

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

XXXXXXX

XXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXX

Hertfordshire

XXXXXX



Aerial view – 360 photo

FOR

XXXXXXXXXX

Prepared by:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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

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

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

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

### **The Good**

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

- 1.0) This is a period property imitating the style of an older Wealden hall house.
- 2.0) The property has most of the original features left, which add to the overall character of the property and form part of the reason why it is listed.
- 3.0) The property has off road parking with a double garage.

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

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## **The Bad**

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

### **1.0) Thatch roof**

We have spoken briefly to thatchers xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx who have carried out work on the property.

xxxxxx advises that in xxxxx he re-roofed the property with a straw reed from a continental source which he thinks is Turkey, originally this used to be called Norfolk reed as it is from Norfolk and then it moved onto being called water reed and gradually the sources of it changed. We had a good discussion with xxxxxx about this. We tend to feel that the jury is still out as to how this sort of thatch will perform in English climate conditions. Indeed Historic England (used to be known as English Heritage are carrying out experiments with regard to this as we assume others are). From what we understand the ridge was re-done fairly recently.

We generally say that Norfolk reed/water reed should last thirty to sixty years; xxxxxxx the thatcher thought it was more likely to be around sixty years.

Going on what we could see at the moment moss is occurring on the kitchen left side of the building (all directions given as you face the front of the property). This area would benefit from repair, the sooner the better.



Moss on the right-side roof

Also, from what we can see/understand, the extract systems from the bathrooms and the kitchen are discharging into the thatched roofs which can be problematic. We recommend this is amended to extract to outside air (subject to appropriate approvals).

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Amend the extraction system and carry out thatch repairs.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would set aside the sum of 7,500 to £15,000 (seven thousand five hundred pounds to fifteen thousand pounds). We would ask both of the thatchers to carry out work. We would recommend more

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work is carried out rather than less right at the start of you owning the property as we feel then you get the full benefit of it; please obtain quotations.

For your information there tends to be three different ways of thatching a roof; be careful that you do not obtain quotes for something for a lesser material than water reed. We have included more detailed comments within the main body of the Report.

## **Trees**

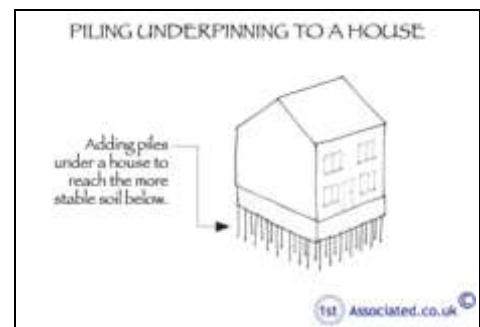
There are many large trees to the property. We believe the trees may be blocking sunlight from the thatch and also tends to restrict the airflow around the building which is causing accelerated deterioration.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section and the Trees Section of this Report.

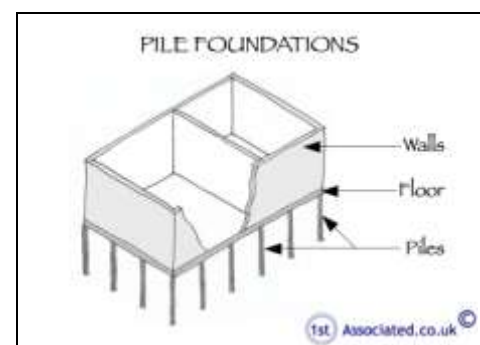
## **2.0) Underpinned**

### **General comment**

We will first of all talk generally about underpinning. If you have two properties exactly the same and one has been underpinned and this has been carried out successfully and one has never had any problems generally most people would go for the property without any problems. It will only be if you discount the underpinned property that more people start to get interested in an underpinned property. Whatever estate agents/structural engineers involved with underpinning say, people generally do not like the fact that there have been problems. We have seen discounts ranging from ten to thirty percent on underpinned properties. This percentage depends upon many factors from the condition of the housing market/economy generally to the desirability of the area and then to personal requirements of the individual.



Piling underpinning



Pile foundations

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## What work was carried out?

We are having slight difficulty obtaining information to understand exactly what work has been carried out. As with most underpinning work it is now hidden. In this case there are some undulations and poorer quality repairs to the painted render and there are different coloured paving slabs and the tree with the drain next to it however we do not have the exact details of what was carried out. We have the plans with piles around the kitchen area (please see overleaf). We were also given a cross section of piling work however were also advised this was not carried out. We would like to see sketches, drawings and details of information with regard to what has been carried out.



Marks to wall from movement visible after underpinning



Undulations in the wall



Area of underpinning

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal advisor to provide and email electronic information pack to us on all the work carried out thereafter we can comment further.

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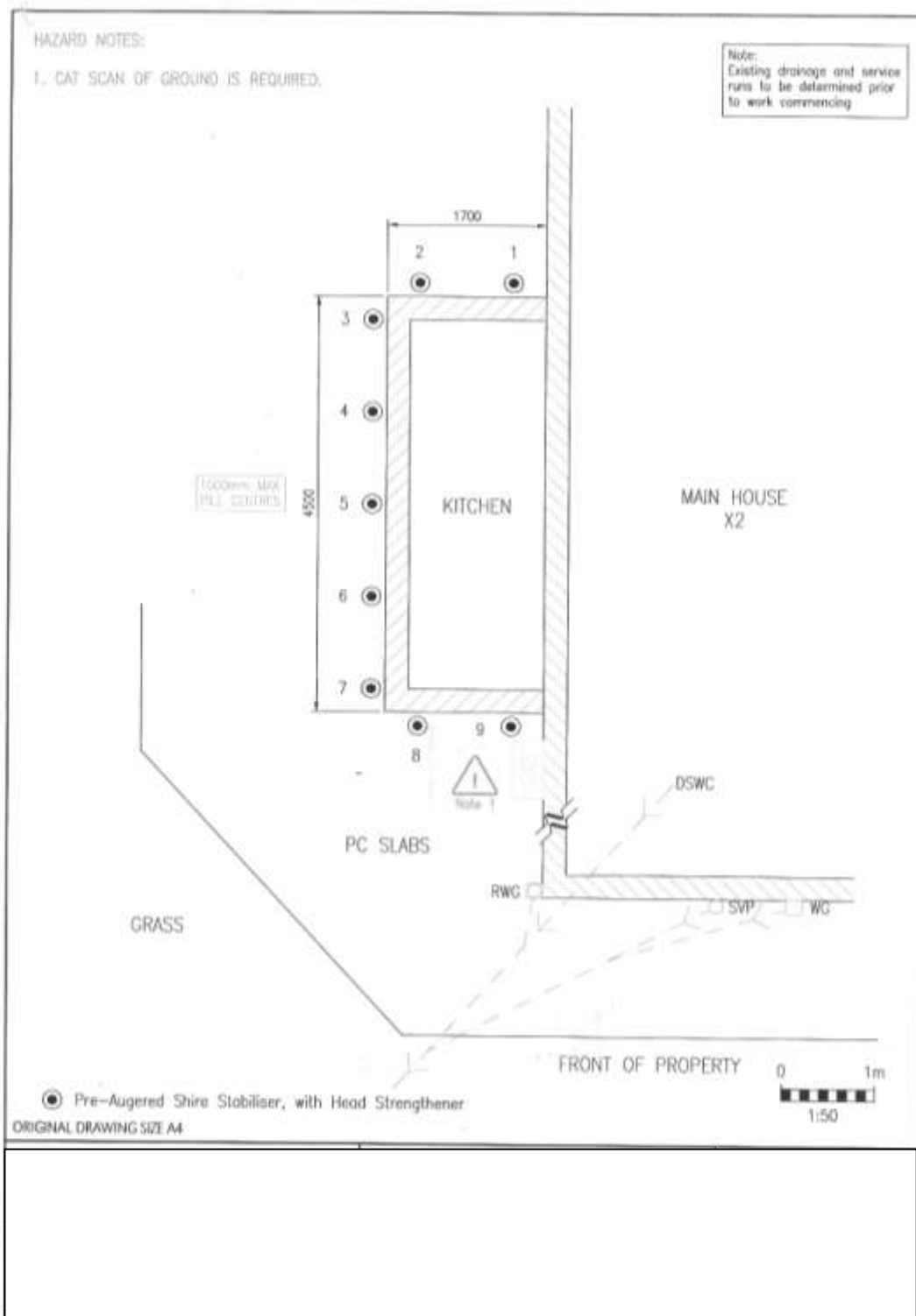
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## Location of Underpinning

Information on the underpinning work was limited. We would request that we see a full copy of the underpinning documentation.



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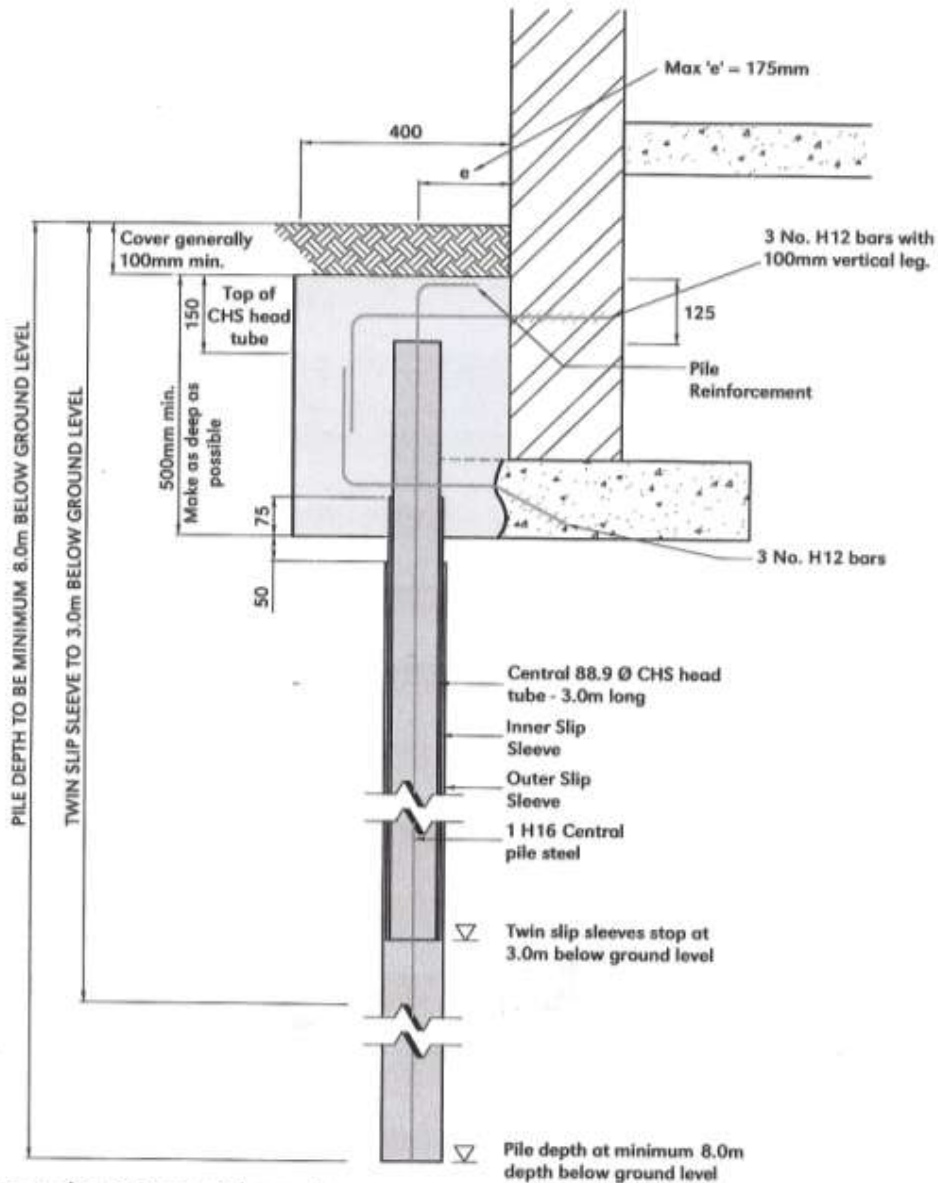
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## Piling

(Owner advised this was not the type of piping system that was used on the property however it does interestingly show it going down to a depth of eight metres)

### Remedial Connection Detail 3.2.1 Solid Wall & Concrete Foundation - 800-500mm Deep with cover to cap



#### Notes:

1. Pile cap to be 450mm wide on plan
2. Dowels to have 200mm vertical leg and 125mm penetration
3. Break back face of existing foundation to achieve eccentricity show. Scrape/wash face of wall to achieve shear key

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## **Has the underpinning solved the problem in the long term?**

One of our concerns with insurance work carried out is that sometimes the effect is dealt with and not the cause. In this instance we would be interested to know exactly what the cause is considered to be. There are trees that are relatively close to the property which we believe need a regular maintenance plan (ideally an overview ten year plan) from an arboriculturalist (not a tree surgeon) and we all need to understand what is stopping the problem from happening again.

### **3.0) Partial underpinning**

There has been some debate in the surveying and engineering world about partial underpinning which has led to some surveyors / engineers preferring total underpinning or no underpinning. We obviously did not see the property when it had movement/cracks in it so it is difficult for us to comment about the severity of it other than we were advised it has ground heave which is an upward pressure from the soil rather than subsidence which is a downward pressure from the soil. It could relate to leaking drains or change in the water table level.

#### Ground heave defined

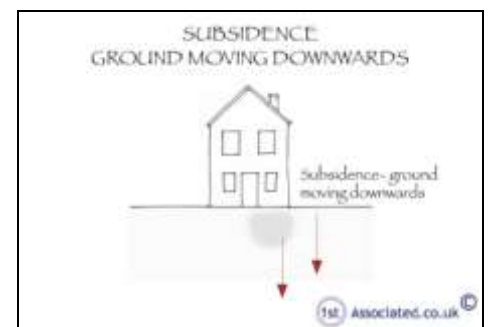
This is where a ground expands because of excessive water, this can be weather related, it can be a water supply pipe leaking or drainage leaking. It can be something that has changed in the area such as cutting down of trees or not maintaining trees.



Heave – ground moving upwards

#### Subsidence defined

Subsidence is when the ground under a building shrinks which can be through lack of water and ground movement of the ground, etc. Whichever way it shrinks it then results in movement in the building.



Subsidence - ground moving downwards

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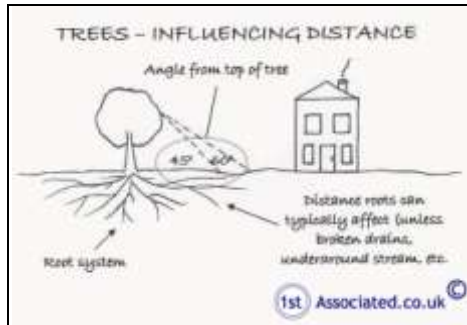
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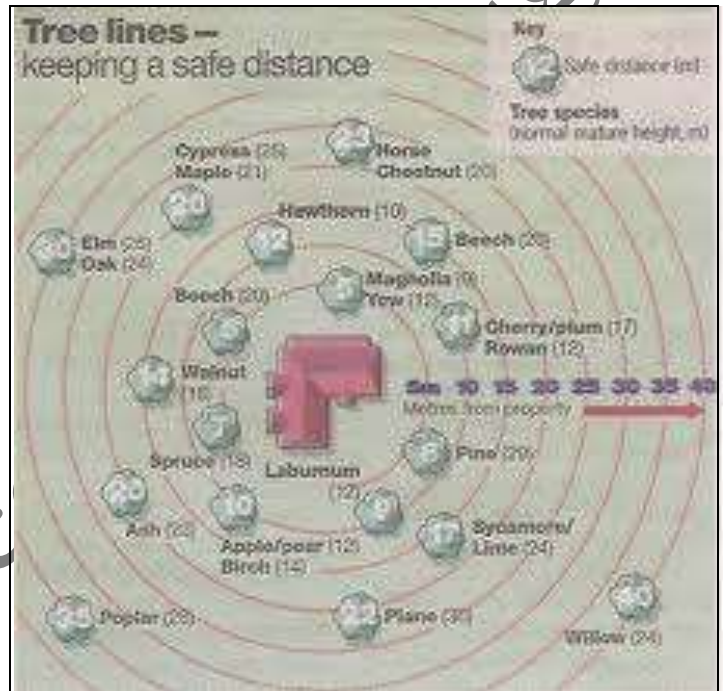


## 4.0) Trees

Trees will have a considerable effect on this property and the surrounding grounds and the sub-soil. Depending on the type of tree this will also have different root systems, etc. which is why we are recommending an arboriculturalist (not a tree surgeon) is asked to look at all the trees in the surrounding area to ensure you have a full understanding of what is going on.



Influencing distance of trees



Tree lines

### Tree roots in drains

You also would be best to have a closed circuit TV camera report of the drains to ensure there are no tree roots in the drains.



Trees surrounding the property



Tree with manhole to base



Tree with manhole to base

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** We believe you should have a ten-year plan by an arboriculturalist (not a tree surgeon) for all trees to ensure they are adequately maintained. Then you will have evidence of this if there is ever any future insurance claim.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £500 to £1,000 (five hundred pounds to one thousand pounds) as we believe there will be some tree maintenance required; please obtain quotations.

## 5.0) Drains with trees on top

It is very unusual to have a drain with a tree on top of it as there is at this property. As mentioned, we do feel the tree roots are likely to get into the drains. We can see that the manhole is distorted and deteriorated and it is only a matter of time before the roots affect the drainage on this property.



Tree on the drain



Tree roots in the manhole



Close up

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend a closed-circuit TV camera report to establish the condition of the drains and partial rebuilding of the manhole.

## 6.0) What are the soil conditions in this area?

From soil maps, etc you can get very general soil conditions in the area. As part of the insurance claim, we assume that they took soil samples in the area; we would like to see these so we can comment.

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** As part of the information being obtained from your solicitors they need to also obtain the soil/auger samples that were taken in the area to allow them to decide on what underpinning to design and also if there is any ongoing sampling work that made them review what they were doing.

## 7.0) Insurance

Generally, where there has been an insurance claim we feel it is best that you keep with the existing insurance policy, insuring at the same level that the property is already insured at / checking that it is adequate. We feel that this insurance is likely to have a high premium as it is a listed building and it has a history of movement and there are a number of trees around it.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Test the insurance market however we feel that it is best that you keep the existing insurance policy. The existing owner should be fully transparent in all their dealings with regard to the insurance valuation. The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors recommend that insurance on listed buildings is carried out on an element by element basis from what we recall as opposed to a metre squared basis which is what the owner was asking about at the time of our inspection.

## 8.0) Top floor extension- does it have Planning Permission and Building Regulations Approval?

It did occur to us, it probably was originally built like this, but we have not seen any original photographs so we are assuming the top floor was built as part of the original design? We would recommend that your legal advisor double checks this as you need to be aware any contraventions with regard to listed buildings become your liability when you take on the property.

### Planning Permission Defined

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

### Building Regulations Defined

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

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that your legal advisor specifically asks the owner to put in writing details of any alterations/modifications whatsoever carried out whilst they have been at the property.

#### 9.0) Listed Building alterations without permission

We would recommend you speak to the Listed Building Officer with regard to this property to see if they have a photographic record of its condition as many local authorities do have. It will then be worth comparing this against the condition and way the building presently is, as we do feel a lot of alterations and amendments have been carried out.

You should be aware that any amendments that have been carried out without approval become your liability and your risk. This can be insured against by the owners but you do need to establish this before you purchase the property.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would always recommend a visit to the Listed Building Control Officer before you commit to purchase.

#### 10.0) Higher than average chance of condensation

The extract systems in the bathroom and the en-suite are via light extracts and extract into the thatch which we are not keen on. We would recommend these are relocated so they extract to external air however, often this is easier said than done.

It is very important that you have good extraction in the humidity generated areas such as the bathrooms, en-suites and kitchens. We would also advise that you do need to air the building as well as ensuring that things like clothes are not dried on radiators etc. otherwise the property we believe will be prone to black mould.



Checking the draw of the extract fan within the light



Extractor in the bathroom

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

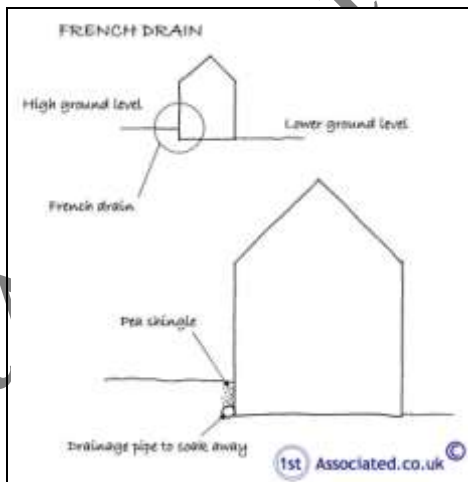


Extractor in en-suite shower room

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would anticipate costs between £250 - £500 (two hundred and fifty pounds to five hundred pounds) per extract fan depending upon the wiring required. We always recommend quotes are obtained before work is agreed/commenced.

#### 11.0) Water discharging against the property

It does look like water discharges against the property at the base. Ideally we would recommend a French drain against the building and also the paving slabs being adjusted so they run away from the building.



French drain



Water marks against the building



Vegetation against the building

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Once you have established what the ground conditions are and seen the property when it has rained heavily it may be

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necessary to either adjust the paving slabs around the property to ensure that they discharge away from the building or to add a French drain. We would be more than happy to talk to you further about this once you are in the property.

## 12.0) Painted / presented to sell / higher than average chance of condensation

We do believe as many people do that has a property being presented to sell, particularly with the decorations standard we do feel that it may be prone to condensation/black mould particularly when a family is living in the property.

Below are thermal image photographs with the bluer colours being colder areas and the red being the warmer areas, in this case the radiators.



Thermal image  
Colder walls in upstairs bedroom



Thermal image  
Cold walls to first floor landing

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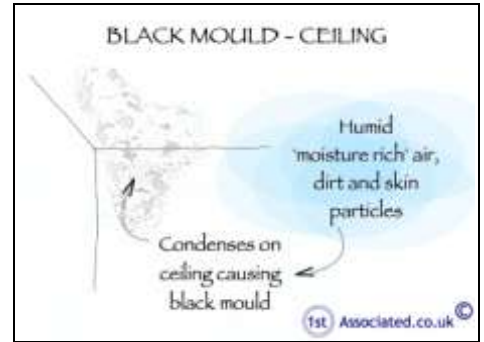
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### Black mould defined

This is when humid air carries dust and skin particles to colder areas of the walls which are known as cold bridging.



Black mould

### Cold Bridging Defined

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



Cold bridging/thermal bridging

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments with regard to adding large good quality humidity controlled extract fans.

## Services

### 13.0) Dated electrics

The electrics are located in the cloakroom and are dated.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As the fuse board is dated we recommend replacement particularly as this property is thatched. The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) recommend a test and report when properties change hands, to be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.



Dated electrics

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**ANTICIPATED COST:** £250 - £500 (two hundred and fifty pounds to five hundred pounds) for a test plus any work recommended; please obtain quotations.

#### 14.0) Fire alarm

Smoke detectors need to be installed. We believe that most insurance companies require these in a thatched property.

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

#### 15.0) Radiators

There is a mixture of single and double panel radiators.

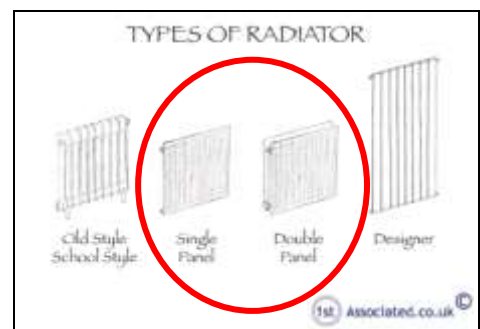


Double panel radiator



Single panel radiator

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend these are changed to double panel convection radiators and thermostatic radiator valves etc. are checked and ensured they are in working order. It is probably worth a pressure flush of the system as well.



Single panel radiator

**ANTICIPATED COST:**

£200 - £250 (two hundred pounds to two hundred and fifty pounds) per radiator and a few hundred pounds to pressure flush the system; please obtain quotations.

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## **The Ugly**

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

### **Movement/Insurance claim/Cause and effect**

We are concerned with this property that the insurance company may have dealt with the effect of the problem rather than the cause and that this could happen again. It is difficult for us to be conclusive without having the paperwork with regard to exactly what went on.

The effect we consider is the cracking and the movement in the property and the cause may be the ground conditions, it may be the trees, it may be the water table level or a combination of all of these; we simply cannot be sure without seeing the information from the insurance company/loss adjusters. It is likely to be a combination of several things. We would like to know what measures have been put in place to prevent this from happening again.

It does look like there have been very deep pile foundations added, the sketch that we saw (that we were advised was not used) showed piles of 8 metres which is a deep pile on a residential property particularly bearing in mind that the existing foundations are not likely to be more than a metre (foot or two) deep.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal advisor needs to investigate with the insurance company / loss adjusters as to what work was carried out in relation to dealing with the cause of the problem.

### **Insurance claim**

During our discussions with the owner they advised that they had placed a call to the loss adjusters / insurers to ask them to come back and make a better job of the finish of the render.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to speak to the owner and check and confirm if there is any other outstanding work or issues on this underpinning.

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## **Thatch properties**

The difficulties we have with thatch these days is where does it come from and part of this question is what quality will it be and how would it weather in the English climate?

In my time as a chartered building surveyor carrying out building surveys, we have moved from using the term Norfolk reed to using the term Water reed. We originally said it is more likely that this property has used reed from abroad, now we have had a chat with xxxxxx he has confirmed the reed is from Turkey, normally it seems to be from Poland. We have been involved in some cases where there has been considerable weathering to the reed in a relatively short time span. We consider it should last thirty to sixty years depending upon who you talk to, location, weather conditions, etc.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal advisor needs to specifically ask what type of reed has been used on the roof. We asked for details of the companies that carried out the work. These need to also be forwarded onto your solicitor.

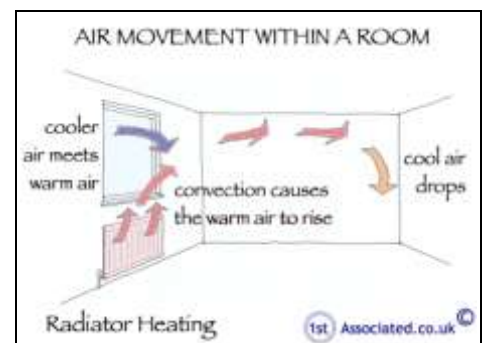
## **Higher than average possibility of condensation**

Another fact that needs to be considered is how people live in properties today. We used to live in a lot colder internal conditions within a property whereas today we tend to want to live in houses which are t-shirt weather warm all year round and we have a lot more showers than we used to do when baths were the only option.

Generally, we create more heat and humidity than we ever did which in turn can cause condensation. This can occur to the walls and we also believe it is likely to affect the thatch roof.

## **Air movement**

Our concern within this property and many other properties is that they have minimum air movement in them. With the removal of real fires which used to create movement through the property we are left with air movement being created by radiators that are located under windows and we have the usual draughts from the windows to move the air around the property.



Air movement within a room

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## **Effects of condensation**

As well as creating black mould the humid air will also generally cause some expansion to windows and doors making them a bit more difficult to open and once you do open them it is a bit more difficult to shut them. You do need to be aware that simply opening windows will not improve humidity in a property as it may be more humid outside than inside which is why you need an extract fan to extract the humid air and force it outside.

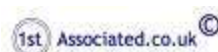
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## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

## **Maintenance**

It should be appreciated that defects which would normally be highlighted in a modern property (we consider modern to be less than one hundred years old however in this case it is a relatively modern property imitating an older style), effectively form part of an older property's overall character and style. Such defects are considered acceptable and may not have been specifically referred to as defects within the context of this Report.

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

## **Services**

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

## **Electrics**

There are dated electrics from 1980's to 1990's located in the cloakroom. We recommend the electrics are upgraded particularly as the property has a thatched roof. The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) recommend a test and report whenever a property changes occupancy. This should be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

## **Heating**

There is a Worcester boiler located in the cloakroom. On the day of our survey the boiler was being tested. We are not sure if it was being overhauled or not.

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

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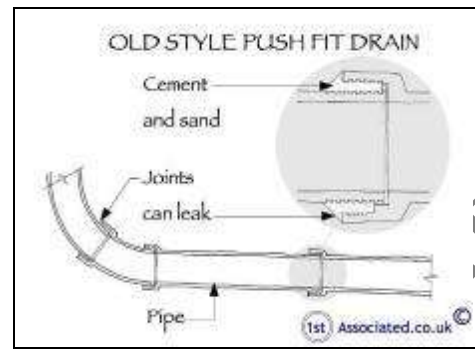
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## **Drainage**

Whilst we have lifted the two manholes covers to the front left hand side of the property one of which is practically under a tree, the only true way to find out the condition of the drains is to have a closed-circuit TV camera report to establish the condition of the drains. In this age of property there have often been leaks over the years.



Push fit drain

### **ACTION REQUIRED:**

Closed-circuit TV camera report to establish the condition of the drains.

## **Water Supply**

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

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

## **DIY/Handyman Type Work**

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

## **Purchase Price**

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

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## **Every Business Transaction has a Risk**

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

## **Estimates of Building Costs**

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

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

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## APPENDICES

1. Limitations
2. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
2. Information on the Property Market
3. Listing Details
4. Location of Underpinning
5. Piling (Not the type of piping system that was used on the property) Thatched Roofs
6. Contact Information
7. Wealden Hall House
8. The myth of opening windows to reduce condensation

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## **LIMITATIONS**

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

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

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

## **ENGLISH LAW**

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

## **SOLE USE**

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

## **APPROVALS/GUARANTEES**

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

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

## **LAYOUT PLAN**

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

## **WEATHER**

It was mild and dry day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

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

## **NOT LOCAL**

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

## **OCCUPIED PROPERTY**

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

## **JAPANESE KNOTWEED**

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

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

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## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

Unfortunately, in this instance our inspection has been limited as:

- 1) We were unable to access the roofs due to the roof space areas being very small (all three of them). We could see approximately five to ten percent of all of the roof structure in the property. The roof structure is very important with a thatch roof as if dampness is getting through the thatch it will cause deterioration to it.
- 2) We did not open up the walls as we could not see a way of doing this without causing damage.
- 3) We did not open up the ground floor, the first floor or top floor as we could not see a way to do it without causing damage.
- 4) We thank you for taking the time to meet us during the survey.

## **BUILDING INSURANCE**

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

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

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

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

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

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

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

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

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

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## **INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET**

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

[www.landreg.org.uk](http://www.landreg.org.uk)

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

[www.rics.org.uk](http://www.rics.org.uk)

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

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

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

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

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

[www.motleyfool.co.uk](http://www.motleyfool.co.uk)

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

[www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk)

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

[www.zoopla.co.uk](http://www.zoopla.co.uk)

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

[HistoricEngland.org.uk](http://HistoricEngland.org.uk) and [BritishListedBuildings.co.uk](http://BritishListedBuildings.co.uk)

These are good websites for establishing if the property is Listed and general information on Listed buildings.

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## Listing Details

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

**DESCRIPTION:** XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

**GRADE:** xxxxxxxx

**DATE LISTED:** xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

**ENGLISH HERITAGE BUILDING ID:** xxxxxxxx

**LOCATION:** xx

**LOCALITY:** xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

**LOCAL AUTHORITY:** xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

**COUNTY:** xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

**COUNTRY:** England

**POSTCODE:** xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

## Listing Text

### Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: xxxxx

UID: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

### Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

### Details

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx (south side) xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. Designed in the style of a Wealden Hall house ('cottage orne with Art Nouveau trimmings' - Pevsner). Two storeys and large central dormer. Symmetrical facade with 3 bay front. Hipped thatch roof with decorative ridge and tall red brick chimneys with moulded caps. Roughcast first floor with brick header patterns between windows. Gault brick. First floor with tile string at first floor level. Outer bays with 3 windows each of small casement type with leaded lights. Central bay with characteristic Art Nouveau T-shaped window of 7 lights. Four light dormer window with thatch hood and apron. Central entrance with canopy.

Listing NGR: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

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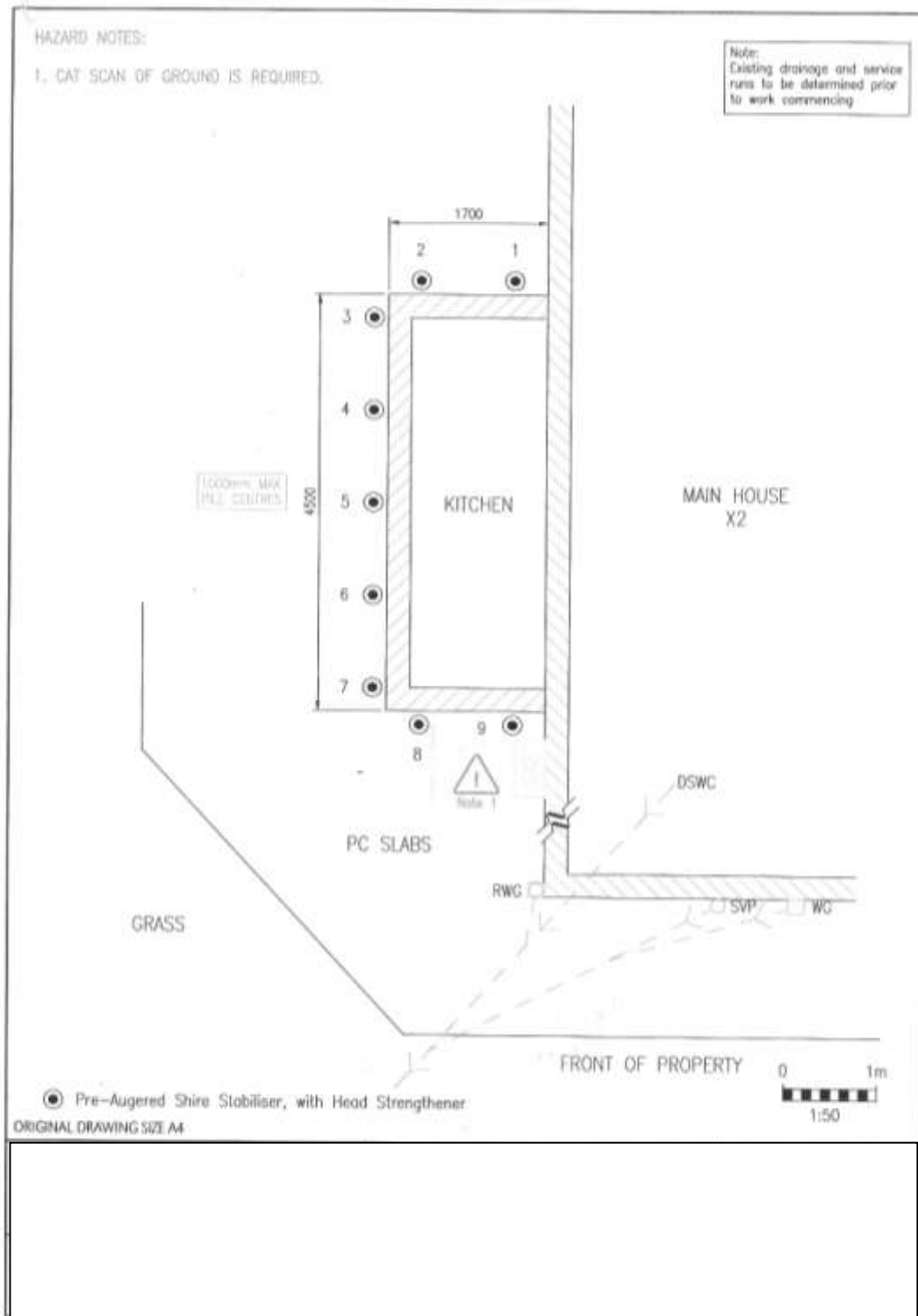
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# Location of Underpinning

Information on the underpinning work was limited. We would request that we see a full copy of the underpinning documentation.



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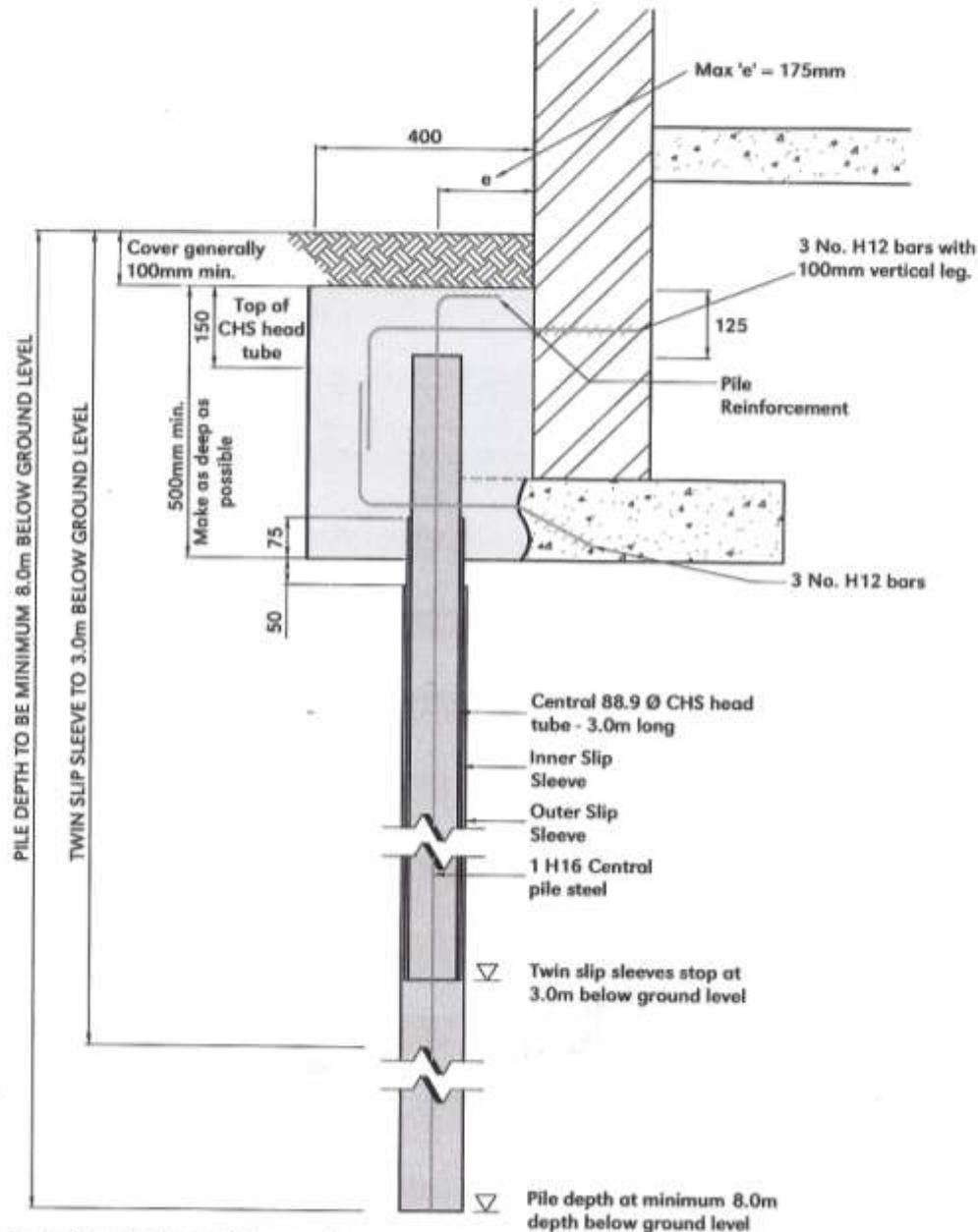




## Piling (Not the type of piping system that was used on the property)

### Remedial Connection Detail

#### 3.2.1 Solid Wall & Concrete Foundation - 800-500mm Deep with cover to cap



#### Notes:

1. Pile cap to be 450mm wide on plan
2. Dowels to have 200mm vertical leg and 125mm penetration
3. Break back face of existing foundation to achieve eccentricity show. Scrape/wash face of wall to achieve shear key

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# Thatched Roofs

Thatch was the most common form of roofing in Britain until about the 17th Century on domestic structures, particularly in the South East of England. Its use was limited by legislation due to the risk of fire, initially in the City of London, (unfortunately after the fire of London!) which in turn, was followed by larger cities/towns, and eventually considered good building practice nationwide.



For example, in London, it was compulsory by 1212 to give thatch a coat of white wash to protect it from sparks, and new houses were not allowed to be thatched from this date. However, this legislation took some time to be adopted in other areas, but by the early/mid 18th Century, thatch was generally prohibited from use.

## Types of Thatch

There are three main types of thatch common in England; Long straw, Water Reed (originally called Norfolk reed) and Combed wheat reed all usually laid on a pitch of about 55°.

**Combed Wheat Reed (originally known as Devon Reed)**

Wheat reed will tend to have a bristled finish and will typically have a life of 20 to 40 years from new. However, it will require maintenance throughout its life.

**Long Straw**

Long straw is typified by its "shaggy" soft look and it is typically considered to have a life of between 10 and 20 years from new. However, it will require some maintenance throughout this period.

**Water Reed (originally known as Norfolk reed)**

Norfolk reed is typified by its solid, neat, clean cut appearance. It is typically considered to have a life of between 50 and 70 years from new. However, it will require some maintenance throughout this period.

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## How do I repair my roof?

## How do I find a good roofer?

This probably has to be equivalent to the how long is a piece of string question. First, we would say you need to ensure that whoever you use has your best interest at heart rather than their best interest and that they are not simply trying to sell you the most profitable solution to them. Word of mouth is a great way of finding good builders but do be aware that often word of mouth recommendations come via someone who doesn't have any experience or expertise or working with builders.

Therefore, the reasons for their word of mouth could be that the builder turned up on the day that he said he would, finished the job on the day that he said he would and charged the price he said he would, which ironically can be a good recommendation, but not if the work carried out was technically wrong or of poor quality. You should also take great care if your property is an old property as it could be a Listed Building or in a conservation area, or simply need a builder that knows how to deal with older properties.

Equally, a newer property also has to be dealt with in an appropriate manner, so the experience the builder has is very important. We have developed a specific defects report for looking at a specific problem, such as chimneys on your property. These originally developed from our engineer's report that specifically looked at structural cracks in properties, which then moved onto us giving specific advice on dampness in properties, due to many contractors being involved in this industry simply being there to sell a product rather than to give you best advice.

If you truly do want an independent expert opinion from a surveyor with regard to chimneys, roof problems, roof repairs, roof materials or any other matters please contact 0800 298 5424 for a surveyor to give you a call back.

## Access requirements

It is very, very likely that on a re-roof or a major repair scaffolding will be required. Scaffolding is not cheap and you will also have to make the decision as to whether a roof is put over the top of the scaffolding in case it rains or there is inclement weather during the course of the repair or renewal work to the roof. Please see our article on scaffolding.

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## Work carried off long ladders and crawler boards

In years gone by most roofing work would be carried out off long ladders and crawler boards. This simply wasn't safe then and is certainly not safe now. A good contractor will insist upon a scaffolding to work from, even where the site is difficult, for example where there is a shop front that you have to work around, there are scaffolding solutions. In that instance using a unitary scaffold. Some people use unitary scaffolds all the time as it saves them time, but we certainly would not recommend crawler boards and a ladder.



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## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Company: xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Address: xx

Tel: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Website: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

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## **Wealden Hall House**

This is a timber frame structure from the era when we had Open Halls meaning an open room without a first floor. This would have been in the two central bays of the property (where the balcony is with your particular house). This type of house would have been owned by a farmer (often known as a yeoman).

Along with being a gentleman farmer the yeoman may also have taken the role of law and order and general running of the local area. The open hall house would have originally had an open fire. One side would have been the food stores and preparation areas, sometimes the kitchen (known as the buttery and the pantry) although often this was outside due to the fear of fire and to the other side of the open hall would be the area where the yeoman lived in the cellars and the parlours.

This is a Victorian/Edwardian take on this type of structure which was more typically found in Kent and Sussex. It got its name from the Weald Forest.

If you ever get the opportunity it is well worth going to visit the Weald and Downland Museum (website [www.wealddown.co.uk](http://www.wealddown.co.uk)) singleton, Chichester, PO18 0EU where there is the living museum and a collection of fifty buildings which are historic buildings. You will be able to see a real version of a Wealden Hall House as well as many other old properties.

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# The myth of opening windows to reduce condensation

The reason we have identified extract fans to be used in humidity generating areas is that in some cases opening windows is not sufficient to rid a property of relative humidity.

To explain this further, you will have a relative humidity environment within the property and you will also have a relative humidity externally. If the relative humidity is higher internally then opening the windows to a lower external relative humidity will often alleviate the situation, as long as there is a through draught.

However, if externally the relative humidity is higher, which it can be on many days, relative humidity internally changes very little unless it is drawn out via something like a humidity controlled extract fan.

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