 - x) Removal of any chimneys in part or whole.
 - xi) Have there been any structural problems referred to insurance companies, any insurance claims, monitoring or underpinning, etc.
 - xii) Drainage repairs
 - xiii) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
- e) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- f) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.

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

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

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

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LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

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

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

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

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

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

For and on Behalf of
XXXX
Independent Chartered Surveyors
XXX

This Report is dated: XXXX

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REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses

Published by Estates Gazette Limited

Life expectancies of building components

*Published by Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and
Building Research Establishment*

Surveying buildings

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

House Builders Bible

By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

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LIMITATIONS

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

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

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

ENGLISH LAW

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

SOLE USE

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

APPROVALS/GUARANTEES

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

ONLY HUMAN!

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

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

WEATHER

It was a mild winter's 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.

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.

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INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been limited as:

- 1) Our view of the roof was limited due to the height of the roof.
- 2) We did not have a full view of the roof space due to the insulation covering the ceiling joists and general configuration of the roof and the rooms formed within the roof.
- 3) We did not open up the walls as we could not see a way of doing this without causing damage.
- 4) 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.
- 5) We did not have the benefit of meeting you at the property.

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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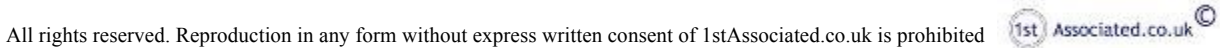


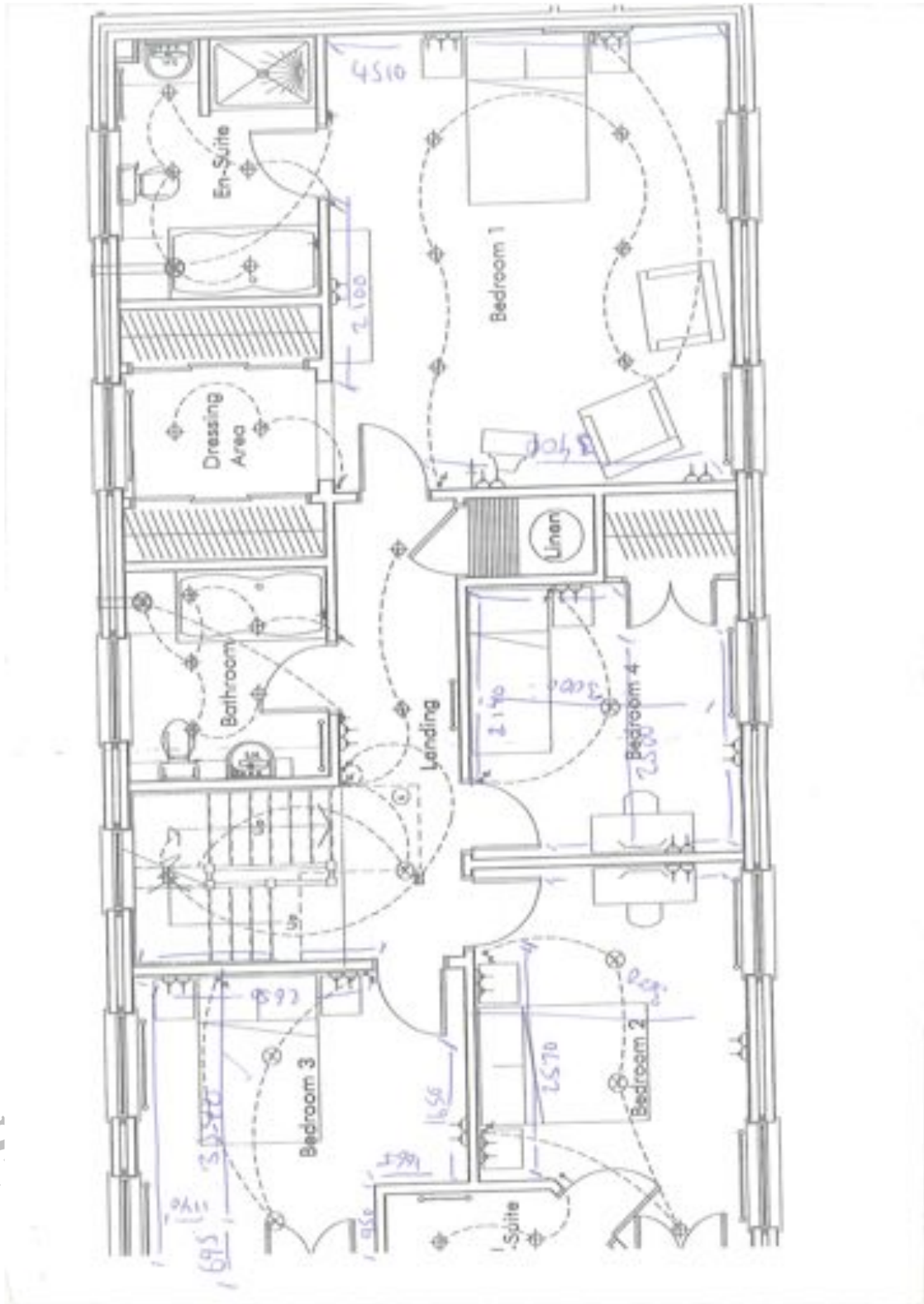
APPENDICES

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

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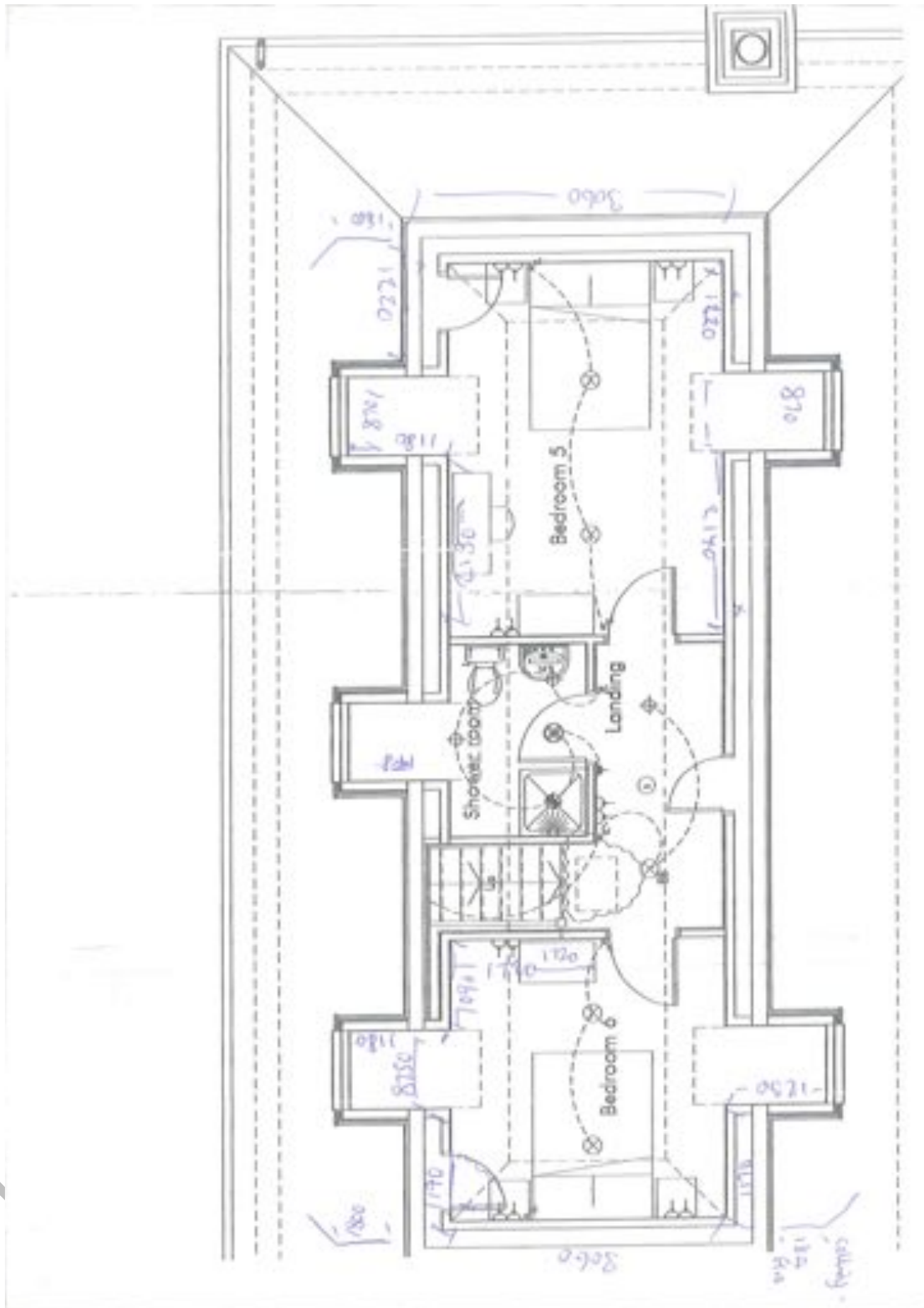






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THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS

PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

Work You Cannot do Yourself

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

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INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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

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

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www.hometrack.co.uk

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

www.motleyfool.co.uk

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

www.rightmove.co.uk

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

www.zoopla.co.uk

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

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French Drain

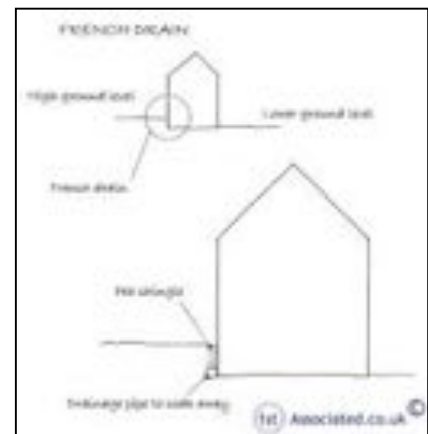
Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

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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