

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

**XXXXX**  
**Radlett**  
**Hertfordshire**  
**WD7 XXX**



Aerial view – 360 photo

FOR

**Mr and Mrs M X**

Prepared by:

XXXX

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS



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## **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## **REPORT FORMAT**

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

### ***GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION***

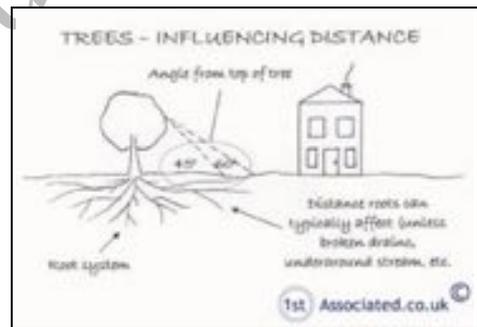
*This has been given in the survey where it is considered it will aid understanding of the issues, or be of interest. This is shown in "italics" for clarity.*

### **TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED**

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

### **A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS**

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



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 two storey mid-terraced property that has been extended and amended over the years, within a predominantly residential area.

The property sits on a sloping site with gardens to the front and rear. Parking is on the roadside on a first come first serve basis, with a parking permit.

The property was tenanted at the time of our inspection.

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

**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:*

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 1860 | The first ever fish and chip restaurant is opened, now they're a national institution! |
| 1863 | The Opening of the London Underground, mind the doors!                                 |
| 1870 | British Red Cross established, saving thousands of lives.                              |
| 1878 | Electric Street Lights are installed, lighting the way for Londoners                   |
| 1896 | The first modern Olympic Games in Athens was a great success                           |
| 1900 | Max Planck formulates the Quantum Theory   |
| 1902 | Willis H. Carrier designs the first air conditioning system, a cool invention!         |

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## EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view  
Aerial view – 360 photo



Rear view



Front garden  
Aerial view – 360 photo



Rear garden



Street view left uphill



Street view right downhill

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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 and stairs
- 2) Lounge front left
- 3) Lounge rear left
- 4) Kitchen/Dining Area rear right



### **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

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



### **Outside Areas**

There are gardens to the front and rear.

Parking is on the roadside on a first come first serve basis, via a permit scheme.

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



Hallway and stairs



Front left reception room



Rear left reception room



Rear right kitchen/diner



Rear right kitchen/diner

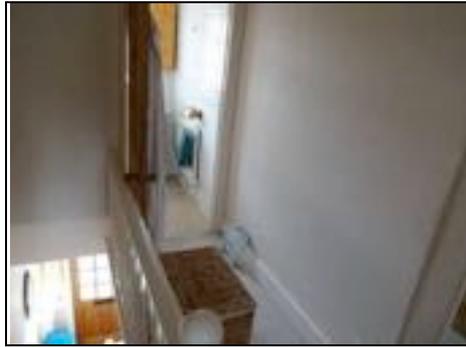
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**First Floor**



Landing



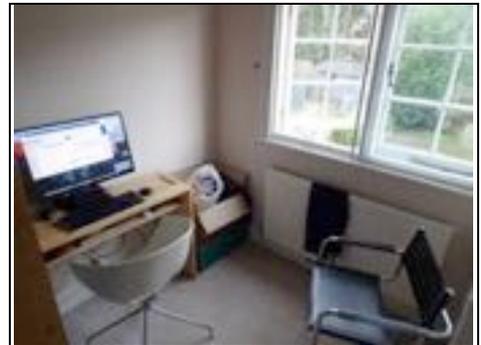
Front left bathroom



Front right bedroom



Rear left bedroom



Rear right bedroom

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## SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

### External

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Chimneys:              | One render chimney<br>One brick chimney                                  |
| Main Roof:             | Pitched, clad with clay tiles, possibly a thin concrete tile (assumed)   |
| Main Roof Structure:   | Cut timber roof  |
| Rear Left Flat Roof:   | Covered with asphalt   |
| Rera Right Flat Roof:  | Covered with felt  |
| Gutters and Downpipes: | Cast iron and plastic  |
| Soil and Vent Pipe:    | Cast iron.<br>(Note, it also discharges into next door's drains)         |
| Walls:                 | Flemish Bond brickwork<br>Painted render to rear extension (all assumed) |
| Fascias and Soffits:   | Painted timber   |
| Windows and Doors:     | Timber single glazed windows   |

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## Internal

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Ceilings:             | Lath and plaster (assumed)  |
| Internal Walls:       | Predominantly solid (assumed)   |
| Perimeter Walls:      | Finished with a skim coat of Gypsum plaster (assumed)                           |
| Floors: Ground Floor: | Suspended timber floor to the front with a concrete floor to rear (assumed)     |
| First Floor:          | Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers. Joists run front to back (assumed) |

## Services

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

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Heating:   | There is an Icon boiler located in rear right bedroom          |
| Electrics: | The electrics are 1980s/1990s and are located under the stairs |
| Gas:       | The consumer unit was located under the stairs                 |
| Drainage:  | The manhole is located to the front                            |

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

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

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

### The Good

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

- 1.0) The property has potential, for example:
  - 1.1) Rear extension
  - 1.2) Loft extensions
  - 1.3) WC under stairs
- 2.0) The property has good natural light due to the bay windows.
- 3.0) The property also has some of the original features left, which add to the overall character of the property.

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

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## The Bad

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

### 1.0) Chimneys in poor condition

#### 1.1) Left chimney

The left chimney (as you face the property) requires render repair and general making good to stop dampness getting in.



Render coming off chimney

#### 1.2) Rear right chimney

The rear right chimney needs repointing. The lead flashing is coming away and needs replacing.

It also needs to be checked to ensure the chimney breast that has been removed has Building Regulation requirements. We spoke to the neighbour who had removed their part of the chimney who advised they did have the relevant permissions etc.



Brickwork needs repointing to rear right chimney

**ACTION REQUIRED:** General repairs to both chimneys within the next few years; sooner rather than later.

Your legal adviser to check to check and confirm if there is any information regarding applications for a chimney alterations. We would also recommend you speak to the neighbour.



Flashing coming away

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Few hundred pounds for chimney repairs; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

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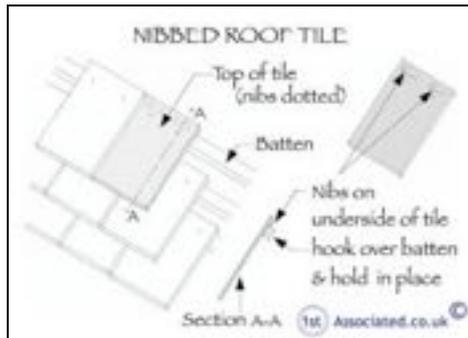
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## 2.0) Main Roof

This is a pitched tiled roof. Some of the tiles have become displaced. They are likely to be nibbed tiles as there is a close boarded roof beneath, although we cannot be certain of this. Deterioration can be caused by water getting underneath these tiles (wind driven rain) and spalling occurring to the nibs. Unfortunately with this construction of roof (close boarded) there is no way of being able to check exactly what is going on.



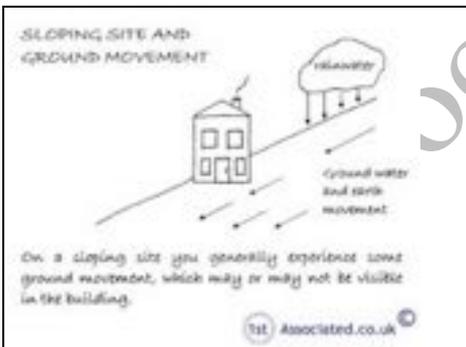
Nibbed tiles



Displaced tiles.  
Tile guard at bottom  
Aerial view – 360 photo

## 2.1) Step in roof

The property sits on a sloping site. There are render steps in the roof and these could allow some dampness in.



Sloping site



Step in roof  
Aerial view – 360 photo



Step in roof  
And moss on tiles  
Aerial view – 360 photo

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## 2.2) Close boarding

The internal of the roof is close boarded and as such you do not have a secondary protective layer in the form of a protective underlayer, which modern roofs tend to have. It is important in a roof such as this that you do keep it well ventilated to reduce the chance of dampness getting into the close boarding.



Close boarding

### Close Boarding Defined

These are timbers positioned on the common rafters which are butt jointed together. They add to the wind resistance and water-tightness of the roof together with the overall structural integrity of the roof. Usually this type of roof does not have an underfelt, this can lead to problems if the roof is not cross-battened as wet rot will occur to the underside of the timbers. This is very difficult to identify.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend periodic inspection of the roof. We were originally going to recommend a roofer for the day but we do feel on reflection that this may well cause more damage than good unless the work is carried out very carefully.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would set aside the sum of one day's work for a roofer plus materials of a few hundred pounds if you do have work on the roof. Please obtain quotations.

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### 3.0) Rear Flat Roofs

#### 3.1) Rear left flat roof

To the left is a flat roof covered with a felt with chippings on it which was popular in the 1960's. Chippings were used to minimise the effects of the extremes of heat, sun and frost, but unfortunately it can also cause a problem by hiding the location of any leaks.

#### Moss sitting on roof

In this particular case we can see moss is sitting on the roof and the roof and we would term this as a flat, flat roof and as such we would ultimately recommend that it is re-roofed, although we consider that patch repairs can take place for some time, although you do need to bear in mind it can be hard to find problems on roofs covered with chippings.

There are no significant visual signs of dampness to the ceiling in the kitchen beneath at the time of our inspection.

#### Felt Flashing

There is a felt flashing; we much prefer to see a lead flashing.

Please note that we have not walked on this roof as we feel that this could have damaged it.



Rear left flat roof  
Aerial view – 360 photo



Moss on rear left flat roof  
Aerial view – 360 photo



Felt flashing,  
we prefer a lead flashing

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## Condensing pipe

There is a condensing pipe from the boiler which has a long run across the flat roof which then discharges into the downpipe. We have read about condensing pipes that have a long run being susceptible to freezing up.



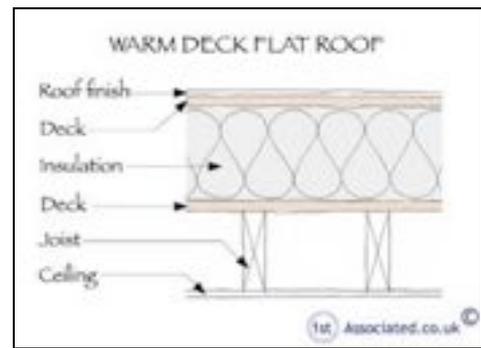
Condensing pipe from boiler  
Aerial view – 360 photo



Condensing pipe going into  
downpipe. We have known there to  
be problems with these freezing as  
it's a condensing pipe from a boiler

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Budget for a roof replacement with a warm roof.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £2,500 to £5,000, depending upon how the roof is detailed and if it is insulated. We would also add a lead flashing. Please obtain quotes.



Warm roof

We would seek advise from a Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Plumber/Heating Engineer, who is Gas Safe registered, regarding the condensing pipe. At the moment it does look to also be partly blocking the downpipe.

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### 3.2) Rear right flat roof

There is an asphalt flat roof to the rear right flat roof, which we generally consider to be the Rolls Royce of roof materials. In this instance we did note some splits in this asphalt.

It was noted the downpipe from the main roof discharges onto this roof. Often it is best to put a slate underneath the base of the downpipe to reduce wear or to extend the downpipe so it crossed the roof further. This can be an area of surcharging where the guttering overflows when it rains heavily, which seem to be more common with our weather conditions.



Rear right flat roof  
Aerial view – 360 photo



Splits in asphalt



Downpipe discharging onto flat  
roof

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Make good splits in asphalt.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £500 to a few hundred pounds to repair the asphalt and improve the downpipe; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

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#### 4.0) Front bay window roof

The front bay window roof is covered with mineral felt, rather than a tile covering. There has been some minor movement in the bay, as can be seen by the hairline cracking in the lath and plaster and old style textured paint ceiling internally.



Front bay window  
Aerial view – 360 photo



Front bay and textured paint



Crack in ceiling to bay window

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend re-roofing with a matching tile. This will also give the opportunity to have a store of tiles should there be any that become loose on the main roof.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £500 to £1,000; please obtain quotations.

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## 5.0) Hopper heads, gutters and downpipes

The building is constructed with a solid wall construction in a softish red brick to the front and a yellow stock brick to the rear.

It is therefore important that the gutters and downpipes are kept watertight. From what we can see the clips to the gutters have been positioned too wide for plastic (a typical width of the original cast iron width), with cast iron having more strength than plastic guttering. This will lead to the gutters dropping slightly and discharging water onto the wall.

There are also other things such as the end cap missing on the rear guttering and, as mentioned earlier, the downpipe from the main roof discharging on the rear right corner of the flat roof.



Grass growing from gutter



Missing end cap  
(and next door neighbour!)

**ACTION REQUIRED:** General upgrade of gutters and downpipes; approximately one day's labour.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds; please obtain quotations. The sooner this work is carried out the better.

### 5.1) Next door's hopper head

The hopper head on next door's property is overflowing and this may cause problems with dampness getting into your property. It should also be noted that the hopper head takes waste water from your bathroom.



Soil and vent pipe  
and next door's hopper head  
Aerial view – 360 photo



Next door's hopper head  
overflowing

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Dampness may get into your  
property from the overflowing  
hopper head

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend you discuss this with the neighbour as it could well be worthwhile you relocating your waste pipes into your own soil and vent pipe.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £500 to £1,000; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Gutters and Downpipes Section of this Report.

### 6.0) External Joinery – windows and doors

There are painted timber, single glazed windows. There are some signs of wet rot to the rear of the property particularly to the base of the kitchen door. You may want to replace the entire door for a more secure door.

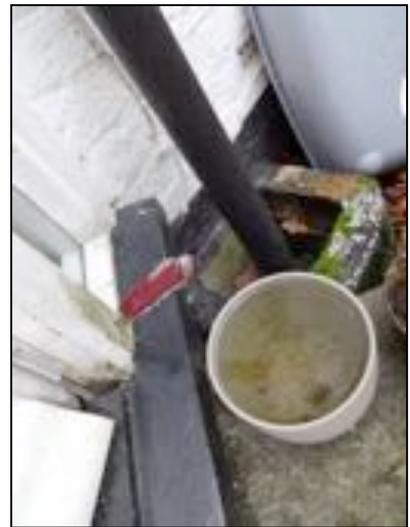


Minor wet rot in timber window frames

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repair and redecorate the entire external joinery. You may wish to replace the kitchen door as it is not particularly secure glazed door.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £2,000 to £4,000; please obtain quotations.

Please see the External Joinery Section of this Report.



Rot to base of rear kitchen door

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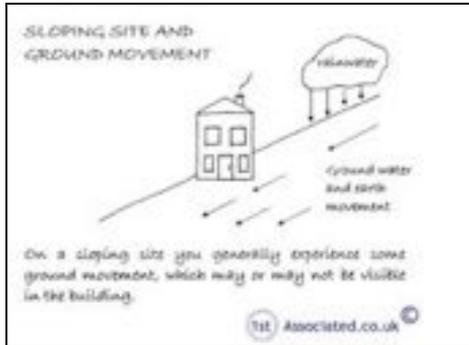
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## 7.0) Sloping Site and Dampness

As mentioned, the property sits on a sloping site. It runs from the left to right and from the front to rear of the property. For example, the ground level on your neighbour's side to the left looks far higher.



Sloping site



Next door's floor height shows amount of slope on site  
Aerial view – 360 photo

It could be that you will get dampness occurring after heavy rainfall or indeed during wetter months as a result of rainwater travelling from the upper to lower areas. This may be why at the time of our survey the dampness was relatively minor and that you will get considerably more during the wetter winter months.

We have in the past used a French drain (please see Appendices) to divert water travelling on a sloping site but this would seem to be very hard in this particular instance.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** See our article on French drains in the Appendices.

Please see the Outside Areas Section of this Report.

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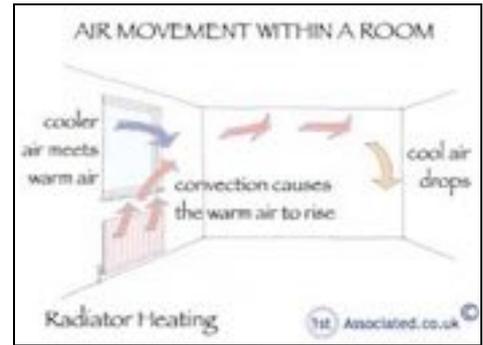
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## 8.0) Higher than average chance of condensation occurring

Within the kitchen and bathroom there are high areas of humidity generation and there are no extract fans. We also noted internal radiators within the property.

Condensation does depend upon your lifestyle and how you live within the building.



Air movement from radiator under window

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend good quality large humidity controlled extract fans in all humidity generating areas, such as the kitchen, bathroom and any areas used for drying clothes. You may also wish to make the filter above the cooker into a proper extract.



Filter over cooker – not an extract fan

We recommend radiators are repositioned under windows for better air flow.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £250 to £400, depending upon whether there are openings and wiring in the areas, and £200 to £300 per radiator. Please obtain quotations.

## 8.1) Cold bridging

Due to the way the first floor rooms are formed partly within the roof you also have an above average chance of cold bridging occurring and black mould, particularly if you do not amend the air circulation and condensation issues previously mentioned.



Rooms formed partly in roof

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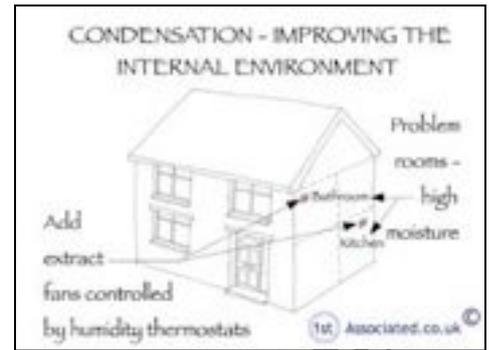
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Cold bridging defined

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. Cold bridging is 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.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our article in the Appendices of this report.

**9.0) Dampness**

On the day of the survey the damp readings we took with our Gann meter showed dampness to be minimal with the exception of the rear left corner. We believe most of the higher readings probably related more to condensation.



Checking for rising damp

Having said that, the property sits on a sloping site and has a suspended timber floor to the front with a concrete slab to the rear kitchen area, which can effectively act like a piece of blotting paper absorbing dampness. This can then be drawn up through the property via the warmer environment and it can be very difficult to get rid of dampness completely in the areas with concrete floors in this age, type and style of property.

**What can be done about it? Or, does anything need to be done about it in non-inhabited rooms, i.e. kitchens and bathrooms?**

We suggest you live in the property to see how bad the conditions are over the term of a few months/one year, when this is combined with your lifestyle.

Is an acceptable option to redecorate more frequently or to add close boarding wooden slats over parts of the property, for example to the right side where we took readings in the breakfast/dining area of the kitchen.

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### 9.1) Dampness to left side/rear left corner

There were high damp readings to the rear left corner. This could again relate to the sloping site running from left to right and could also relate to what the next door property has within their property. It may relate in part to the brick bed planter to the rear of the property, although this did look quite low when we reviewed it in our photographs.



Planter bed to rear left side, maybe causing dampness internally

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend you meet with next door to see what is happening on their side of the property and whether they have dampness, and as mentioned we would also live in the property to see if dampness occurs.

We recommend you open up the floor to see what is underneath.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds to open up the floor; obtain quotes.

### 9.2) Dampness to right side

If you recall, we investigated this side by moving the fridge as well as viewing next door's property. There was a relatively low amount of dampness at the time of our inspection, however it did occur to us that this area is roughly in line with the left hand corner and it may be a weak part in the structure where the water is travelling on the sloping site from the top downwards and this is the area it passes through.

As mentioned, we have used a French drain in the past to divert water travelling on a sloping site but it may be difficult in this instance.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend speaking to the neighbour to see if they have added a waterproof plaster (although from our discussions we are not sure whether they would know or if they will have to ask their builders).

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

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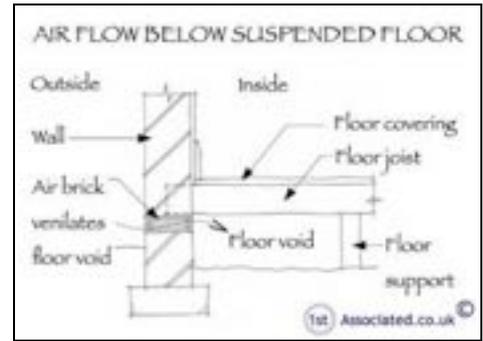




## 11.0) Suspended timber floor

The floor is slightly springier than is ideal to the front bay. There may be some wet rot within the embedded timbers.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If the opportunity arises we would open up this area.



Suspended timber floor

We would also recommend that all the plants to the front of the property are removed, the ground level lowered and to ensure that all the airbricks are clear and that there is a through flow of air from front to rear. This could also help reduce the dampness that has been found in the property generally, in conjunction of course with you managing the condensation as previously explained.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** To open up and inspect a few hundred pounds. If there is work such as renewal of timbers etc then costs will be in the region of £500 to £1,000. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Floors Section of this Report.

## 12.0) Services

### 12.1) Heating - radiators

As mentioned some of the radiators are internal and ideally they should be positioned under the windows. The radiators also have radiator covers on them. We have found in the past that rusting radiators occur beneath. We did not open up any of the covers in this particular instance.



Covered radiator

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Relocate all radiators under windows and check condition of radiators.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** As mentioned £200 to £300 per radiator; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

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### 13.0) Where is the boundary?

When we went into next door's property (right side) the fence of the boundary did not seem to match. In our experience with boundaries there is generally an element of uncertainty, even with Deeds and plans when these are scaled up. There is generally room to manoeuvre and discuss in the surveyor's world of approximately one meter.



Where is the boundary?

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Inspect the Deeds to see if they have any measurements on them which can identify exactly where the boundary is if this is important to you.

Please see the Outside Areas Section of this Report.

### 14.0) Neighbour to right side

If you recall, we met the neighbour to the right side. At the time of preparing this survey report we have not had a text from them therefore we are unable to forward on a phone number, but we hope you can see the benefit of talking to the neighbours.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend you return and speak to the neighbours on both the left and right side.

Please see the Outside Areas Section of this Report.

### The Ugly

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

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

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## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

### **Potential**

As discussed, the property does have potential with regard to rear extension and a loft conversion.

### **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.

#### **Heating**

As the property is rented it should be subject to a Gas Safe Certificate which we recommend you obtain. We also 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.

The boiler is a make we do not come across very often and you may have difficulty getting parts for.

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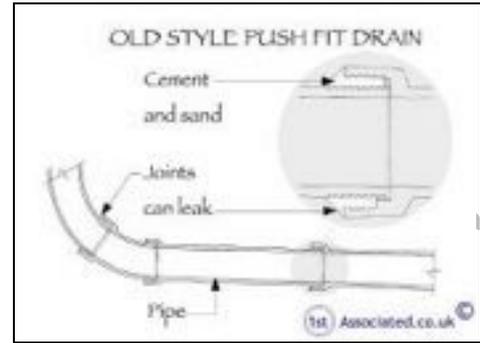
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## Drainage

In older properties, such as this, drainage was often push fitted together rather than bonded together which means that they may leak over the years. Whilst we have lifted the manhole cover to the front of the property the only true way to find out the condition of the drains is to have a closed circuit TV camera report to establish the condition of the drains. In this age of property there have often been leaks over the years.



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.

## 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.

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## **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:

### Dampness

As mentioned, the dampness may be something that occurs more in the wetter months and it is certainly worth re-visiting the property and having a good look round. We would also recommend you chat to the neighbours when you re-visit.

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

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

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

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## **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

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

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

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

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

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

### **SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

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

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

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

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

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



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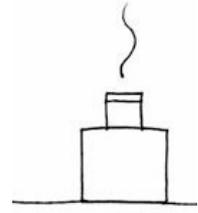
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## EXTERNAL

### CHIMNEY STACKS



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

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

#### Chimney One, located to font left

This chimney is covered with render, with a lead flashing and numerous chimney pots. From what we could see from ground level it looked in slightly below average condition considering its age, type and style. Areas of render are coming away.

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



Front left chimney



Render deteriorating

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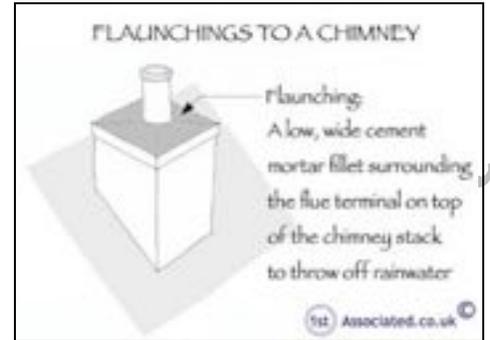
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Unfortunately we were unable to see the top of the chimney properly known as the flaunching, we therefore cannot comment upon them.

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

Periodically inspect the chimney.



Flaunching

### Chimney Two, located to rear right

This chimney is built in a soft red brick with a lead flashing and four chimney pots. It is in below average condition for its age, type and style. We would comment that it needs repair and repointing.

This chimney has a satellite dish and an aerial, which can be held in place with wires which cut into the brickwork.



Rear right chimney

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

Periodically inspect the chimney.

#### Flashings Defined

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

#### Flaunchings Defined

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

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## **Party Walls**

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

### Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

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

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

Specifically in this case we would have a chat with the right hand neighbours to see if they are aware of the Party Wall Act regarding the amendments to the chimney.

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

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

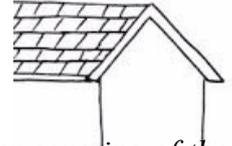
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## ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

We will consider the roofs in three areas; the main roof, the front bay window roof and the rear flat roofs.

### Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad with tiles and from ground level these looks in average condition considering the roof's age type and style.

With this age of roof there will usually be a few missing or displaced tiles, this is not uncommon. Probably the most unusual thing is the tile guard to the rear which does lead us to believe that perhaps quite a number of tiles have come away at some point in time.

The roof is stepped to accommodate the sloping site.

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

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



Main roof



Step in roof

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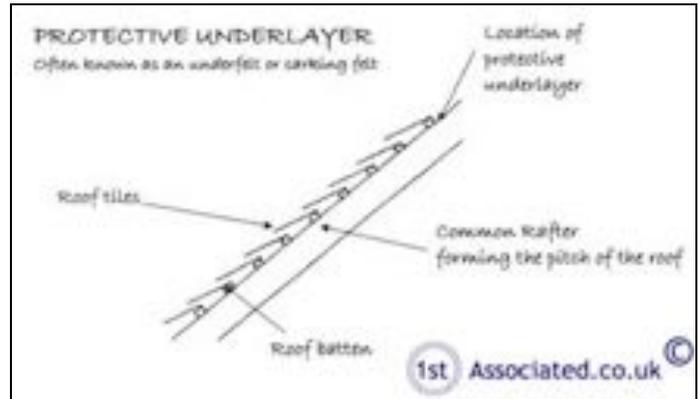
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## **Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)**

*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

The property has a close boarded roof. It is covered with tiles which are likely to be nibbed tiles and has no protective under layer. This means that wind driven rain can get underneath the tiles and indeed we can see that this is happening from the staining within the roof.



Close boarding

We are always in a Catch-22 with regard to this type of roof as although it is letting in some rain water it is not letting in that much. We have taken guidance from the adjoining roofs which show that these haven't been replaced.

### Close Boarding Defined

These are timbers positioned on the common rafters which are butt jointed together. They add to the wind resistance and water-tightness of the roof together with the overall structural integrity of the roof. Usually this type of roof does not have an underfelt, this can lead to problems if the roof is not cross-battened as wet rot will occur to the underside of the timbers. This is very difficult to identify.

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

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### **Front Bay Roof**

There is a bay window to the front. It is covered with mineral felt rather than a tile covering with a lead flashing.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would reinstate to a tiled bay window which if done properly will last far longer than felt.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Front bay window roof

### **Low Level Rear 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.*

There are two low level rear flat roofs; one to the left and one to the right.

### **Rear Left Flat Roof**

The rear right flat roof is covered with felt and chippings. It is a flat, flat roof and we can see moss sitting on it.

### **Flat roof meeting next door's property**

We discussed that there may a problem where the flat roof meets next door's property but the leadwork does look reasonable.

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



Rear left flat roof



Flat roof meeting next door's low level pitched roof

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### **Rear Right Flat Roof**

This is covered with asphalt, which we consider to be the best roofing material, although we did note splits in the asphalt.

We noticed that the main roof downpipe is discharging directly onto this roof.



Rear right flat roof

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

### **Further information on flat roofs**

#### **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.

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, via a ladder and via aerial photography.

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

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

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## ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT

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

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

### Main Roof

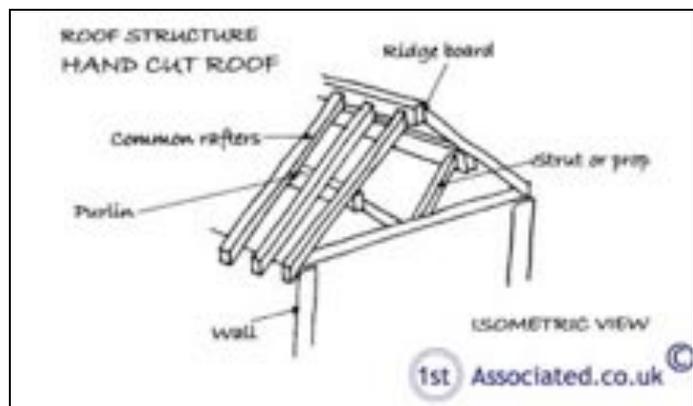
### Roof Access

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing. There is no loft ladder but there is an electric light and some secured boarding. We recommend a loft ladder and secured floor boarding is added (removing the existing which is not very good), as it will make the loft space safer and easier to use.

The loft perimeter has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly.

### Roof Structure

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



Cut timber roof

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## **Roof Timbers**

We have inspected the roof structure for:

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

Our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof, the insulation and stored items. What we could see was generally found to be in slightly below average condition for its age, type and style. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.

The purlin supports are not ideal in this instance and these need periodically checking, however they have stood the test of time.

### Purlins Defined

Purlins are the horizontal cross members that give support to the common rafters.

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

## **Fire Walls**

The property has two brick firewalls which are located one to the left side and one to the right 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.



Purlins need periodic inspection



Purlin, common rafter and close boarding

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## **Water Tanks**

There is a water tank in the roof.

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



Water tank

## **Ventilation**

The roof is naturally ventilated due there being no protective underlayer.

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

## **Insulation**

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

## **Electrical Cables**

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

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

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

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## GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

### Gutters and Downpipes

The property has a mixture of cast iron and plastic gutters and downpipes. They are in below average condition for their age, type and style. Unfortunately poorly installed gutters and downpipes can do a lot of damage.

Cast iron of this age will need maintenance. If regularly maintained it lasts longer than plastic, in our experience.



Grass growing out of rear gutter

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

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



Downpipe discharges onto ground, which could cause dampness

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

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### **Soil and Vent Pipe**

The property has cast iron soil and vent pipes. The interesting thing is they are discharging into the right hand neighbour's hopper head.

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



Soil and vent pipe discharging into next door's hopper head

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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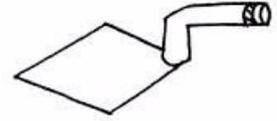
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## WALLS



*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 constructed of brickwork, with painted render to rear low level extension.

### Brickwork

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

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

### Timber lintels and bonding timbers

Before the 19th Century, the practice of building timbers into external walls was almost universal. These were known as bonding timbers. They are of course prone to rot as solid walls allow dampness through.

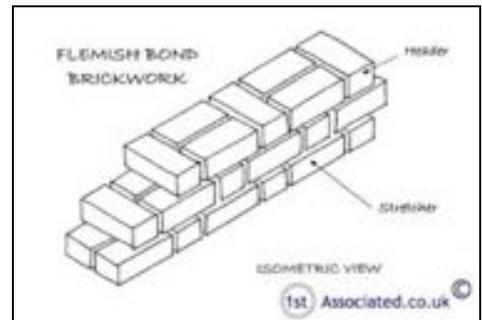
Unfortunately, without opening up the structure, we are unable to confirm if this is the case.

### Condition

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



Soft red brickwork spalling



Flemish bond brickwork

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In this case a cement mortar has been used replacing the original lime mortar.



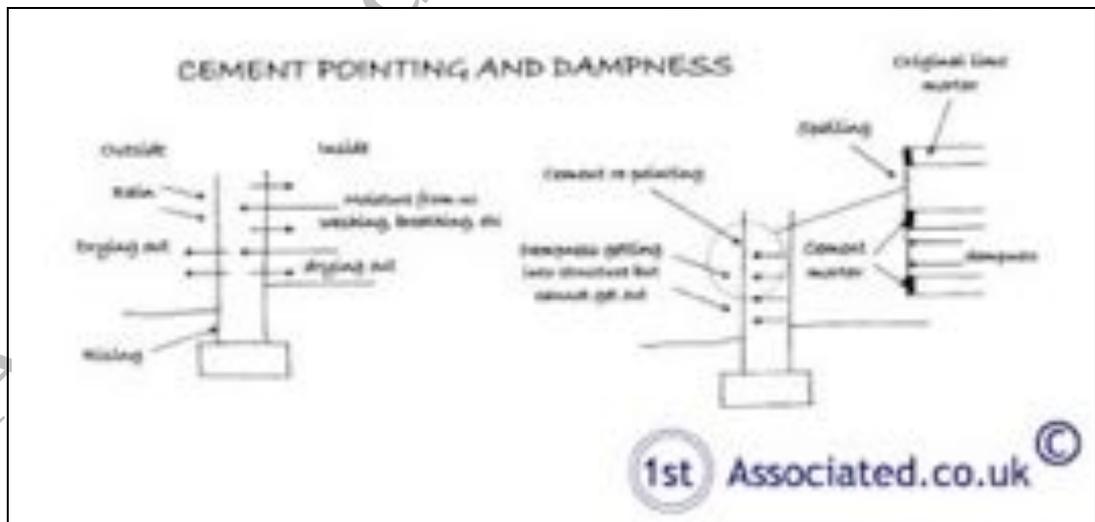
Close up of cement mortar and spalling brickwork

Originally they realised how soft these bricks were and added a lead flashing on there.



Lead flashing on brickwork

Lime every time



Use lime mortar every time

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend an experienced builder gradually removes all cement mortar and replace with lime mortar.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £750 to £1,5000; obtain quotes.

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## Painted Brickwork

There is an area of painted brickwork to the rear which is in average condition for its age, type and style.



Painted brickwork

## Render

The rear kitchen/dining room extension is external walls are finished in a painted render.

We are always wary when we see rendered properties as it usually means they have been rendered for a particular reason. In this case is likely to have been so that a cheaper blockwork construction could be used.



Painted render to rear extension with unpainted area around gutter

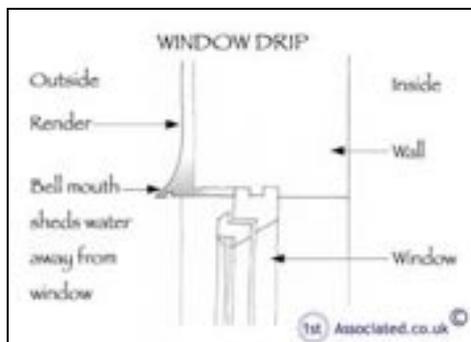
We noted that the render was unpainted around the rear gutter which could be due to a leak/repair. We have carried out a tap test (literally hitting the render with the back of a hammer). We found it to be in average condition for its age, type and style.

## Render Detailing

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

## Window Drip Detail

In this case we found no drip detail to the window.



Window drip



No drip detail above window

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### **Bell mouth to base of property**

A bell mouth is a good detail to the base of a property.



Bell mouth detail

### **Lintels**

We noted timber lintels in the property



Timber lintel

Finally, the external walls have been inspected visually from ground level and/or randomly via a ladder. Where the window and door lintels are concealed by brickwork / painted brickwork / 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 brickwork / painted brickwork / render / plaster has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork / painted brickwork / render / plaster would be if it were opened up for this age, style and type of construction. We are however aware that all is not always as it seems in the building industry and often short cuts are taken. Without opening up the structure we have no way of establishing this.

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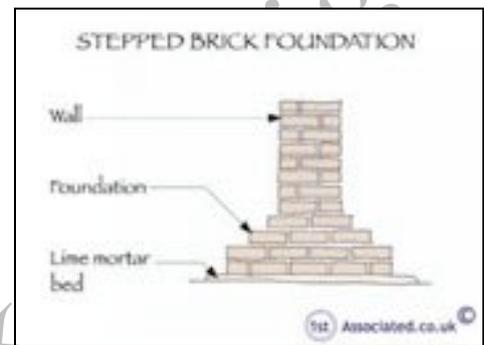


## FOUNDATIONS

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

### Foundations

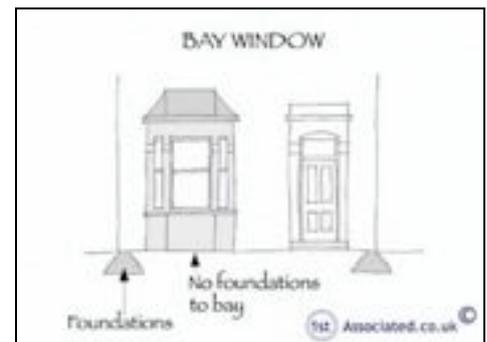
Given the age of the property you may find different depths of foundations. We would expect to find a stepped brick foundation possibly with a bedding of lime mortar to the original property which are likely to be very shallow and a stepped brick or concrete foundation to the rear extension.



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

### 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.

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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.*

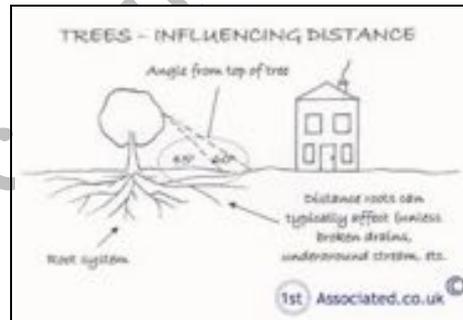
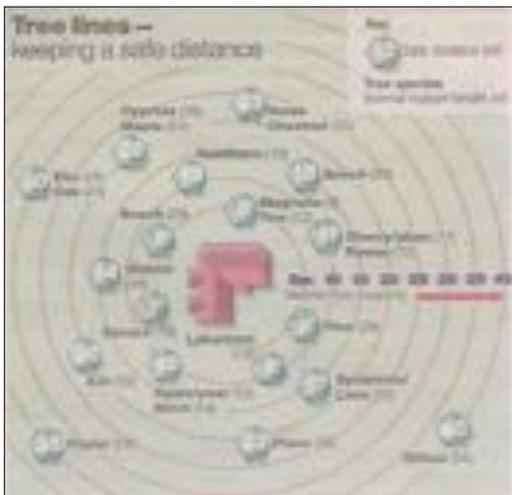
There are no trees within what we would term as influencing distance but you do need to speak to your insurance company as they may have a different interpretation for insurance reasons.

However, there are small trees and bushes to the front that will need removing/cutting back, which will also then expose the airbricks to help the flow of air under the property.



Bushes and trees to front

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Cut back bushes/small trees to front.



Influencing distance of trees to a property

Influencing Distance Defined

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

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

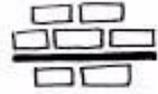
Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

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## DAMP PROOF COURSE

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

In properties of this age it is unlikely that a damp proof course (DPC) would have been built in originally. However, often they have had damp proof courses added at a later date. In this case we could not see a DPC.



DPC to next door property

We noted a DPC to the next door property which does not have the two courses/150mm gap between the DPC and the ground due to high ground level. The same may have happened on your property but we simply cannot see it.

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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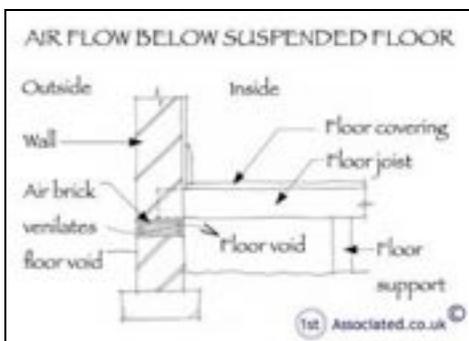
# AIRBRICKS



*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 bushes need removing / cutting back to the front to expose the air bricks. You may need to add additional air bricks to the rear.



Suspended timber floor



Air brick to front

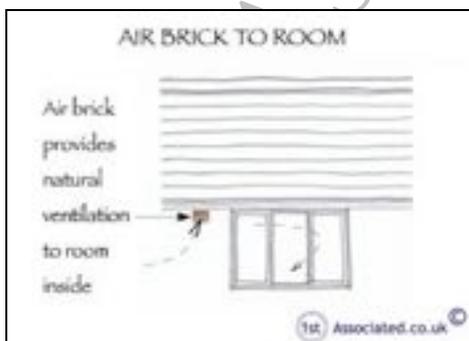


Air brick to rear

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add additional air bricks to the rear of the dampness problem persists.

## High Level Air Vents

There is a high level to the rear and we recommend this is changed to a mechanical extract fan. To the front there looks to be a blocked up air vent to the bathroom.



High level air vents



High level air vent in rear extension



Blocked up air vent from bathroom

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** Open up all air vents and add large humidity controlled extract fans internally.

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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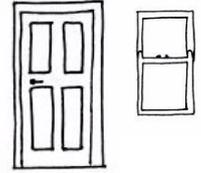
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## FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



*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 below average condition for their age, type and style and need redecoration.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Redecorate once the repairs to the gutters and downpipes have been carried out.



Fascia board needs redecorating

### Windows and Doors

The property has single glazed timber windows. We would specifically comment that they have wet rot in some of the windows. There is secondary glazing in some of the rooms.



Broken window, moss on roof and condensing pipe from boiler



Window sill needs painting



Secondary glazing

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### Knife Test

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



Knife test of timber windows

### External Kitchen Door

The glazed single door does not offer much security and you may wish to replace this.



Rear kitchen door

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

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.*

Windows and doors and fascias and soffits need redecorating sooner rather than later.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

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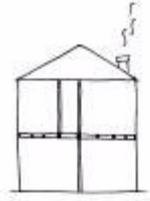
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## INTERNAL



# CEILING, 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

Where we could see the ceilings from the roof space we could see that they were lath and plaster.

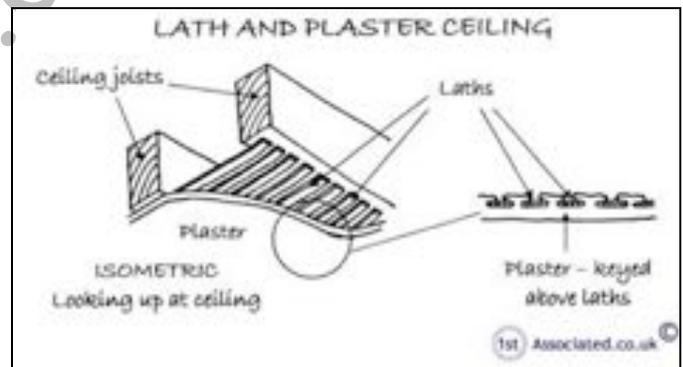
Some of the ceilings have textured paint on them which may have an asbestos content.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary. Lath and plaster ceiling noted in roof space

### 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

## Internal Walls and Partitions

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

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## **Perimeter Walls**

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

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

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

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

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

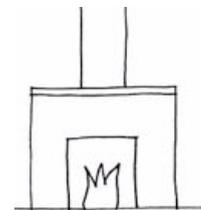
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## CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

The chimney breasts are located to the left and rear right side (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.

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

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.



Feature fireplace in front lounge

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# FLOORS



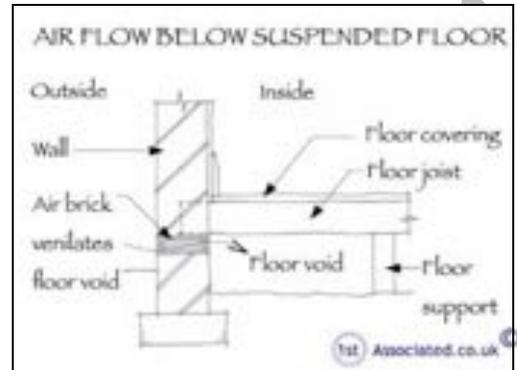
*Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.*

## Ground Floor

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 kitchen/dining area.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to expose the air bricks to the front and may need to add extra air bricks.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Suspended timber floor

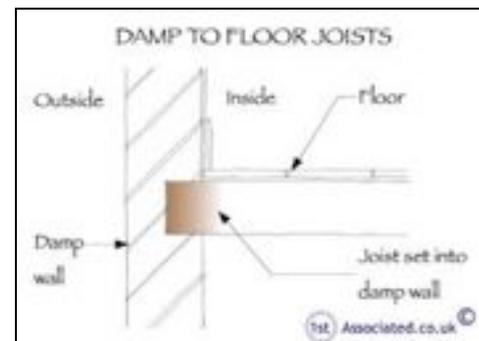


Stripped timber floors

## 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.

We noted that the joists run front to back.



Embedded timbers

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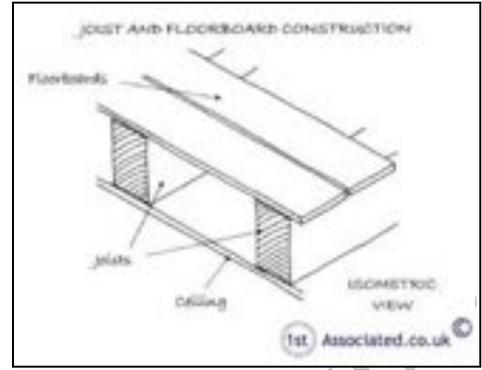
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Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



Joist and floorboards

Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with exposed floorboards, fitted carpets, floor coverings, laminated flooring, tiling, 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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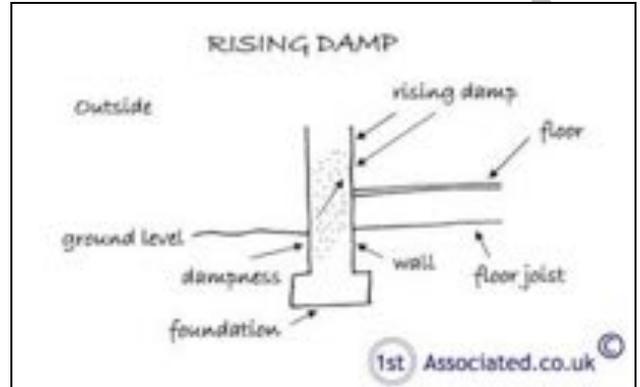


## DAMPNESS

*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 minor dampness in the property.

As discussed, it is well worth reading Jeff Howell's book 'The Rising Damp Myth'.

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



Testing for rising damp in front bay

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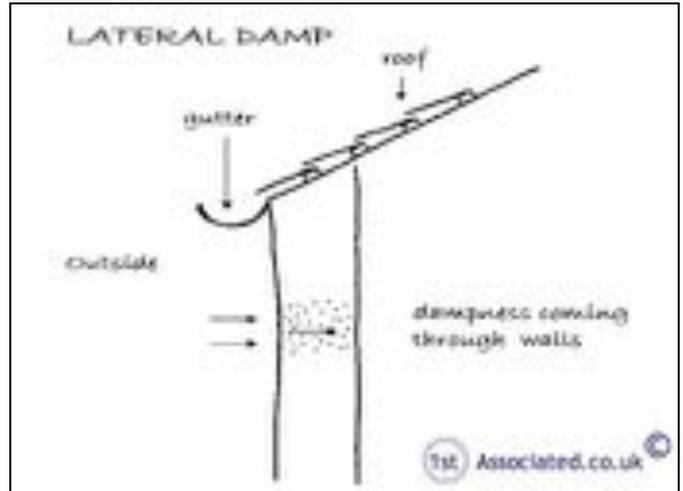
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## Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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



Lateral damp

We used a resistance meter on the external walls. We have not found significant dampness.

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



Testing for lateral dampness

## Condensation

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

We feel there is a higher than average chance of condensation occurring in this property.

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

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

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

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

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

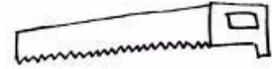
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## INTERNAL JOINERY



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

### Doors

The doors are re-used timber doors which are common in properties of this age, type and style.



Re-used timber door



Checking doors for movement

### Built-In Cupboards

We were pleased to see some built-in cupboards which are always useful and often missed on modern properties.



Rear left reception room cupboard.  
Painted doors on outside, timber on  
inside

### Staircase

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

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## **Kitchen**

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

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

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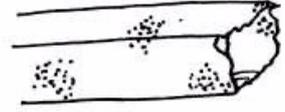
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## TIMBER DEFECTS



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

### Dry Rot

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

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

### 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.*

There are signs of wet rot to the timber windows and doors and there was flaking paint to the fascias and soffits therefore there may be some wet rot here. There were also slight signs of staining/wet rot to the close boarding.

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

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## Woodworm



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

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

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

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

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

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## INTERNAL DECORATIONS

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

Internal decorations are in average condition, particularly bearing in mind it is a rented property. You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste.

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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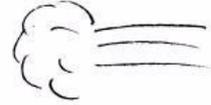
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## THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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

### Roofs

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 300mm. In this instance there is about 200mm to 300mm and no vapour barrier.

### 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

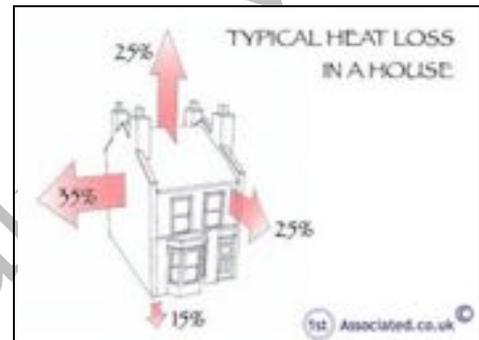
The windows are single glazed and therefore will have poor thermal properties.

### Services

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

### Summary

Assuming the above is correct, this property is below average compared with what we typically see. Please note we have not seen the Energy Performance Certificate.



Typical heat loss

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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)*

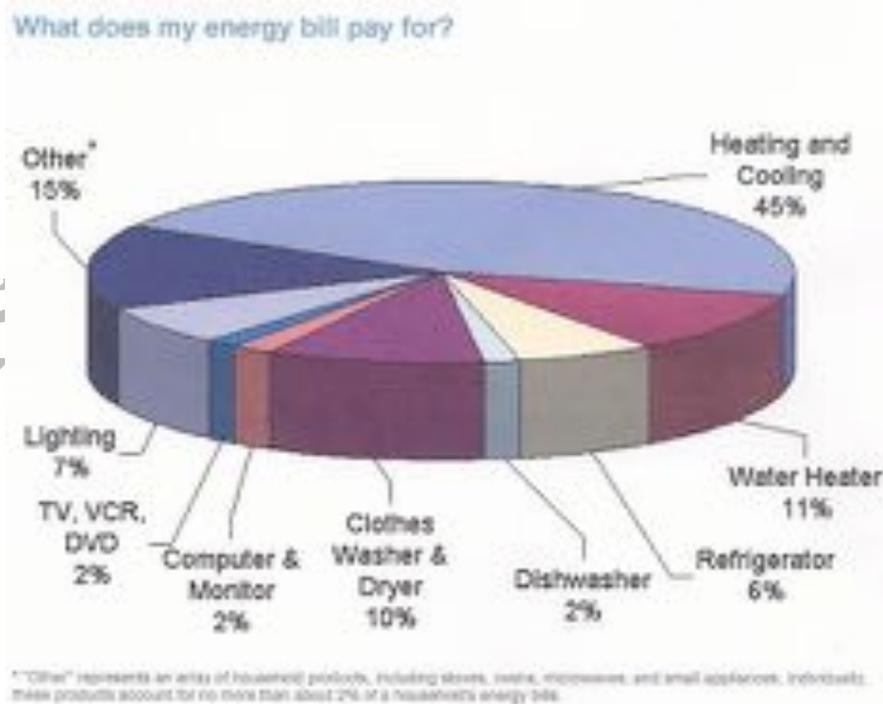
*or Sustainable Energy Without the Hot by David J C MacKay  
HTTP//www.withouthotair.com/Videos.html to download for free or buy a paper copy as we did.*

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

### **HIPs**

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

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



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## OTHER MATTERS



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

### Security

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

### Insurance

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

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 believe there may be some in the textured paint to the ceilings (commonly known as Artex).

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

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

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## SERVICES

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

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

## ELECTRICITY



*It is strange to think that electricity only started to be used in domestic properties at the turn of the 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.

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## **Fuse Board**

The electric fuses and consumer units were located under the stairs. The fuse board looked to be from the 1980's/1990's and better are now available.

As the property is rented there should be relevant certificates for this.



Fuse Board

## **Earth Test**

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



Earth test

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Check whether there are relevant certificates.

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.

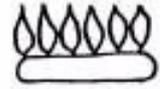
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## GAS



*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 believe the property has mains gas. The consumer unit was not located. As the property is rented there should be a Gas Safe Certificate.

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Check whether there is a Gas Safe Certificate.

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

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## PLUMBING AND HEATING



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

### Water Supply

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

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

### Water Pressure

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

### Cold Water Cistern

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

### Hot Water Cylinder

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



Hot water cylinder

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## **Plumbing**

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

## **Heating**

The wall mounted Icon boiler was located in the rear right bedroom. This is a make we do not often come across and parts may therefore be hard to obtain.

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.



Icon boiler

## **Ten Minute Heating Test**

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

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

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

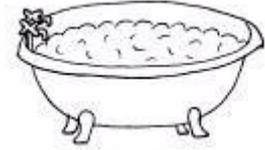
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## **BATHROOM**



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

### **Bathroom**

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

Please note our comments about adding a good quality large humidity controlled extract fan.

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

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## MAIN DRAINS



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

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

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

### Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We have identified one inspection chamber / manhole and one rodding eye / water meter.

#### Manholes Defined

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

### Inspection Chamber / Manhole One, located to the front

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

From what we could see it is brick built.



Manhole

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### **Rodding Eye/Water Meter, located to the front**

There was a rodding eye/water meter located to the front of the property. We did not open this but think it is likely to be a water meter.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend you open this up to check its condition.

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.



Rodding eye

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.

### PARKING



Parking is usually roadside parking on a first come first serve basis, via a parking permit.



Roadside parking

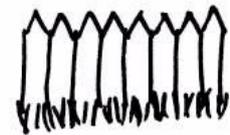
### EXTERNAL AREAS

#### Front Garden

There is a small garden to the front, with bushes and shrubs.

The front wall has a crack in it.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Cut back bushes and repair front wall.



Crack to front wall

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## Rear Garden

There is a reasonable sized garden to the rear.

As mentioned, the property is on a sloping site, which runs from left to right and from front to rear.



Rear Garden

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

The fence to the left is moss covered and needs repair/re-staining.

We went into next door's property and noticed that the fence boundary and wall boundary differed.



Fence to left side needs re-staining

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



What is the correct boundary?

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.

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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) Drainage repairs
  - v) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
  - vi) Rising damp treatments.
  - vii) Central heating installation.
  - viii) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
  - ix) Have there been any structural problems referred to insurance companies, any insurance claims, monitoring or underpinning, etc.
  - x) 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.
- j) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.

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- 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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XXX, Radlett, Hertfordshire WD7 XXX

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  
XXXXX  
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 autumn day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

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

## **NOT LOCAL**

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

## **OCCUPIED PROPERTY**

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

## **JAPANESE KNOTWEED**

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

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

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## INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been limited as:

- 1) We did not have a full view of the roof due to the insulation covering the ceiling joists and general configuration of the roof.
- 2) We did not open up the walls as we could not see a way of doing this without causing damage.
- 3) We did not open up the ground floor or the first floor as we could not see a way to do it without causing damage.
- 4) We would normally have had a question and answer sheet filled out by the occupier but unfortunately due to the miscommunication between the estate agents and the occupier and the resulting difficulty in access we did not feel it was appropriate to have the form filled out in this instance.

## BUILDING INSURANCE

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

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

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

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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

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## APPENDICES

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

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

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

### **Work You Cannot do Yourself**

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

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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

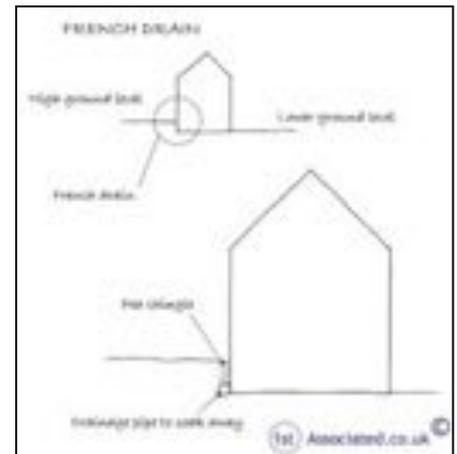
## Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

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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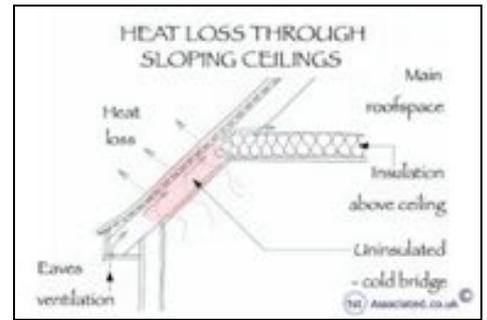
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## Heat loss and sloping ceilings

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:

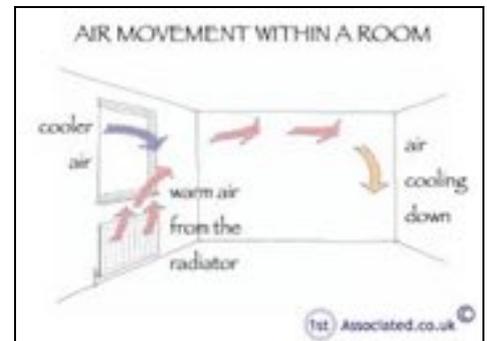
- 1) Eras of properties where there are warm elements and colder elements to the building.
- 2) Where you have a mixture of warm rooms and cold rooms.

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

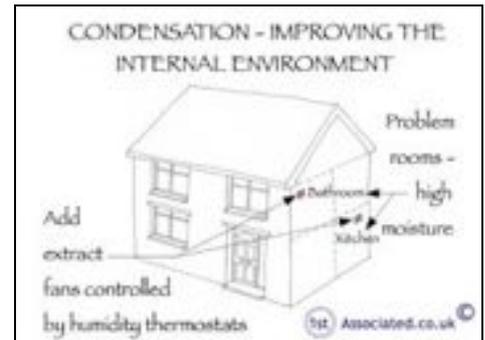
This really is a difficult question to answer. We have been involved in a number of cases as expert witnesses or advocates and the answer can vary. We would comment that there are factors that can be changed and factors that can't be changed. For example, the occupiers' lifestyle can in most cases be 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

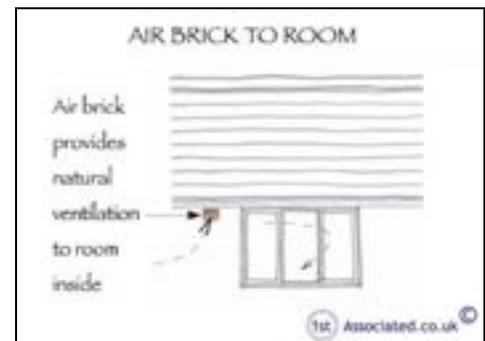
Sometimes it really is down to the design of the property. Where there are cold elements in it, such as a concrete structural frame or concrete lintels, when these are in contact with moist air condensation occurs. Sometimes this is impossible to stop but often it is possible to reduce it by having a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



## 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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