

JOB REFERENCE: XXXX

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

XXXX

Leighton Buzzard,  
Bedfordshire  
LU7 XXX



FOR

Mr X

Prepared by:

XXXXXX

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS



Marketing by:

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## REPORT FORMAT

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

### GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

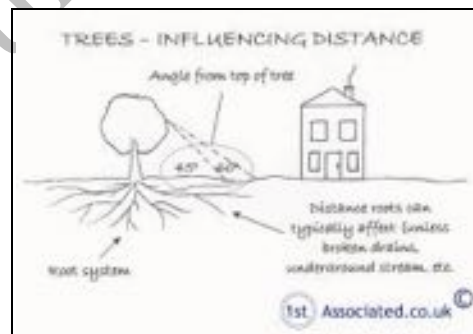
*This has been given in the survey where it is considered it will aid understanding of the issues, or be of interest. This is shown in "italics" for clarity.*

### TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

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

### A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

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



Influencing distance of trees

### ORIENTATION

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

### ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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## **SYNOPSIS**

## **SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION**

This is a mid terrace two storey property that has been extended and altered including rooms in the roof and rear flat roof/single pitched roof extensions and alterations.

The front of the property sits directly onto the pavement/road, the rear has a relatively long thin garden together with an attached outbuilding and also a garden room at the end of the garden.

There was once a passageway running down the left side of the building used for coal delivery, etc which has now been built into the building, this includes the soil and vent pipes (sewerage and waste pipes). Your legal advisor needs to check whether you definitely own this and it is not shared.

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

We have carried out a brief inspection to ascertain if the building is listed via the BritishListedBuildings.co.uk website. We have found it not to be recorded as listed.

**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:*

1859	Charles Darwin proposes the Theory of Evolution
1865	Salvation Army opens its doors to the poor giving hope to many
1872	William Gladstone's Liberal government introduced voting by secret ballot
1900	Max Planck formulates the Quantum Theory
1908	Pension scheme came into force to help the less affluent

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## EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view



Rear view



Street view



Outbuilding



Rear garden

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## **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

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

### **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Entrance hallway/stairs left
- 2) Lounge/diner front right
- 3) Kitchen/breakfast room middle right
- 4) Utility Room rear
- 5) Outbuilding rear left



### **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Landing
- 2) Bedroom front left
- 3) Bedroom front right
- 4) Bedroom rear right
- 5) Bathroom rear left



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## **Top Floor**

The top floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Bedroom four/loft room



## **Outside Areas**

The front of the property sits directly onto the pavement/road, the rear has a garden together with an attached outbuilding and also a garden room at the end of the garden.

Parking is roadside parking on a first come first served basis as far as we can see. Often with older properties there are more cars than there are parking spaces as these houses were built before we fell in love with cars as much as we have today. You do need to consider parking if this is important to you.

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

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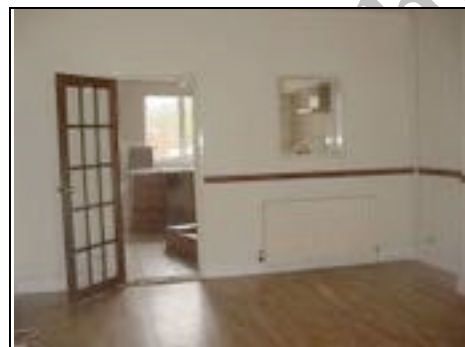
## **INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS**

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**



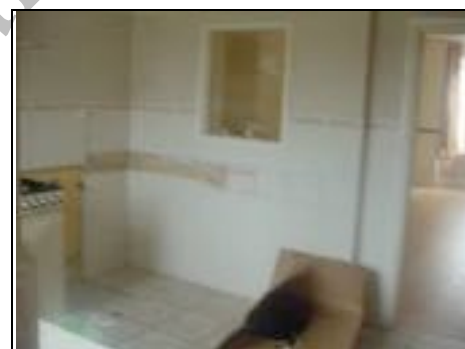
Lounge front



Lounge rear



Kitchen



Kitchen/lounge dividing wall (the wall you are looking at removing in part or fully)



Utility room rear



Entrance hall/stairs

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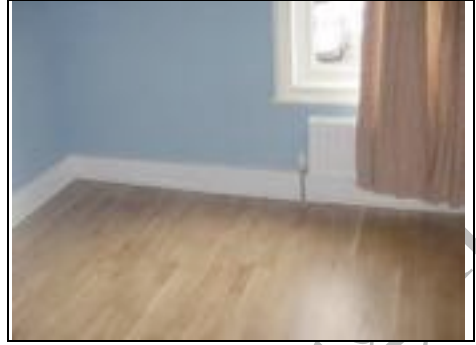
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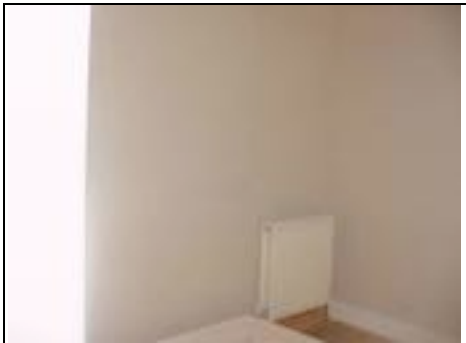
**First Floor**



Bedroom front left



Bedroom front right



Bedroom rear right

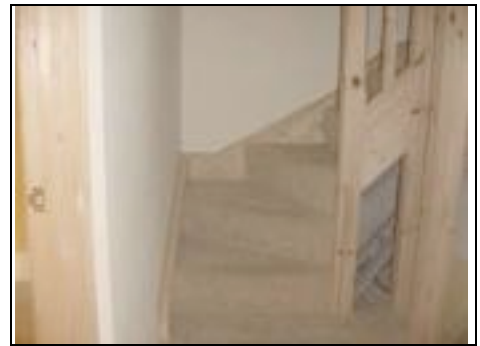


Bathroom rear

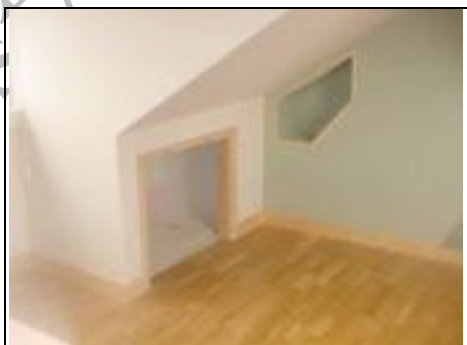
**Top Floor**



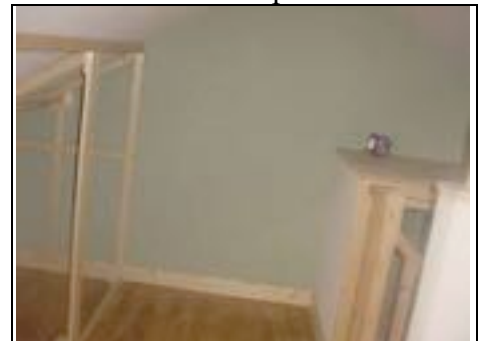
External view of room in roof



Stairs to top floor



Room in roof



Room in roof

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## **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

### **External**

Chimneys:	Brick chimneys front right
Main Roof:	Pitched, clad with concrete tiles Hidden valley gutter to rear One roof window to front Dormer window to rear
Main Roof Structure:	Cut timber roof with amendments Advised steel eye beams have been added but not visible
Single Storey Roofs:	Front: Flat roof to bay window  Rear: Single storey felt flat roof Single pitched roof
Outbuilding:	Single storey outbuilding with pitched corrugated metal roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Cast iron and Plastic
Walls:	Painted roughcast cement render (assumed)
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Mixture of plastic double glazed sliding sash casement windows with and without trickle vents (assumed)

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## **Internal**

Ceilings:	Lath and plaster and plasterboard (assumed)
Internal Walls:	Predominantly studwork partitions (all assumed)
Perimeter Walls:	Wet plaster onto brickwork, dry lining to right side of lounge (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Suspended floor to the front with a concrete floor to rear (assumed)
First Floor:	Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)
Second Floor:	Timber and structural steel (advised by owner)

## **Services**

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

Heating:	There is a Worcester boiler located in the bathroom.
Electrics:	The electrics are 1980's/1990's and are located in the front bay
Gas:	The consumer unit was located to the front right
Drainage:	The manholes are located to the rear, the rear left and front of property

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

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

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## **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 200 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) A loft conversion has been carried out assuming that planning permission, building regulations and party wall agreements have been obtained and approved.

We often find that people/sellers/vendors forget to have Party wall notices and also they forget to get final certificates from the Building Control department or they cannot get them as they have not completed the work. Please note our article on building control in the Appendices.

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Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

A structure that both parties enjoy the use of or benefit from. An example of this would be where both parties gain support from a wall or utilise a chimney or chimneys.

Planning Permission Defined

This relates to the aesthetics of how a building looks and how it fits in with the environment.

Building Regulations Defined

This looks at the way the building is built ensuring that good practice occurs, setting out a minimum standard of building and also Health and Safety.

- 2.0) The property has some of the original features left, which add to the overall character of the property (although lots of alterations).
- 3.0) The property has good natural light due to the bay windows.

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

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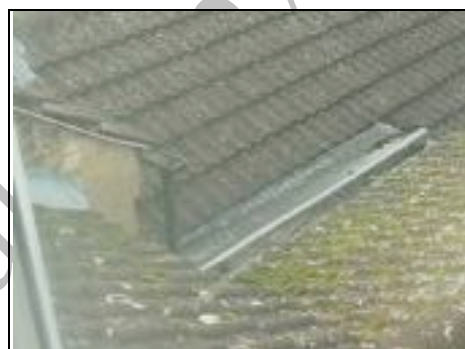


## The Bad

*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) Awkward valley gutter to rear roof**

Where your pitched roof meets next doors pitched roof on the rear left hand side there is an awkward valley gutter. Whilst we were pleased to see it is finished in lead these can often overflow and water gets into the property.



Rear valley gutter

**ACTION REQUIRED:** This is a characteristic of this property, there is very little you can do to resolve it other than ensure the lead is kept in good condition which you will normally only know about with this sort of awkward detail when a leak occurs.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

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## 2.0) Flat roof over kitchen

There is a flat flat roof over the kitchen (this is not a typing error, we mean the roof is flat). From the moss on it, it looks like water is sitting on it. You do need to be aware that it could get into the kitchen area particularly if you are carrying out alterations to the kitchen.



Flat roof over kitchen

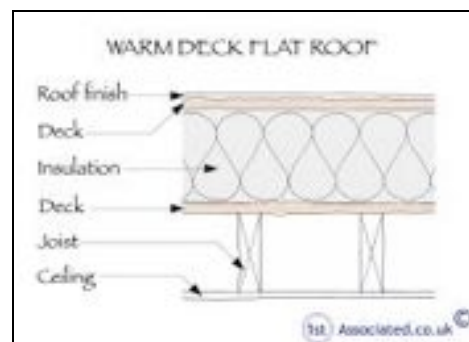
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally replace with a pitched roof. You can put an insulated roof on that is cut to falls and then this would both add a fall to the roof and also insulation to keep you warmer. We recommend a modern high performance elastomeric felt. Add lead flashings and amend parapet wall detail to the right hand side (all directions given as you face the front of the property).



Rear flat roof

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £1,500 - £3,000; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.



Warm roof

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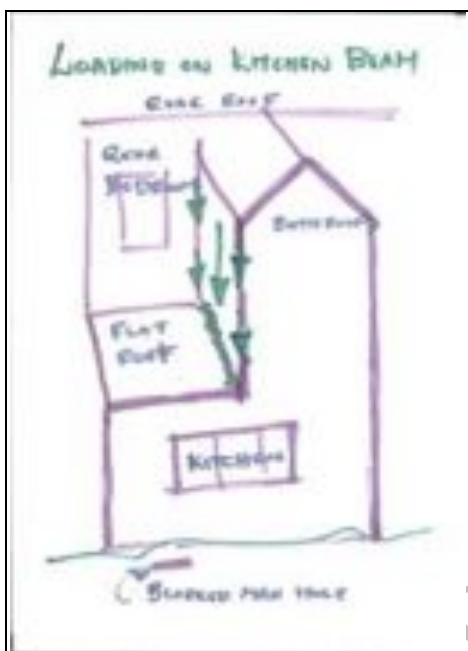


### 3.0) Beams and lintels

There has been some unusual alterations in the property.

#### Lintel in kitchen

There is an awkward/unusual lintel in the kitchen which is supporting the wall of the bathroom above which is a main wall. It does sit onto the middle of the window which is unusual.



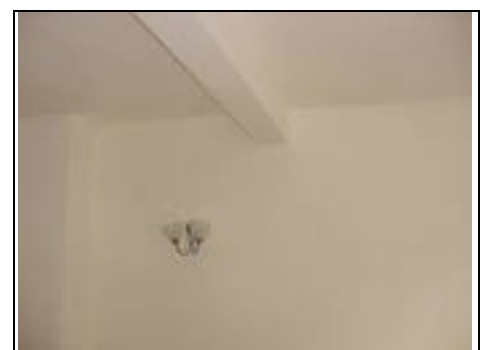
Beam supporting outside wall



Beam in kitchen over top of window

#### Beam in through lounge

The beam in the through lounge is taking all of its support off the wall rather than having a pier which would be more usual and has been a requirement of the building regulations for approximately the past sixty to seventy years. When the owner was questioned about this they advised that they had not been the ones to carry out that alteration.



Beam in lounge has not got a pier support

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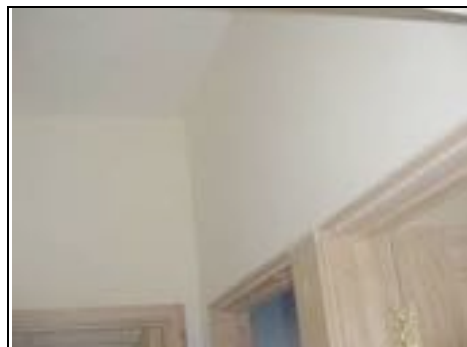
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### **Removal of many walls at first floor but keeping some of the brick wall in place**

Unusually the majority of the walls on the first floor are studwork partitions and what we would term as lightweight studwork partitions which is practically what all modern studwork is as opposed to older studwork such as you would find in Victorian properties as this which were also structural.



When tapping the wall we noted that part of the original wall has been left in. As far as we can see this is just adding weight to this area.

Brickwork wall to front of property.  
Most walls on first floor replaced with studwork

The owner, during our questions advised that they had had a structural engineer carry out calculations however we suspect this probably just relates to the loft conversion and they have not looked at the property as a whole.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If it is an essential part of this purchase that you carry out the alterations in the kitchen then we would recommend a structural engineer has a look who can provide costs as our experience has found that you can remove practically any wall, it is just the amount of noughts in the end bill that changes considerably so the structural engineer needs to also be able to give you an indication of costs.

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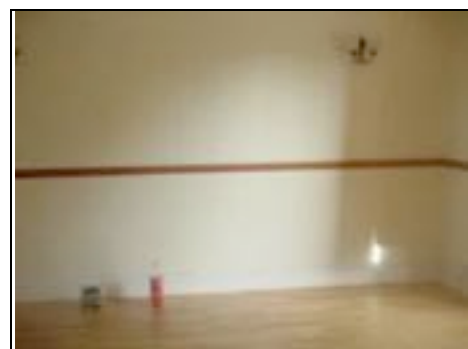
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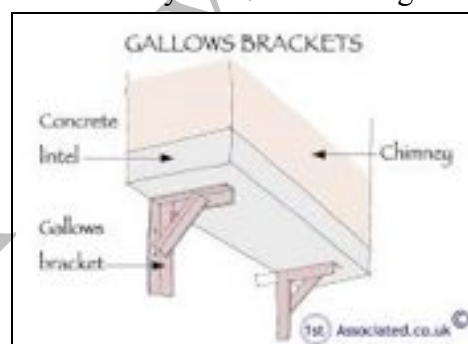


#### 4.0) Removal of chimney in the lounge

There has been a chimney removed to the lounge and also up into the bedrooms above (see floor plans). This is something that we come across a lot in the London area where there is a need to gain every inch/centimetre of space and not normally in places like Leighton Buzzard. We do find there are people that are not keen on chimneys that remove them. The important thing is to make sure the chimney is supported correctly. In years gone by gallows brackets were often used, these are no longer required and now a lintel is a requirement. Unfortunately we simply cannot see the wall properly as it has been dry lined. Our concern/suspensions are that the dry lining may be hiding something. Read on to find out more about dry lining



Chimney removed in lounge



Gallows brackets



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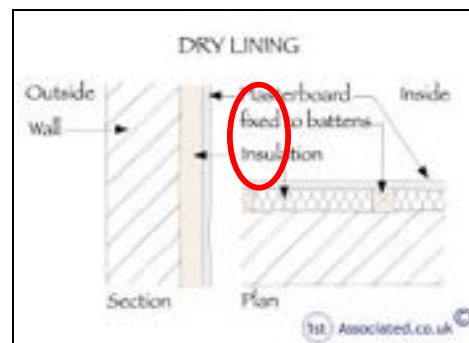
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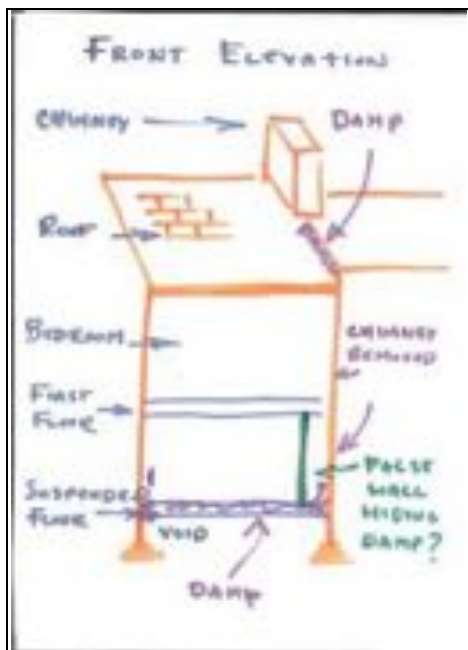


## 5.0) Dry lining hiding dampness

Dry lining (also known as false walls) is often carried out to hide dampness and other problems which is why we are highlighting this on the ground floor. We are also aware on the right hand wall if you look at roof level where it steps we believe dampness is getting in (see sketch below) and we noted the plaster key was loose beneath.



Dry lining



Roof steps to right



Cracking to render, flashing come away above rear blue bedroom where plaster has lost its key

We can see the cement mortar has come away from the flashing. This needs repairing.



Cement mortar come away from flashing

### Is this enough to bring the plaster off the wall?

If like many modern buildings they have used a PVA glue in the plaster below, what is known as a scratch coat, then this normally hangs on even when the walls are damp.

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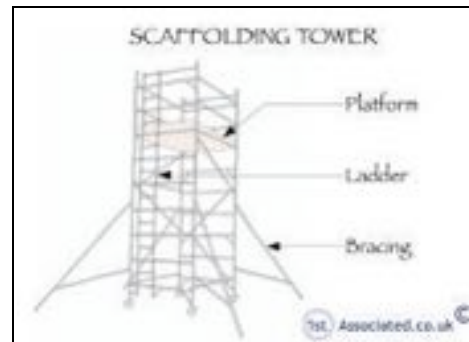
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**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repair/replace flashing. Unfortunately as it is high level you will need a set of long ladders or preferably a tower scaffolding.



Tower scaffold

## 6.0) Rising damp

We obtained damp readings that were thirty to fifty percent higher than we would expect in the walls at this time of year and in this age, type and style of construction.

### What are the reasons for the dampness?

We believe the main reason is the lack of airflow underneath the floor. There is a suspended timber floor covered with a laminate floor so unfortunately we could not see its condition. Whilst we could feel the laminate flooring moving in areas we feel this may be down to the poor quality of the laying or something wrong with the floor.



High damp meter reading to bay



Laminate flooring

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally we would like to open up the floor to check its condition.

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## **Dampness to the rear of the property**

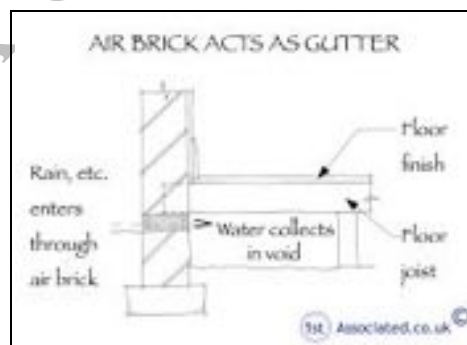
We also found dampness to the rear of the property. This, we believe, is a combination of the problems that we have mentioned and also the rear of the property feels to be a concrete slab which can act like blotting paper when it comes into contact with dampness. We think it may be coming into contact with dampness not only from the suspended timber floor side but also from the outside with rainwater being discharged against the bottom of the wall. We can see that a French drain type has been added but we do not believe it is working properly.



Does French drain to rear work?

## **Ensure airflow underneath suspended timber floor**

A way of improving things would be to ensure you have an airflow underneath the suspended timber floor. We would recommend adding airbricks to ensure this. You also have to ensure the airbricks are not acting as gutters so we would also protect them. This can be difficult as you would need to do this on a public footpath.



Airbrick acting as gutter



Airbrick to front acting as gutter



Airbrick acts as gutter



Protect airbrick

## **ACTION REQUIRED:**

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- 1) Add air vents
- 2) Open up the floor to check it
- 3) Add a proper French drain to the rear

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of a few hundred pounds for airbricks, a few hundred pounds for opening up the floor. It will depend on what you find as to whether you have to prop the floor or replace part of it, we have done both over the years, we are more than happy to discuss it. Add a French drain which will cost a few hundred pounds, there is a drain nearby so you should be able to use a perforated drain to discharge into this. Please see our comments regarding problems with the drains; quotations required.

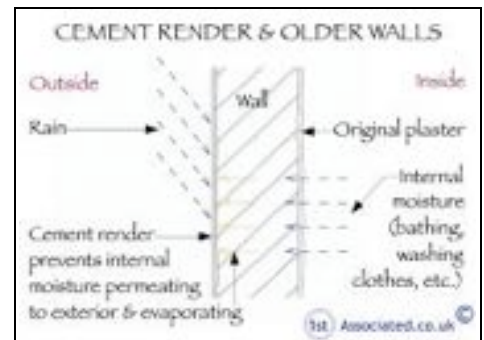
### 7.0) Smothering the building with cement render

In buildings of this era the walls were meant to breathe which is what they typically did with the softer red brick and a lime mortar (see next door neighbours property to left side). Over the years people have added things such as the cement render that there is in this particular case so there is a seal on the outside of the building particularly as it looks to have been painted with a modern plastic based paint.



Cement based roughcast render to your property,  
Flemish bond brickwork next door

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As we discussed the ideal solution would be to remove the render and expose the bricks but often doing this would just result in a layer of damaged brickwork. Therefore you do need to make sure that the rest of the building breathes as much as possible so such things as:



Cement render

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## 1) Windows with trickle vents help considerably

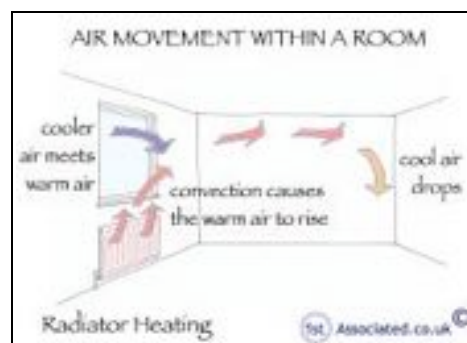
### Trickle Vents Defined

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



Trickle vents

- 2) Removing all humidity from humidity creating areas such as the kitchen and the bathroom and any rooms you use for drying clothes. We would recommend large good quality humidity controlled extract fans.
- 3) Radiators should be underneath the windows rather than located in the centre of rooms.



Air movement

**ANTICIPATED COST:** For new windows you can spend anything from £3,000 to £4,000 upwards depending on what you want. Good quality large humidity control extract fans cost in the region of £250 - £500 per extract fan depending upon the wiring required. Moving radiators will cost in the region of a few hundred pounds per radiator; please obtain quotations.

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## 8.0) Alterations to the kitchen

We can see why you are looking to alter the kitchen and open it out however there are certain things to consider:

- 1) It will need structural support if you are removing walls particularly as you are looking to remove the main walls of the building. These may also need foundations underneath them which is why we have recommended a structural engineer is essential if it is a hundred percent requirement of buying this property that you do these alterations.



Wall to be removed is outside wall of original building

- 2) The drains need looking into. They are relatively shallow and therefore it may be limited as to what you can do to the drains. The haunching looked to be worn away which is also an indication of a regularly blocking drain. The drain was blocked at the time of the survey. The owner thought it was a tenant problem but it may well be a drainage problem or both!



Drain blocked. Looks DIY as haunchings not formed properly.

## 9.0) Noise transfer

Without proper insulation you could get some noise transfer, without any insulation at all you could get lots of noise transfer between the properties. We have come across several instances where this has resulted in neighbourhood disputes.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** There is little you can do about noise between the buildings. You need to consider it a characteristic of the property.

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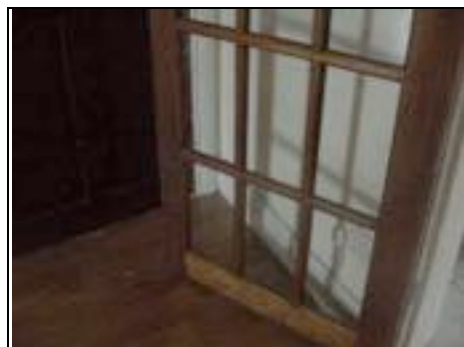
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#### 10.0) Not safety glass

We cannot see a British standard safety kite mark and we believe that this glass is not safety glass therefore it can shatter. We would recommend changing the glass to safety glass.



Door without safety glass

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Replace glass with safety glass or replace the door.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Set aside the sum of £175 to £300 per door depending upon the quality of door you want; please obtain quotations.

#### 11.0) Small rooms?

We believe the bedrooms are small in this property. It may be worth measuring your existing bedrooms and comparing dimensions. Also, measuring things that you want to have in the bedrooms such as your bed and any other furniture you like.

#### 12.0) Condensation and black mould

We did see what we thought may be signs of condensation and black mould. This may be as the property has been tenanted they do not tend to get lived in the same way as people that own the property or it may also be that the building is prone to it.



Small extract fan in bathroom  
Is this black mould (circled)?  
Conditions ripe for black mould

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend large humidity controlled extract fans are added to the kitchen, the bathroom and any areas that are used for drying clothes internally during winter months (we would assume that clothes will be dried externally during the warmer months). By large extract fans we mean 150mm.



Signs of black mould

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would anticipate costs between £250 - £500 per extract fan depending upon the wiring required. We always recommend quotes are obtained before work is agreed/commenced.



Black mould in utility room

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

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### 13.0) Cold bridging

The ceilings are sloping in areas which mean they are being formed by the roof. Please also see our comments with regards to condensation and black mould. This would lead to cold bridging.



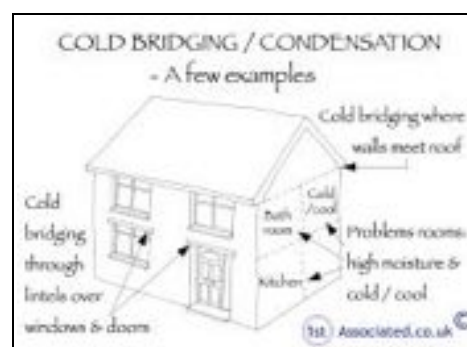
Cold bridging



Sloping ceilings

#### Cold Bridging Defined

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



Cold bridging/thermal bridging

**ACTION REQUIRED:** This is a characteristic of this property. You need to consider this. Particularly you should note our first comments with regard to the valley gutter as this is the area where the water would get into the bathroom.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

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## Services

### **14.0) DIY electrics**

We noted what we would term as DIY electrics throughout the property and a lack of socket points to the kitchen and also in some of the rooms.

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

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £250 - £500 for a test and basic alterations and improvements. £1,000 plus if you wish to add more; please obtain quotations.



DIY electrics



DIY electrics

### **15.0) Drains blocked**

Just to reiterate the drains are blocked. It may well be a lot more than just being blocked. The owner advised the drains had been blocked by the tenants and they would get the tenants to clear them. You need to ensure this definitely happens.

We would also warn that there could be quite awkward drains to the rear of the property based upon where the manholes are. There is one directly outside the kitchen, the next one is in the old passageway and then one directly outside the front door.



Drain blocked. Looks DIY as haunchings not formed properly.

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Manholes Defined

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

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



Example of manhole with haunching done properly

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

**The Ugly**

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

We have found more than the average number of things that we would classify as bad. We would specifically comment upon:

- 1) Dampness
- 2) The alterations that have taken place such as removal of chimneys and removal of walls, etc.
- 3) The relative difficulty of extending and altering the property

There are enough other things within the bad section to make this a higher risk purchase than normal. You do need to ensure that you are absolutely certain and understand these risks. Ideally we would obtain as many quotes as you possibly can before you commit to purchase and we would certainly negotiate on the price.

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## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

### **Opening up the chimney**

We discussed opening up the chimney to have a real fire in the property. Currently the chimney has been closed up and vented so you will need chimney pots on it as well as lining the chimney breast. We would add that we are always surprised at how much it costs to reinstate a chimney. The last time we were quoted on this we were quoted £3,000 on a Victorian property that had not had a chimney removed!



Chimney closed up and vented

### **Maintenance**

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

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

### **Services**

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

#### **Electrics**

The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) recommend a test and report whenever a property changes occupancy. This should be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

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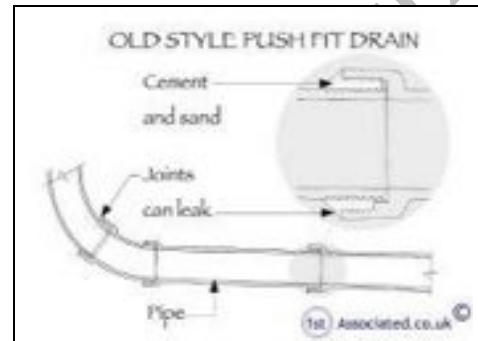
## **Heating**

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**

We would refer you to our previous comments. We would also add in older properties, such as this, drainage was often push fitted together rather than bonded together which means that they may leak over the years. We usually run the tap for 15 minutes however in this case the drains were backing up.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a closed circuit TV camera report of the drains once the drains have been unblocked by the owners.



Push fit drain

## **Water Supply**

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

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

## **DIY/Handyman Type Work**

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

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## **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:

There is a lot to consider on this property. As we discussed a lot of people would be put off this property. We believe this does give opportunity but you need to ensure that you are happy and comfortable with carrying out the work. We are more than happy to talk this through with you until you are happy to make a decision.

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

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

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

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## **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

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

### **TENURE – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)**

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

### **ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?**

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

### **SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

### **TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS**

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

### **OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION**

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

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



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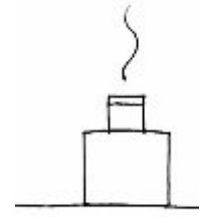
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## EXTERNAL

### CHIMNEY STACKS, FLUES ROOF WINDOWS 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 is one chimney to this property located to the front right and sits on the Party Wall (all directions given as you face the property).

#### Chimney One – located to the front right

This chimney is brick finished with a lead flashing. The chimney has been closed up and vented known as capping. From what we could see from ground level it looked in average condition considering its age, type and style.

We noted an aerial attached to the chimney which we are not keen on as it cuts into the brickwork rather like a cheese wire cutting into cheese.

Also, we noted that the front chimney breast has been removed, possibly part of the rear which is not the best of situations.



Chimney wrongly repointed in cement mortar



Chimney closed up and vented

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Unfortunately we were unable to see the top of the chimney properly known as the flaunching, we therefore cannot comment upon them other than it is likely to be a concrete slab that has capped off the chimney.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to get the chimney back into working order then quite a lot of work is needed, rebuilding the chimney as well as lining it.



Flaunching

#### Flashings Defined

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

#### Flaunchings Defined

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

#### Capping Defined

Capping is a practice used when chimneys are no longer in use to prevent moisture from entering the structure in the form of rainwater via the chimney. This usually involves the closing of the chimney with a tile or slab positioned across. It should include vents to allow air circulation.

### Flues

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

The property has a flue to the rear for the boiler within the bathroom.



Flue from boiler on rear wall

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## **Roof Windows**

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

The property has a purpose made roof light to the front, which looked in average condition, as it should as we assume it is relatively new. The important factor with roof lights is the flashing around them, in this instance we would comment they looked to be incorrectly fitted. As you commented the roof window does open a long way, it may also be classified as a fire exit. Restrainers are available for roof windows, you just need to make sure you are able to undo it in an emergency such as a fire.



Roof window to front

We would add, as we always do, it seems inevitable with roof windows that they will sooner or later leak. If this doesn't occur then they seem prone to condensation. Keep a cloth handy!

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## **Dormer Windows**

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

The dormer window has a felt flat roof, the cheeks of the dormer are clad in plastic and the windows are plastic with trickle vents (keys don't work!). We had a fairly limited view, what we could see looked in average condition as it should do for a dormer window that is relatively new.



Dormer window to rear

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



Key to window for room in roof does not work

## **Party Walls**

The party wall relates to shared items, such as the chimneys, chimney breasts, firewalls and putting load bearing lintels into walls! If you do any work on these you will need to deal with the Party Wall Act. Here is a brief explanation of it.

Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

A structure that both parties enjoy the use of or benefit from. An example of this would be where both parties gain support from a wall or utilise a chimney or chimneys.

*Any work to party structures, such as party walls or party chimney stacks, require agreement under the Party Wall Act. We would be more than happy to offer you help and advice in this matter.*

Specifically in this case we would comment that if steels have been used in the loft conversion as the lady advised then party wall agreement should have been obtained from the neighbouring properties.

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

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

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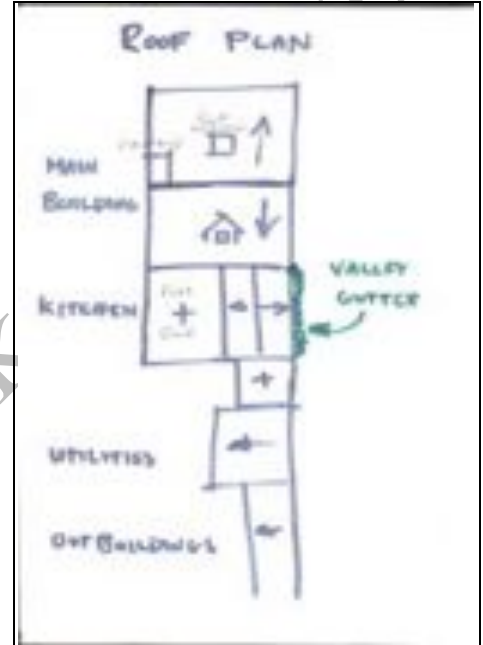
## ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS

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

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

We will consider the roofs in six areas:

- 1) Main roof
- 2) Flat roof to front bay
- 3) Rear flat roof over kitchen
- 4) Small roof between kitchen and utility room
- 5) Rear single storey roof over utility room
- 6) Outbuilding roof (see external areas)



### Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad with concrete tiles and, from ground level, this looks in average condition considering the roofs age type and style with slightly more moss than we would expect which can lead to blockages of gutters, etc.

A heavier concrete tile has replaced the original slate and therefore there should be additional roof support. Unfortunately as a room has been formed in the roof we literally cannot see whether this extra support has been added but we were advised a steel was added.



Main roof



Moss on roof

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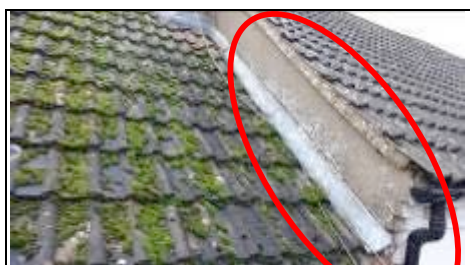
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**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would like to see a copy of the drawings, if you forward an electronic copy of these to us we can comment further.

### Step in the roof

The property sits on a sloping site, both left to right and front to back. The left to right slope means there are steps in the roof. These steps are rendered with a lead flashing. We can see that the lead flashing is coming away and also there is cracking to the right hand side.



Flashings starting to come away  
pointing coming out



Cracking to render, flashing come  
away

Next doors verge problem to roof could become your problem if it soaks into the wall and then goes down into the rooms below.



Next doors verge

### **ACTION REQUIRED:**

Planning permission, building regulations and Party Wall Agreement

Your legal adviser to check and confirm that building regulations, planning permission and Party Wall Agreement have been obtained for the roof extension and associated areas.

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### Steps in roof

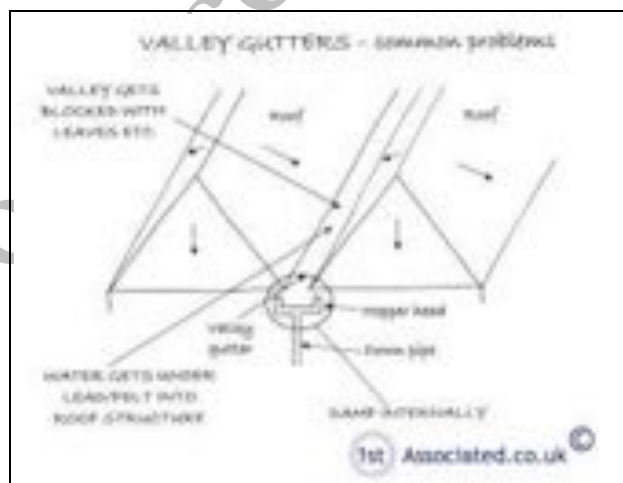
We believe the step in the roof is letting dampness in to the right hand wall. This is maybe why the plaster is becoming un-keyed in the right hand blue bedroom remembering that the ground floor and the first floor both have dry lined walls, also known as false walls. It would be interesting to open up some of the walls.

### Valley Gutters

This property has valley gutters. Valley gutters are formed where two roofs meet and these are generally problematic. Typical problems you can get with valley gutters is shown in our sketch below.



Rear valley gutter



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Unfortunately this valley gutter will have to be considered a feature of the property. What we are really intrigued by is how it drains.

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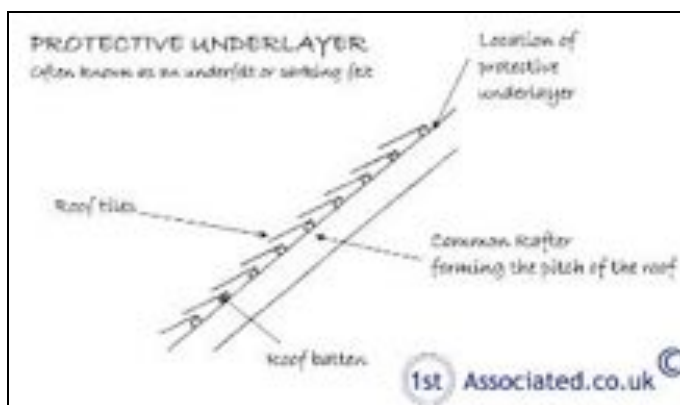
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### **Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)**

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



Protective underlayer

We were unable to view the roof due to the room formed within the roof therefore are unable to comment.

### **Flat Roofs**

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

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

### **Flat roof to front bay**

This is a flat roof covered in felt which looked in average condition.



Flat roof to front bay window

### **Rear flat roof over kitchen**

There is a flat flat roof over the kitchen. It looks like water sits on it.

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Flat roof over kitchen



Rear flat roof

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

**Small flat roof to rear**

Unfortunately our high level photograph did not come out, we will try and revisit to take another photograph of this.



Small flat roof to rear

**Single Storey Roof to rear over utility room**

This looks to be a felt mineral roof from ground level. Again, unfortunately our high level photograph did not come out, we will try and revisit to take another photograph of this. We would add that we do not recall the ceiling feeling this high within that area.



Single storey pitched roof to rear

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## **Further information on flat roofs**

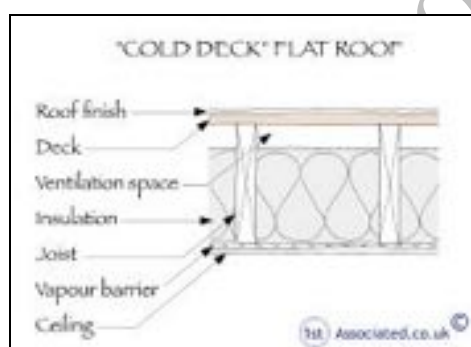
Flat roofs have moved on in their construction over the years and also the Building Regulation requirements and regulations are now stricter. Generally you will require a ventilated and insulated roof.

## **Ventilation**

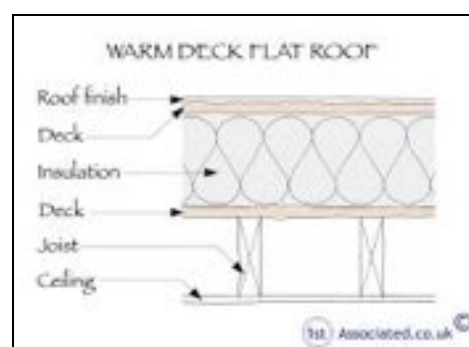
Building Regulations require flat roofs to be ventilated. Building Regulations are not retrospective but the reason for the requirement is to make sure that any moisture that enters the roof construction is dispelled by way of ventilation. We would suggest that if the opportunity arises ventilation should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

## **Insulation**

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



Cold roof



Warm roof

All the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. Flat roofs have been inspected from upper floor windows and/or ground level.

Finally, we were only able to see approximately eighty percent of the main roof to our satisfaction from ground level via our ladder or via any other vantage point that we managed to gain. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see, however a closer inspection may reveal other defects. For further comments with regard to ventilation please see the Roof Structure and Loft Section.

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## **ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT**



### **(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)**

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

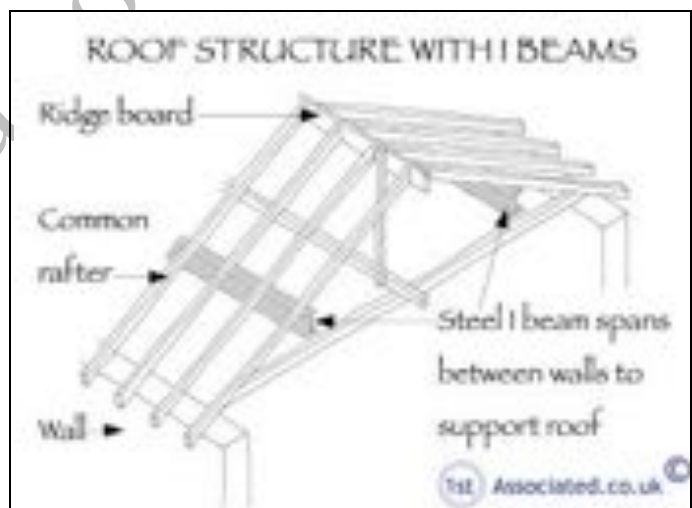
#### **Main Roof**

#### **Roof Access**

There is no roof access as a room has been formed in the roof. It is normal to actually have access panels in the roof space however in this case we could not see any. This does make us slightly suspicious but maybe we are becoming sceptical.

#### **Roof Structure**

We were unable to view the roof due to the room formed within the roof however taking an educated guess we believe this is type of roof structure with what is known as a cut timber roof. We are advised it has had additional support in the form of metal I beams. These normally replace the timber purlins if you note the adjoining sketch.



I beam roof structure

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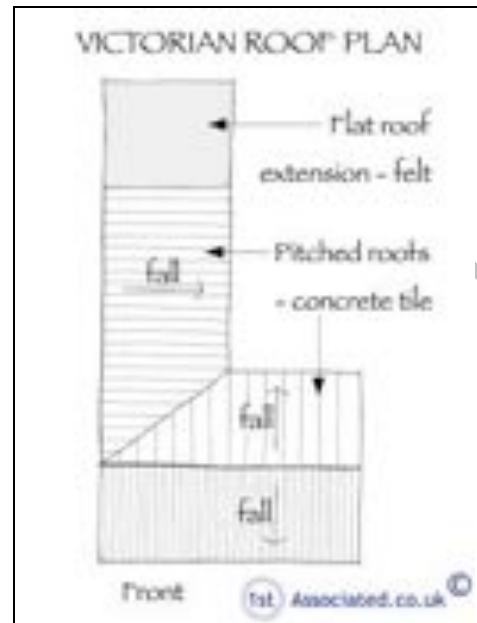
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There is a fairly complicated roof. A typical Victorian roof is adjacent for you to compare.



Typical Victorian roof plan

## **Fire Walls**

The property has two brick firewalls located one to the left hand side and one to the right hand side (all directions given as you face the property). The firewalls are also Party Walls.

### Fire Walls Defined

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

## **Water Tanks**

Typically an older Victorian property would have had a water tank. The idea behind these was to have twenty four to forty eight hours of water should the water main not work for some reason. We assume these have been removed when the alterations have been carried out.

## **Ventilation**

A modern roof would have had a breathable protective underlayer added. We are not sure in this instance if the pitched roof has been removed at all due to the amount of moss on it. This is why we would also put a question mark over whether steel beams have been added as it is particularly difficult to add them if the property has not been re-roofed.

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally we would like it opened up and have a look within the roof but as a minimum we would look at any drawings that can be provided and ideally any invoices and bills from builders as well to show that the work really has been done and not just drawings carried out.

### **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 any as the room is formed within the roof.

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**

We noted that the property has a mixture of the original cast iron gutters and downpipes and modern replacement plastic gutters and downpipes. Where these two materials are mixed there are often problems where they join and also in the falls to the outlets.



Guttering and downpipe from bay window roof, this could overflow and leak onto the wall causing dampness

### **Areas where we do not believe the rainwater goods work**

#### **Bay window**

Typically this is an area where water will overflow and you get damp patches in the front room. There were no obvious signs at the time of our inspection.

#### **Kitchen**

Water is being transferred from the main pitched roof and the flat roof onto the guttering adjacent to the kitchen window. This does look like it would overflow on a rainy day.



Gutters likely to overflow to kitchen

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### Downpipes discharge directly onto ground

The downpipes discharge directly onto the ground. This is a practice we are not particularly keen on but in this instance there looks to be little choice, normally there would be a drain going under the pavement or even a gully.



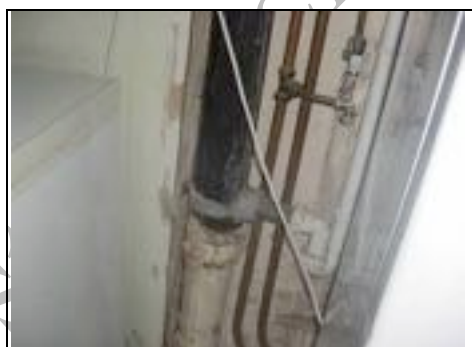
Downpipes discharge directly onto ground

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

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

### Soil and Vent Pipe

The soil and vent pipe looks to be leaking or has been leaking. It could be back up from the drains. These 'leaks' could be that the drain that is located behind the stairs is also blocked and this has been a back up of sewerage in the soil and vent pipe.



Soil and vent pipe leaking



Downpipe originally in passageway that ran down side of building  
Plastic connections to cast iron pipes looks to have leaked

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

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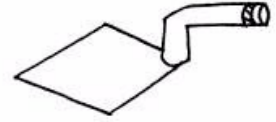
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## WALLS



*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 covered in a cement based roughcast render.

### Render

The external walls are finished in a cement based roughcast render which is painted, originally they would have been brickwork like your neighbour. The paintwork looks in reasonable condition (painted to sell?).



Cement based roughcast render to your property,  
Flemish bond brickwork next door

We have carried out a tap test (literally hitting the render with the back of a hammer). We found it to be in average condition for its age, type and style. However we do have concerns about some of the render:



Render

### High level render to rear right parapet wall

The colour and texture of the render on the right hand parapet wall leaves us to believe that it is an inside render plaster that has been added rather than an exterior one. We would also add that it is interesting that there has been a need to re-render it which we believe means that the parapet wall is leaking, possibly because the drip detail is not correct. Unfortunately this will lead to dampness getting into the walls and then into the bedrooms below.

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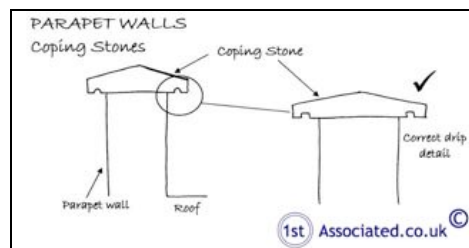
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Inside plaster/render used outside

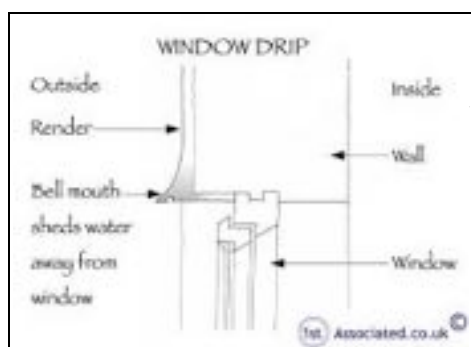


Drip detail

## Render Detailing

You can normally tell whether the render is good or not by the drip detail over the window and the bell mouth to the base of the property. As this is roughcast they do not tend to have drip details.

## Window Drip Detail



Window drip



Render

## Bell mouth to base of property

To the base of the render there was a bell mouth detail. Interestingly the rear detail looks to have been added on at a later date and it is really a bit too low. You also need to make sure that the French drain works and as water does discharge against the property.

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Bell mouth detail



Bell mouth to front



Rear

### **Painted render**

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

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

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

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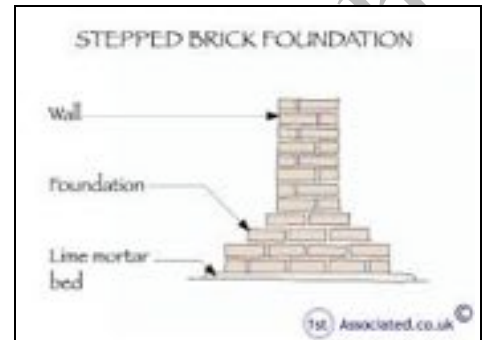


## FOUNDATIONS

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

### Foundations

Given the age of the property you may find different depths of foundations. We would expect to find a stepped brick foundation possibly with a bedding of lime mortar. There is likely to be no foundations to the bay.



Stepped brick foundation

### Bay Windows

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



Bay window

### Clay

This property stands on an area that is clay and sand. Leighton Buzzard had sand works until relatively recently when they were built on with the new development on the McDonalds side of Leighton Buzzard. They were built on areas of land that at one time you would not have considered building on. We can always remember being at college and Leighton Buzzard being famous for exporting sand. Equally there is some clay in the area which is why there are the brickworks at Bedford (at one time making more bricks than anywhere else in the world) so there are very mixed ground conditions. Obviously the building has been there for some time and would have settled into position.

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### **Building Insurance Policy**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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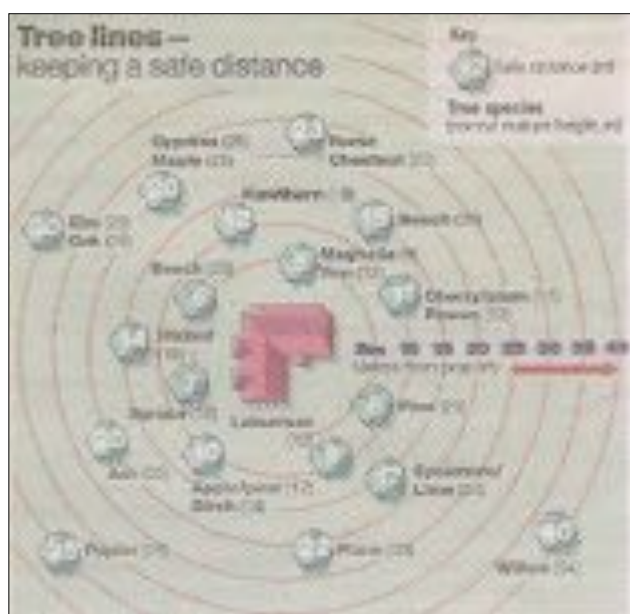


## TREES



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

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



Influencing distance 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.

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

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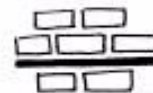
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## **DAMP PROOF COURSE**

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

In properties of this age it is unlikely that a damp proof course would have been built in originally. However, often they have had damp proof courses added at a later date. In this case we cannot see due to the render. Note; we did obtain high damp meter readings.

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

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

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## AIRBRICKS



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

### Low Level Air Bricks

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



Airbrick acting as gutter



Airbrick to front acting as gutter

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

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

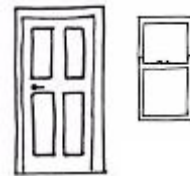
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## FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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

### Fascias and Soffits

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

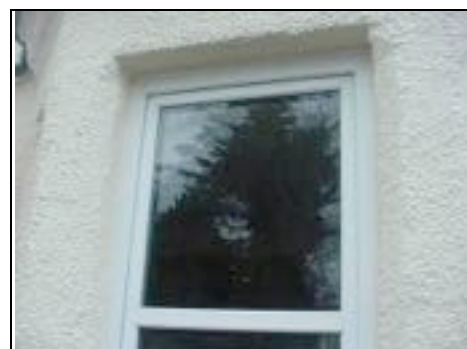
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Make sure gutters and downpipes are watertight before carrying out any work on fascias and soffits.



Fascia and soffit

### Windows and Doors

The property has older style plastic double glazed sash windows without trickle vents probably from the cheaper end of the market.



Windows without trickle vents

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### General Information on Sliding Sash Windows

If you have not lived in a property with sliding sash windows previously, you should be aware that typically the timber windows are draughty and rattle. There is no easy way to eliminate this problem. In our experience, a general ease and adjustment of the windows and the addition of a plastic tube draught sealer (available from most DIY stores) and regular redecoration is the best option to minimise the draughtiness of the windows in this case. Horizontal Sliding Sash Windows (sometimes known as York Windows).

The plastic windows such as these became so airtight that it was necessary via building regulations (in other words the building law) to add trickle vents to allow an airflow. Our concern in this property is that there is a lot of dampness and not much airflow.

### Trickle Vents Defined

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



Trickle vents

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Investigate price of installing windows. You can spend a few thousand pounds to many thousands of pounds.

### Transferable Guarantees

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

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

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## **EXTERNAL DECORATIONS**

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

The external decorations looked in reasonable condition. The property may have been painted to sell or painted quite recently.

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

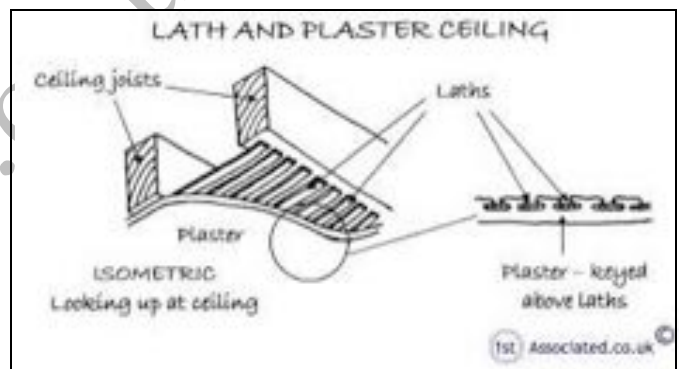
*In this section we look at the finish applied to the structural elements such as the plasterwork applied to the ceiling joists, walls or partitions, together with the construction of the internal walls and partitions.*

### 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 originally likely to be lath and plaster however much of it has now been replaced with plasterboard or a proprietary board. With these properties that have been altered over the years you never know exactly what you have got until you open it up in many cases.

#### Lath and Plaster Defined

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



Lath and plaster ceiling

#### Plasterboard Defined

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

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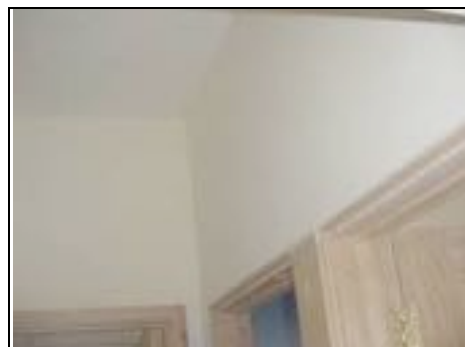


## **Internal Walls and Partitions**

On the ground floor these are predominantly solid walls as the original construction. On the first floor these are predominantly studwork partitions as the majority of the walls have been removed with the exception of part of the wall to the right bedroom and the left bedroom.

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

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

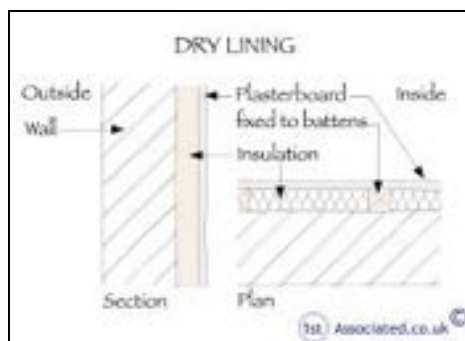


Brickwork wall to front of property.  
Most walls on first floor replaced with studwork

## **Perimeter Walls**

The perimeter walls are wet plaster onto brickwork generally as would have been the way originally with this property. We believe they have then had a modern gypsum plaster skim coated on them in many areas.

### **Dry lining/false walls**



Dry lining

There is dry lining to the ground floor and also dry lining within the roof areas. Our concern with the dry lining particularly in the ground floor is that it may be hiding dampness and/or poor quality repairs where the chimney has been removed.

Again, we cannot be 100% certain of the wall construction without opening them up which goes beyond the scope of this report. This comment has been based on the visual look of the wall which is relatively “smooth” and normally means a modern finish.

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

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

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

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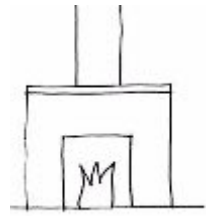
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## **CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES**



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

At the time of the survey no chimneys were in use. Any chimneys that you do not propose to use should be capped and ventilated to prevent dampness. Any chimneys you do intend to use should be swept and a check should be carried out that a lining is in place.

### **Chimney removed to front of lounge**

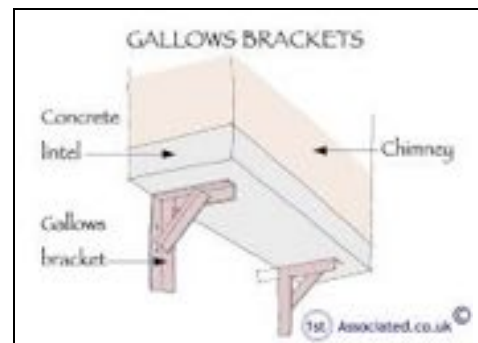
In addition to the missing chimney it has also been dry lined in this area.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The existing owner should be asked for details with regard to what has happened in this area. He should really have understood the alterations and implications of the removal of the chimney to carry out the roof extension.

In years gone by chimneys were supported with a gallows bracket such as the sketch; this is no longer considered acceptable.



Chimney removed in lounge



Gallows brackets

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

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

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

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

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## FLOORS

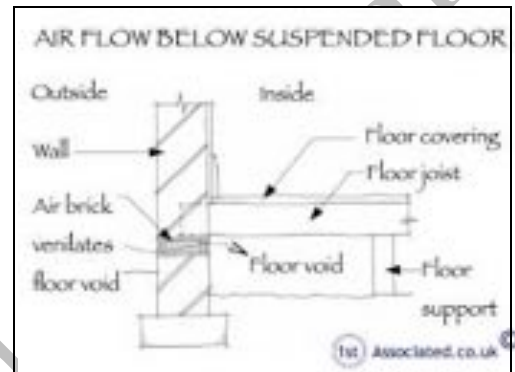


*Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.*

### Ground Floor

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

We could not open up the floors as we could not see a way of doing so without damaging them. Having said that, it would be great if we could open up the floors to check their condition.

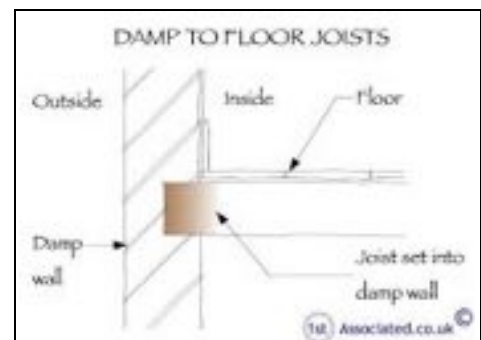


Suspended timber floor

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Open up the ground floor to check the condition underneath it.

### First Floor

We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards with embedded timbers, as this is typical in this age of property. Again, we could not see a way of lifting the floor without damaging it.



Embedded timbers

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#### Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



Joist and floorboards

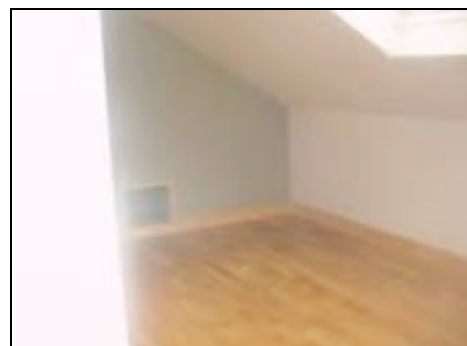
We noted broken tiles in the bathroom.



Broken tiles in bathroom

#### Room in the Roof

We generally find in loft conversions that the cheapest sort of boarding is used which tends to be a manmade floorboard sheet which in this case has been covered over with laminate so we cannot view it.



Laminate flooring in room in roof

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

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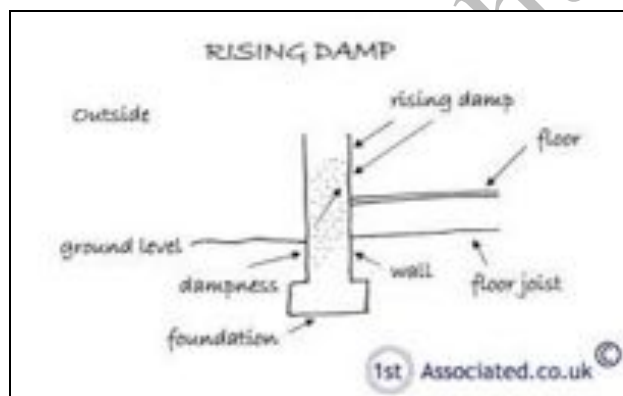


## **DAMPNESS**

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

### **Rising Damp**

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



Rising damp

A 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.



High damp meter reading to bay

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see the Executive Summary.

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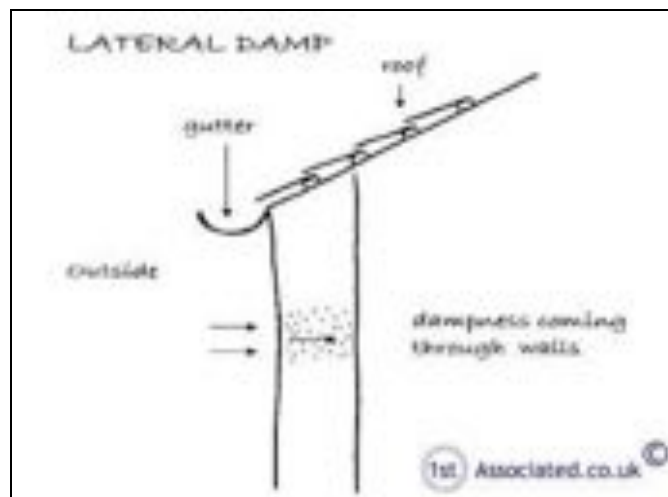
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## **Lateral or Penetrating Dampness**

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



We used a resistance meter on the external walls. We have found significant dampness.

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

Lateral damp



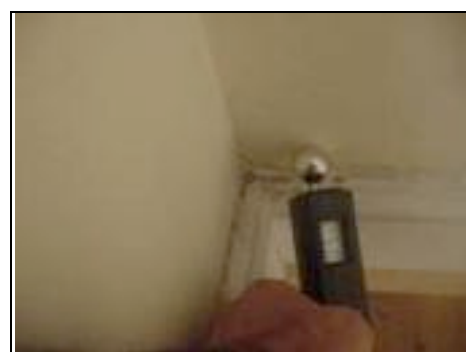
High damp reading of 62  
Should be 30-60

## **Condensation**

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

At the time of the inspection there were signs there had been condensation in the property such as black mould in the bathroom and to some of the rooms such as the utility room.

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.



Signs of black mould

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### **Extract fans in kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas**

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend large humidity controlled extract fans be added to kitchens, bathrooms and any rooms where you intend to dry clothes.



Small extract fan in bathroom  
Is this black mould  
Conditions ripe for black mould

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would anticipate costs between £250 - £500 per extract fan depending upon the wiring required. We always recommend quotes are obtained before work is agreed/commenced.

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**

We cannot see a British standard safety kite mark to the glazed door and we believe that this glass is not safety glass therefore it can shatter. We would recommend changing the glass to safety glass.

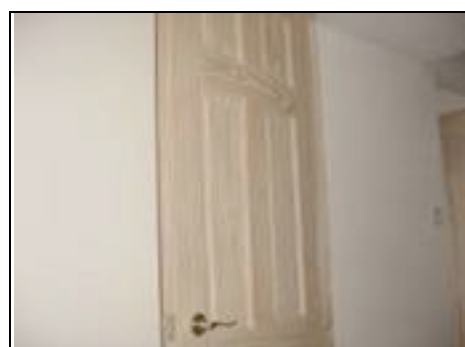


Not safety glass

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

### **Fire Doors**

There are, what we believe to be, fire doors to the first floor bedrooms.



Fire door

### **Staircase**

We noted that the underside of the staircases were exposed. We are surprised that building regulations passed the stairs without it being lined. It is more normal today to have a half hour fire barrier to stop fire spreading from the ground floor to the first floor in a worse case scenario. You may wish to take a view on whether you add this.



Stairs not lined

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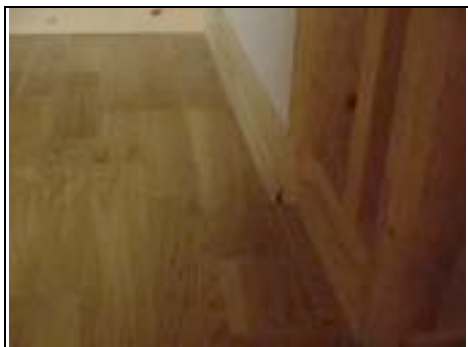
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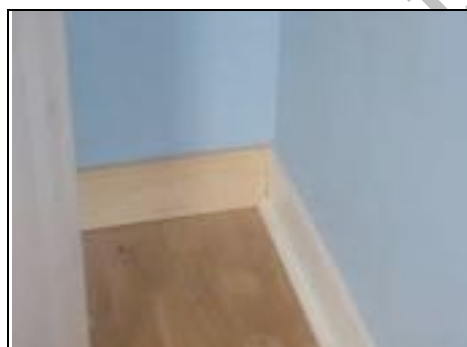


## **Skirtings**

We do not normally comment on skirtings however in this case we would comment that we do not believe this is a double profile skirting (we were impressed that you knew about them!). The property has basic butt jointed skirtings as opposed to mitre skirtings which usually have a 45 degree angle to form a corner.



Not double profile skirting



Butt jointed skirting

## **Cupboards**

We noted basic cupboards in the bathroom.



Basic

## **Kitchen**

We found the kitchen poor condition. We appreciate you are looking to refurbish this.

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

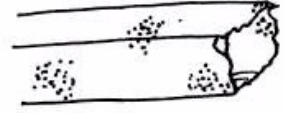
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## **TIMBER DEFECTS**



*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 believe there are conditions underneath the floor that are appropriate for dry rot. We would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had no view of the roof.

### **Wet Rot**

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

We have not visually seen any signs of significant wet rot during the course of our inspection. Wet rot may be present in the floor or in the roof or underneath the flat roofs. Again, we would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had no view of the roof.

### **Woodworm**



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

The roof/floor is the main area that we look usually for woodworm. In this case we have been able to view the roof or the floor.

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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.*

Some rooms are acceptable, some rooms are below average.

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**

We were unable to view the roof due to the room formed within the roof therefore are unable to comment other than to say in a modern roof there should be a good level of insulation.

### **Walls**

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

### **Windows**

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

### **Services**

We were advised that the boiler was relatively new, located in the bathroom. If the property has been rented out it should have had a regular service. Service records should be obtained. It is essential for the services to be regularly maintained to run efficiently.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ask for copies of the Gas Safe test certificate.

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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](http://www.cat.org.uk) (Centre for Alternative Technology)*

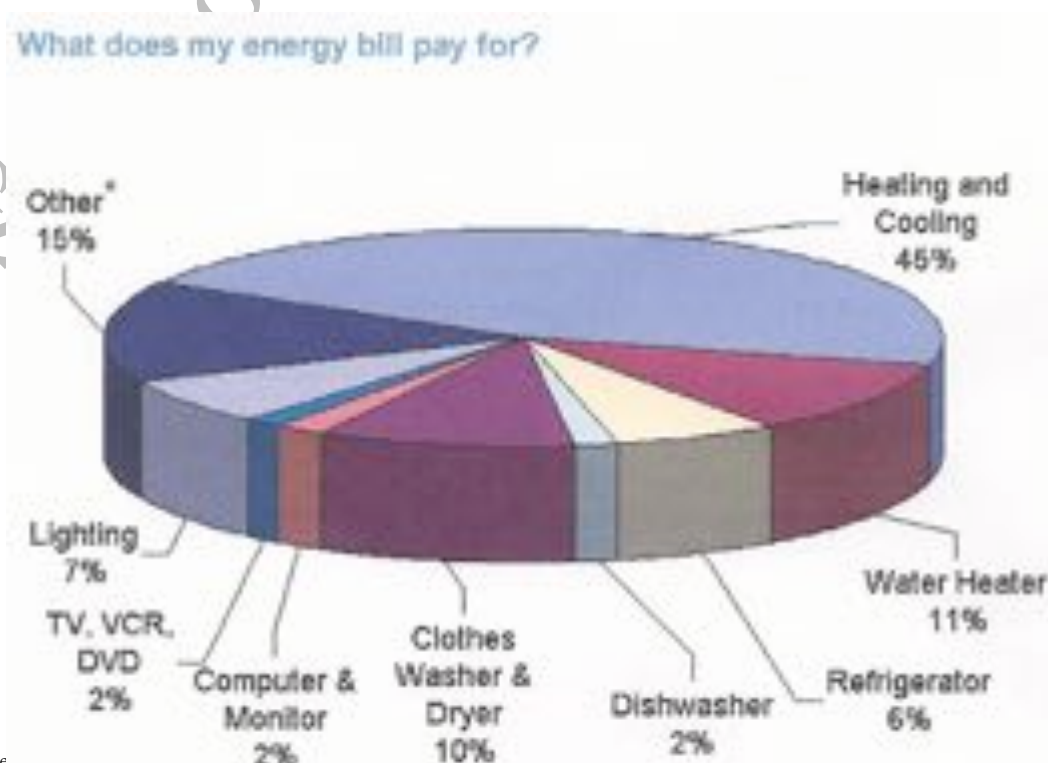
*or Sustainable Energy Without the Hot Air by David J C MacKay  
HTTP//www.withouthotair.com/Videos.html to download for free or buy a paper copy as we did.*

*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.



## OTHER MATTERS



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

### Security

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

### Fire / Smoke Alarms

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend, for your own safety, that 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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## **Asbestos**

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

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

Our insurance company requires us to advise we are not asbestos surveyors and advises us to recommend asbestos surveyors are instructed and that you have your own asbestos survey carried out.

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

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## **SERVICES**

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

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

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## ELECTRICITY



*It is strange to think that electricity only started to be used in domestic properties at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> 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 front of the bay. The fuse board looked 1980's/1990's and better are now available.



Fuse Board

### Socket points

There is a lack of socket points in the property as there often is in older properties.

### Earth Test

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



Earth test

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## Cabling

We noted cables running across the roof. We are not keen on this practice particularly where they are sitting on damp moss.



Cables on roof

There is a horizontal bar which we are not sure what it is. This may relate to electrics.



What is this horizontal bar?

**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.

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 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005. Any comments made within this report or verbally do not change this requirement.

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

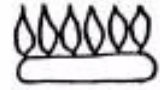
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## GAS



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

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

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



Gas meter front right

**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.

### Carbon Monoxide

No carbon monoxide monitors were noted.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** It is recommended that an audible carbon monoxide detector is fitted (complying with British Standard EN50291) within the property. Carbon monoxide detectors are no substitute for regular servicing of gas installations and their flues.

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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 did not physically see the stopcock, they are normally located under the kitchen sink.

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

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

### Water Pressure

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

### Plumbing

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

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## **Heating**

The boiler was located in the bathroom, it is manufactured by Worcester.

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



Boiler needs to be vented to outside air

## **Ten Minute Heating Test**

We did not carry out a ten minute test however the boiler was working at the time of our inspection.

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

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

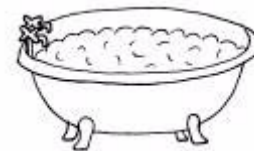
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## **BATHROOM**



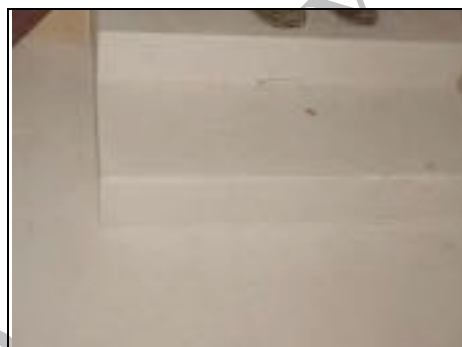
*In this section we consider the overall condition of the sanitary fittings such as the bathroom, the kitchen, the utility room and the cloakroom.*

### **Bathroom**

The property has a refurbished bathroom which looks in relatively new condition. We noted a crack in the step which was hidden by a mattress!



Mattress hiding problem



Cracked step hidden

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. The drains were blocked.

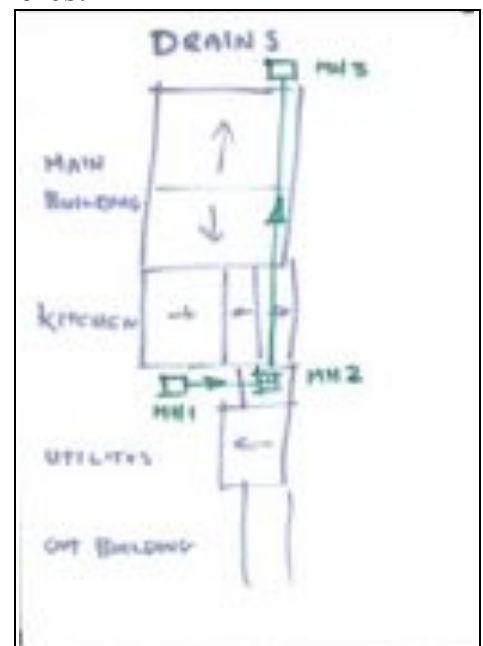
### Inspection Chambers / Manholes

*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 inspection chambers / manholes.

#### Manholes Defined

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



Drains

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**Inspection Chamber / Manhole One located to the rear of the kitchen**

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

From what we could see it is concrete built.



Manhole outside kitchen



Drain blocked. Looks DIY as haunchings not formed properly.

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

**Inspection Chamber / Manhole Two under stair area**

We were unable to lift this manhole therefore are unable to comment.



Couldn't lift drain

**Inspection Chamber / Manhole Three located to the front**

We were unable to lift this manhole therefore are unable to comment.

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

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

### **Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage**

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

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

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

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

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

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## OUTSIDE AREAS

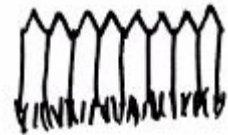
The main focus of this report has been on the main building. If you wish us to do a specific report on the other buildings then you need to instruct us for this separately. We are offering here a brief overview.

### OUTBUILDINGS/ PARKING



Parking is roadside parking on a first come first serve basis. Parking may be difficult in this area as it was built before the needs and requirements of car owners were considered because cars did not exist! If it is important to you to park in and around your property you need to see how easy/hard it is to park in the area.

### EXTERNAL AREAS



#### Front Garden

The front of the property sits directly onto the pavement/road. At the time of our several visits there were wheelie bins outside the properties. We are not sure where the wheelie bins are supposed to go.



Wheelie bins

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## Rear Garden

The rear has a garden together with an attached outbuilding and also a garden room at the end of the garden.



Rear Garden

## Outbuilding

Single storey outbuilding with pitched corrugated metal roof which is rusting and corrugated plastic.



Outbuilding



Crack in outbuilding



Inside outbuilding



Sink in outbuilding

## Bonding timbers/lintel

There looked to be some bonding timbers in the outbuilding which also means there may well be some in the actual house as well. These can be problematic.



Bonding timber/lintel

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Bonding timbers/lintel defined

Structural supports. Bonding timbers were meant to hold the walls together but can often rot and cause problems.

### **Summerhouse/garden room**

There is a summerhouse/garden room to the rear of the garden.



Summerhouse

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

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

### **Neighbours**

#### **Left Hand Neighbours**

We met the left neighbour several times as we have tried to get into this property. We recommend visiting.

#### **Right Hand Neighbours**

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

#### **Other Neighbours**

We met the neighbourhood cat several times.

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## **POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

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

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

However, with regard to Envirosearch or similar general reports please see our article link on the [www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk) Home Page.

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

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

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

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

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

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

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

For and on Behalf of  
XXXX  
Independent Chartered Surveyors  
XXXX

**This Report is dated: XXXX**

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## **REFERENCES**

The repair and maintenance of houses

*Published by Estates Gazette Limited*

Life expectancies of building components

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

Surveying buildings

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

House Builders Bible

*By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press*

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## **LIMITATIONS**

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

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

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

## **ENGLISH LAW**

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

## **SOLE USE**

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

## **APPROVALS/GUARANTEES**

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

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

## **LAYOUT PLAN**

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

## **WEATHER**

It was a mild and dry 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.

## **EMPTY PROPERTY**

The property was empty at the time of our survey, we were therefore not able to carry out our usual question and answer session or have our questionnaire filled out.

## **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) We did not view the roof due to room formed within the roof.
- 2) We did not open up the walls as we could not see a way of doing this without causing damage.
- 3) We did not open up the ground floor, first floor or second floor as we could not see a way to do it without causing damage.

## **BUILDING INSURANCE**

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

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

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

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

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

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## APPENDICES

1. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
2. Information on the Property Market
3. French Drain Article
4. Condensation and Cold Bridging Article
5. Article - What's in the Building Regulations and when do Building Control Surveyors visit and what do they do when they do visit?

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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](http://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](http://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](http://www.halifax.co.uk) and [www.nationwide.co.uk](http://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](http://www.hometrack.co.uk)

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

[www.motleyfool.co.uk](http://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](http://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](http://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 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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# Victorian and Edwardian property problems with Condensation and Cold Bridging

Victorian properties that have been extended and altered over the years with new thermal properties can have cold bridging because of the mix of old and new standards.



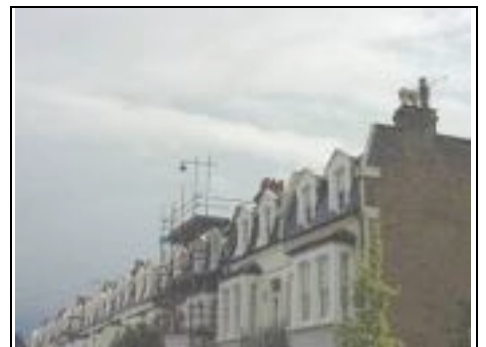
Victorian properties

## How does cold bridging work?

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

## Cold Bridging

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



Loft conversion and dormer windows

## Loft conversions and dormers

Loft conversion and dormer windows can allow heat to escape.

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## Heat loss and sloping ceilings

Our original survey sketch adjacent shows how heat can be lost when sloping ceilings are present in properties such as in loft conversions and dormer windows.



Heat loss and sloping ceilings

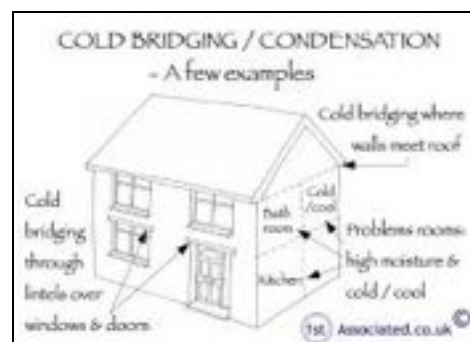
## Combination of issues can cause cold bridging

This is often caused by a combination of issues. It can occur from things such as having a shower or a bath, cooking or clothes washing, particularly if you are drying washing on the radiators. It could, in commercial properties, be a large gathering of people breathing (this can cause a lot of humidity) in a building that has stood cold and empty for some time such as a church, village hall, sports centre or a crèche. These human atmospheres create a climate, which can result in condensation on the cold elements of the structure and fabric if the room is not ventilated properly.

## Condensation and Cold Bridging in certain era properties

### Here is our sketch on Cold Bridging

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



Cold bridging/condensation

## Cold Bridging isn't just about condensation on mirrors

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

Cold bridging is far worse than condensation as it is caused by an element in the structure, which you can do very little to change without great expense.

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## When is Cold Bridging Likely?

In our experience we have seen cold bridging occurring in:

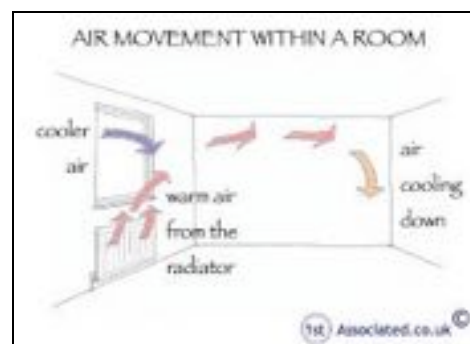
- 1) Eras of properties where there are warm elements and colder elements to the building.
- 2) Where you have a mixture of warm rooms and cold rooms.

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

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

## How to solve Cold Bridging

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



Air movement within a room

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## Where do we most commonly find Cold Bridging?

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



Victorian property that has been modernised

Red oval is original sliding sash window

Green oval is new large window that has been added

## Is your lifestyle a factor in Cold Bridging?

This is often a contentious and difficult question, particularly where the occupier is a tenant and there is a disagreement between the landlord and the occupier as to why there is mould in the property. In our experience the major factor is the size of the family living in a property. This is especially the case with large families with young children and where in turn there is a lot of washing of clothes being done.



Very old Victorian water heater

## Winter months and cold bridging

This is particularly the case in the winter months, with the wet washed clothes being dried on radiators. Also general hygiene washing and not to mention cooking to feed everyone all lead toward a more humid atmosphere.

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



Older style cylinder with loose insulation jacket

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## Design problem or a lifestyle problem?

### Condensation and cold bridging explained further

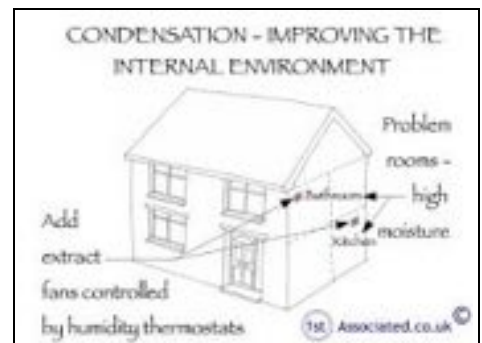
This really is a difficult question to answer. We have been involved in a number of cases as expert witnesses or advocates and the answer can vary. We would comment that there are factors that can be changed and factors that can't be changed. For example, the occupiers' lifestyle can in most cases be amended. This may involve the occupier having an understanding of the problems they are causing. For example, drying lots of washing on a radiator inside may be causing excessive moisture in the atmosphere. Equally not opening the windows and closing or sealing up vents can be a problem.



Inappropriate double glazed windows change the look of the property  
Red circle is insulated roof indicated as snow is not visible

### Design of the Building

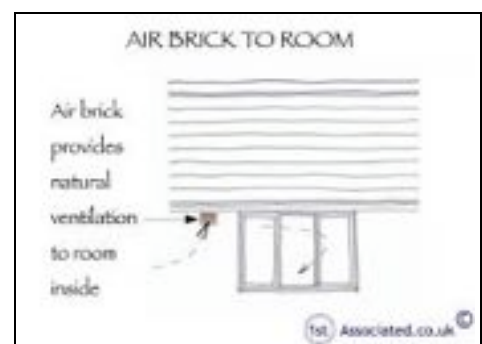
Sometimes it really is down to the design of the property. Where there are cold elements in it, such as a concrete structural frame or concrete lintels, when these are in contact with moist air condensation occurs. Sometimes this is impossible to stop but often it is possible to reduce it by having a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



Condensation

### Things to remember about an air brick

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



Air brick may not ventilate room enough

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## Seasons change and condensation and cold bridging problems occur

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

### Lifestyle can cause cold bridging

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

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



Classic Victorian Sliding sash windows where they have managed to put in one pane of glass



Sliding sash windows can swell in the winter months

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## **What's in the Building Regulations and when do Building Control Surveyors visit and what do they do when they do visit and why they do not supervise the builder!**

### ***Independent Surveyors***

We are independent surveyors, which means we are not linked to or owned by an estate agent or lending institute, and as a result we are only working with your best interests in mind. Since we are solely surveyors, we can keep our overheads down and ultimately our prices as well.

Please free phone us on 0800 298 5424 to speak to a surveyor. We feel the quality of our surveys is one of the best on the market. We offer a reasoned view, based upon our knowledge and experience and we don't make a mountain out of a molehill. Equally if we think the property has problems we say so in a clear, jargon-free manner. We also use sketches, photographs and digital images to clarify what we are saying like the examples shown below, and circles and ovals on our photos and sketches to highlight certain areas making our reports as easy to understand as possible.



An example of one of our photos



An example of one of our sketches

Having a survey carried out on a property by a qualified surveyor will give you extra peace of mind.

### ***What are the Building Regulations?***

The building regulations are a set of regulations that specify the minimum standards of construction required when the property is built and are very much about safety.

### ***What is a Building Control Surveyor?***

Sometimes known as a Building Control Officer, also known as the Building Regulations Department, sometimes known as the District Surveyor. All of them when dealing with new building regulations check any properties that are built and brought to their attention meet this standard. At the end of it a completion certificate is issued however this isn't a guarantee that everything is ok with the building.

### ***Does the Building Control Surveyor set the standards on the building site or does the builder set the standards?***

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Building control is a process that every major building construction has to go through before building on site.

There are several stages to a building project:-

- Planning permission
- Building Regulations



## ***In brief what does each of these stages do?***

### ***Planning permission explained and when do I need planning permission***

Planning permission broadly looks at the aesthetics of the project and how it fits in and suits the location. This can be what is known as an outline planning permission where you look to see if the project is possible and fits the plan for the area (each area has a development plan that is built up by the local authority after consultation). Detailed planning permission, exactly what it says is required for anything from a brand new Tesco's shopping centre to an extension on your house.

### ***Building Control explained***

We said briefly above that building control relates to the safety standards in building and looks at the minimum standards. We would add to this it is also a development of best practice that's happened over many years. It's now set down in law under the building regulations and appended to this are the building regulations approved documents which explain ways in which you can meet the building regulation requirements which are very much set out as a performance standard. This means that you have to meet a set level of performance say to meet building regulations performance standard maybe that it isn't damp.

### ***Building Regulations what do I need to do?***

However you still can't build if you have just planning permission (or you can but it's very much at your own risk and could be a very expensive way forward). You then need to have building regulations approval which looks at how a property is built and requires that you provide drawings showing how the building is put together. There is a document known as a Building Regulations Approved Document which gives guidance on the building regulations which are a statutory requirement and best or common design practice.



## ***The different stages and parts to the Building Regulations***

### ***Building Regulations Structural Safety Part A***

The weight of the building from the walls, furniture and people in the building will be transmitted to the ground, so as not to cause instability to the building or other



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buildings. Requires buildings to be built in a way ensuring no collapse will occur disproportionate to its cause.

Ground movement such as freezing of subsoil will not impair the stability of the building.

## Building Regulations Fire Safety Part B

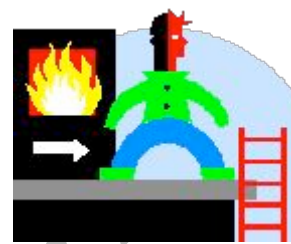
Requires safe means of escape from the building.

Requires the stability of a building to be maintained in a fire, both internally and externally.

Internally - the wall lining i.e. plaster, plasterboard or wooden boards on the walls and ceiling will resist the spread of flames and give off reasonable levels of heat, if on fire. Internal stability will be maintained during fire and fire spread will be prohibited.

Fire and smoke will be prohibited from spreading to concealed spaces in a buildings structure.

Externally - the external walls and roof will resist spread of fire to walls and roofs of other buildings. The building will be easily accessible for fire fighters and their equipment.



## Building Regulations Site Preparation and Damp Proofing Part C

Nothing should be growing on the ground covered by the building.

Precautions must be taken to stop gases and dangerous substances from previous land use from entering the building and endangering the health and safety of occupants.

Subsoil drainage will be in place, if needed, to stop the passage of ground moisture to the interior of the building and to prevent damage to the fabric of the building.

The walls, floors and roof of the building shall prevent moisture passing to the inside of the building.

## Building Regulations Toxic Substances Part D

Insulating materials inserted into cavity walls can give off fumes. Prevention must be taken to stop these fumes reaching occupants of the building.

## Building Regulations Soundproofing Part E

Floors and walls between domestic buildings should have a certain resistance to the passage of sound.

Sound insulation requirements also apply to floors and certain walls within individual dwellings and new schools.



## Building Regulations Ventilation Part F

The building must have adequate ventilation and provision to prevent condensation occurring in the roof structure.

## Building Regulations Hygiene Part G

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Adequate sanitation facilities i.e. toilet.

A house must have either a bath or shower with ability to heat hot water.

Unvented hot water storage systems - Restrictions apply to who can install the system.



## Building Regulations Drainage and Waste Disposal Part H

An adequate system to carry water used for cooking, washing, toilet, bath or shower to a sewer cesspool or settlement tank must be in place.

A cesspool or settlement tank must be impermeable to liquids and have adequate ventilation. It must also have means of access for emptying, not harm the health of any person and not contaminate water or water supply.

An adequate system to carry rainwater away from the roof of a building eg. guttering carrying water to a sewer.

A place to put a wheelie bin or dustbin. The place must not harm anyone's health.



## Building Regulations Heating Appliances Part J

Must have an adequate air supply for combustion and for efficient working of a fluepipe or chimney.

Appliances shall discharge the products of combustion to the outside.

The appliance, fireplace and chimney shall reduce the risk of the building catching fire.

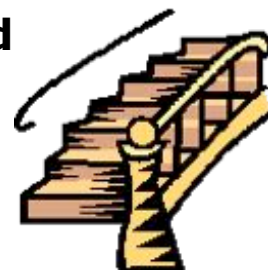


## Building Regulations Stairs, Ramps and Guards Part K

Stairs, ramps and ladders shall provide safety for people, when moving between different levels of a building.

Stairs, ramps, floors and balconies shall be adequately guarded.

Safety shall be provided for people using vehicle ramps and loading bays.



## Building Regulations Conservation of Fuel and Power Part L

Part L has recently been sub-divided into four areas, New Dwellings, Existing Dwellings, New Buildings Other Than Dwellings, Existing Buildings Other Than Dwellings.

Provision must be made for the conservation of fuel and power in a building.



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The fabric of the building must limit heat loss.

Controls to operate the heating of the building and heating of water.

By limiting heat loss from hot water tanks and hot water pipes.

Lighting systems in buildings should use no more energy than needed and have adequate controls.

## **Building Regulations Access and Facilities for People with Disabilities Part M**

In Part M, "people with disabilities" means people who have an impairment which limits their ability to walk or which requires them to use a wheelchair for mobility or have impaired hearing or sight.

Reasonable provision shall be made for people with disabilities at entrances to and within new dwellings and buildings.

An existing building should have reasonable provision:

For people with disabilities to gain access and use the building.

If toilets are provided, reasonable provision shall be made available for people with disabilities.

If a building has seating such as audience or spectator seating, reasonable provision should be made for people with disabilities.

## **Building Regulations Glazing Materials and Protection Part N**

Glazing that people come into contact with whilst in a building, should, if broken, break in a way unlikely to cause injury, resist impact without breaking or be shielded or protected from impact.

Buildings, other than dwellings that have transparent glazing which people come into contact with while moving around a building, must have features to make it apparent. Windows that can be opened must be operated safely and provision made for safe accessible cleaning.



## **Building Regulations Electrical Safety Part P**

These change from time to time. Plans and drawings are submitted to pass these various regulations.

**Thank you for reading this article. Other articles that may be of interest to you on our website are:**

**Does Building Control Approval mean that the property is up to modern day standards?**

**Approved Inspectors - v Local Authority Building Control Officers**

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## **Does Building Control Approval mean that the property is up to modern day standards?**

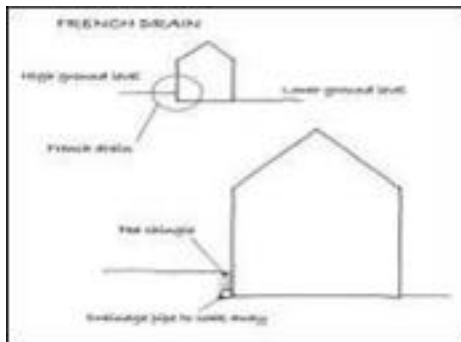
### ***Independent Surveyors***

If you need help and advice with regard to extending or altering your property, structural surveys, residential building surveys, commercial building surveys, specific defects reports or engineers reports or any other property problems please free phone for a chat with an independent surveyor on 0800 298 5424.

We can offer you a comprehensive survey report, which offers you solutions and anticipated costs for any works we suggest need carrying out on a property. Our surveys contain photographs of the property and explanatory sketches, which clients have informed us helps explain the survey report.

### ***What do the circles and ovals mean in our reports?***

In our building surveys and structural surveys the circles and ovals are a method that we used to draw attention to property problem areas so that you are not left wondering what the property problem is like this example below.



An example of one of our sketches



An example of one of our photos

## **Do Solicitors sometimes give wrong advice?**

We recently had several incidents where we have found building defects in a property and we have been advised by the solicitors that it has building control approval as if this is the be all and end all of the matter.



## ***What are Building Control Approval and Planning Approval?***

For those that are not aware the local authority is required to give approval of any new building construction or major alteration.



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## ***Planning Permission Approval***

This comes in several formats, the first planning permission looks at the aesthetics of how a property is and how it blends in with the local environment. This can range from anything from an older building, making sure the extension is appropriate for building in the area to the modern property having say a balcony added to ensure it doesn't affect someone's privacy, and there are also quirks to what planning permission also looks at (although we are sure that planners don't think of them as quirks) such as if you are looking to put up a temporary structure for a fair amount of time you may also need temporary planning permission. Planning permission falls into two areas;

- Outline planning permission which is a broad view on whether planning permission would be achieved and if so gives guidance.
- Detailed Planning Permission which is the actual consent, that is when you are preparing drawings and carrying out investigations to obtain detailed consent of what you can build.

## ***Building Regulations***

The other area that we get local authority approval on is building regulations. This is what we want to talk about in this article.

### ***Building Regulations approval is a legal requirement***

Building regulations approval is a legal requirement and there is a statute document relating to it and the statute document is written in terms of what we call performance standards and this means it will say that a property should be wind and watertight. There are then in addition to this the approved documents.

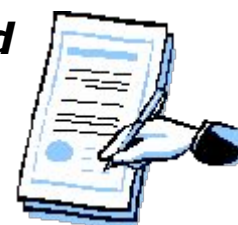


### ***Building Regulations approved documents***

Building regulation approved documents are sometimes mistaken for building regulations and these approved documents illustrate and explain how the building regulations can be achieved. As mentioned these are by performance standards so you can look up that a damp proof course will stop damp getting in the property and this is best achieved by having it two courses above the ground level.

### ***Approved documents take time to write and may not be up to date***

We would add a new or innovative design may not be included in the improved documents and ways of carrying out the work as you would expect because it is new and innovative.



### ***Building Regulations in summary***

You could probably best explain it that the building regulation approved documents show traditional solutions to building problems. Finally we would add that the standards are a minimum standard.

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## ***National House Building Council standards – What on earth are the NHBC standards?***

There are other standards that may well affect how a property is built such as the National House Building Council NHBC who have their own agreed standards which is what they check when they are looking to give an NHBC National House Building Council warranty. We believe they also inspect all building control services as private building control surveyors.

## ***Local Authority Building Control Surveyors and Private Approved Building Control Surveyors***

We would comment that building control once was carried out by local authority building control surveyors which is the traditional way that has been used for many decades and obviously have local knowledge. Today you can also use private approved building control surveyors who often deal nationally with one client such as a house-builder like:

Barratt Homes Ltd

Taylor Wimpey Ltd

George Wimpey UK Ltd

Persimmon Homes Ltd

David Wilson Homes Ltd

Bellway Homes Ltd

Miller Homes Ltd

Morris Homes Ltd

Redrow Homes Ltd

Crest Nicholson Residential Plc

Berkeley Group Plc

Countryside Properties Plc

Cala Ltd

Kier Residential Ltd

Bovis Homes Ltd

J S Bloor Ltd

Banner Homes

Lovell Partnerships Ltd

Gladedale Homes Ltd

Linden Ltd

McCarthy & Stone (Devs) Ltd



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Alison Homes

Jones Homes

Laing Ltd

Stewart Milne Group Ltd

Galliford Try Plc

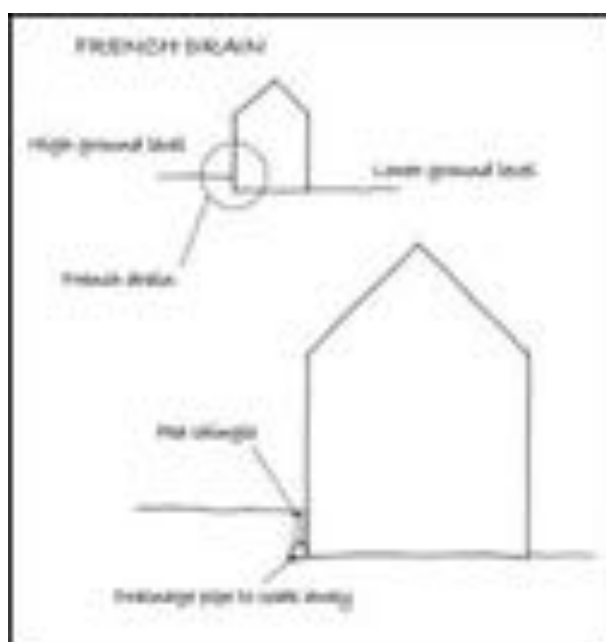
Willmott Dixon Housing Ltd

Taylor Woodrow Homes

The reason why these companies use a nationally approved building control service is so they can get their one type design approved. These private building control surveyors will approve a type of construction which will then be built nationwide. If we take a company that's a big house builder such as Bloor Homes you will notice that they have similar houses all over the country albeit with a little bit of difference perhaps a different roof tile.

We are giving you a big long list like this so that if you do see any of these names and you have a problem with the building control department you will know that it isn't necessarily going to be a case of just ringing up your local council and you may have to seek out the private building control company.

We haven't by all means had experience with all of these companies but we have had experience with quite a few of them including instances of where damp proof courses have been put too low, in one case actually at ground level rather than two courses above it. Another case where they put the pea shingle at the top of the French drain but didn't actually put the French drain in.



Sketch of a French drain

We have got cases where the drains ran back towards the house which isn't very nice as the last place you want your sewerage is actually in your house. Although we didn't see it we were once told about the lovely case where the builder was short for time and the drains hadn't been plumbed in properly. We have also been

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involved in technically complex expert witness cases where air source heat pumps have been used and this has resulted in lots of condensation. Particularly we have been involved in what we would term as standard snagging work which is where you look at a property that is newly finished and check it is to standard. Remember that the house builders are building to a price and to a time scale and sometimes things go wrong.

## ***Commercial Building Control Surveyors***

We know that companies which roll out the same designs UK wide and in many cases worldwide have started the expression Mctowns in such companies as

McDonalds

KFC

Burger King

Pizza Express

Nando's

Subway

Pret a Manger

Starbucks

Costa Coffee



This isn't just the smaller buildings, there are of course companies such as Tesco, Sainsburys and Morrisons who build superstores within city centres and out of town. The advantage is clear for these companies, they can deal with one building control surveyor, who gets to know their design and their requirement equally so also being paid by this company we think is one disadvantage another disadvantage is lack of local knowledge or sympathy for local architecture.



## ***Other regulations which may affect the way the property is built***

With regard to commercial property, pension funds that are building offices or shopping centres or something similar for investment purposes will also have requirements.

## ***Problems with building construction that has passed Building Regulation Approval***

We have been involved in a number recently so we thought we would highlight that the building regulations set out a minimum standard and that sometimes their building control officers are only human and miss issues, but then again we would also comment that it is not up to building control to set the standards, it should be up to the building contractor and developer and architect to set the standards. We have seen some horrendous cases and some very basic issues mentioned above.

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