

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

Shooters Hill,
SE18



FOR
Ms A

Prepared by:

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Marketing by:

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INTRODUCTION

Firstly, may we thank you for your instructions; we have now undertaken a Building Survey (formerly known as a Structural Survey) of the aforementioned property.

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 has been used to highlight a specific area. The sketches are not 100% technically accurate; we certainly would not expect you to carry out work based upon the sketches alone.

ORIENTATION

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

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a large semi-detached period property situated on a sloping site with many of its original features.

There is a small garden to the front and a much larger garden to the rear with a willow tree.

There have been amendments over the years.

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

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

1793-1800	The Grand Union Canal was built
1819	Factory work outlawed in England for children under nine years old.
1823	Macintosh invents waterproof fabric.
1825	Railway transportation was born in England when Stephenson's 'Locomotion' ran from Darlington to Stockton, carrying 450 persons at 15 miles per hour (24km/h).
1854	Florence Nightingale pioneers modern nursing in Crimea
1859	Charles Darwin proposes the Theory of Evolution

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EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Rear View



Front Garden



Patio Area



Rear garden



Rear Garden

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ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Cellar Area-below ground level

There are access flaps in the hallway

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Entrance Hallway
- 2) Main Lounge
- 3) Second lounge
- 4) Study to the rear
- 5) Downstairs Dining area
- 6) Downstairs Kitchen
- 7) Shower room with W.C

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 8) Landing
- 9) Rear left hand Bedroom with a shower
- 10) Master Bedroom
- 11) Bathroom (accessed from Master Bedroom and Hallway)
- 12) Two Double Bedrooms
- 13) One Single bedroom
- 14) W.C.

Outside Areas

There is parking is on a first come first serve basis. There is an outbuilding to the rear of the property.

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

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INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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

Cellar



Cellar entrance

Ground Floor



Kitchen



Breakfast Room



Shower room with W.C

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Main Lounge



Dining area/main lounge



Study



Left hand lounge

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First Floor



Master Bedroom



Family Bathroom with access from Master Bedroom



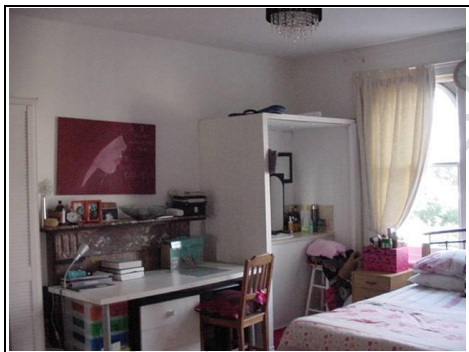
Landing



Rear left hand side bedroom



Shower to left hand Bedroom



Front right hand bedroom



Rear right hand bedroom



W.C

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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Chimneys:	Rendered chimneys
Main Roof:	Pitched, clad with slate without underlayer and with hidden valley gutter
Flat Roof:	Felt with Flashband flashing
Main Roof Structure:	Cut timber roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Flemish Bond brickwork to the front (assumed) with rendering on the detailed areas. Rendering to the rear.
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Single glazed painted timber sliding sash, original style

Internal

Ceilings:	Lath and plaster and plasterboard(assumed)
Walls:	Predominantly solid (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Suspended timber floor with embedded timbers (assumed)
First Floor:	Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)

Services

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

There is a wall mounted boiler manufactured by Ideal and located in the Kitchen. The electrics date from the 1980s/1990's and are located under the stairs.

The above terms are explained in full in the main body of the Report.

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

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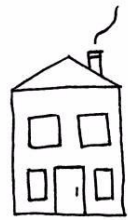
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 200 photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if an issue has not been discussed that you are interested in or concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it; if we have not we will happily go back.

We have divided the Executive Summary into 'The Good', 'The Bad' and 'The Ugly', to help distinguish what in our mind are the main issues. However we would add that we haven't actually met you at the property as we would normally do which means we do not have an understanding of your level of knowledge and risk you are prepared to take with regard to property. We do need to discuss in detail our findings before you commit to purchase this property.

The Good

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

- 1.0) The property has many of the original features left, which add to the overall character of the property.
- 2.0) Older properties such as this typically have more space than newer properties, both in the actual size of the rooms and the height of the rooms and also the size of the gardens. We will simply never build anything like this again.

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- 3.0) The property has good natural light due to the large windows and the bay windows
- 4.0) We believe the roadside parking is free (we didn't pay during the course of our survey) and it's on a first come first serve basis so you may not get a space next to the property.

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

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, parapet walls, flashings and vegetation growing in walls.

Generally work is required to the roof areas. This we are dividing firstly into the chimneys and parapet walls where repair, re-rendering and checking of the coping stones is required. Secondly the flashings of which there is a mixture of, concrete and Flashband, and which we would much prefer to be replaced with Lead.



Parapet Wall

Flashband Defined

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

ACTION REQUIRED: We would estimate the sum of £5,000-£10,000 (five thousand – ten thousand pounds) to carry out this work. However until you get onto the actual roof you will not be able to estimate the cost of this properly. Our concern is that you may



Cracked render

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need scaffolding to carry out this work which could increase the cost.

ANTICIPATED COST: The first course of action is to have a close inspection of the roof using long ladders. We would be more than happy to comment on roofers quotes for work. Please obtain quotations.

Finally we would add that we could see some vegetation growing on and in the walls which does mean that the render is allowing dampness in and will need major work.

Please see the Chimneys Section of this Report.

2.0) **Slate Roof**

The slate roof is probably original as there is no protective underlayer beneath it. Without a protective underlayer it means that wind driven rain can get into the structure. We would add that we could also see light in some areas indicating that some slates are missing/moved/broken meaning the roof is leaking.

ACTION REQUIRED: As a short term measure you can overhaul the entire roof. Particular attention needs to be paid to the valley gutter area. Again it should be noted that we weren't able to get a good view of the roof due to the mass of insulation which prevented us from accessing it properly. There may be other problems that are hidden such



Cracked render



Vegetation growing on wall



Slate Roof



Dampness visible to the timbers.
The darker areas are dampest.

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as wet rot and dry rot.

We could see the dampness in the timber that could ultimately lead to rot.

By short term we mean in the next one to three years. For a long term solution most people will be looking at removing the slate roof and re-roofing which would cost in the region of £10,000 - £20,000 (ten thousand – twenty thousand pounds) depending upon scaffolding requirements and temporary roofing requirements. Please obtain quotations before you commit to purchase.

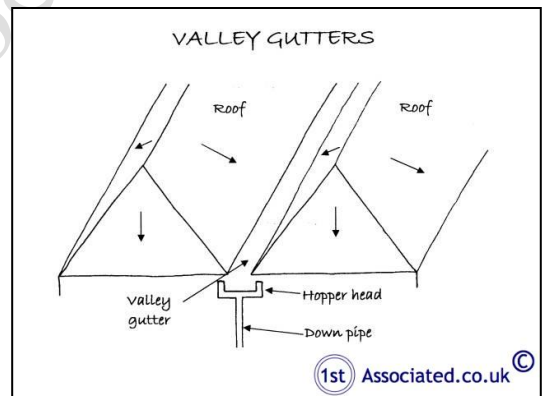


Close up of the valley gutter showing dampness in the timbers

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

3.0) **Valley Gutter**

There is a valley gutter to the property that cannot be seen properly from the front but can be seen from the rear and in the roof space. These are generally considered problematic areas and we think that dampness is getting in which will lead to rot on the roof structure.



ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend that a roof light or access panel of some sort is put into the pitch of the roof so that the valley gutter can be seen, accessed and cleaned. Please note we did not gain access to the valley gutter and our view within the roof was limited due to the mass of insulation. Please note you may need local authority approval to add a roof light/access panel.



Hidden valley gutter

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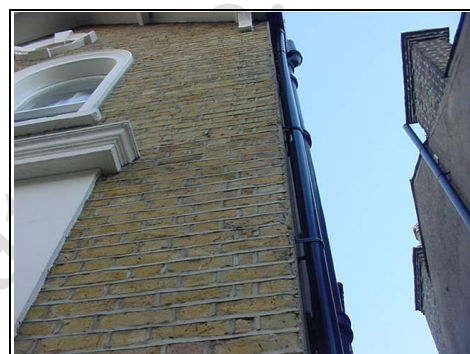
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ANTICIPATED COST: £3,000-£6,000 (three thousand–six thousand pounds) to renew with lead. Again scaffolding may be required in which case this could be combined with the work needed in item one.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

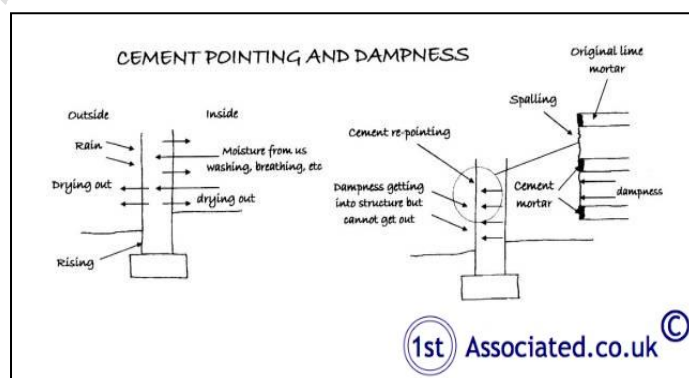
4.0) **Brickwork wrongly re-pointed with cement mortar**

Unfortunately the brickwork has been re-pointed in a cement mortar rather than a lime mortar. It has also been proud pointed which means that ultimately it will cause damage and deterioration to the brickwork which is unfortunate. It should be lime mortar every time as this allows the buildings to breathe.



Cement mortar wrongly used instead of lime

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend a programme over the next few years of gradually removing the cement mortar and replacing it with lime mortar to allow the property to breathe again.



5.0) **Kitchen Roof**

Very unusually the kitchen roof is formed in concrete with a felt covering. We were able to see the concrete, possibly with an asbestos content, roof by lifting the ceiling tiles in the kitchen. The felt covering looks to be in



Kitchen roof

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reasonable condition although where there is Flashband flashing around the roof we would much prefer to see this replaced with lead as generally Flashband is considered a temporary repair material.

Flashband Defined

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

The whole concept of having a concrete roof within the kitchen of a residential property is not ideal as condensation can occur and cause what is known as cold bridging (please see the article in the appendices) Ideally we would much prefer a standard roof construction of timber. However you do have to be careful as it may somewhere be connected to your adjoining neighbours property.

ACTION REQUIRED: Further investigation is required. Have a “cup of tea meeting” with your next door neighbour on the left hand side to check the construction of their rear area and to see if they have altered or amended their roof. We would also have an asbestos check on this roof to see if there is any asbestos content. You also need at the very least to use a ‘rust stop’ agent to stop the rusting that we can see.

ANTICIPATED COST: This is very difficult for us to comment on other than to say thousands of pounds will be needed to put this right. We feel the best bet is to completely open up the kitchen roof to see what is there. Then carry out



General view of the kitchen roof



Close up Flashband repairs with concrete roof in view



Possible asbestos in concrete
This needs checking



Dampness has come through as shown by the rust on the suspended ceiling system

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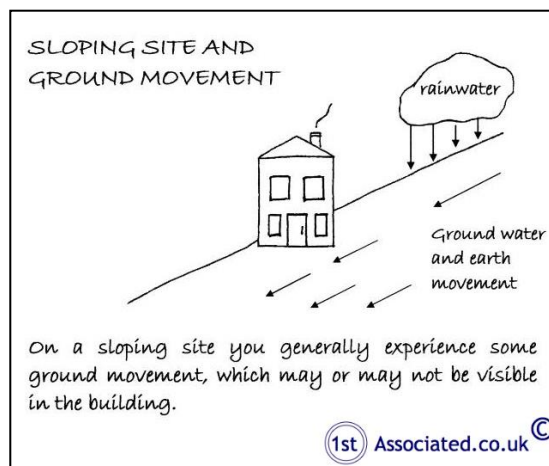
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testing to check there is no asbestos content. We expect costs to be about £10,000 - £15,000 (ten thousand – fifteen thousand pounds); please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

6.0) On a sloping site and kitchen

Any property on a sloping site is more susceptible than one on a flat site; it is simply the laws of gravity. Foundations normally allow for such occurrences, particularly in new properties. There can still be some minor movement



The kitchen stands out as an area where the sloping site really will affect it as part of it is directly against the ground level. This means that dampness will get into this area unless tanking has taken place or a good French gulley.

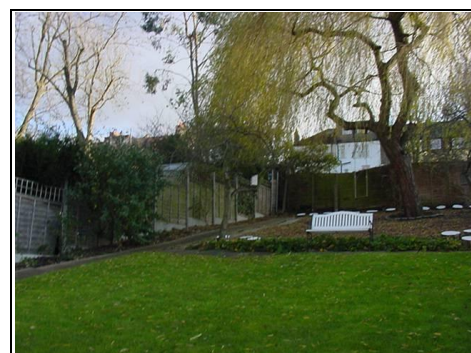
There is a Willow tree in the garden at the top of the sloping site. We would add that this can help hold the ground together although Willows are renowned for having a very long root system that can ultimately affect the foundations of the property.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need arboricultural advice with regards to maintaining this Willow tree.

ACTION REQUIRED: Get an arboricultural report carried out.



Kitchen same level as ground



Willow tree on slope

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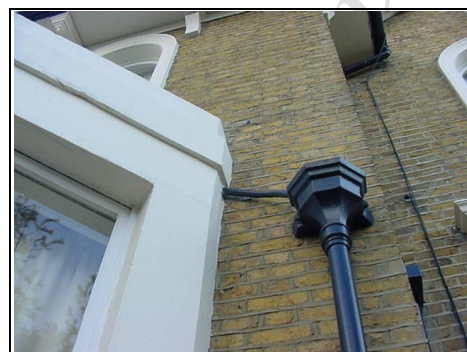
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ANTICIPATED COST: £200-£400(two hundred – four hundred pounds); please obtain quotations.

Please see the Outside Areas of this Report

7.0) **Large windows and Bay windows**

In this age of property the large windows have timber lintels over them which are renowned for failure. We note some cracking around the windows internally. We recommend further investigation.



Small downpipe from bay window.

Often problems are caused for example over the bay window where there is only a small downpipe. This then backs up and over flows and allows dampness to get into the structure.

The small downpipe that is traditionally used on these properties can unfortunately block up.

ACTION REQUIRED: Our concern is the cracking we can see inside albeit hairline cracks. The only way to confirm whether the lintels are in acceptable condition is to expose them and check their condition which will involve removing some plaster.

ANTICIPATED COST: A few hundred pounds to expose and check the lintels and repair them; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Windows Section of this Report.

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8.0) Rotting External Windows

We were able to push a knife right the way through some of the external windows indicating that they have been filled/or are rotting timber.

ACTION REQUIRED: Repair by splicing in new timber. We would always recommend saving as much of the old timber as possible as it was better quality than today's timber.

ANTICIPATED COST: As you are likely to need to scaffold the area to give a protective roof layer so that the kitchen is not damaged we would say £10,000 - £15,000 (ten thousand – fifteen thousand pounds) ; please obtain quotations.

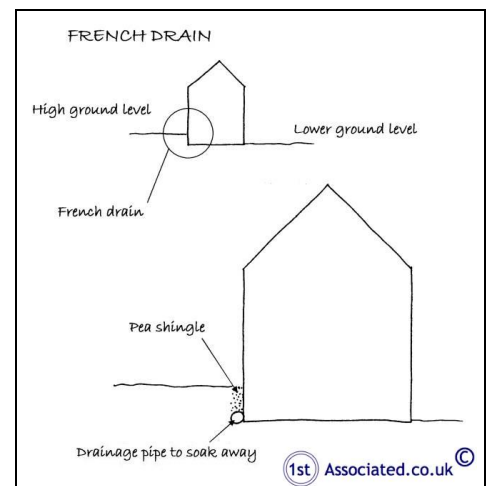


Rotten timber knife test

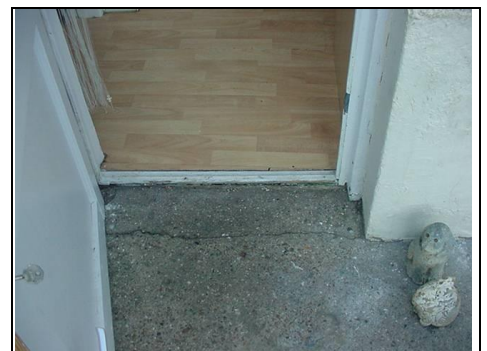
9.0) Dampness

Dampness was found particularly to the rear of the property. We noted the high ground levels.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend lowering the ground level and ideally adding a French drain.



Dampness found in dining room due to the ground levels



High ground levels

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ANTICIPATED COST: Between £5,000 - £10,000 (five thousand - ten thousand pounds). As this is a sloping site this will need to be drained into the drainage system; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

9.0) **Old Woodworm in floors**

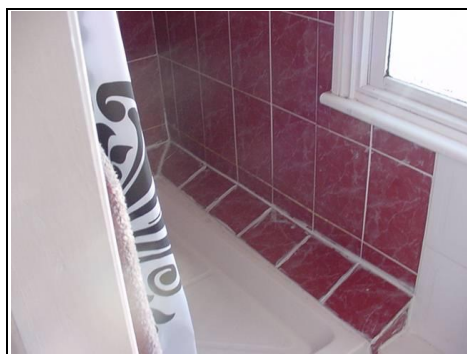
We can see signs of old woodworm in the floors and it is likely there may still be some woodworm remaining given the dampness in the property.

We were not able to access the cellar properly due to the amount of stored items in there and we were not able to view the roof timbers properly due to the mass of insulation that was in there. In both cases we would recommend the areas are cleared and we will carry out a re-visit before you commit to purchasing the property.

10.0) **Leaking showers**

It does look as if the shower has been repaired several times indicating that it leaks.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend that you re-seal this area as one of the first tasks you carry out.



Leaking Shower room

11.0) **What is in the boxing in the Master Bedroom and the pipe work in the bathroom?**

We spoke to the owner about both these items and she advised that the pipe work is redundant and there is an old boiler system in the master bedroom.



Redundant pipe work

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ACTION REQUIRED: Open up area to check its condition and see if the boiler and pipe work needs removing.



Boxed in old boiler

12.0) Living in older properties such as this

You should be very aware with this type of property that there will be ongoing maintenance. This can range from sealing cracks that occur in the walls, to ensure the property remains water tight, to dealing with rotting windows.

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

The Ugly

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

We have found more than the average number of things that we would classify as bad. There is no one specific thing that we would put in the Ugly Section, however when putting all the items in the Bad Section together we do feel this makes this a high risk purchase.

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Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Maintenance

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

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

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

For the electrics We would recommend an Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE) test and report carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent, which is recommended whenever a property changes occupancy.

Heating

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

Drainage

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

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Water Supply

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

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

DIY/Handyman Type Work

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

Purchase Price

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

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Estimates of 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.

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For unskilled labour we currently use between £75 and £100 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 doing 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:

The owner has focussed very much on the interior (as many people do) unfortunately problems haven't been resolved with the structure as a whole. There is a considerable amount of repair and maintenance required to be carried out on this property.

We are aware that where a lot of work such as these needs to be carried out there will no doubt be discounts in the builders prices for the whole works which could work to your benefit. You do need to carry out some investigation work and get quotes prior to committing to purchase this property. We feel the asking price should reflect the work required which we feel is above an average amount.

We feel that the asking price should reflect the work required.

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

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 as your employed Independent Chartered Surveyor represent your interests only.

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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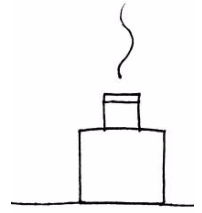
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EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS AND PARAPET WALLS



Chimney Stacks

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

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

Chimney One –Rear left hand side

This chimney is render finished with a cement flashing and two chimney pots. From what we could see we believe there may be problems with the render as we can see vegetation growing which normally means there is dampness in the render.



Rear left hand side chimney

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary with regard to repairs to all the chimneys.



Vegetation growing in render

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Chimney Two and Three – Centre front and rear

These are substantial chimneys, both are finished in render and probably brick built.

It is the base of the chimneys that concerns us as they sit in a valley gutter. It looks from the outside that there have been various repairs including re-tarring of the valley gutter. Within the roof we can see that dampness is getting in.



The two centre chimneys sitting in the valley gutter

To Chimney two (the front chimney) there are repairs to the render and the render generally looks weathered.

To Chimney three (the rear chimney) the render looks weathered. This is the stage that it starts to deteriorate and dampness gets in and frost can damage it considerably.



Weathered render on chimney

Chimney Four – Right hand side

This is the chimney we had the poorest view of and is the greatest concern. This is a large fairly slender chimney that needs a close inspection. We would recommend the summer of 2012 for this.



Right hand side chimney

ACTION REQUIRED: We have concerns about all the chimneys. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary. We have recommended that a roof light is put in the valley gutter roofs. This is a roof window in the valley gutter that will give access to the central chimneys but will also give a better view of the other chimneys. This work should be carried out first and you would be better able to assess the work required to the chimneys.

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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.

Cement Fillets/Cement Flashings Defined

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

Render Defined

A sand and cement external coating applied in two or three coats or layers.

Parapet Walls

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

In this case there is a substantial parapet wall to the rear left hand side and also one to the front. We think we can see vegetation growing out of this parapet wall which as mentioned previously concerns us as this means that dampness is getting in.



Rear left hand parapet wall

This photo (sorry it's blurred) shows the substantial painted parapet wall to the rear and adjacent to the kitchen. You can see the next door neighbour has extending against this pitch roof construction. You will have a responsibility/liability to keep it watertight.



Rear substantial parapet wall

We can see that there is strapping in this wall which indicates there has been retaining work.

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Strapping to rear parapet wall



Strapping to parapet close up

ACTION REQUIRED: This should be inspected at the same time as the chimneys and no later than the summer of 2013.



Front parapet wall

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

Party Wall

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

Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

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

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

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Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the chimney stacks and parapet walls 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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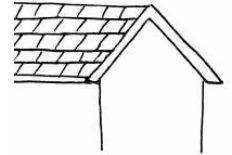
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ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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 it may or may not be present, please read on:

We will consider the roofs in two areas,

Main Roof

The main roof is a pitched hipped roof clad with slate. This meets the second roof which is a gable end roof and forms a valley gutter between the two.

In addition to these two main roofs there is a rear single pitch roof and a flat roof over the kitchen area.



Circle shows where roofs meet and form valley gutter.

Main slate roofs

These are original slate coverings and from our view within the roof we can see that there is light coming through and therefore dampness will be getting in.



Main slate roof joining rear roof

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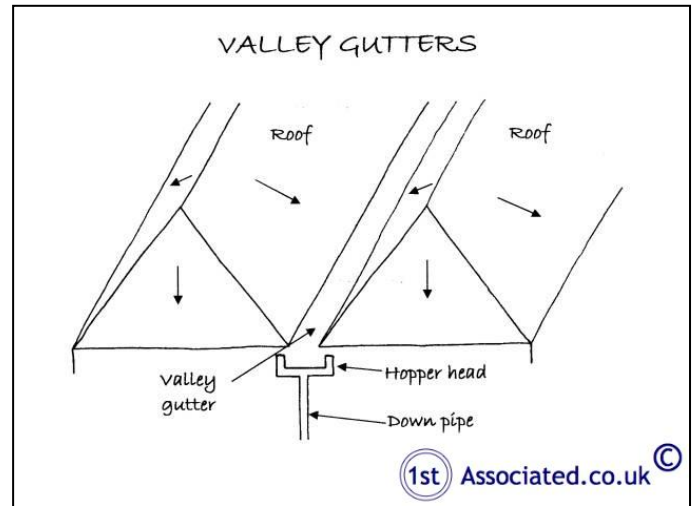
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Valley Gutters

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Awkward Junctions

There are some awkward junctions to the rear of this roof and unfortunately the flashing looks to have deteriorated which in turn will mean dampness will get in. We could not gain access to the rear roof properly and we were very limited on our movements within the main roof due to the mass of insulation (we would not recommend this amount of insulation in this age of property).



Awkward junction

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary about adding new lead flashing.

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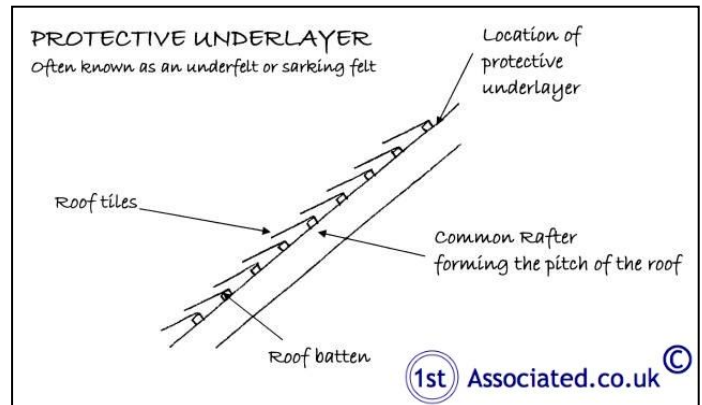
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Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)

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.



In this case this roof doesn't have a protective underlayer. It simply has the slates protecting the property.

Often an older roof will have no protective underlayer at all unless it has been re-roofed post war and then it will have a Hessian base bitumen membrane.

Most importantly we can see that dampness is getting in.



No protective underlayer and dampness getting in

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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.

Rear Kitchen Roof

This has a mineral felt finish that looks in reasonable condition with the exception of the detailing where it meets the main parapet wall and the on the felt edge detail where there is no gutter. Our concern with the flat roof is the detailing and the roof structure.

Kitchen roof detail

The detailing leaves a lot to be desired. There is no proper gutter as far as we can see and also the flashing has been repaired many times.

As far as we can see any rainwater will run off the roof and down the walls of the property causing dampness and deterioration.

ACTION REQUIRED: The detailing needs to be improved with the addition of guttering and the flashings need to be replaced with lead flashing.



Flat Roof on kitchen



Flat roof with no gutter



Repaired flashing

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Roof decking

We spoke at some length about this within the Executive Summary but we want to re-emphasize that it has not been possible to identify what this roof decking is formed of. We have removed the ceiling tiles in the kitchen and found what looks to be a concrete finish but also found rusting which indicates it may be a reinforced concrete which makes sense for this size of roof.



No guttering to the rear of the kitchen roof



Possible concrete roof



Tiles on kitchen ceiling

We can also see what looks like a tar under the roof which looks like it was an attempt at making it waterproof.

Finally there is an outside chance that asbestos is in the cement ceiling. Asbestos anywhere in the property increases the costs considerably when it needs removing.



Tiles removed to see into roof

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ACTION REQUIRED: Ideally carry out tests to the kitchen roof before you commence with this purchase. You should consider as fact that you will need a new kitchen roof.



Rust on ceiling system

The latest 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. This will stop the possibility of fungal growth above the ceiling in the flat roof area.

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 the flat roof itself and ground level.

Finally, we were only able to see approximately sixty 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.

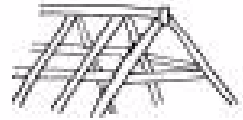
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ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



(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

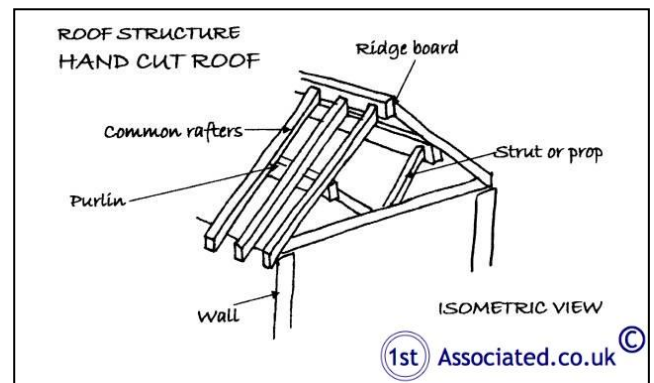
The main roofs are accessed in two areas. The left hand side of the roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing and the right hand side roof is accessed via the front right hand bedroom. In all cases access was limited due to the mass of insulation or difficulty in access. Viewing has been from the loft hatches only. There are no loft ladders, electric lights or secured floorboards. We recommend that these are added, as it will make the loft spaces safer and easier to use and to inspect.

We did have access to the kitchen roof but we have spoken about that in the kitchen roof section earlier. It is important that this is read in full.

The loft has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing considerably. We need to emphasize how limited our view of the roofs have been as due to the mass of insulation we did not feel it was safe to access the roof as we normally would(as we were working alone).

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.



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Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

- Serious active woodworm
- Structurally significant defects to the timbers
- Structurally significant dry rot
- Structurally significant wet rot



Looking at the roof to the right hand side with mould on the timbers.



Front Left hand side roof showing dampness getting in.



Rear Left hand side roof showing damp getting in.

Our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof, and the mass of insulation which restricted our viewing from the loft hatches. What we could see was generally found to be in poor condition for its age, type and style. This is for two reasons.

1. Rain is getting through and this is visible in the damp timber.
2. The amount of insulation is starting to cause mould to the timbers due to lack of air circulation.

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ACTION REQUIRED: A lot of work is required to these roofs. We would ultimately recommend re-roofing. Due to our limited view we would also recommend that the roofs are cleared and we will re-inspect. The only way to be 100 per cent certain is to have the roof cleared and checked.

Fire Walls

The property has one brick firewall which is located to the left hand side (all directions given as you face the property).

Fire Walls Defined

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

Water Tanks

We could not see any water tanks.

Ventilation

The roof is naturally ventilated due there being no protective underlayer. However because of the mass of insulation we think this is causing problems with air circulation.

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 it was covered by 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

Plastic Gutters and Downpipes

The gutters and downpipes would originally have been cast iron but most have now been replaced with plastic.

These looked in average condition apart from there being no guttering at all to the kitchen area. Also the canted bay window to the front of the property has the traditional 50mm piping which always becomes blocked

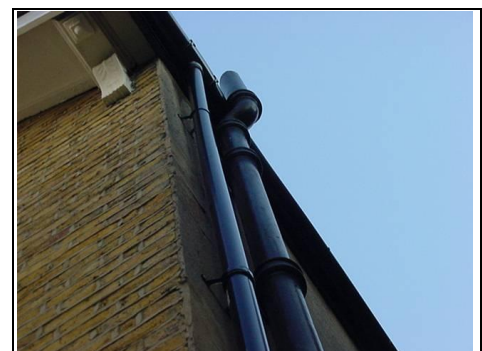


Small pipe outlet from the canted bay window that will leak and these always get blocked.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend you stand outside the property next time it rains heavily and see how well the drains cope with the rainwater particularly looking at the guttering and the joints. We would always recommend that the gutters and downpipes are cleaned out, the joints are checked and the alignment checked to ensure that the gutters fall towards the downpipes.

Soil and Vent Pipe

These are plastic and are located to the left hand side and rear of the property. There have been a lot of additions to the soil and vent pipes including very long runs of down pipe that look to have no fall on them at all.



Soil and vent pipe

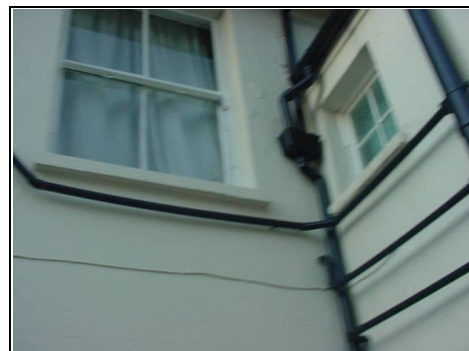
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One of these runs from the far right hand rear bedroom to the soil pipe at the rear which we think is a blockage waiting to happen.



Long run of Soil and vent pipe

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

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WALLS



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

The walls are constructed of brickwork with render detailing to the front, unpainted render detailing to the side and painted render detailing to the rear.

Brickwork

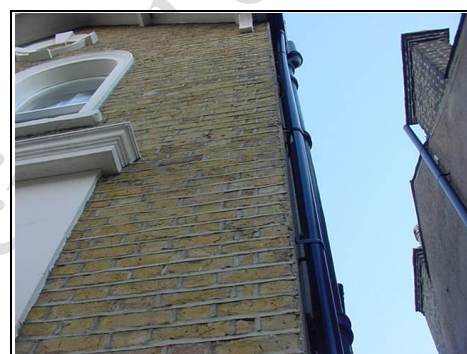
The property is built in a yellow brick originally in a lime mortar in what is known as Flemish bond brickwork which has been re-pointed in cement mortar.

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.

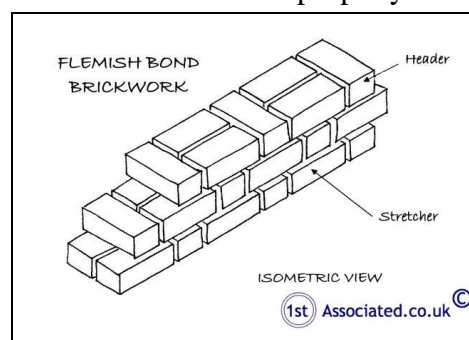
The solid external walls may be liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon their condition and their exposure to the weather. External faces should be kept in good condition.

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.

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



Re-pointing to the cement mortar to the front of the property



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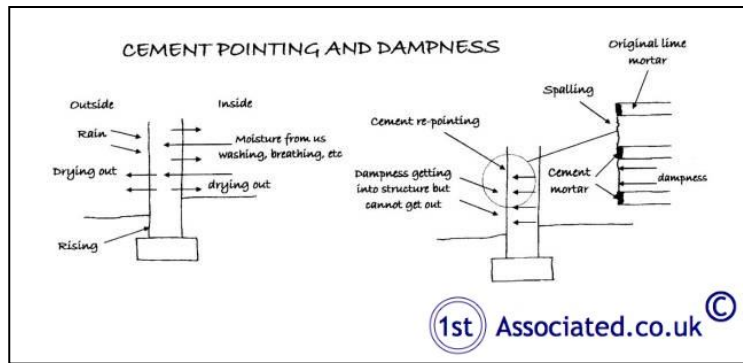
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Lime every time

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



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

Render

Rear Render

The external rear walls are finished in white painted render. We are always wary when we see rendered properties as it usually means they have been rendered for a particular reason.

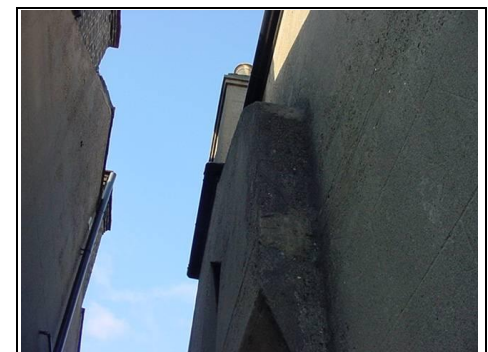
In this particular case we believe it is part of the original aesthetics and we would consider the render to be in average to below average condition.



Painted render to rear walls

Right hand side render

The render on the right hand side is unpainted and has a stucco effect which is lining of the plaster to make it look like stone. This area does not get much light and will be susceptible to dampness which means you need to keep the render in top condition to prevent this.



Render to right side wall

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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.

Drip detail over window

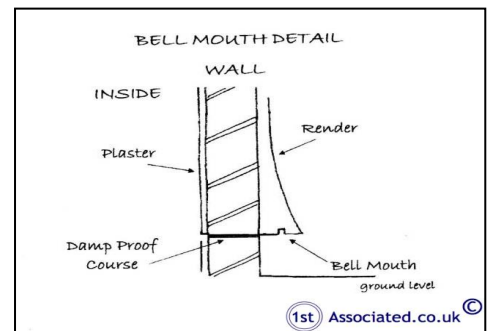
In this case we found no drip detail to the windows but we can see there is deterioration and cracking over the window. Please see our comments on Lintels in the Executive Summary



No drip over window

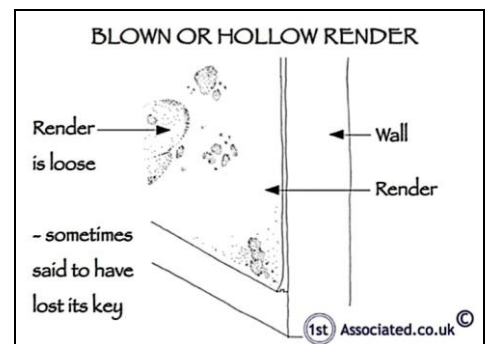
Bell Mouth detail

In this case there is no bell mouth detail at the base of the property.



Cracking

We can see some cracking in the render and these need to be sealed as soon as possible. We would remind you that any hairline cracks that appear, which tends to be the case with render, need to be sealed as soon as possible to stop dampness and water getting in and causing blisters and hollow areas.



Painted render/painted walls

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

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Lintels

We would refer you to our comments in regard to lintels in the Executive Summary

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

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FOUNDATIONS



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

Foundations

Given the age of the property you may find different depths of foundations. We would expect to find a stepped brick foundation possibly with a bedding of lime mortar and possibly a concrete foundation to the newer areas, for example, the kitchen extension.

London Clay

This property stands on London clay. It is, therefore, more susceptible to movement either settlement or heave depending upon the conditions. Issues with leaking drains, trees being allowed to overgrow or if they have been cut down can also cause problems. It's not unusual to have some settlement in London properties.

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. Please remember to talk about any cracks identified within the property. Often insurers will refer to progressive and non-progressive cracking. Unfortunately this is something we are unable to comment upon from a one-off inspection - the Building Research Establishment recommend a year of monitoring of any cracking.

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

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

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

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

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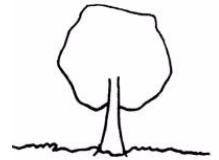
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TREES



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

Often within this age and style of property there are significant trees present in the garden. We can see some of these still remain and they are what we would term within influencing distance, therefore you do need to maintain them.

We were pleased to see the Willow at the rear from the point of view that it will hold the sloping site earth together and looks to be far enough away. However the tree at the front of the property, although we believe it has a small root ball, will affect it.

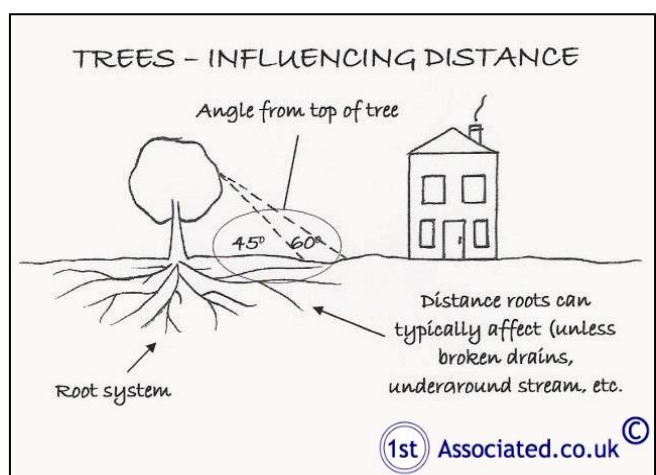
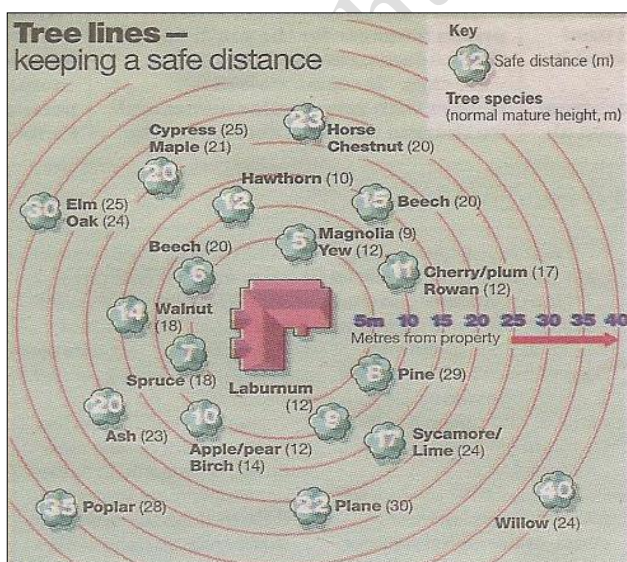
ACTION REQUIRED: You need to consult an arboriculturalist in the summer of 2012. We are not tree surgeons.



Willow Tree to the rear of the property



Tree to the front of the property



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Influencing Distance Defined

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

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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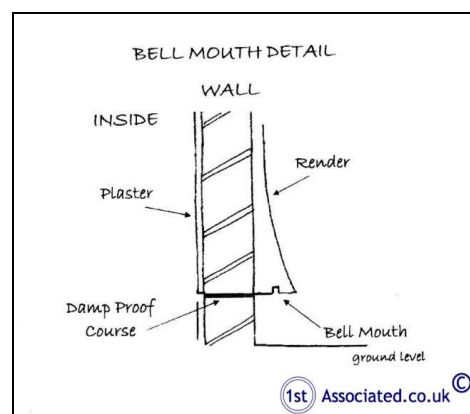
DAMP PROOF COURSE

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.

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, the render detail went right down to the ground both to the front, side and rear of the property. We would much prefer to see a bell mouth detail to the base this would then reduce the chances of dampness.



Render down to the ground



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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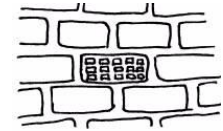
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AIRBRICKS



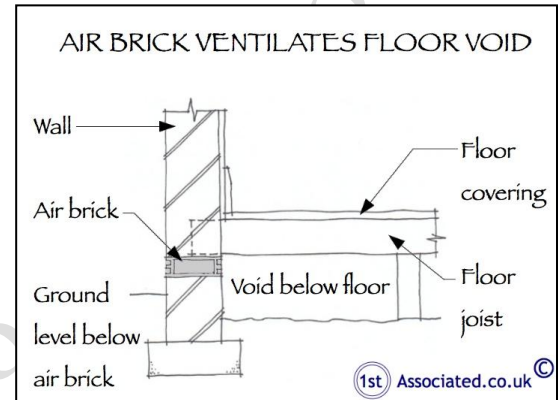
In properties with suspended floors you need to have an airflow beneath to stop deterioration. The air is allowed to pass under the property by the use of airbricks. Generally the rule of thumb is that airbricks are spaced every metre and a half approximately, but this depends upon the specific circumstances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

Low level Air Bricks

Surprisingly we did not see many air bricks considering it had a cellar to the front of the property.

We would have expected air bricks to the front and rear where there is a suspended floor such as this

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.



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

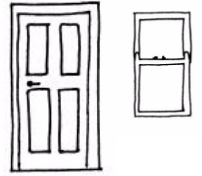
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FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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

Fascias and Soffits

At the front of the property we have some ornate decorative fascias and soffits. To the rear are plain fascias and soffits. The fascias and soffits are painted timber.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend work in the summer of 2013 in the form of repair and redecoration. Make sure gutters and downpipes are watertight before carrying out any work on fascias and soffits.



Decorative fascias and soffits to the front



Plain Fascias and soffits to the rear

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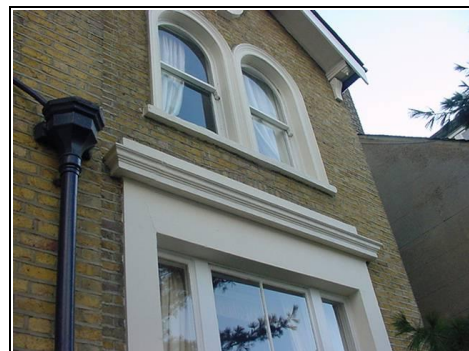
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Windows and Doors

The property has some magnificent large single glazed timber sliding sash windows and doors. We would comment that the sliding sash window was a revelation in its day. We also find that some of these stick when we try to open them as was the case in this instance.



Sash windows

ACTION REQUIRED: We would refer you to our comments in the Executive Summary about rotten windows and also the lintels.

Repairing sash windows can be an expensive hobby.

General Information on Sliding Sash Windows

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

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

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EXTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

There is a considerable amount of external decoration with this property particularly to the rear. There is also considerable work to the windows required. The paint on the render at the rear of the property is a protective coat and you need to ensure you have the right type of paint to carry out the work and to seal any hair line cracks as quickly as possible. At present there are hairline cracks and would recommend on the day you move in that you seal these cracks.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

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INTERNAL



CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

Ceilings and cornicing

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be lath and plaster or though there may have been some plaster board used in newer repaired sections.

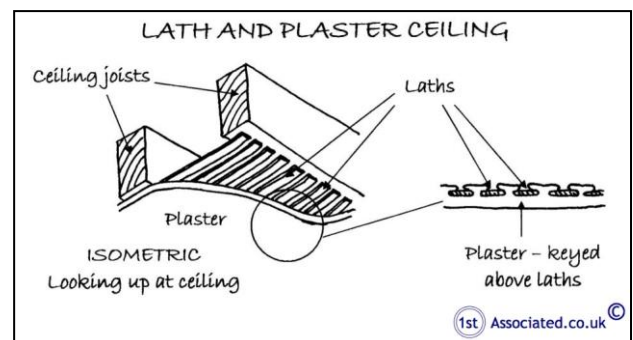
Unfortunately the cornicing has been painted rather than lime washed. This does mean that the detail of the cornicing has been lost over the years. Extensive repair work will be required to make the features fully visible



Painted Cornicing

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.



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Internal Walls and Partitions

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

Perimeter Walls

Originally these would have been constructed with a wet plaster, possibly a lime plaster. From tap testing we think there is still a lime plaster in most places.

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 look of the wall which is relatively “smooth ” which undulates slightly which we typically find on walls that were originally lime based.

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

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

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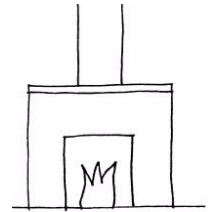
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CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

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

At the time of the survey one chimney was in use in the main lounge. We were not able in this instance to follow the chimneys through as we have not had access to properly view the roof space. So while we could see the chimney breast externally on the right hand side and we could see the chimney breasts at ground level and first floor in the centre of the property we cannot confirm they are in the roof space. The left hand chimney could not be located at all.

Any chimneys that you do not propose to use should be capped and ventilated to prevent dampness.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal advisor to check and confirm if the chimneys have been removed.

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 and we do not comment as modern techniques for adding support can concealed very well 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 the report.

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FLOORS



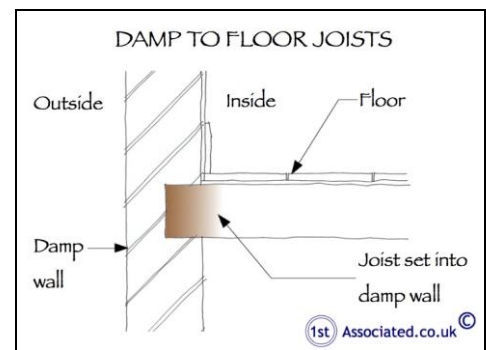
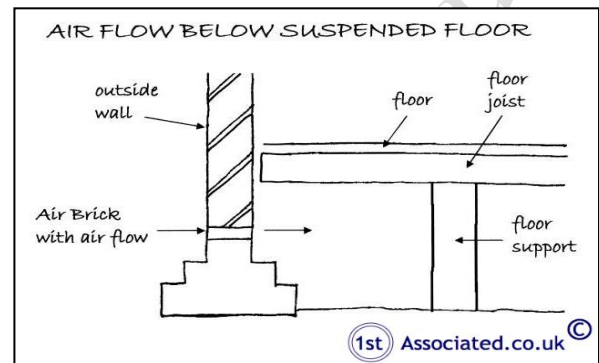
Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.

Ground Floor

Suspended Timber Floor

The floors of the property are suspended timber floors with embedded timbers. The danger with this type of floor is the embedded timber starts to rot. Whilst repairs can be carried out they are awkward. In this instance we have not been able to view these properly as we have not been able to gain access into the cellar area properly.

ACTION REQUIRED: the whole cellar area needs clearing out to give us proper access before you legally commit to purchase the property.



Stored items in cellar

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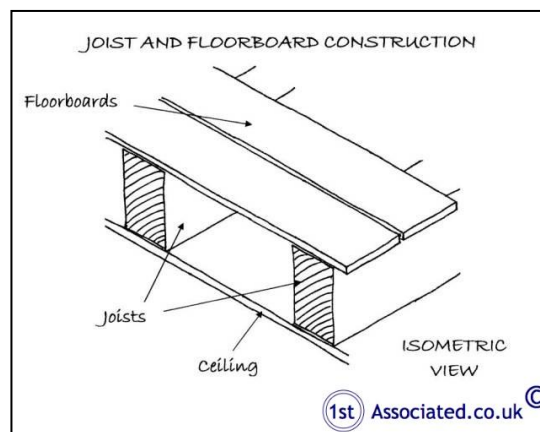
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First Floor

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 would expect some damage and deterioration to the floors. We noted woodworm patterns within the floors.

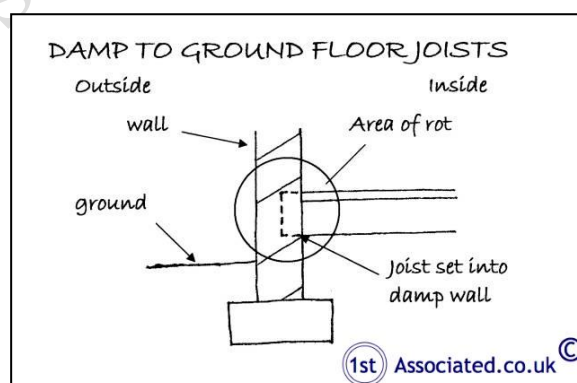
There are also exposed timbers which could cause deterioration to the floor itself.



ACTION REQUIRED: Ideally the floor needs opening up to have an examination carried out.

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.



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

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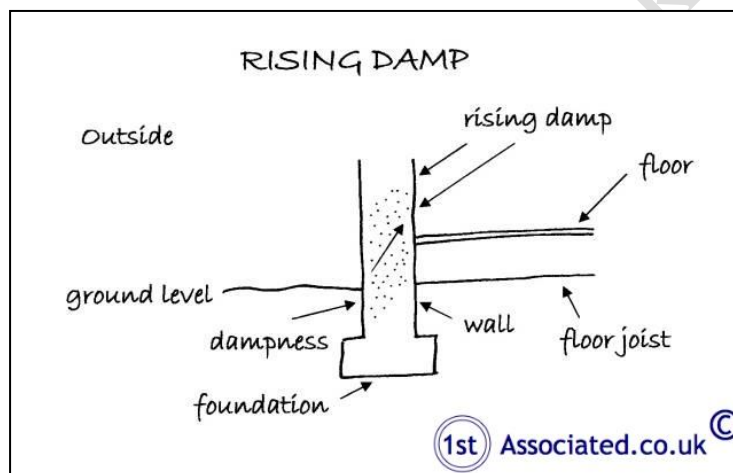


DAMPNESS

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

Rising Damp

Rising damp depends upon various components including the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation of the material, amongst other things. Rising damp can come from the ground, drawn by capillary action, to varying degrees of intensity and height into the materials above.



A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls and some internal walls. In this particular case we have found rising damp and we would comment as follows.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see the Executive Summary



Testing and finding rising damp

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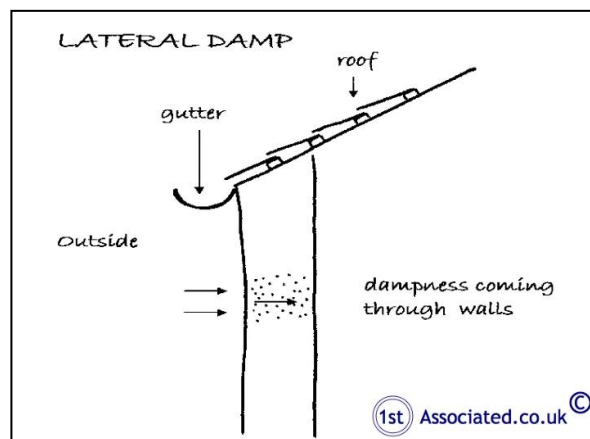
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Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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

We used a damp meter on the external walls. We have not found dampness. However we do feel that if work is not carried out on the exterior of the property then lateral damp will occur.



Condensation

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

At the time of the inspection there were no obvious signs of condensation. However we suspect that within the small shower rooms that condensation occurs and we could not see any extract fans in kitchens and bathrooms.

However, it depends upon how you utilise the building. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating and ventilation of properties. Normally opening windows first thing in the morning resolves most condensation issues.

Kitchen condensation

Given the construction of the kitchen roof which is concrete and the poor detailing that allows water to run down the walls we are sure condensation is likely in this area.

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Extract fans in kitchens and bathrooms

A way of helping to reduce condensation is to have good extract fans within the kitchens and bathrooms.

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

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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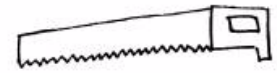
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INTERNAL JOINERY



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 stripped panel doors which wouldn't have been in this property originally; the doors would have been painted. They are however a popular door style. .



Stripped panel door

Staircase

We noted that the underside of the staircase was exposed. It is more normal today to have a half hour fire barrier to stop fire spreading from the ground floor to the first floor in a worst case scenario. You may wish to take a view on whether you add this.

Skirtings

The skirtings range from approximately 150mm to 500mm. The older grander style skirtings are still present and are a nice feature of the property.

Kitchen

Please see our comments regarding the kitchen in the Executive Summary.

We found the kitchen units were in average condition, subject of course to some wear and tear as one would expect, although we would say they are from the cheaper end of the market.

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

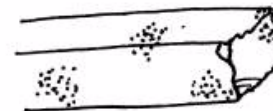
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TIMBER DEFECTS



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

Dry Rot

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

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

Wet Rot

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

We noted wet rot within the windows. Please see our knife test photo and associated comments. We suspect there may be wet rot within the floor joists although we have not been able to see it. We can see some deterioration to the fascias and soffits. Again, we would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had a limited view of the roof

Woodworm



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

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The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm.

In this instance there is a mass of insulation within the roof that limits our view. We did notice to some of the exposed floor boards that there were signs of old woodworm. It is most important to establish whether woodworm is active or not. Many good old properties will have non-active woodworm. In this case we think there is a possibility of woodworm activity although we did not note any that was 'structurally significant'. In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection was restricted by insulation covering some of the timbers in the roof, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings.



Woodworm

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

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

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

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INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

Internal decorations are in average to above average condition and are very much the focus of the refurbishment with regard to the interior.

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.

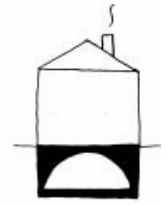
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CELLARS AND VAULTS

Cellars and vaults tend to be found in older properties and offer a useful space, although usually they are damp, unless some treatment has taken place such as the tanking of the walls, which is a lining process, or an external damp proofing membrane of some type has been added, or if internally the walls have been lined, therefore hiding the damp. Cellars are often susceptible to flooding from excessive rain, rising water table levels or even blocked drains.

The cellar is accessed via the flaps as you enter the property. We could not access the cellar properly because of the amount of stored items.

ACTION REQUIRED: We are more than happy to return to view the cellar once it has been cleared.



Large amount of stored items in cellar

Finally, we have made a visual inspection of the cellar only and have no way of knowing what the construction is without opening up the structure.

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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.

HIPs

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

Roofs

In this instance there is approximately 300mm of insulation as required by the current building regulations. However we do not think it is a particularly good idea to use this much insulation in older properties unless ventilation has been added. As far as we can see ventilation has not been added.

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 sliding sash 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 average compared with what we typically see.

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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.

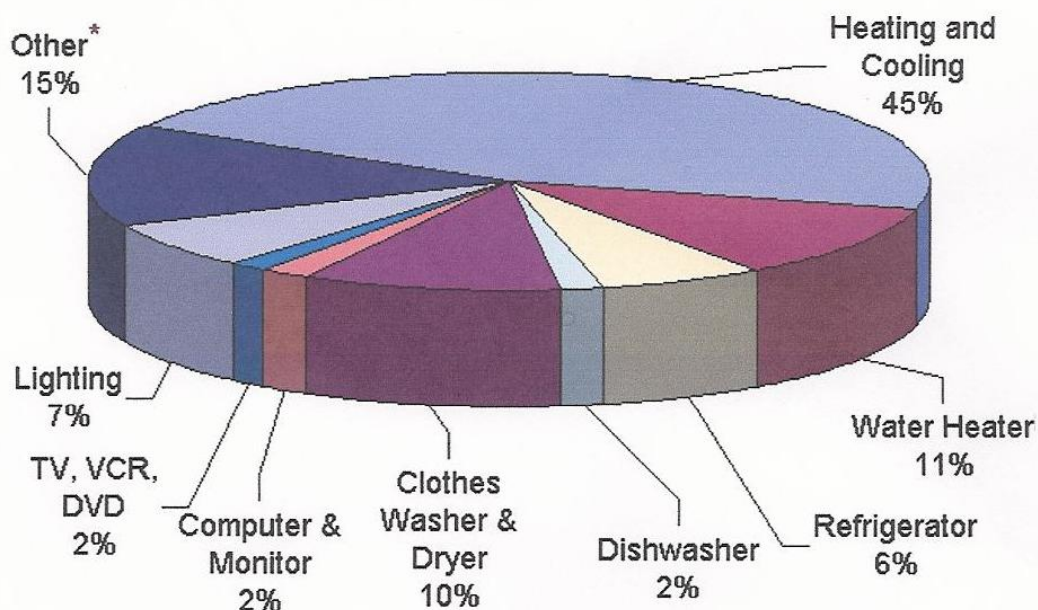
or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

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

It is worth watching the video How Many Light Bulbs? by David J C MacKay HTTP//www.youtube.com/watch?v=UR8wRSp21Xs

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.

What does my energy bill pay for?



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

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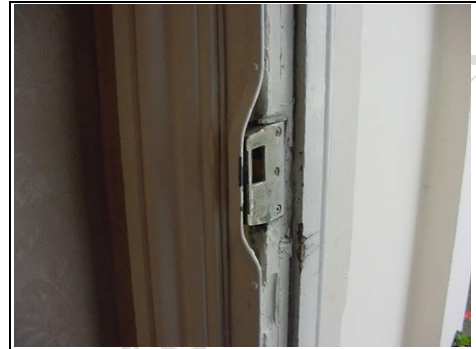
OTHER MATTERS



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

Security

We noted a security box externally but we are advised that it is no longer in working order. This can still act as a deterrent. We also noted a London bar on the front door. Other than that there are very limited security features. A good alarm system should not only help reduce break-ins but also your insurance. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further.



London Bar on front door

Fire / Smoke Alarms

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

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

Insurance

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

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

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Asbestos

Please see our comments on the Kitchen roof in the Executive Summary.

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. This was commonly used post war until it was banned only in the last ten or so years, although it is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time. We are not asbestos surveyors.

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

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SERVICES

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

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

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ELECTRICITY

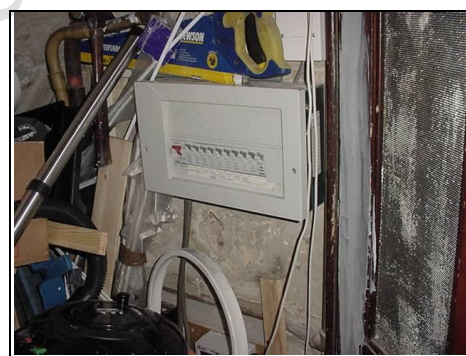


It is strange to think that electricity only started to be used in domestic properties at the turn of the 19th century with gas lighting still being the norm for a good many years after.

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

Fuse Board

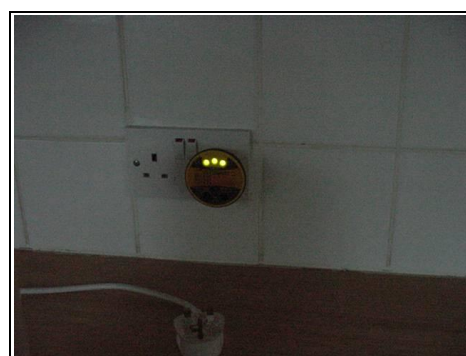
The electric fuses and consumer units were located under the stairs. The fuse board is from the 1980's/1990's and looked dated and better are now available.



1980's/1990's Electric 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. However we are concerned about the condensation that may be occurring in the kitchen area which is not ideal.



Earth Test

ACTION REQUIRED: Enquire about upgrading it.

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ACTION REQUIRED: As the property is changing occupancy an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test and report should be carried out by a NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor.

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

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

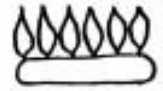
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There is very little we can check for in a gas installation, we do inspect to make sure there is one and that it has a consumer unit and that the boilers are vented. Ideally you should have a service inspection carried out by an independent Gas Safe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

We are advised that the property has mains gas. It comes into the property via the cellar area.

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

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

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 owner was not sure where the controlling stopcock was 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.

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

We were advised that there is one hidden in the box work in the Master Bedroom but we did not see it.

Plumbing

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

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Heating

The boiler was located in the kitchen and it is manufactured by Ideal and the model type is Cibi HE.

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



Boiler in Kitchen

Ten Minute Heating Test

The heating was on throughout our inspection and the property was 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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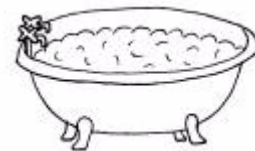
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BATHROOMS



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

Family Bathroom - also known as a Jack and Jill bathroom as it is accessed via the Master Bedroom and the landing.

The property has a three piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin and WC, and is fairly basic. It looks in average to below condition. We would have expected a better bathroom in this size and style of property.

Shower Room to bedroom on First Floor

The shower room in the bedroom does look to have had leaks over the years.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend upgrading this area.

ANTICIPATED COST: Shower rooms and bathrooms really can be as much you want them to be or as little as you want them to be (as can kitchens)!

Shower Room to ground floor

The shower room to the ground floor is again basic and we would recommend upgrading. Please see our comments above.

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.

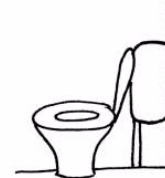
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MAIN DRAINS



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 bathroom and kitchen. No build up or back up was noted.

Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We have identified three inspection chambers / manholes.

Manholes Defined

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

Inspection Chamber / Manhole One - Rear Middle

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.



Rear Middle Manhole

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Inspection Chamber / Manhole - Two Rear Right hand side

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

From what we could see it is brick built.



Rear Right hand side

Inspection Chamber / Manhole Three -left hand side near the Kitchen

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 finished in concrete.



Manhole three

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

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

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Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal.

In this age of property it is likely to be into shared drains. These can be a problem during heavy rainfall and peak periods, such as the 9 o'clock rush to work.

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

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

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OUTSIDE AREAS

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

OUTBUILDINGS/ PARKING



Parking

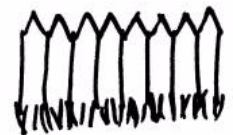
Parking looks to be on a first come first serve basis and looks to be free.

Outbuildings

There is an outbuilding to the right hand side of the property which has this unusual checkerboard roof. We cannot imagine it is waterproof and it should be considered a very basic construction.



Outbuilding roof



EXTERNAL AREAS

Front garden Wall

As the property sits on a sloping site we would much prefer to see the front retaining wall with weep holes but we couldn't see them in this instance. You can see from the whiteness how water is getting through it.



Retaining wall to the front

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Rear Garden

Sloping Site

The rear garden is a considerable sloping site and you therefore need to expect that rainwater will discharge to the bottom section whenever it rains.



Rear Garden



Patio/seating area

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

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

Left Hand Neighbours

There was no one home when we knocked.

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POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

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

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

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

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

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LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

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

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

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

If you would like any further advice on any of the issues discussed (or indeed any that have not been discussed!) then please do not hesitate to contact us on **0800 298 5424**.

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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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APPENDICES

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

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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 - British Gas or NICEIC Electrical Contractor.
2. A certificate from the local authority saying that the installation has approval under the building regulations.

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

Work You Cannot do Yourself

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

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INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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

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

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www.hometrack.co.uk

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

www.motleyfool.co.uk

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

www.rightmove.co.uk

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

www.zoopla.co.uk

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

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French Drain

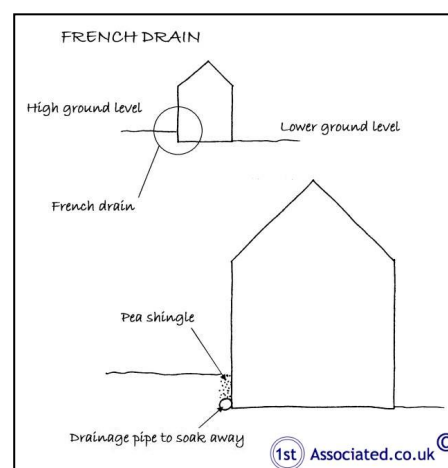
Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

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 dingo-rod equivalent, as it is normally fine sand, organic matter or clay that has clogged up the French drain. So, it is a case of digging it up and cleaning the pipework (or it may be quicker to just replace it), adding a filter fabric and re-filling the gravel.

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Condensation and Cold Bridging – What is Cold Bridging?

What is cold bridging and does it always cause condensation?

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



Certain types of buildings are more susceptible to condensation and cold bridging

You often see condensation in properties, for example on a mirror in a bathroom when you have had a shower or a bath. 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.

Typically this will be a lintel. Problems can occur with concrete lintels that were commonly used in the 1970's, and also in more modern, better insulated properties, cold bridging has been known to occur on metal lintels. The problem is what to do about it.



Example of a concrete lintel – can you notice where the cold bridging would be in this photo?



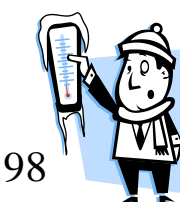
A close up view of the concrete lintel

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When is Cold Bridging Most Likely?

In our experience cold bridging is most likely on properties built in the 1930's to 1980's, most commonly in the 1970's. This is the era when we were just starting to think about insulation and we added insulation into our structures for example with cavity wall insulation or double glazed windows. This meant they were warmer which in effect has meant the significance of a lintel over a door or window being colder and allowing the transfer of coldness becomes much more important. This results in condensation that we commonly see above windows in this age and era of property.



Typical 1970's house

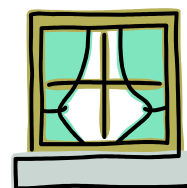


Typical 1970's houses



So what can you do about 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, the air ventilation and movement you can reduce considerably the chances of condensation. Airing the room which seems to have gone out of fashion where you literally open the windows in the morning to air the room is a big step forward.



Where do we most commonly see cold bridging?

We would answer this in two ways. Firstly, we see as mentioned cold bridging is common in 1970's houses. It's also more common to various



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other factors.

The main other factor is large families or families with young children where there is a lot of washing going on and often during the winter months this washing is then dried on radiators. This is generally known as the lifestyle of the occupants.

Expert witness cases

We have seen some terrible examples of this. We have been involved in several court cases as expert witnesses where landlords are being taken to court over the condensation being caused by cold bridging. The discussions that then take place in court with us as expert witnesses are, is it a design characteristic or is it a lifestyle characteristic that is causing problems.

Is Cold Bridging a design problem?

We have been involved in many reports on condensation and cold bridging and some legal cases where we have been asked to act as expert witness. Really it's down to the design of the property. There are cold elements in it such as a concrete frame or concrete lintels. You have a disadvantage although, not impossible to stop the condensation it's very hard. It could also be argued that where cold bridging is occurring in a modern property you are getting interstitial condensation which is condensation within the structure which you literally can't see.



1960's concrete frame



Concrete lintel visible externally
but they are not always visible



Dampness and condensation around
the concrete window lintel

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Do lifestyle issues cause condensation?

By lifestyle issues we mean the way the building is being used. We have come across quite a few instances where it is how the property is being used that's causing the problems. This may be due to showers being taken without extractor fans being put on or it may be due to clothes being dried internally, particularly during the winter months. It could be steamy kitchens. Some things can be helped by airing the home by opening the windows and in bathrooms and kitchens you can have extractor fans that are controlled by humidity controls on the fans. So it really is an individual answer in most cases to the problems with the property.



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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 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.

ONLY HUMAN!

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

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

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WEATHER

It was a bright winters 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 that we are not local surveyors 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.

INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited due to the mass of insulation and we did not have access to the cellar.



Dampness and condensation in the timbers



Mass of insulation

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Also we did not have the benefit of actually meeting you at the property and go through your requirements to get a better understanding of your knowledge of property. We would not recommend proceeding with this purchase unless we have spoken in detail and/or met at the property. There are considerable elements of risk that you need to understand fully.

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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