RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

Dorset

Marketing by:
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CONTENTS

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.

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.

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two storey detached modern chalet bungalow with the first floor being formed within the roof space.

The front of the property has been converted to parking and to the rear there is a patio area and garden with mature trees.

We believe that the property was originally built in the post war years. If the exact 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:

1939-1945	World War II (6 June 1944 D-Day)
1940	Food rationing introduced
1941	The National Fire Service established
1945	First computer was built
1946	Winston Churchill gave his 'Iron Curtain' Speech
1947	Polaroid Cameras invented
1948	Olympic Games held in London
1949	First non-stop flight around the world
1950	The concept of artificial intelligence for computers was developed by Alan Turing (MOD)
1951	Truman signs Peace Treaty with Japan which ended WWII
1952	Princess Elizabeth became Queen at age 52

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Front View

Rear View

Garden

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

1) Entrance Hallway

2) Large Lounge

3) Dining Room

4) Kitchen / Breakfast Room with Central Island

5) Two Bedrooms/Reception rooms

6) Bathroom

7) Cloakroom

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

1) Master Bedroom with Internal Ensuite

2) Internal Family Shower Room

3) Two further Double Bedrooms

Outside Areas

Rear Garden with mature trees. Front Garden converted to a parking area as well as roadside parking on a "first come first serve" basis.

INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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

Ground Floor

Hallway

Lounge

Kitchen

Dining Room

Bedroom One/Reception Room

Bedroom Two/Reception Room

Bathroom

Cloakroom

First Floor

Landing

Rear Right Hand Bedroom

Front right hand bedroom

Master Bedroom

Ensuite to Master Bedroom

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Main Roof:	Pitched Hipped Concrete Tiled Roof with hidden Flat Roof. There are three roof windows / fire exits (we will explain why they are fire exits in the main report).
Gutters and Downpipes:	Profile Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Predominantly internal using an air inlet system
Walls:	Painted Render without detailing (some trickle vents) Construction beneath render unknown
Fascias and Soffits:	Over cladding
Windows and Doors:	Plastic Windows (some with trickle vents)

Internal

Ceilings:		Plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:		Mixture of solid and hollow (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor:	Solid under floor, assumed concrete.
	First Floor:	Joist and floorboards and structural steel frame forming the vertical extension (assumed)

Services

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

The Boiler is located in the ground floor cupboard to the right hand side and is a Bosch Worcester. The Fuse Board is located in the Garage. The owner advised that the services are as new and test certificates will be available.

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.

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 150 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.

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) The Property has been extended to maximise the site.

2) The Property is newly refurbished to a modern standard (albeit that this is superficial).

3) The property has the benefit of off road parking.

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) Guarantees and Tests

We would start by advising that the owner/developer should in our opinion offer some form of guarantee. With a completely new build you normally get a NHBC warranty for ten years, this property has had major alterations and therefore there are schemes such as an Architects Certificate or Chartered Surveyors Certificate which give approval.

Tests

There should be an electrical test and a gas test together with warranties and guarantees on such things as the windows together with a Building Control Surveyors Final Completion Certificate on this property. It is essential that you are given all of these.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal advisor needs to specifically ask and obtain if there are any guarantees/warranty available.

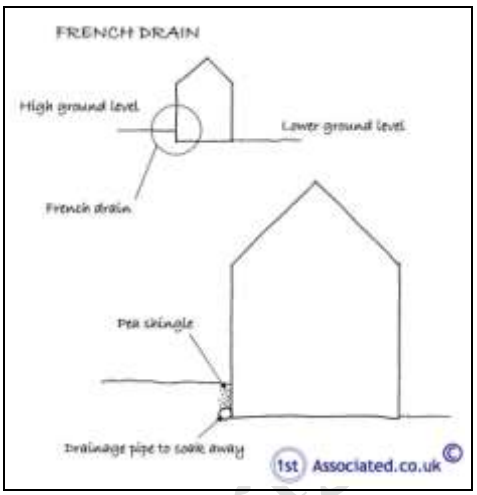
2) Car Parking Area runs towards the Property and will cause dampness

The car parking area runs towards the house and therefore when it rains we would expect the rain to do the same. We would expect a running gulley or French Drain to run along the entirety of the house. We can see that one has been put in front of the garage although we cannot confirm if this is connected to a drain or not.

Car Parking Area

ACTION REQUIRED: Our preferred method would be a French Drain. Without this there will be damage, deterioration and dampness to the base of the render over time.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £5,000 - £10,000; quotations required.

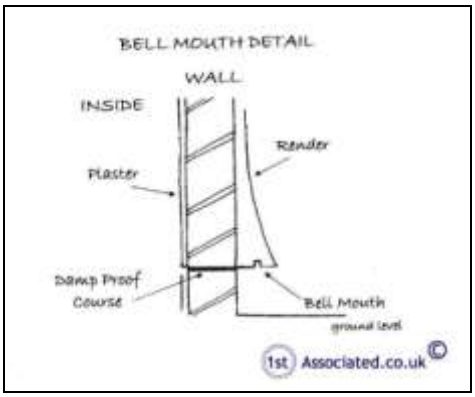


Please see the Outside Areas Section of this Report.

3) **Render**

We were unable to see a Damp Proof Course and we also noted that the render doesn't have a bell mouth at the base which is a traditional detail to help stop damp or drips form above the windows. Whilst these may be considered old fashioned they have for many years helped stop dampness getting into a property. We much prefer a bell mouth detail to the base of the property although we do accept that a window drip perhaps is not as important today with plastic windows.
This together with the off road car parking area which looks as if it is running towards the house, leads us to believe that there is likely to be dampness in the front elevation in years to come, unless a running gulley or French drain is added as recommended above.

Lack of Bell Mouth Detail to base of Render



ACTION REQUIRED: Add a running gulley / French drain.

ANTICIPATED COST: We would anticipate costs to be in the region of £4,000 to £6,000 although quotations are required.

Please see the External Section of this Report.

4) **Hidden flat roof**

The way this property has been developed has cleverly had a large hidden flat roof added which can't be seen properly from the front or the rear. Unfortunately it cannot be accessed either.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would always recommend in these instances that an access hatch is made to enable a view of the roof to be obtained as soon as possible. In this case we believe that the owner/developer should carry this work out to give safe access to the roof and therefore any future roof leaks from this sort of thing will all be part of the guarantee/warranty offered.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section of this Report.

5) **Over Cladding**

The fascias and soffits rather than being replaced have overclad the original timber. This is normally carried out where the timber is in poor condition. Unfortunately it can exasperate the problem as the fascias and soffits are now encased without any ventilation.

Over cladding on Fascia and soffits

This can be problematic as it can lead to wet rot and dry rot in the fascias and soffits. Over cladding is normally carried out as a more economical solution.

ACTION REQUIRED: In the long term we would recommend that this fascia and soffit is removed (you will also have to remove the gutters) and replace with a fascia and soffits either in timber or solid plastic.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £5,000 - £6,000; quotations are required.

Please see the External Section of this Report.

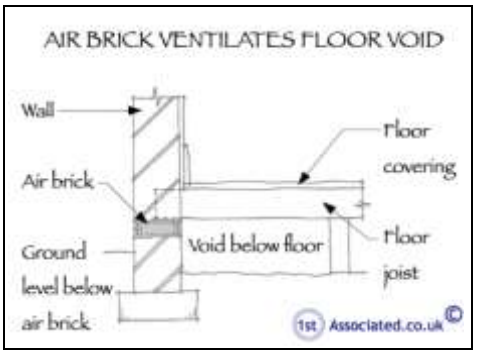
6) Was the Original Floor a Suspended Timber Floor?

It is usual in this age and type of construction to have a suspended timber floor. We would like to see confirmation from the owners/developers that the floor was either all concrete originally or they made provision in the floor to allow air-flow underneath it which would normally be in the form of airbricks which we can't see.

ACTION REQUIRED: Confirmation from existing owners/developers.

Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

A suspended timber floor usually consists of timbers spanning the ground floor, supported on piers (usually brickwork), vented via air bricks within the walls.

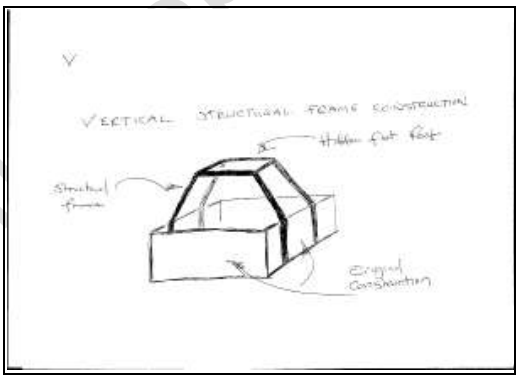


Please see the Internal Section of this Report.

7) **Movement – a mixture of original construction and modern steel frame construction**

In any property which has been built from a mixture of construction such as this, where you have the original construction which has been added to a modern construction and particularly where a steel frame has been added, it changes in how the roof structure weight applies to the building. You have to expect some movement and as such there is likely to be some cracking, particularly in joints of plasterboard walls and ceilings and corners. We would add interestingly that the house walls didn't look to have any expansion joints in them to allow for such movement, these may be well hidden.

Opening up of architraves around the doors



Movement/Cracking to the render

This mixed type of construction and the relatively hard cement render that you have on the property may well cause cracking to the render that you will have to seal and redecorate. Unfortunately the property with this new development has not had the test of time.

ACTION REQUIRED: Existing owner/developer to confirm expansion joints have been added or that Building Regulations didn't require them.

8) **Popping of Plaster**

We noticed, particularly around the landing area / roof lights, that there is an amount of popping of plaster. This normally occurs when the incorrect nails have been used or that they have been bedded into the plaster incorrectly. This unfortunately can give a "spotty dog" type of affect to the plaster even when you are repairing it.

Popping of the Plaster

ACTION REQUIRED: We would therefore recommend that you obtain some sort of guarantee from the owner/developer.

Please see the Internal Section of this Report.

SERVICES

9) **Extract fans not working**

We were unable to get the extracts to work within the bathrooms

During the course of our inspection we could not get the extract system working within the bathrooms. The owner of the property came to show us how they worked and also could not get them working. We demonstrated the lack of extraction by holding sheets of paper against the extract fans. As the bathrooms and shower rooms are internal it is essential that they work otherwise you will increase the movement/cracking and possibly the popping that we discussed earlier to the plasterboard. The owner advised that the building control officer had managed to get them working but we would say that he hasn't and as such we would recommend the following:

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to see the extract systems working within the bathrooms as these areas are internal and therefore will suffer considerably from dampness.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

The Ugly

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

The owner/builder that carried out the work seemed to have little knowledge of construction or little knowledge that they were prepared to offer us during our discussions. It concerns us on such a large project, which is why we would insist you have guarantees and warranties of some form from the architects/chartered surveyors that were involved with it. If you can't obtain this then you are purchasing a relatively high risk property.

Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Electrics

As the electrics are affectively new there should be an Institute of Electrical Engineers test and report by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** As mentioned earlier you need to have full test reports.

Maintenance

Although the property is newly finished the type of construction means that it will be quite high maintenance as it has a hidden flat roof which there appears to be no easy way of accessing, which is why we have mentioned adding an access. In addition the gutters to the side of the property are difficult to access. There is a large amount of painted white render. Whilst it looks nice in the summer sun, it will certainly change during the winter months.

There are elements of above average maintenance required.

DIY/Handyman Type Work

Whilst the property is affectively as new there will no doubt be some alterations you wish to carry out to make the house into your home, such as redecorating to your style and taste. 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. 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.

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:

We are aware that we are seeing this property at perhaps its best point in time having just been finished and during the sunny summer months. We would much prefer to have seen it after six months or a year and during the winter as we feel it would be very interesting to see whether it is suitably heated particularly with the large glazed areas in the kitchen and the lounge. Whilst we are a fan of this type of style it does have to be done well to stop draughts, etc. We have recently been involved with the fitting of units of approximately half that size on a balcony development and have stayed in the room before and after and noted a difference in temperature which was during the summer months.

We are also aware that some of the detailing that we can see is not what we would consider best practice and we are also concerned if things have been carried out that you can see are not to the best standard then what are the areas like that you can't see such as the majority of the roof.

In summary we would add that we feel the owner/developer has focused on the interior presentation more than the exterior detailing work possibly because this is where their interest/knowledge is and they have made the interior very presentable in this style.

We would refer you to our comments in the Executive Summary, 'Good', 'Bad' and 'Ugly' Section and ask that you re-read these. The costs that we have mentioned should be negotiated off the asking price of the property or carried out properly by the existing owner/developer.

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

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

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 Residential Building Surveys, as agreed to and signed by yourselves. If you have not seen and signed a copy of our terms of engagement please phone immediately.

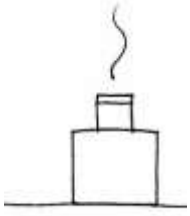
OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION

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.

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

EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS



Chimney Stacks

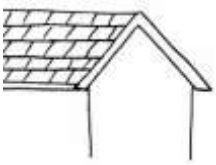
Chimneys developed originally from open fires placed within buildings. From this, the chimney has developed to its present day format where it is used as an aesthetic feature and focal point rather than purely just to heat the room.

This style and age of property would have originally had fireplaces and with them of course chimney breasts and chimneys. These look to have been removed therefore it is difficult to view these areas.

ACTION REQUIRED: Building Regulation approval should have been obtained to remove the chimneys. Your solicitor needs to specifically confirm that they have been removed.

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

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.

The underlayer's function is to minimise wind and water damage. Dependent upon the age of your property this may or may not be present, please read on:

We will consider the roofs in two areas, the hidden flat roof and the main pitched roof.

Hidden flat roof

We believe the main roof has a hidden flat roof, we can just about see the perimeter of it but unfortunately there was no access for either the roof void or the roof itself.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments within the Executive Summary requiring an access hatch to be added by the present owner/developer so the roof can be viewed prior to purchasing the property.

Hidden flat roof

Flat roofs General Information

Flat roofs typically have a life of between 20 and 30 years depending upon the quality of workmanship, materials and decking, although some manufacturers do claim longer.

Please see the comments in the Executive Summary.

Main pitched roof

Concrete Tiles

The roof is pitched and clad in a small nibbed concrete tile. From what we could see the concrete tiles are lying level and true and look in reasonable condition.

The property has been extended in a very clever format which means that the front and the rear view are still similar to the original and the house has been extended by the adding of the flat roof which we have just mentioned. The concrete tiles that have been used we believe would have been original small concrete nibbed tiles.

Sometimes we find that deterioration occurs to the ridge and exposed areas such as the perimeter and so you should periodically check these areas.

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

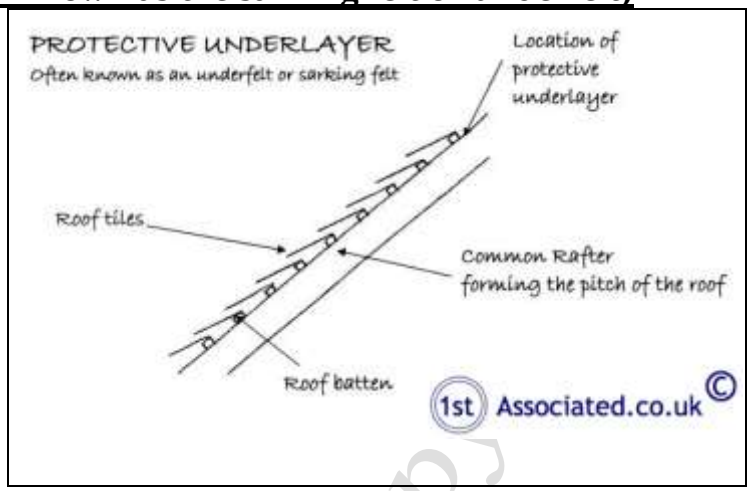
Awkward Valley Gutter

There is a valley gutter to the rear of the property where the two roofs join with a flat roof section in between. These are generally poor construction areas. With the surrounding trees and associated leaves and branches you will need to regularly clean this and ensure that it drains away rather than drains into the property.

Valley Gutter to the Rear. We think that this will block in years to come as it is a poor detail.

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.



Our view inside the roof has been very limited. The areas that we could see to the front accessed via the front right hand bedroom cupboard had a hessian based Bitumen membrane which has been used since the 1940's thereby showing that the original roof tiles are probably still in place. If we looked at a modern roof we would expect to find a modern breathable underlayer which tends to be a white or grey colour which have been in use since 2002.

Underlayer

Roof Windows

The property has three roof windows; they are located two to the rear and one to the right hand side in the front bedroom. These are also we believe classed as fire escapes.

We find that most roof windows leak sooner or later, or you get condensation!

Roof Windows

ACTION REQUIRED: Your solicitor needs to check whether these are classed as fire escapes or not.

Finally, all the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera.

Unfortunately we only had a limited view 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.

ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT

(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

Main Roof

Roof Access

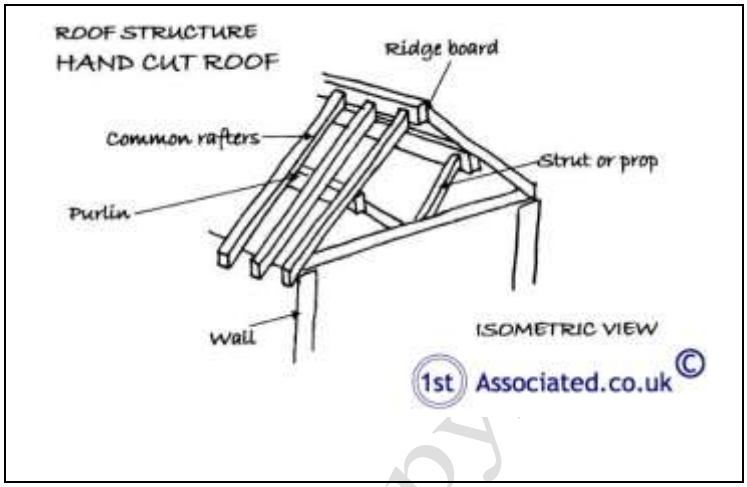
The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located within a cupboard to the front right hand first floor bedroom. From here we effectively had what we would term as a head and shoulders view of the roof which means we looked at approximately ten per cent of the roof.

Roof access located within the cupboard

Whilst this does show how well the property has utilised the roof space forming the rooms within the roof, (we could literally see where the plasterboard goes around the steel frame), it means that much of the structure is actually hidden from our view.

We would insist that a roof access is made up onto the main flat roof. Unfortunately with this type of construction you do have limited access to the roof space.

Roof Structure



As mentioned there was little access to the main structure available. We can take an educated guess from our knowledge of this type of construction that it would originally have had a cut timber roof which has then been amended and altered with a steel frame being added and no doubt additional common rafters (the ones that form the pitch of the roof).

Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof timbers that we could see for:

Roof timbers

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

Our examination was very limited by the configuration of the roof. What we could see was generally found to be in average condition considering its age.

Ventilation

A modern roof should have ventilation. Whilst there are now very good ways of hiding these vents (which once were plastic mushrooms sticking on the roof), we have got better at spotting them but in this case we were unable to see them.

Insulation

If this roof isn't insulated to current Building Regulations you will get solar heat gain during the summer which is almost unbearable and heat loss during the winter which again is almost unbearable. So again, it is very important that your solicitor checks that it has met all the Building Regulation requirements and that Building Control Department have actually seen it at this stage.

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

> **ACTION REQUIRED**: Your solicitor to check and confirm not only that it has Building Control approval but also that Building Control saw it at the roof stage which they will have notes of on their system. We are finding that Local Authorities with a limited time and budget are not necessarily viewing the properties as they should.

Electrical Cables

We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of wiring found in the roof. In this case there was insufficient quantity to comment other than to say the owner/developer advised that there would be guarantees available.

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.

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

From ground level the gutters and downpipes looked to be what is known as, profile plastic, which means the gutters and downpipes are shaped. They look as new, there is no pattern staining that we could see on the front and rear elevations. Obviously our view to the side was very limited.

Gutters

ACTION REQUIRED: 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

We believe these to be predominantly internal and using an air inlet system also known as its trade name as a Durgo Valve. There is a flue on the right hand side of the property near the first floor right hand bedroom which may well relate to the rear internal family shower room.

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.

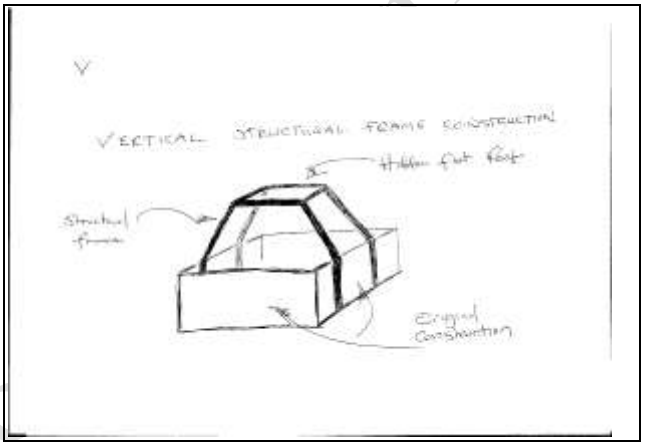
WALLS

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 property has a new render and painted white finish. In our experience this will have been carried out to give a consistent finish to the outside of the property to marry the new and old together.

Structural frame

We believe that the main property has a structural steel (assumed) frame with an external cladding. Without opening up the structure it is very difficult to give further conclusive information.



Render

The render is the external finish that has been painted over. We have carried out a tap test to the render at low level (literally hitting the render with the back of a hammer) to try to establish if there are any hollow areas and found it to be in average condition. It is, however, very important to keep the render in good decorative order as without this the render will deteriorate.

Render

Cement render

There may well be some original render remaining which has been hidden or rendered over. Without opening up the structure it has not been possible for us to confirm.

Render Defined

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

What is beneath the render?

Originally we would expect a brick to be underneath the render. In modern construction we would expect an insulation block. A structural frame would have first of all been added. It looks like the front roof has been utilised and then new roofs put onto the rear. We hope this gives you a better understanding of the type of construction. Using a structural frame also allows for such wide openings to the rear of the property.

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

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

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

In a property such as this it is likely to have a mixture of foundations, due to the property being extended and/or altered over the years. We would expect a shallow stepped brick foundation to the main property and concrete foundations to the newer part, probably Pad foundations underneath the structural frame extension.

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. We would recommend that you stay with the same building insurance company so that if there are problems you will not be arguing between insurance companies.

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.

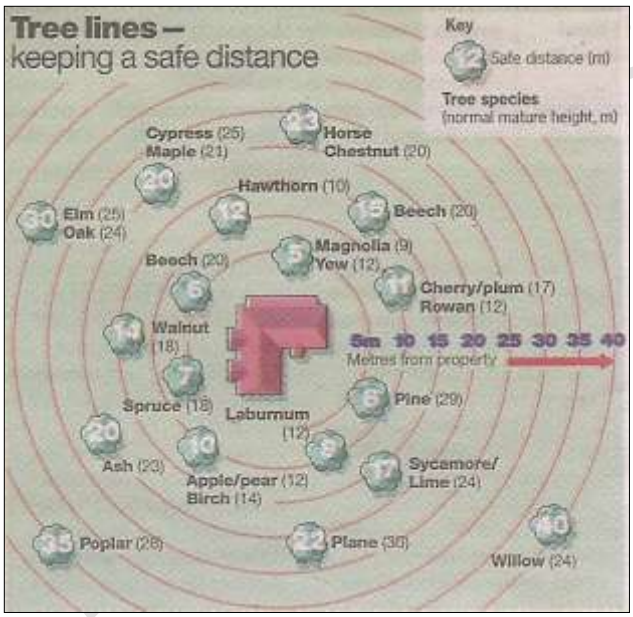
TREES

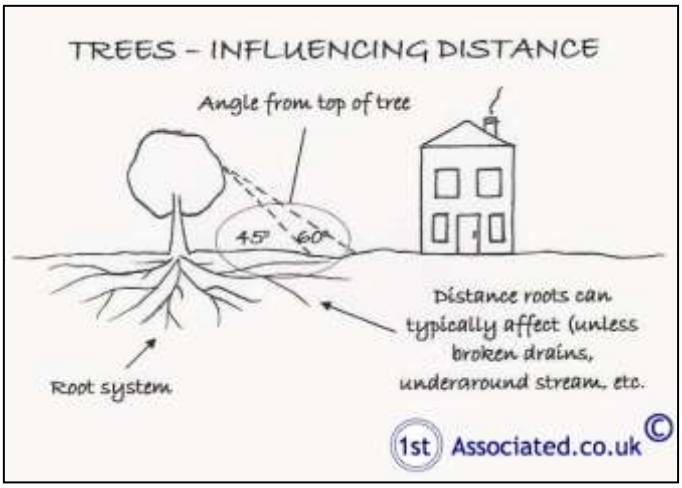
Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.

There are some large trees fairly close to the property within what we would term as influencing distance of the property. Insurance companies are becoming more and more concerned about trees near properties. In this case we don't think the root system will be damaging the property and in theory the foundations should have allowed for this in the new extension.

Mature Trees

ACTION REQUIRED: It is probably best to remember that trees need maintenance from time to time such as cutting back. Without this their root system may well grow to damage the property and/or the drains.



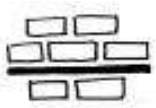


Influencing Distance Defined

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.

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

DAMP PROOF COURSE



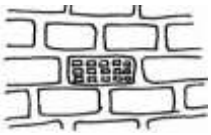
The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required various other basic standards. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout London and then the country as a whole, 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, unfortunately we could not see a damp proof course because of the render. The original age of the property means it is likely to have had a damp proof course. Your attention is drawn to our comments in the Executive Summary where we think that dampness will occur.

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.

AIRBRICKS

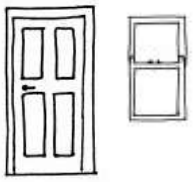


In properties with suspended floors you need to have an airflow beneath to stop deterioration. The air is allowed to pass under the property by the use of airbricks. Generally the rule of thumb is that airbricks are spaced every metre and a half approximately, but this depends upon the specific circumstances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

We didn't find any airbricks, which we would just make you aware of would have been normal in this age, type and style of original construction.

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.

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

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary. We believe overcladding to be a poor quality system. The plastic is usually stuck on and as there is no ventilation in this area, rot can occur.

ACTION REQUIRED: Strip off the over cladding and check the condition of the timber beneath. Ideally you should replace completely and add a vent to the soffit and repair and redecorate as necessary.

Fascias and Soffits are over clad

Windows and Doors

The property has plastic, double glazed windows and doors, which generally look to be of an average quality for the year made. We have made this comment because the older windows don't have any trickle vents but the more modern windows/sliding doors do and although they look quite similar at first glance they have very different characteristics and also very different places in the life of the windows. We were surprised that all the windows hadn't been replaced with a modern double glazed unit.

Windows and Doors

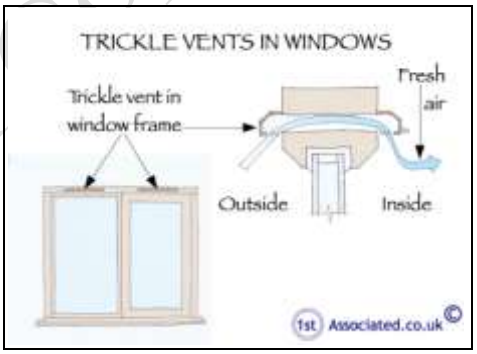
ACTION REQUIRED: Ask for guarantees with regards to all the replacement units. If they have all been replaced then we are surprised that they haven't all got trickle vents.

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

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

Trickle Vents Defined

Small vents to the windows to allow air movement inside the property to stop a build up of fumes or humidity.



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.

EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

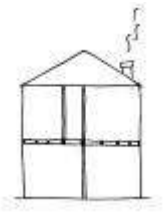
The external decorations act as a protective coat for the building from the elements. Where this protective covering has failed, such as with flaking paintwork, the elements will infiltrate the structure. This is of particular concern as water is one of the major factors in damage to any structure.

The property has been painted as a whole to marry it all in so that the different types of construction can't be seen. There is a lot of painting that will be needed to be done here. You should be very aware that you have seen the property at its very best during the summer months and when it has just been built. It is likely to get pattern staining onto the paintwork of the render unless it is literally painted every year or every other year.

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.

INTERNAL



CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

Ceilings

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be plasterboard (assumed). Please see our comments with regards to the popping that is occurring.

Ceiling

Plasterboard Defined

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

Beams

Drop beams (rather than flush beams) are visible throughout the property, these do infringe some areas.

Drop beam infringing on ceiling and room height

Popping

Generally we would term this where plaster is coming away around the head of the nail fixing which can look very unsightly and be very difficult to repair.

ACTION REQUIRED: This is why we feel you need a guarantee/warranty from the owner/developer.

Internal Walls and Partitions

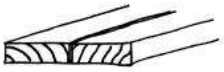
A mixture of solid and hollow walls.

ACTION REQUIRED: As above a guarantee/warranty from the owner/developer is required.

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.

FLOORS



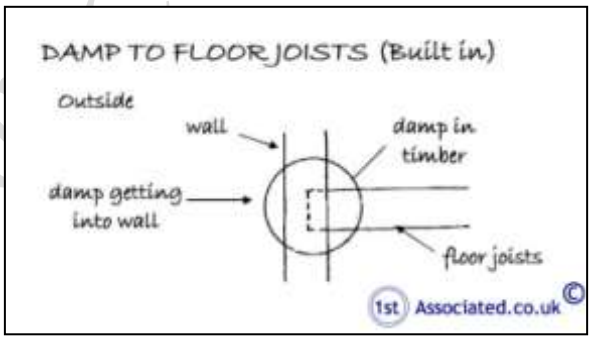
Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.

Ground Floor

The floors felt solid underfoot normally meaning that it is formed in concrete. We would add that in this age of property we would expect a suspended timber floor to the original area. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

First Floor

We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards as this is typically used where vertical extensions are carried out.

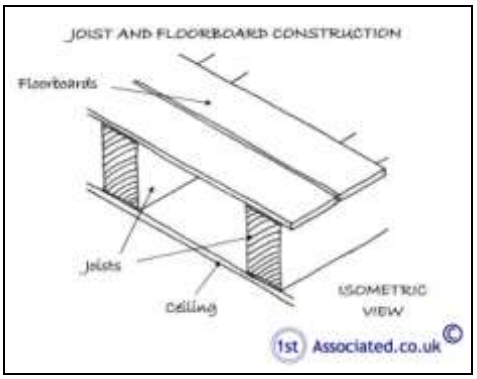


Original floor joists may well remain although sometimes it is harder to keep them than just start afresh. If they do then they may well be embedded. Please see our sketch.

ACTION REQUIRED: Existing owner/developer to confirm whether all are new floors or part original.

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.



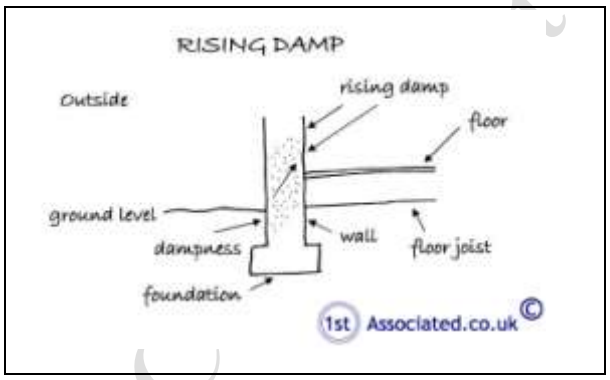
Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with floor coverings. The comments we have made are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction. We would emphasise that we have not opened up the floors in any way or lifted any floorboards.

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.

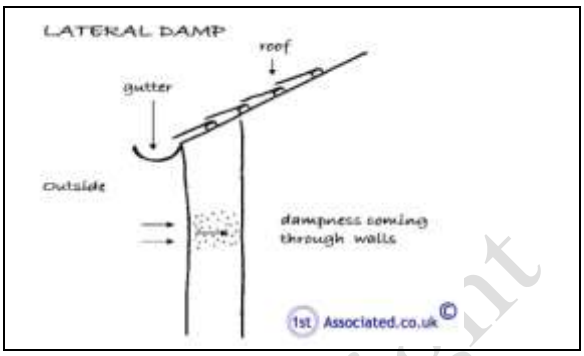


A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls and some internal walls. Whilst we didn't find any readings we are concerned that the outside floor levels are similar to the inside floor levels without any French Drain or other way of getting the water away from the property.

Checking for Rising Damp

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

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.

A visual inspection was carried out. No significant penetrating/lateral dampness was seen.

Condensation

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

There are several internal bathrooms. These obviously have the danger of getting condensation if the extract fan systems don't work properly. During the course of our inspection we could not get the extract fans to work properly. This needs to be resolved before you move into the property.

The owner insisted that they worked although he couldn't get them to work at the time of our inspection. He equally advised that the Building Control Officer had difficulty getting them to work but had eventually. Either way we haven't seen them working.

General information on condensation

Condensation does depend 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.

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

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

INTERNAL JOINERY

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

Doors

The property has flush panel doors, these are as new.

Panel Door

Staircase

There is a central open staircase (which is why you have the alternative fire escapes). The handrail and balustrade are nicely detailed.

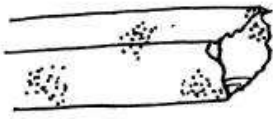
Staircase

Kitchen

From our cursory visual inspection the kitchen is as new with a nice central island. Please note our comments with regard to the large sliding folding doors; they are great under summer conditions but it will be interesting to see how they test under winter conditions. Please note we have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

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.

In the areas visually inspected no evidence was found of any significant dry rot. Please remember we have not opened up the floors and we have not had access to 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.

In the areas visually inspected no evidence was found of any significant wet rot, with the possible exception of the over cladding. Please note we have not opened up the floors and we have not had access to the roof.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please read our comments on the over cladding of the fascias and soffits in the Executive Summary.

Woodworm

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

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. We could see approximately ten per cent of the roof. Within the roof area that we could see we found no obvious visual signs of significant woodworm activity or, indeed, signs of past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage.

In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection is usually restricted by insulation covering some of the timbers and general stored items in the roof, and roof configuration, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings. If you wish to be 100 per cent certain that there is no woodworm the only way would be to check the property when it is empty of fixtures and fittings, etc.

> **ACTION REQUIRED**: If you wish to be 100 percent certain then you will have to check the roof by forming extra access hatches. We would recommend one on each elevation.

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.

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.

The decoration is as new with a typical magnolia developer's finish.

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

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

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

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 300mm. In the areas we could see we were surprised by the amount of insulation that was there considering it is an as new property.

Roof Insulation

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to confirm that insulation is present. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary about the property heating up in the summer and cooling in the winter if there isn't any insulation.

Walls

The walls to this property are solid and will have a relatively poor thermal efficiency. It is very difficult to improve thermal efficiency in solid wall construction without major alterations, which will usually affect the external appearance or reduce the internal space.

Windows

The windows are double glazed and therefore will have reasonable thermal properties. There is a lot of glazed areas particularly with the sliding folding doors which may affect the temperature during the winter.

Services

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

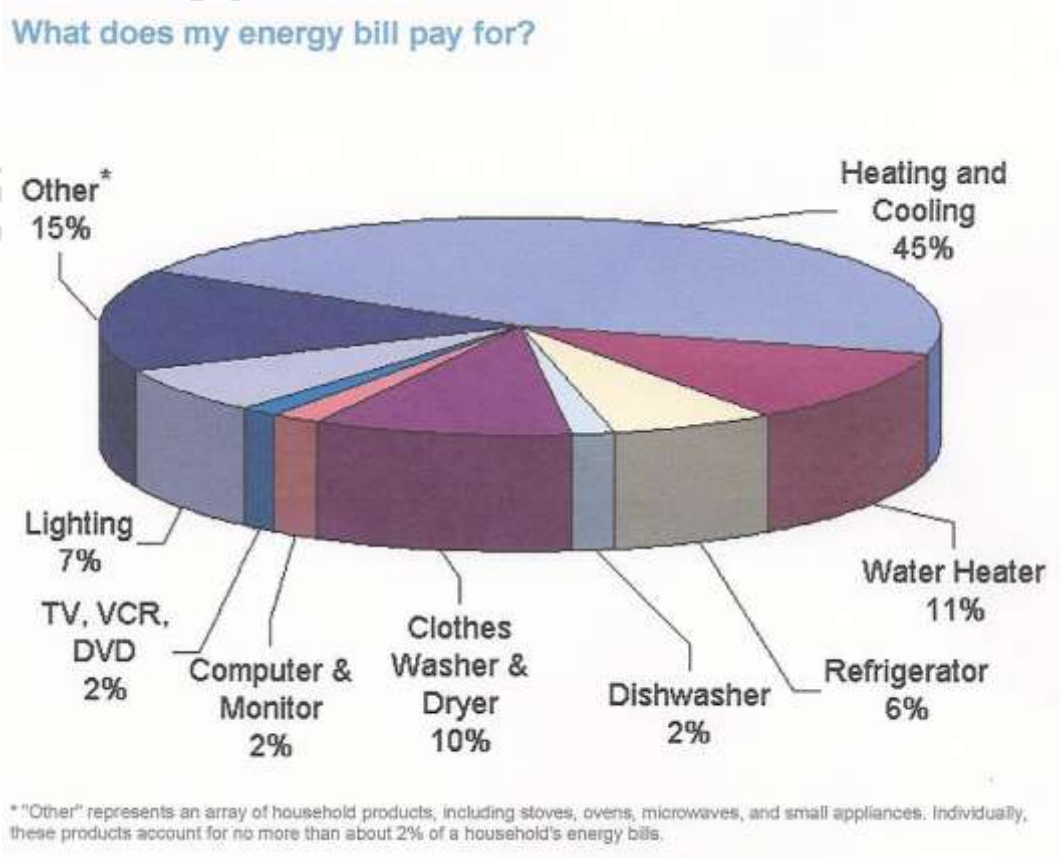
Summary

Assuming the above is correct, this property is average compared with what we typically see.

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 www.ecocentre.org.uk for an alternative technological view.*

Finally, we would advise that an energy rating is likely to be required for future house sales.



OTHER MATTERS

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

Security

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

Fire / Smoke Alarms

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

> **ACTION REQUIRED**: We would recommend, for your own safety, that smoke detectors be installed.

We have seen recently a smoke detector that fits within a light fitting (although we have not used these personally), which is charged when the light is switched on, providing it is switched on a certain number of times a year. We feel this is an excellent idea as it alleviates the problems of batteries running out. We would also advise that if you wish to have any general advice the local Fire Authority are usually happy to help.

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.

Asbestos

In the original age of the property 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 assume that any asbestos has been removed during the extensive modernisation that has been carried out. We would advise that we are not asbestos surveyors.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to get confirmation from the owner/developer that all asbestos has been removed.

SERVICES

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

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

ELECTRICITY

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

Periodic inspections and testing of electrical installations is important to protect your property from damage and to ensure the safety of the occupants. Guidance published by the 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 in the garage. The owner advised us that this is as new and that IEE (Institute of Electrical Engineers) certificates will be available.

Fuse Board

ACTION REQUIRED: Your solicitor to check the IEE certificates.

Earth Test

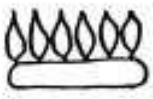
We carried out an earth test in the kitchen area to the socket point that is normally used for the kettle, this proved satisfactory.

Earth Test

ACTION REQUIRED: Normally we would comment that as the property is changing occupancy an IEE report should be carried out by a NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor, however in this case as it is so new we would be happy as long as the IEE report has been carried out and is checked by your solicitor.

Also note that Building Regulations require certain electrical work to be certified by an approved contractor. Please see the appendices at the end of this survey for further details.

GAS



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

We assume that the property has mains gas although we haven't seen the consumer unit.

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

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

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

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

ACTION REQUIRED: Ask the owner/developer.

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!). We have not used a listening stick to check for water leaks.

Plumbing

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

Heating

The boiler was located in the ground floor cupboard to the right hand side. It is manufactured by Bosch Worcester.

Boiler

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

Ten Minute Heating Test

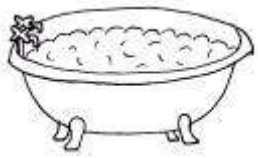
We asked the owner to turn the heating on for approximately ten minutes and it warmed up.

> **ACTION REQUIRED**: Ask the owner to confirm the heating is working satisfactorily and provide any guarantees or/ and annual inspections.

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.

BATHROOM



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

Ground floor family bathroom

The bathroom suite, looks in as new condition, however it is internal, and therefore could be prone to condensation.

First floor shower room

The first floor shower room looks in as new condition apart from it is internal and therefore could be prone to condensation.

En suite to master bedroom

Again, this looks in as new condition apart from it is internal and therefore could be prone to condensation.

> **ACTION REQUIRED**: Please see our comments about the extract fans not working.

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.

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 found several manholes to the property, all of them are inset manholes where the bricks have been laid into them. These really can only be lifted with a special lifting device which we don't have, by two men.

Inspection Chamber / Manhole One

We have been unable to lift the manhole cover. Which is often the case with this type of inset man hole.

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We were unable to lift the Manhole

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

Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

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

OUTSIDE AREAS

GARAGES/OUTBUILDINGS/PARKING

Garage

There is an integral garage. We were pleased to see a running gulley in front of it, but as mentioned we are concerned that the car park rainwater will drain against the property which is not acceptable.

Garage (showing rain gulley to the front)

Parking

There is a large brick paved area to the front of the property for parking for many cars.

Off Road Parking

EXTERNAL AREAS

Gardens

The garden is to the rear and is grassed and has some mature trees.

Rear garden

Boundaries: Since 1948, the left hand boundary (all directions given as you face the property) is usually the responsibility of the subject property; however on older sites this varies and will be identified on the deeds.

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

Neighbours

Left/Right Hand Neighbours

We haven't contacted either of the neighbours in this instance.

POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

a) Responsibility for boundaries.

b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.

c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:

i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
ii) Rising damp treatments.
iii) Cavity wall insulation and cavity wall tie repairs.
iv) Double glazing or replacement windows.
v) Roof and similar renewals.
vi) Central heating installation.
vii) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
viii) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
ix) Are there any guarantees/warranties available, if not we recommend they are obtained by the owner/developer.

d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.

e) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.

f) Liabilities in connection with shared services.

g) Adjoining roads and services.

h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.

i) General development proposals in the locality.

j) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other

Designated Planning Area.

k) Confirm from enquiries that no underground tunnels, wells, sewers, gases, mining, minerals, site reclamation/contamination etc., exist, have existed or are likely to exist beneath the curtilage of the site upon which the property stands and which could affect the quiet enjoyment, safety or stability of the property, outbuildings or surrounding areas.

l) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.

m) Any outstanding Party Wall Notice or the knowledge that any are about to be served.

n) Most Legal advisors will recommend an Envirosearch or a similar product is used by you to establish whether the area falls within a flood plain, old landfill site, radon area etc. If your Legal Advisor is not aware of Envirosearch or similar please ensure that they contact us and we will advise them of it. Any general findings should be brought to their logical conclusion by using appropriate specialist advisers.

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

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

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

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

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

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

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

REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses
Published by Estates Gazette Limited

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

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

House Builders Bible
By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

APPENDICES

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.

WEATHER

It was a warm sunny day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

Our weather seems to be moving towards the extremities from relatively mid range. A few interesting facts in Britain over the years have been:

2000	Wettest year on record at the time
2003	Driest year on record at the time
2004	Wettest August on record at the time
2004	Boscastle was the worst flash flood on record at the time
2005	Third driest year on record at the time
2006	Warmest year recorded on record at the time
July 2006	Hottest July on record at the time
2006	Hottest autumn on record at the time
2007	Warmest spring on record at the time
2007	Wettest June on record at the time
April '06-April '07	Hottest 12 months on record at the time
2008	
2009	Third wettest August since 1956
2010	Heaviest snowfall in march since 1991
	Britain faces one of the coldest winters for 100 years
References	BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

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 us not opening up the floors, not having had access to the roof, some of the cupboards being full of stored items and due to the owner not wishing to fill out our question and answer sheet although he was quite open with our general questioning.

Some of the storage cupboards were full

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.

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.

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.

www.hometrack.co.uk

From what we can see this is an internet based company who say they offer independent property research (in fact they say they are the only independent company), although they also advise that they are part of a property related group that has bought and sold over 60 million pounds worth of residential property, which indicates that they may have a vested interest. They do also comment that they have carried out their own independent surveys and they have at least two Hometrack recommended estate agents in each postcode area. We would refer you to the 'About us' section within their website to understand better where their information is coming from. We would comment that we have been pleasantly surprised with the quality of information provided by the company.

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.

http://www.nethouseprices.com/

This website offers information on land registry recorded property sales, by postcode or address.

www.globrix.com

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

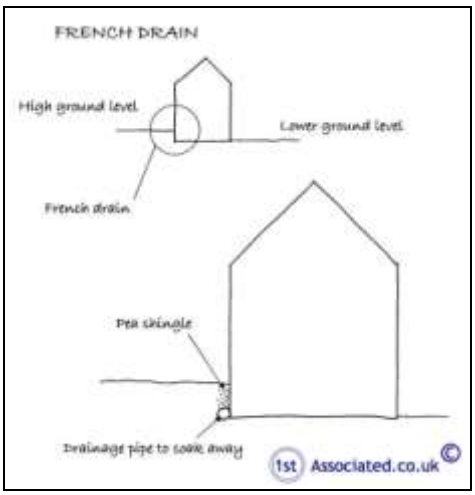
French Drain

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, a 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.

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 stand and then turf over. This is how a basic French drain is carried out.

The French drain system that we would recommend

This would be as described, although we would add to the base an inch or two of gravel on to which the perforated drainage pipe will rest. It will then wrap around that drainage pipe filter fabric. This is to stop the holes in the perforated pipe from blocking up. By the way, the drainage pipe should be four to six inches/100 millimetres to 250 millimetres. We would then fill with gravel. In addition to this, we would add a silt trap and this is added in the run of the pipe and is very similar to a road gully (not that's of much use if you don't understand how a road gully works). The silt trap is a rectangular box with a pipe opening at each end. The drained water passes onto this and any particles sink to the bottom of the box and then the water travels on to the other side of the box, enabling you to feed into a drain.

These are usually made of glass reinforced polyester and have been available in this form since the mid-1980's. They are normally reinforced with a steel frame for additional strength and re-bedded in concrete.

The French pond!

French drains will, over time, clog up, which is why we recommend using a filter fabric. However, even with this they will eventually clog up. Unfortunately, there is no Dyno-rod equivalent, as it is normally fine sand, organic matter or clay that has clogged up the French drain. So, it is a case of digging it up and cleaning the pipework (or it may be quicker to just replace it), adding a filter fabric and re-filling the gravel.