

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

XXXX

XXXX

Tenbury Wells,  
Worcestershire  
WR15 XXX



Aerial view – 360 photo

FOR

Miss X

Prepared by:

XXXX

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS



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## **INTRODUCTION**

Firstly, may we thank you for using our services once again and your kind instruction of XXXX; we have now undertaken an Independent Building Survey (formerly known as a Structural Survey) of the aforementioned property. This Survey was carried out on XXXX.

As you may recall 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 area and the buildings services. We conclude with the section for your Legal Advisor and also attach some general information on the property market.

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

As always, we recommend that you set aside time to read the report in full, consider the comments, make notes of any areas that 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 house is yours but we will do our best to offer advice to make the decision as easy as possible.

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## **REPORT FORMAT**

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

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

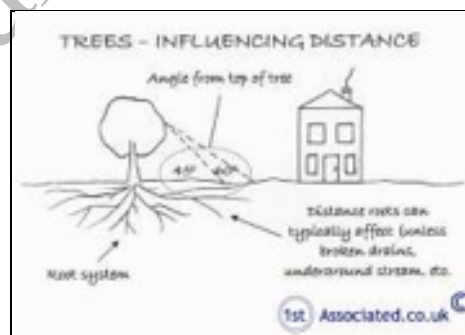
*This has been given in the survey where it is considered it will aid understanding of the issues, or be of interest. This is shown in "italics" for clarity.*

### **TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED**

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

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

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



Influencing distance of trees

### **ORIENTATION**

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

### **ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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

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## **SYNOPSIS**

## **SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION**

The main property is two-storey and has had alterations and amendments over the years. There is an adjoining barn construction to the left and a single storey storm porch running the entire length of the right gable/lower end of the property. The property sits on a sloping site in an isolated location.

There are gardens surrounding the property and we believe there is some acreage with it. You need to establish exactly what land is included and where the boundary is.

It is very difficult to date this property however we believe that the property was built in late the 19<sup>th</sup> Century / early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Based upon the brickwork from the stonework and timber work to the front of the property it may well be older. If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal advisor needs to check and confirm all of the above.

### **Putting Life into Perspective!**

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

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 1878        | Electric Street Lights are installed, lighting the way for Londoners |
| 1896        | The first modern Olympic Games in Athens was a great success         |
| 1901        | The first ever Nobel Prizes are awarded                              |
| 1910        | Halley's comet is photographed for the first time.                   |
| 1914 - 1918 | World War I  |
| 1921        | Winston Churchill is appointed Colonial Secretary and helps win      |

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## **EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS**



Front view of main house



Rear of main house



Left gable



Right gable



Garden to left



Garden behind house

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## **BARN**



Front view of barn



Left view



Rear of barn



Gate and fence to left adjacent to the barn

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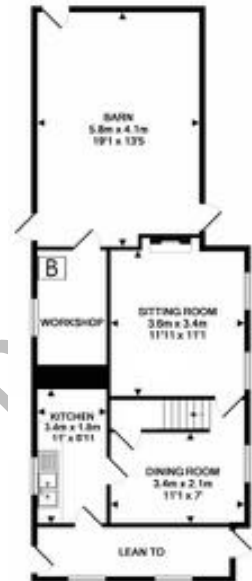
## **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

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

### **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Storm porch
- 2) Front right kitchen
- 3) Rear right dining room
- 4) Rear left reception room
- 5) Barn left
- 6) Front left services room



### **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Central staircase
- 2) Rear left bedroom
- 3) Rear right bedroom
- 4) Front bathroom
- 5) Storage room off bathroom



### **Outside Areas**

There are gardens surrounding the property with a road to the front (and some verge area). From our discussions with you, you advised there is also acreage; you need to confirm exactly what land is included. As we mentioned deeds need to be fairly precise with regard to land these days particularly with the likes of GPS (global positioning system) as some older deeds can be very vague.

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

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## **INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS**

The following photos are of the internal of the property to help you recall what it looked like and the general ambience (or lack of).

### **Ground Floor**



Entrance porch right



Front right kitchen



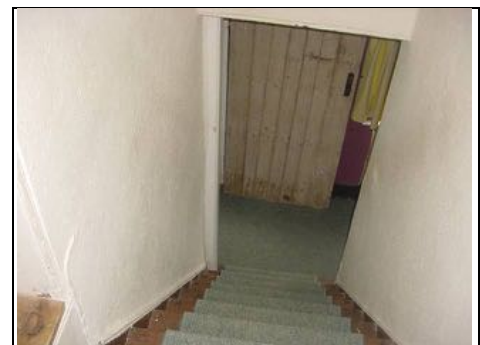
Rear left reception room



Rear right reception room/dining room



Service area front left



Central stairs

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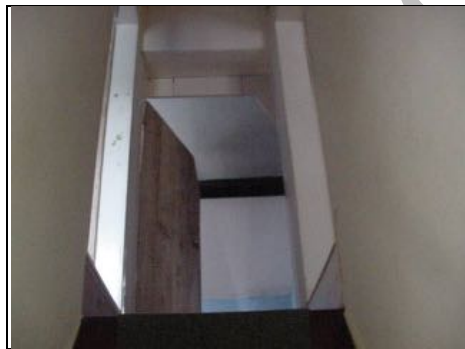
**First Floor**



Rear right bedroom



Rear left bedroom



Stairs/landing



Bathroom



Front left store

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**Barn**



Kingpost truss roof of sorts  
stabilised with a metal brace



Barn



Barn



Tension wire



View towards main house



Crack to gable of house visible  
within the barn

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## **MAIN HOUSE - SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

### **External**

Chimneys:	One brick chimney to left
Main Roof:	Pitched, clad with clay tiles
Main Roof Structure:	Kingpost New timbers and cross bracing
Porch Roof:	Flat felt roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Painted Flemish Bond brickwork (modern paint onto lime wash and moss covered walls in some areas) Stonework to front base Timber frame structure and cladding to entrance porch (all assumed)
Fascias and Soffits:	Dog tooth corbelling at high level, possibly with timber fascia board – limited view Painted timber to storm porch (all assumed)
Windows and Doors:	Timber casement windows and Metal Crittal windows

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## **Internal**

Ceilings:	Originally lath and plaster, some replaced with modern plaster Exposed timbers to some ceilings (all assumed)
Internal Walls:	Mixture of solid and hollow (assumed)
Perimeter Walls:	Predominantly lime plaster, some modern gypsum plaster for example near the kitchen door
Floors: Ground Floor:	Concrete and we believe tile on screed or tile on compacted earth to kitchen (all assumed)
First Floor:	Traditional timber floor style with exposed spine beam and joists Some parts look to be a modern version (all assumed)

## **Services**

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

Heating:	There is a floor mounted boiler located in the Services cupboard on the left side of the house accessible from the barn.
Electrics:	The electrics are located in the Services cupboard
Oil:	The oil tank is plastic and is located next to the parking area
Septic tank:	Not located – location needs to be confirmed and the construction
Drainage:	Not located

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## **BARN - SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

### **External**

Main Roof:	Pitched, clad with clay tiles
Main Roof Structure:	Medieval Kingpost style with raked struts (further investigation required) Additional timbers and cross bracing added for support and also metal cable tying wall plates together we assume to stop roof spread
Gutters and Downpipes:	None
Soil and Vent Pipe:	None
Structural Frame:	Timber – vertical transoms approximately 600mm to 700mm spacing which is wider than we would normally expect
Walls:	Single red brick and timber cladding (all assumed)
Windows and Doors:	Timber entrance door and boarded windows (all assumed)

### **Internal**

Ceilings:	Exposed roof structure
Internal Walls:	None
Perimeter Walls:	Not lined, one wall is the brick wall of the house
Floors: Ground Floor:	Brick paviors on earth (assumed), some areas giving way

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

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

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



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

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 300 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) Potential with the house and barn.
- 2.0) Potential with the garden although you do need to understand exactly what land is included.

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.*

As the property is in such a dilapidated state we are not going to include the some of the type of items we would usually put in the Bad Section however they will be in the main body of the report.

### **1.0) Chimney**

The chimney has suffered from a lack of maintenance, there is vegetation and plants growing out of it. It no doubt will require some repointing and repair work.

There is also an awkward detail where the chimney meets the barn roof.



Plants growing out of chimney

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Remove plant/vegetation, repoint and repair.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would set aside the sum of £250 to £500 assuming the work can be carried out off a ladder and crawler boards (roofing company to advise); please obtain quotations. These costs could double if you need to have specialist scaffolding to carry out the work.

Please see the Chimneystacks Section of this Report.

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## 2.0) Roofs

Ad hoc repairs required to the roofs of the main house and the barn.

### 2.1) Step between main roof and barn

This is an area where often dampness gets in. A cement flashing has been used; we would much prefer a lead flashing.



No lead flashing between barn and main building

### 2.2) Barn Roof

Ad hoc roof work is required generally to both roofs and specifically to the barn roof to make it watertight.



Barn roof



Part missing from barn roof

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend the moss is cleared with a soft brush and carry out ad hoc repairs to the roofs. The main repairs are required to the barn. Add lead flashing between the main house roof and the barn roof. Care needs to be taken when on the barn roof until the structure is stable.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £750 to £1,000; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section of this Report.

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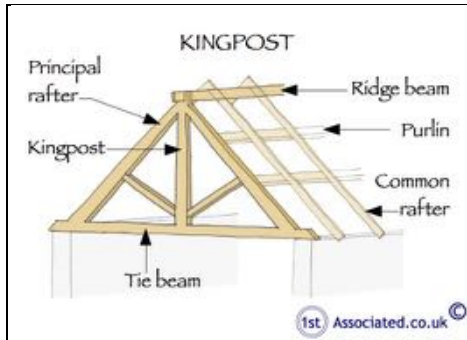
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### 3.0) Roof structure

There are two kingpost truss roofs; a more modern one to the main house and a medieval style kingpost in the barn with metal brackets and metal cable to help stabilise it.

Interestingly, the kingpost to the house looks relatively new, in this case we mean the last fifty or so years. However, looking at the tiles externally it does not look like any work has been carried out to these.



Kingpost



King post roof of main house



Barn has medieval style kingpost truss of sorts stabilised with a metal brace

#### King Post Truss Defined

A traditional timber roof truss with a vertical post from the apex to the centre of the bottom tie beam, suitable for spans up to about 11m, but like the queen-post truss not now used for new build work in Britain but can be found on restorations and conservation projects.

#### Barn medieval style kingpost truss

We are really not sure how old this roof is and never really know until it is dendro dated.

#### Dendro chronology

Often called tree ring dating. It is much more scientific than simply counting the number of rings and relates to patterns of growth. There are tables available on this and now our knowledge grows as we gain more knowledge.

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### **Additional Kingposts**

We spoke about having an exposed roof in the barn and possibly one for the first floor. If this is the case, we would recommend adding additional timbers possibly additional Kingposts. We would recommend making the two structures separate to each other; at present the barn seems to sit against the main building.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repair work required to both roof structures.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** For repairs to existing roofs and possibly new kingposts we would set aside the sum of £2,500 - £5,000; please obtain quotations.

#### **4.0) Woodworm to roofs**

##### **4.1) Main house timber roof structure**

The roof area is slightly damp and we noted woodworm. It is very difficult to confirm whether it is still active, we would air on the side of it not being active as we could see some new timbers in the roof that do not seem to have woodworm.



Dampness coming through painted walls



Dampness coming in through walls



Dampness to right gable



Woodworm

The only true time we know for certain is during the woodworm breeding season of the spring months.

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We always recommend having traps for the woodworm to make sure they are active as many of the holes that are treated by 'woodworm specialists' are flight holes where the woodworm has flown away and they are effectively treating nothing.

### **Make the environment not good for the woodworm**

You need to resolve dampness getting into the property which will involve repointing of the gable end and all the usual things you do when occupying a property such as having the heat on and generally warming it up as well as making the roof watertight which we have mentioned earlier within the report.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repoint and repair the gable end walls and stop the dampness getting in with repairs to the roof. Monitor the woodworm using woodworm traps whilst you live in the house with the heating on!

**ANTICIPATED COST:** To repoint the gable end we would set aside the sum of £500 - £1,000; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Structure Section of this Report.

### **5.0) Cracking to brickwork of left gable of main house adjoining the barn**

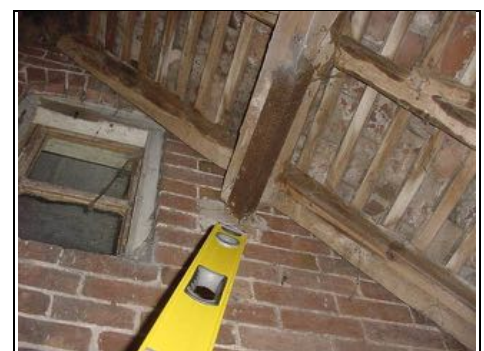
We believe that where the door is and the window on the left gable of the main house is a weak area. The barn is also taking support off this wall in the form of point loads from the purlins. This combination, we believe, has caused movement in the main property.



Crack to left gable of main house



Crack to left gable



Point load created by purlin has had metal bracket added

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally, we would recommend the existing owners take out an insurance claim, advising that the cracking has been noted by a

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structural surveyor (this should cost them nothing other than time to write the letter). This usually means that the insurance company will carry out a monitoring exercise (the Building Research Establishment recommend monitoring any cracks for a minimum of one year) to establish if there is any progressive movement. Your future liability will be limited to the cost of the excess on the insurance providing the insurance company is happy for you to take over the insurance claim.

Your solicitor needs to ensure this is a legally watertight process and ensure your liability is limited to paying the excess on the insurance only.

We believe the work needed will be to separate the barn to make it a self-supporting structure although obviously, it has stood the test of time as it is. Once this has been carried out, carry out repairs to the wall structure to re-bond it together.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** This should be covered under insurance (assuming the existing owners have insurance). If not we would set aside the sum of £1,000 - £3,000 for repairs. This is assuming that you are carrying out the work mentioned earlier; quotations required.

Please see the Roof Structure Section of this Report.

#### 6.0) Additional structural movement and cracking

We have already discussed cracking within the left gable wall visible within the barn. There is also some movement throughout the property. To some extent it could be argued it has stood the test of time with very little appropriate maintenance from what we can see and things will only get better as you carry out the work.



Vertical crack which follows line of mortar

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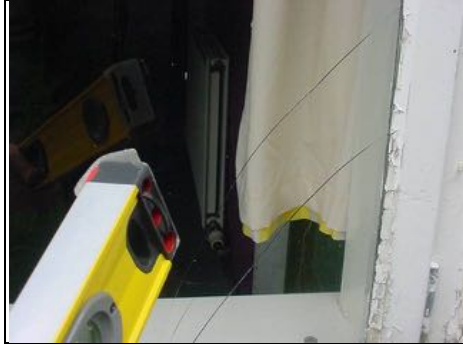
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Movement around window



Cracked glass possibly indicating there is movement in the property



Movement around front window likely to be due to the timber lintel

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to be on the safe side then an insurance claim placed by the existing owners would be the best way of limiting your future liability.

#### 7.0) Main house gutters, downpipes and drainage

Again, once you have carried out repairs to the main roof check the guttering actually catches the rainwater (which you can only do next time it rains heavily by standing outside the property). It does look like it may be running down the wall which is why there is moss to the rear of the property which has been painted over. As well of course as this being partly to do with the overgrown trees.



Front guttering needs checking



Rear guttering allowing water to discharge down the wall causing moss



Awkward downpipes to rear left of main house

The rainwater discharging down the building is also damaging the timber lintels that we can see to the front of the property.

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** Re-align the guttering, make sure it is discharging away from the building, clear the moss off the walls which in turn should start to remove some of the modern paint as well.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £1,500 to £3,000 for re-aligning of the gutters and also adding in any new soakaways to get the rainwater away from the building; please obtain quotations. It may be far less if you can put the drains into an existing drainage system.

Please see the Gutters and Downpipes Section of this Report.

## 8.0) Walls

### Main House

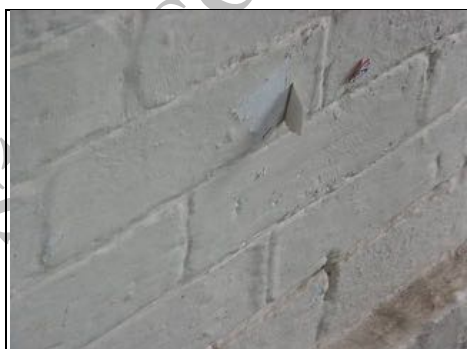
The walls to the main house are paint finish onto a red brick (relatively soft) in a Flemish bond brickwork. We can see moss has been painted over to the rear of the building. This could be misalignment of gutters (as mentioned) and also the surrounding trees.



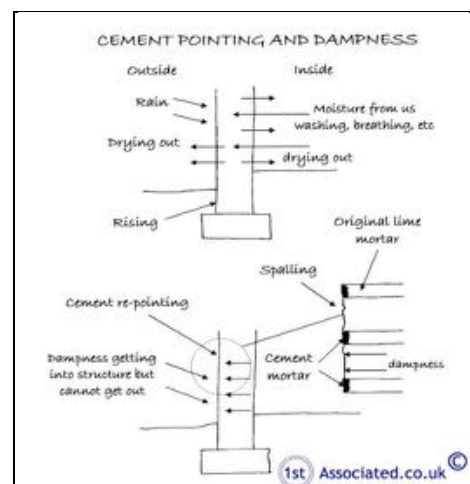
Painted over moss and mould

### Wrong paint

A wrong type of modern paint has been used which has painted over a lime wash. Luckily the lime is rejecting the modern paint so it is starting to peel away. You need the walls to breathe.



Paint flaking revealing lime wash behind



Walls need to breathe

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The dampness, we believe, is getting in through the joints and can be seen in the form of efflorescence in the roof.

### Timber lintels

To the front of the property there are timber lintels. It may well be worth taking these out completely. You can replace them with a timber lintel or with a metal lintel.



Efflorescence, bonding timber will be affected by dampness



Timber lintel



Timber lintel over front window

**ACTION REQUIRED:** There is a lot of work required to the walls once you have stopped the water discharging down them by mending the gutters and get them back to a state where they are breathing again. Gently and gradually remove the modern paint that has been painted over the lime with a soft brush ensuring the brickwork is not damaged and then repoint and redecorate using a lime wash or modern microporous paint. This is likely to take several summer months (sunny days). We would anticipate this work to be carried out over a few years. Within it we would also incorporate repairs to the timber lintels and also underneath the windows which look to have been repaired in some areas with a modern cement rather than a lime plaster.



Damage under windows

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £2,000 - £4,000; please obtain quotations.

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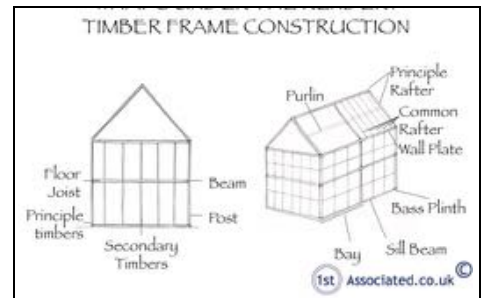
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### 9.0) Why has the property got beams and open/exposed flooring?

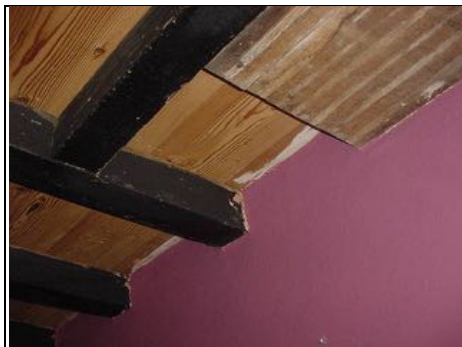
There is some unusual timber work in the building for example the kingpost roof in the main building which looks relatively new. It may be that this was once a timber frame structure and it has had brick walls built around it over the years; we simply do not know. It would be great to speak to someone from the family who owns this property.



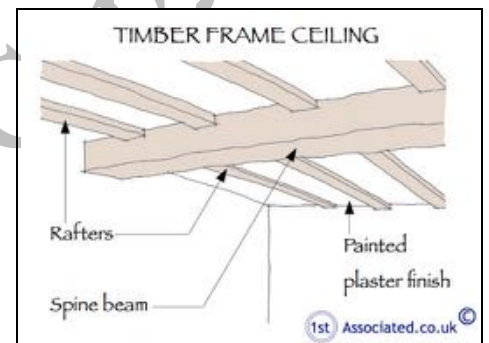
Timber frame structure



Kingpost truss roof



Timber to underside of ceiling/floors



Timber frame ceiling

**ACTION REQUIRED:** It would be interesting to find out the history of this property and look at any old photographs.

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## 10.0) External joinery – windows, doors and timber lintels and bonding timbers

The external windows are in a poor state.



Rot to windows



Window put in flush and timber lintel above

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would normally recommend you splice in new timber however these windows are relatively modern and it may be better to replace them with a good quality timber window. We suggest that the new windows are set back slightly to allow a drip detail so that the rainwater from the walls does not go impact the timber as much.

At the same time as carrying out repairs to the windows you will also need to check the lintels above them as we have already mentioned. Many of them are timber and may need replacing/repair.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £1,000 to £3,000 to repair fully and £4,000 to £6,000 for new timber windows; please obtain quotations.

Please see the External Joinery Section of this Report.

## 11.0) Deflection to right side of structure at first floor level

When we carried out an impact test (literally jumping up and down on the floor) we felt deflection/reverberation more than we would expect to. This could be due to a combination of things such as the original floor structure being too thin to dampness getting in the ends of the timbers where they sit into the walls (known as embedded timbers).

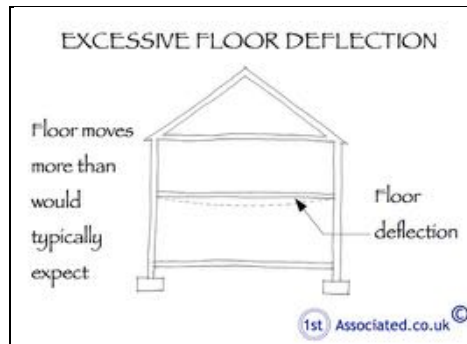
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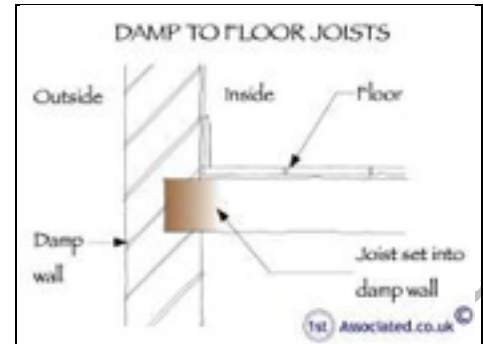
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Excessive floor deflection



Damp to floor joists

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add additional timbers in although there is an exposed floor structure so it may not be possible without covering this area over.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Depending upon what you want to do costs will range from zero cost and accept the deflection to £1,000; please obtain quotations.

## 12.0) Concrete to ground floor

Unfortunately, the floor is now a concrete floor, originally it was probably tiles onto earth or maybe even a timber floor. A concrete floor does act like blotting paper.

We discussed whether a timber floor could be put on top of it; normal good practice would be to batten particularly if an oak floor was going in as we discussed. You could in theory scabble/cut back the concrete floor. There should have been a screed of 50 to 75mm put on it before you have the concrete underneath. With this type of property in the middle of nowhere it really is anyone's guess what has happened. You could take a core sample of the floor to see what is in it before you did anything. We would add that if you were going to do a lot of work to the floor we would add a warm floor heating system as well.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Live in the building and see how dry it gets as this floor will act like a piece of blotting paper. We mentioned elsewhere within this report about lowering the ground level which should help.



Concrete floor

Please see the Floors Section of this Report.

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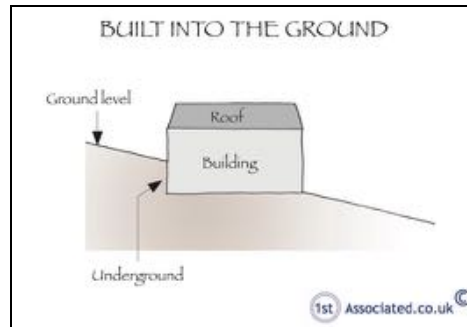


### 13.0) High ground level

Both the house and the barn sit on a sloping site and to some extent suffers from a high ground level. There has been a build up to the area where the parking is and there is also concrete added around the building to form a pathway. All of this also allows dampness to get into the building.



High ground level



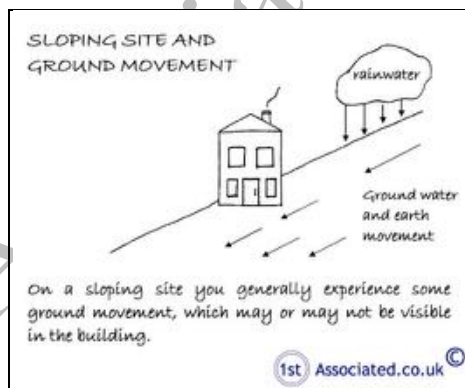
High ground level



Grass growing against property/dampness

### Sloping site

In addition, the property sits on a sloping site (sketch is an exaggeration of slope of course) and because of this rainwater and ground water need to travel from the top of the site (car port/barn area) to the bottom and doing this brings dampness into the building. Sloping sites are not as good as level sites and buildings on them are integrally unstable. You need to understand this is a characteristic of any building sitting on a sloping site.



Sloping site



Sloping site

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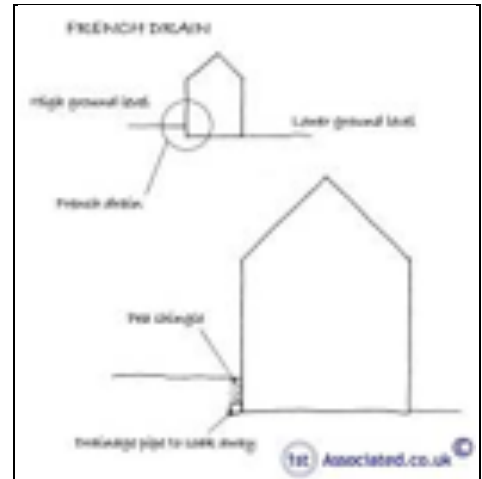
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**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that you reduce the ground level around the building wherever possible and add a drain around the building in the form of a French drain, traditionally approximately a shovel width by two shovels deep and in more recent times it has a perforated pipe at the base of it to take the water away to a drainage system.

**Care when carrying out work around the barn**



French drain

You need to be take care when carrying out work around the barn and you should have stabilised the barn first as we believe the barn is probably getting some strength from the gable end being supported partly in the ground.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** To add a French drain system around the property and also form a drainage system of soakaways is quite expensive. We would expect costs in the region of £2,500 - £5,000; please obtain quotations.

**14.0) Plaster and redecoration**

There is a lot of loose plaster (known as the plaster losing its key) which to some extent has been held in place by the wallpaper. If you do remove the wallpaper then expect quite a bit of the wall to come with it. As a holding position you could paste the wallpaper down or even add another lining paper over the top of what is there and redecorate.

You need to look for the cause of the plaster losing its bond which we believe is dampness in the property. The deteriorating plaster (losing its key) is being caused partly by dampness coming through the walls, probably old age in the plaster in this particular instance but mainly dampness. We would refer you to our earlier comments about walls needing to breathe and removing the existing modern paintwork and repointing and also reducing the high ground level around the property.



Dampness/grass growing at base of property

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### **Chemical damp proof course inserted**

We can also see that the previous owners did not understand/were wrongly advised with regards to this property as we can see where the modern chemical damp proof course has been added horizontally and vertically which is not the way to resolve dampness in this particular property in our opinion.



Chemical damp proofing

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Once the work externally has been carried out to help the property dry internally the best way is to remove the wallpaper and this would then allow some of the plaster that has not lost its key to remain and dry. You could patch repair other areas. If and when you remove the plaster the walls are still very damp then it may be necessary to remove all of the plaster. In some cases, expose the brickwork to allow it to dry out.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £200 to £300 per room to re-plaster in a lime based plaster (do not use a modern gypsum plaster) assuming you would be prepared to remove the plaster yourself; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

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### 15.0) Dampness in the kitchen

We discussed the dampness in the ceiling timbers which we thought related to water getting in from the roof. You commented it may also be from the toilet which is a possibility.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** This is something that you will need to investigate further as work proceeds. We mentioned carrying out work to the roof and flashing which may rectify this problem.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** See comments on roof work.



Dampness to timbers in rear lounge

### 16.0) Condensation/black mould

The property suffers from some condensation/black mould which could relate to how the building has been lived in, i.e. it has been heated but not aired by opening of the windows, extract fans, etc. (in fact, it would be difficult to open some of the windows).



Mould to corner



Black mould to timbers

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

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

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

**17.0) Percentage contingency sum**

As this is likely to be an old property you would expect a percentage contingency sum of the overall cost of the work that you are doing. In a new build project, this is typically ten to fifteen percent. In this type of property, we would expect it to be fifteen to twenty five percent. Hopefully the more research you do and the more comfortable you get with the project the less likely you are to use the contingency as we feel you can almost reduce the likelihood of finding something unexpected to zero on a property such as this.

**18.0) Storm porch area on right side**

**Roof**

There is a storm porch running the length of the right-hand gable. The roof was covered with moss indicating that it is a flat roof and water is not discharging from it.



Flat roof to porch on right



Moss to flat roof



Flashing starting to come away from wall

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would suggest you clear the roof to see its condition and it is probably best if you put a layer of felt over the top of it and check the flashings. Also, add guttering. Ultimately, we would recommend that you put a pitched roof on this.

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### **Porch building structure (timber)**

When we discussed this porch area you said that you would like to carry out work to it to a minimal standard as it offers protection.



Timber deteriorated to left side

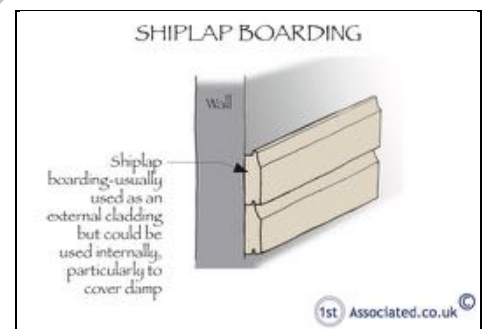


No gutters



Rotten timber

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend stripping back all of the shiplap boarding, adding insulation between the timber frame and then putting new shiplap boarding on the entire structure and redecorating. There would be some associated repairs with this around the windows and doors as well as adding the guttering of course.



Shiplap boarding

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £1,500 - £3,000 depending on whether you are happy with some DIY work; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section of this Report.

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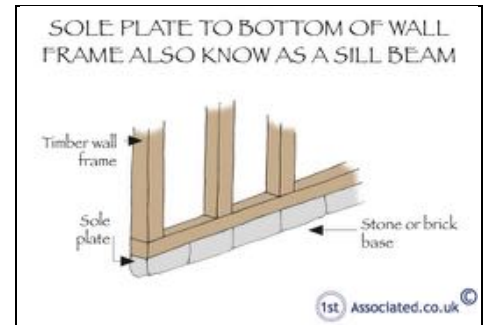
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## 19.0) Barn repairs

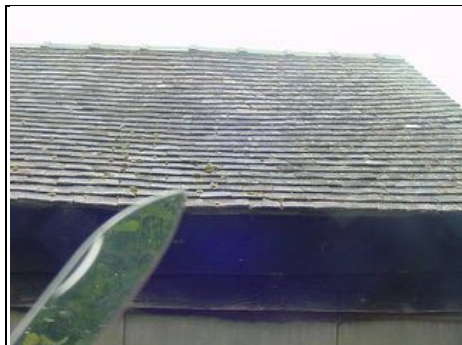
As mentioned you need to carry out work to the structure of the roof and also the repairs to the roof tiles as well as adding guttering. This in turn will then stop the mould and the dampness that we can see for example to the rear base of the barn. Rainwater is discharging onto the brickwork and to the front it is discharging onto the timber sole plate.



Sole plate



No gutters

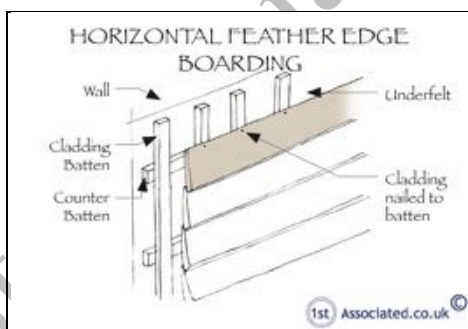


Water discharging down front of barn



Dampness to rear base of barn due to not having gutters

Guttering needs to be added to the barn. Once you have added gutters you then need to replace the shiplap boarding to the side and to the gable end, you may well be able to re-use some of the cladding. By adding guttering to the building will make it a lot better.



Feather edge boarding



Deterioration to boarding on gable end

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £1,000 to £3,000 assuming you are prepared to do some DIY work; please obtain quotations

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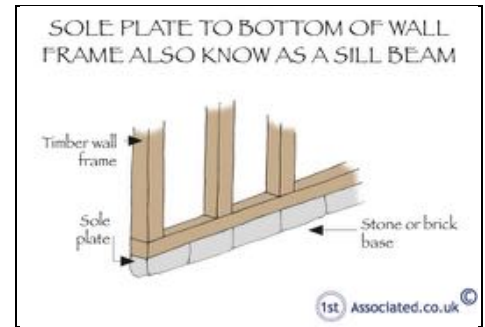
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## **Walls to the barn and possible conversion to a kitchen?**

We discussed converting this into a kitchen area which means it would have to be brought up to modern day standards. The framework within the barn is 600mm to 700mm wide; we would expect it more typically to be 400mm to 450mm.



Sole plate



Sole plate and vertical timbers



Base of vertical timbers



Rot to sole plate

### Sole plate defined

Base timber that sits against the earth or onto a brick or stone base.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The timber that we knife tested is not doing too badly. We would suggest extra timbers are added in between the existing timbers and that repairs are carried out to some of the existing timbers including the sole plate that had some wet rot in it. There was not an excessive amount considering it was a sole plate.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £1,000 - £3,000; please obtain quotations. You can spend more however it really depends upon how far you want to go. We have describing getting a basic wall construction in place. To meet Building Regulations, you would need to add insulation to the walls, also probably to the floors although it could be argued due to the historic nature of this building that you do not have to meet building regulations completely.

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### **Is it more economic to knock down the barn and start again?**

You need to be aware that some may consider it more economical, particularly if you are looking for building regulations and planning permission with regard to the barn to make this area part of the house as a kitchen, to literally take down the whole structure and start again with a new frame.

We believe this would be a great shame as there is certainly a fair amount of history in the barn particularly with its medieval style kingpost roof. It needs to be looked at by an expert; it may be something that the local VAG (Vernacular Architectural Group) would be interested in carrying out historic research on for you. We are a member of the National VAG; if you are interested in this please contact us and we will put you in contact with the right people.

#### **20.0) Private road access**

The property has what we would term as a non-adopted road meaning that the local authority will not look after it.

This is also likely to be true of any drainage you have which will be a private system of drainage.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to ensure your solicitor checks as to what your liabilities are and repair responsibilities with regard to the road.



Private access road

**ANTICIPATED COST:** These searches should be included in your solicitor's searches. The costly part would be if you have a liability to maintain the road; please obtain quotations.

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## 21.0) Trees

There are trees to the rear of the property which we believe are shading it which is probably why you are getting moss on the property.

Generally, we would comment that tree problems are being exaggerated in our opinion by industries that have vested interest. You need to ensure that the trees are regularly maintained, not cut down as this would allow any water they take away to saturate the area. They should not be left to overgrow as the root system could then affect the property.



Trees need cutting back

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We believe that all of the trees need maintenance around the property and cut back to appropriate size for this property which we believe is much smaller. We would recommend an arboriculturalist (not a tree surgeon) is asked to view the property and give a ten-year plan for maintenance. There was a lot of tree cutting taking place on the day of our survey around the electrical lines.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £250 - £750 for report plus associated costs for cutting and trimming back the trees; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.

## SERVICES

### 22.0) Dated electrics

Whilst the fuse board is newer than we would expect the electrics within the house were dated with single socket points noted and older switch points.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a complete re-wiring of the property to be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.



Fuse board

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**ANTICIPATED COST:** £2,000 - £4,000 for complete re-wiring; please obtain quotations.

### 23.0) Heating

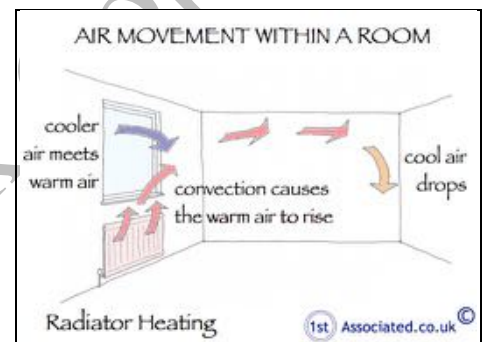
The property has a Worcester floor mounted boiler. This may or may not work; it was not working on the day of our survey. It would be great if you could get it to work as to replace it would be costly.



Boiler

### 23.1) Internal radiators – wrong location

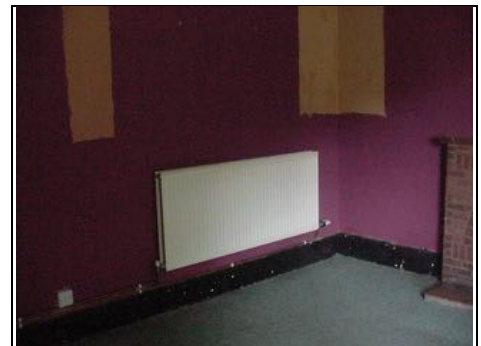
We noted the radiators are internal in some areas. This is often carried out on cheaper central heating systems to save the labour and piping costs of positioning the radiators underneath the windows. However, it then reduces the air movement in the room, which can lead to black mould.



Air movement

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Qualified heating engineer to establish whether boiler is working. This would be worth carrying out before you purchase the property as this would be a major cost.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** For a new heating system including radiators, etc expect costs in the region of £3,000 - £5,000 assuming the oil supply from the tank is usable; please obtain quotations.



Internal radiators

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## 24.0) Drainage

We were not able to check the drains other than to run the tap in the bathroom. We have not found the usual indicators as to where these are such as manholes. There are no obvious signs of drainage problems such as overflowing drains however it does look like the property has not been lived in for some considerable time.

The existing system may be good however we have no way of knowing therefore we would suggest that the existing drains are rodded and a closed-circuit TV camera is put through them to allow you to see the condition. It may well be that the drains are working satisfactorily and going to a septic tank.

As mentioned, we believe that additional drainage is required around the property to take the rainwater/groundwater away from the property via a French drain particularly at the left gable end where there is the high ground level and following on with a French drain around the property to take all the rain water and ground water away. This should go into a soakaway or existing septic tank system assuming it works.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a closed circuit TV camera report of the drains before you legally commit to purchase the property.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £250-£400 for closed circuit TV camera report; quotations required. It may be more cost efficient to put in a sewerage/drainage system at the same time.

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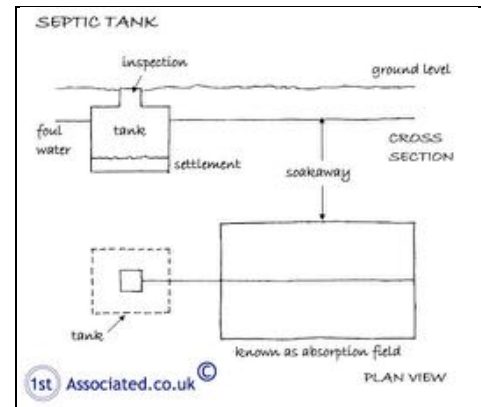
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## 24.1) Septic tank

We assume the property has a septic tank however we were unable to find where the septic tank is. It is usually at the lower end of the site which would be the right end. There was no obvious manhole/drainage system to indicate where it is.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal advisor to specifically ask where the septic tank is.



Septic tank

We would recommend that you have the septic tank emptied and whoever empties it takes photographs of the outside and most importantly the inside and we are provided with the telephone number of the company emptying it to discuss with them.

In this age of property, it is very typically a brick built septic tank, sometimes having pipework that then displaces the liquids into the ground. Your legal advisor needs to investigate what the situation is in this case with regard to where the liquids are discharged (we have seen a property where the septic tank was discharging into an adjoining framers field not in their ownership). Any photographs taken we will be more than happy to comment upon if they are sent electronically to us.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** New septic tanks and drainage can be very expensive. The last time we dealt with one was for a pub which cost £35,000. You would not need something as large as this. We would still expect you to have the majority of the digging out costs to sink in the new septic tank, etc. If at all possible it would be good if you could use the existing septic tank otherwise we believe it would cost in the region of £20,000 - £25,000 for a new septic tank and associated drains to it as you would not want old drains feeding into a new septic tank; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

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## **The Ugly**

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

As you are aware the property is in what we would term as a dilapidated condition, even for a farm building/farmhouse it is lower than what we would normally expect. There are some unusual features to this building such as the kingpost roofs to both the barn and also the main property and also the beams to the ceiling as well as the stone base to the front of the property. It would have been very interesting to talk to whoever lived in this property or anyone who knew about this property.

The building is a higher risk than most people would be willing to take on as we feel you are aware from our discussions with you at the property on the day of our survey.

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## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

### **Future design areas**

- 1) Moving the kitchen to the barn area
- 2) Vaulted ceilings in the barn area
- 3) Vaulted ceilings to bedroom area
- 4) Units for renting in the garden area

### **Eco-warrior ‘stuff’**

We discussed what eco items could be used on this property for example:

#### **Solar / Photovoltaic Panels (known as PV panels)**

Things are progressing on these, Tesla the car company have recently produced a lifetime solar panel slate and whilst these have been produced by Marley and other manufacturers before it is the fact they have a lifetime guarantee (we are not sure whether it is your lifetime or the houses lifetime) that we feel is extra appealing and it may well move the slate/tile/solar/PV market to change and improve. You need to investigate the market fully.

You could actually have solar panels on a building in the garden. We have seen some solar panels which are quite decorative that you can curve, etc.

#### **Eco alternatives to septic tank**

You could also look to have ponds, etc that create filtration plants for sewerage etc if you so wish although we do appreciate this is not everyone's cup of tea.

We have included an article in the Appendices. We would be more than happy to have a chat with you when you get to this stage in your project – just invite us back for a cup of tea!

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## **Maintenance**

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

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

## **Getting to know more about older properties - SPAB course**

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

## **Services**

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

### **Electrics**

The fuse board is located in the Services cupboard off the barn. The electrics were switched off at the time of our inspection therefore we were unable to carry out our usual earth test.

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 floor mounted Worcester boiler located in the Services cupboard off the barn. We would recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

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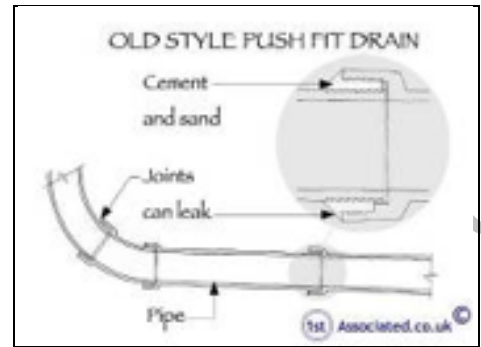
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## **Drainage**

In older properties, such as this, drainage was often push fitted together rather than bonded together which means that they may leak over the years. Whilst we ran the tap for 15 minutes without any build up or blockages the only way to be one hundred percent certain of the condition of the drains is to have a closed-circuit TV camera report.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a closed-circuit TV camera report 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 removing the paint on the outside wall, removing and making good the plaster and repainting the property in the colours you wish (as opposed to the very bright colours at present). We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

## **Purchase Price**

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

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

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

## **Estimates of Building Costs**

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

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

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## **SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION**



The Summary Upon Reflection is a second summary so to speak, which is carried out when we are writing the second or third draft a few days after the initial survey when we have had time to reflect upon our thoughts on the property. We would add the following in this instance:

You need to make absolutely sure you carry out investigation work with regard to costings on each of the items. We have included budget costings in this report however some of these items need further investigation. Some of the work can be put off until you have the budget required to do the work properly.

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

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

We would ask that you read the Report in full and contact us on any issues that you require further clarification on. We would be more than happy to help at any time – just phone us.

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## **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

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

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

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

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

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

### **SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

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

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

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

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

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



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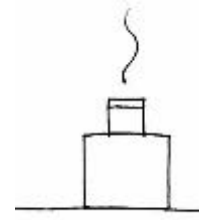
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## **EXTERNAL**

### **CHIMNEY STACKS AND FLUES**



#### **Chimney Stacks**

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

There is one chimney to this property located to the left of the main house (all directions given as you face the front of the property).

#### **Chimney One – located to left of main house**

This chimney is painted brick finished with two chimney pots. From what we could see from ground level it looked in below average condition considering its age, type and style with plants growing from it. We are not sure what the flashing is; we could see internally that there was dampness coming in from the chimney.



Plants growing out of chimney

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



Dampness internally to chimney



Rear view of chimney

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repair work required, removing of the plants/vegetation. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Flaunching

#### Flashings Defined

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

#### Flaunchings Defined

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

### Flues

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

The property has a flue to the front of the main house for the boiler. There is rusting around the caging of the flue.



Rusting around flue

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

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

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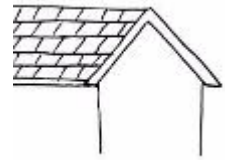
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## **ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS**



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

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

We will consider the roofs in three areas:

- 1) Main house roof
- 2) Barn roof
- 3) Storm porch flat roof

### **Main House Roof**

The main roof is pitched and clad with clay tiles and, from ground level, this looks in average condition considering the roofs age, type and style.

With this age of roof there will usually be a few missing or displaced tiles, this is nothing unusual.



Main roof



Close up of tiles on main roof



Rear of main roof

### **Moss**

The moss is slightly above what we would expect, possibly due to the nearby trees.

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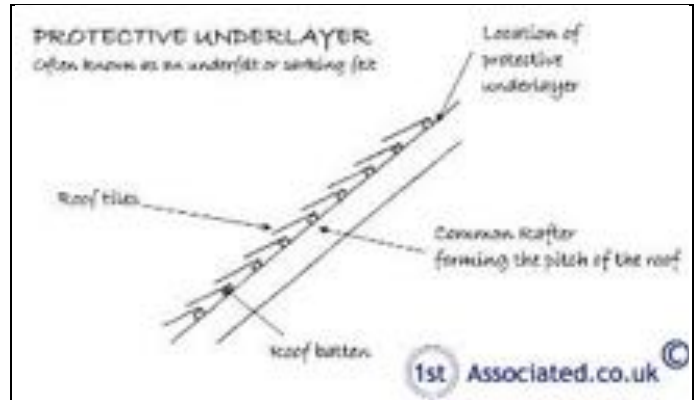
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**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

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



Protective underlayer

When we inspected the loft space we found a Hessian based Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s. We generally found it to be in average condition, with damage in some areas which is what we typically find.



This photo shows the common rafters (the ones that form the pitch of the roof) and the dark area between is the underlayer.

### **Barn Roof**

The barn roof is pitched and clad with clay tiles and, from ground level, this looks in slightly below average condition considering the roofs age, type and style. Again, this roof was not as bad as we were expecting; the main problem with working on the barn roof is the stability of the barn structure. We would only carry out work without putting weight on the barn.

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Barn roof



Part missing of barn roof

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

### **Flat Roofs**

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

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

### **Flat roof over storm porch area**

There is a storm porch with a flat roof running the length of the right-hand gable. The roof is in below average condition and was covered with moss indicating that it is a flat, flat roof (we would expect to see a fall of about fifteen degrees) and water is not discharging from it, it is more likely to be discharging into it. We can see this with the discoloration to the decking beneath it.



Flat roof to porch on right

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Moss to flat roof



Flashing starting to come away



Decking deteriorating

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

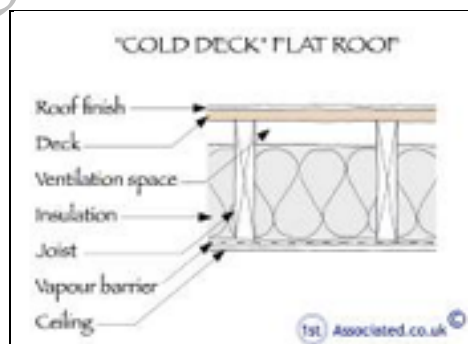
### **Further information on flat roofs**

#### **Ventilation**

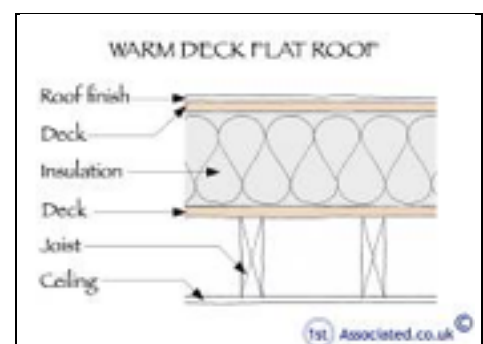
Building Regulations now require flat roofs to be ventilated, this is where there is a ceiling in place and of course there is not a ceiling in the porch area. Building Regulations are not retrospective but the reason for the requirement is to make sure that any moisture that enters the roof construction is dispelled by way of ventilation. We would suggest that if the opportunity arises ventilation should be provided.

#### **Insulation**

There was no insulation in this roof. Normally you would add insulation to a flat roof in an area that was occupied. This would be relatively easy to do in this case and may give warmth to the building as a whole therefore we would suggest that you add insulation however remember it needs to be vented.



Cold roof



Warm roof

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All the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera and/or aerial photographs. The flat roof has been inspected from the roof itself.

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

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

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## **ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT**



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

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

#### **Main Roof**

#### **Roof Access**

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located in the rear right bedroom. There is no loft ladder, electric light or secured floorboards. We recommend that these be added, as it will make the loft space safer and easier to use.

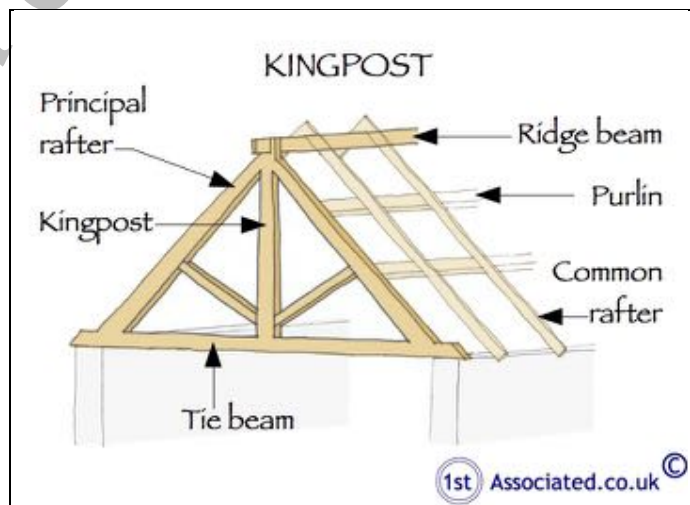
The whole of the loft has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly.

#### **Main House Roof Structure**

This type of roof structure has what is known as a kingpost truss.

##### King Post Truss Defined

A traditional timber roof truss with a vertical post from the apex to the centre of the bottom tie beam, suitable for spans up to about 11m, but like the queen-post truss not now used for new work in Britain.



Kingpost

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The roof has had additional timbers added to it and noticeably timbers tying in the gable ends and also a collar has been added at the far end of the roof which is difficult to view.

### Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

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

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



Collar added



King post roof



Purlin to king post



New collar to left gable end



Tie from gable end to gable end

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## **Woodworm**

We noted some woodworm within the roof.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The only way to be one hundred percent certain is to have the roof cleared and checked. We would like to come back and view this roof when you are underway with the project and we would then be able to give you further comments.



Woodworm

## **Purlins Defined**

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

## **Main House Gable end wall**

Dampness is coming through.

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



Salts coming through the wall

## **Ventilation**

No ventilation noted.

## **Insulation**

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

## **Electrical Cables**

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

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

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## **Barn Roof Structure**

The barn has a medieval king post truss. Having said that, the two strut timbers to the left and right of it look to be replacements. As dampness has come into the roof the purlin ends have rotted away and angle irons were added.



Cross bracing in roof



Kingpost roof of sorts stabilised with a metal brace



Close up of metal brace



Tension wire



Tension wire loose



Angle irons



Dampness coming into roof  
Purlin end rotted away and angle iron added



Point load created by purlin has had angle iron/ bracket added

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

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## GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

### Gutters and Downpipes

The gutters and downpipes are plastic to the rear and look to have been added at a later date probably replacing cast iron gutters. The gutters to the front we could not make up our mind as to whether these are cast iron or not. There are in below average condition for their age, type and style and we believe they are allowing water to discharge down the property, particularly to the rear.



Downpipes discharge into gully



Plastic gutter



Awkward and unusual downpipes to rear left of main house



Guttering at front discharges against building to front right

### Barn gutters and downpipes

At present the barn does not have any gutters.

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No guttering to barn (cement flashing where barn meets main building)



Dampness to base of barn due to not having gutters

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

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

### Soil and Vent Pipe

The soil and vent pipes are plastic. Repair leaking soil and vent pipe.



Soil and vent pipe to right of storm porch



Leaking soil and vent pipe

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

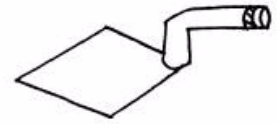
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## WALLS



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

The main house walls are constructed of brickwork.

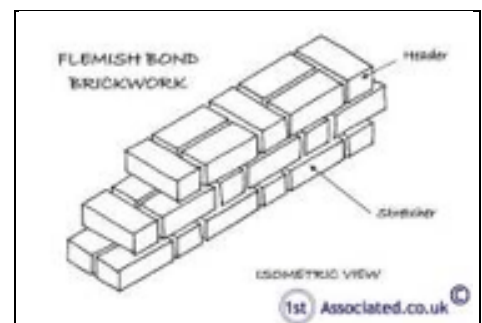
### Brickwork

The property is finished with a brick in a lime mortar in what is known as Flemish bond brickwork. The brickwork is allowing dampness into the property.

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



Painted brickwork



Flemish bond brickwork

### Timber lintels and bonding timbers

Before the 19th Century, the practice of building timbers into external walls was almost universal. These were known as bonding timbers. They are of course prone to rot as solid walls allow dampness through. Unfortunately, without opening up the structure, we are unable to confirm if this is the case.

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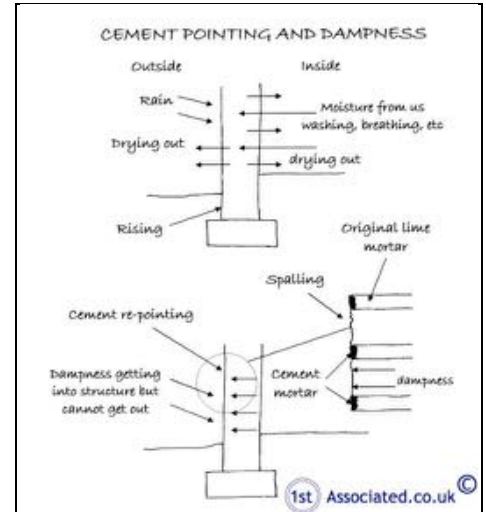
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## Condition

Generally Flemish Bond brickwork is liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon the condition of the brickwork and the exposure to the weather. It is essential that external faces be kept in good condition. In this case, it has been painted with a modern paint that seals it rather than allowing it to breathe. There is a lime wash underneath it which would have allowed it to breathe. It is rejecting some of the modern paint so it possible to remove it however this is a laborious task.



Walls need to breathe



Pointing required



Lime underneath and red brick underneath

## Cracking

We would remind you that there was cracking to the left gable. There are also cracks elsewhere within the property.



Cracking to left gable



Cracking around purlin

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

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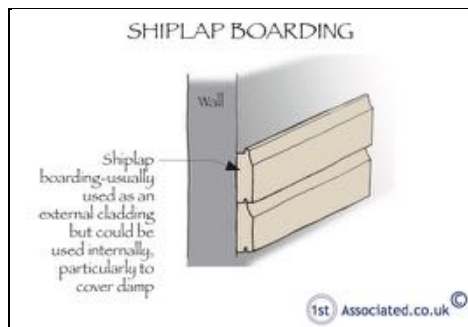


## **Painted render/painted walls**

As you are aware, the property has been painted in what we would term as the wrong paint. Do not underestimate the amount of time/cost it will take to take off the existing paint to repoint and then repaint the property particularly as there is high level work which is likely to need scaffolding which can be expensive.

## **Shi lap boarding to storm porch**

The shi lap boarding needs repair and redecoration. It may be better to remove and start again.



Shi lap boarding

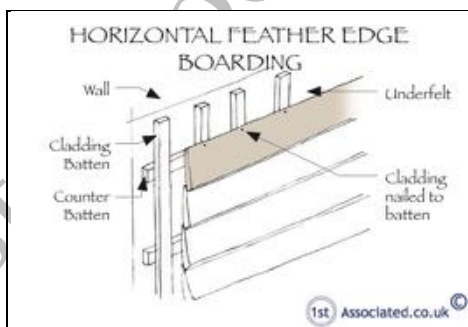


Cladding to porch has holes and wet rot

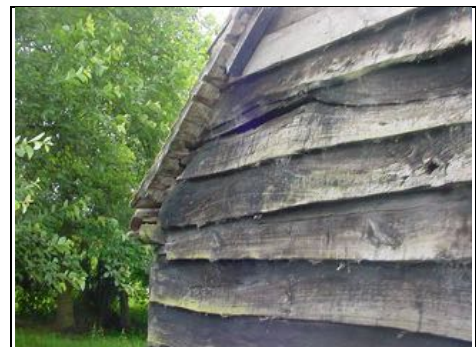
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## **Feather edge boarding to the barn**

Repair and redecoration required.



Feather edge boarding



Cladding to barn

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

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### **Brickwork to base of barn**

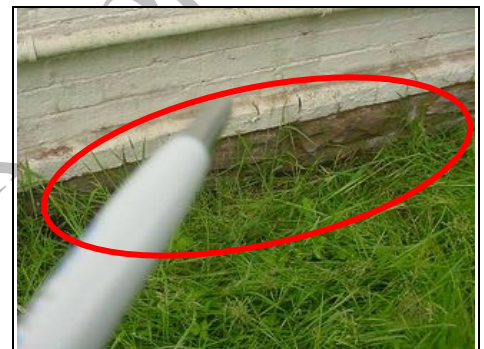
The brickwork is being badly affected by the lack of guttering to the barn. Once there is a guttering added this will be far better. There is also a boarded-up window in this area which we would like to see the boarding removed to inspect the condition of the timbers beneath it.



Brickwork to barn needs repair

### **Stonework**

We can see an old stone area to the base of the front of the property. It was interesting as this building may have once had stonework with a timber frame on top of it.



Stonework beneath painted brickwork

Finally, the external walls have been inspected visually from ground level and/or randomly via a ladder. Where the window and door lintels are concealed by brickwork / stonework / cladding / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age timber lintels, concrete lintels, rubbed brick lintels or metal lintels are common, which can be susceptible to deterioration that is unseen, particularly if in contact with dampness.

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

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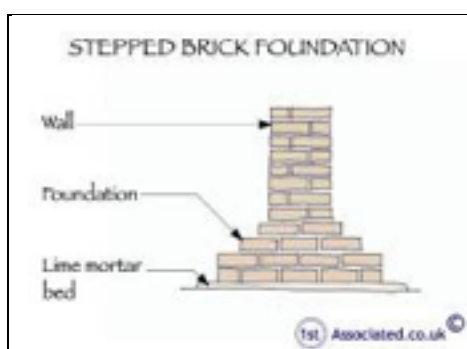
## **FOUNDATIONS**

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

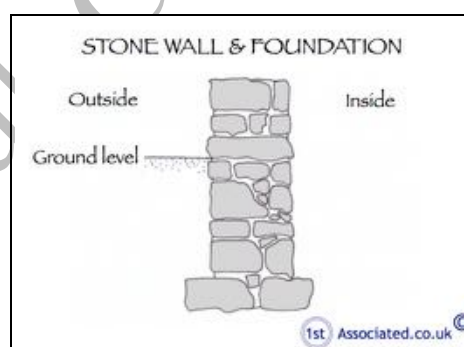
### **Foundations**

Given the age of the property you may find different depths of foundations.

We would expect to find a stepped brick foundation or interestingly there may be stone foundations.



Stepped brick foundation



Stone foundation

### **Building Insurance Policy**

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

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

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## **Cracks**

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

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

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

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

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

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## TREES



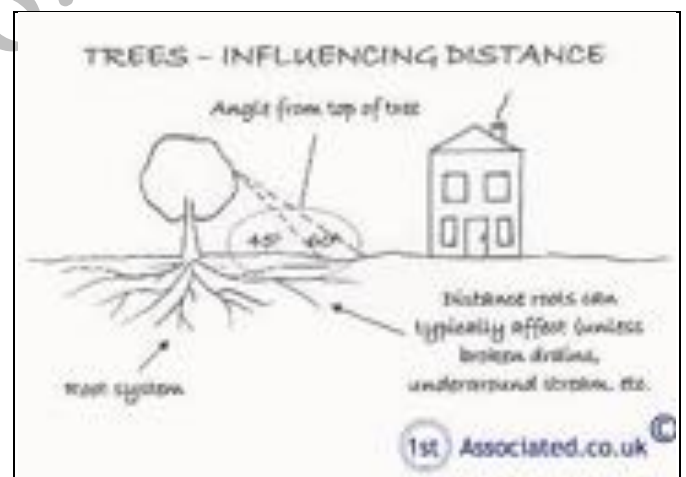
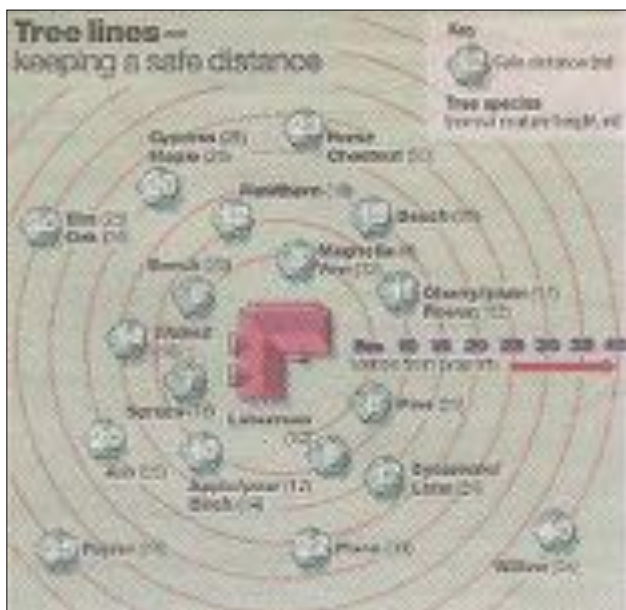
*Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.*

There are trees within what we would term as influencing distance but you do need to speak to your insurance company as they may have a different interpretation for insurance reasons.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The trees need cutting back. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Trees need cutting back



Influencing distance of trees to a property

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Influencing Distance Defined

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

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

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## **DAMP PROOF COURSE**

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

In properties of this age it is unlikely that a damp proof course (DPC) would have been built in originally. However, often they have had damp proof courses added at a later date.

In this case, we can see an inserted damp proof course has been added. We feel that these damp proof courses are practically useless.



Damp proof course added

With regard to dampness we would refer you to Jeff Howell's book "The damp proof myth" where he tried for ten years to recreate dampness into older properties. 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.



Inserted damp proof course

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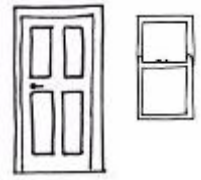
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## **FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS**



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

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

### **Fascias and Soffits**

It is difficult to see whether there are any fascias and soffits on the main building. There is what is known as a dog tooth corbelling which may be part of the problem with fixing the guttering at high level. To the storm porch there is a fascia and soffit board however has not got gutters fixed to it and would benefit from a gutter being added.



Dog tooth corbelling

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



Fascias and soffits to storm porch

### **Windows and Doors**

#### **Timber casement windows**

The property has timber casement windows. The windows are in poor condition and many are flush rather than set back which means that the rainwater has caused a lot of deterioration. There is one window with cracked glass indicating some movement in the property. This may be because it is saturated with water.



Missing windows to storm porch

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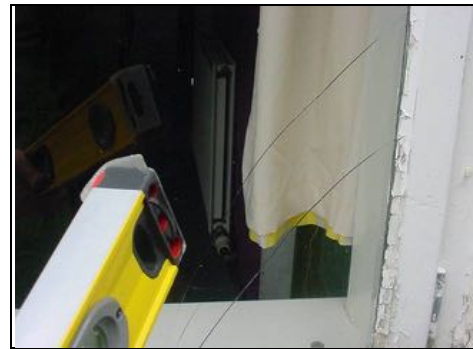




Sills missing to rear windows



Window put in flush and timber lintel above



Broken glass indicating there is movement in the property

### **Knife Test**

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



Rot to sills



Rot to windows

**ACTION REQUIRED:** It will probably be more economical to start again with the windows given that the original quality of the timber is not particularly great. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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### **Metal crittal windows**

The property has one metal window to the rear. Often metal windows are the older windows in a property. Metal windows are often known by their generic name of Crittal windows which was one of the main manufacturers from the 1940's /1950's onwards. Typically, these windows warp and rust and become difficult to close which in turn makes them draughty. In this instance, we would consider replacing this window to match the others.



Metal Crittal windows

### **Barn windows and doors**

The barn windows are boarded over therefore we are unable to comment on them.



Barn door

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

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## EXTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

External decoration offers an important protective coat against the weather elements and at the moment the external paint is in very poor condition both to the walls and also to the timber work. Having said that, we were pleased to see a lime wash was underneath the modern paint which will make it easier to get the paint off. You then need to repair the walls with repointing as well as of course making the gutters good and making the building watertight. This will be quite a long process particularly if you intend to do it yourself. You could get a tower scaffold or something similar to give you good easy access to the upper areas; we would not recommend carrying out work from a ladder as we do not feel you get as good a job.



Tower scaffold

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

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## INTERNAL

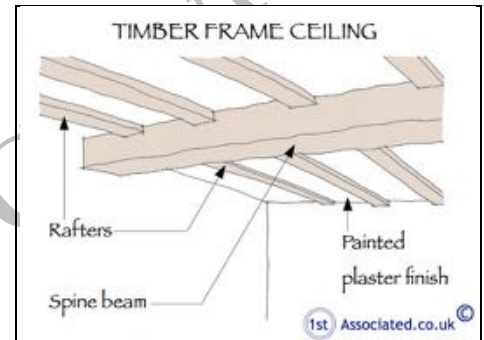


## CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

### Ceilings

A spine beam is visible on the ground floor. Whilst this is a very traditional way of building a ceiling/floor it does have very modern joist hangers which just about sums up the timber in this building. It seems to be a contradiction of old and new work and needs further investigation.



Timber frame ceiling



Beams on ground floor rear right room



Modern joist hangers



Purlin within front left store on first floor

Where the ceilings are finished in the building we believe they are a mixture of lath and plaster and modern plasterboard.

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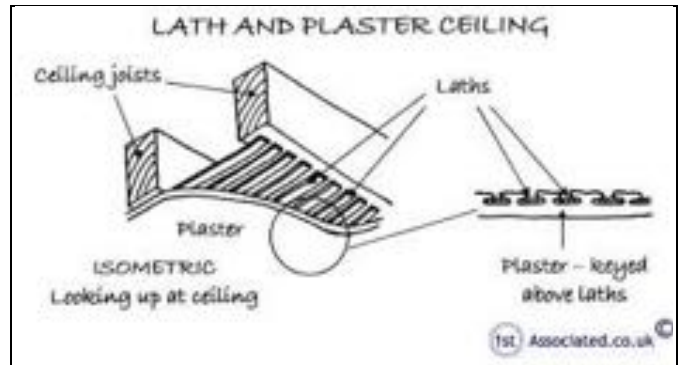


### Lath and Plaster Defined

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

### 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.



Lath and plaster ceiling

## **Internal Walls and Partitions**

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

## **Perimeter Walls**

The perimeter walls have a lime plaster finish that has dampness in it.

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

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

## **Plaster lost its key**

In many areas' the plaster is crumbling away from the wall where it has lost its key. It will ultimately need re-plastering. We find that plasterers tend to want to re-plaster everything, we believe in this instance there will be an opportunity to actually save some of the older plaster so our over-riding comment is when you are looking at the walls and taking the paper off is to carry it out slowly and



Modern plaster repair

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delicately to save as much of the plaster as possible. We can however see some areas where a modern plaster has already been used.

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

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

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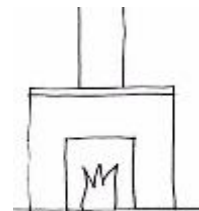
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## **CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES**



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

The chimney breasts are located to the left-hand side (all directions given as you face the front of the property). Externally the chimney is in poor condition and has a tree growing from it. No-one is living in the property therefore no chimneys were in use at the time of our survey.



Fireplace at rear left bedroom

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We assume you will be looking to open up the chimney again, in which case it needs to be swept and checked that a lining is in place and working satisfactorily.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £500 - £1,000 to put a new lining in, maybe more depending upon the condition of the chimney; quotations required.

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

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

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

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

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## **FLOORS**



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

### **Ground Floor**

The floors felt solid under foot so we have assumed that they are constructed in concrete. Where we pulled back the carpet we could see a concrete section in the rear right room.



Concrete floor

### **Tile on earth to kitchen**

The kitchen had a tiled floor which may be tiles onto a screed or onto earth. There is also a brick floor in the services room which we believe will be onto earth as well. Both of these areas will tend to get damp during the wetter months, equally they will dry as opposed to the concrete floor which will tend to stay damp even during warmer months.



Brick floor in services room

### **Wooden floor to rear left room**

The wooden floor in the rear left room intrigues us as to what is underneath this, whether it is battens onto concrete or onto a timber floor. It may be worth opening up a section of this to check.

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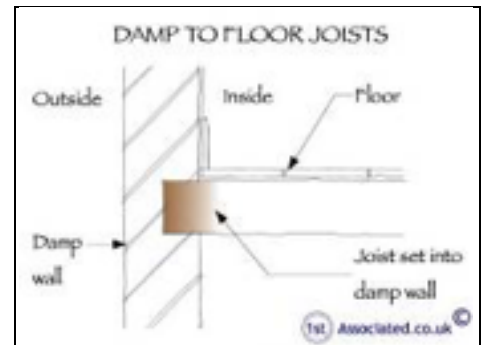
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## **First Floor**

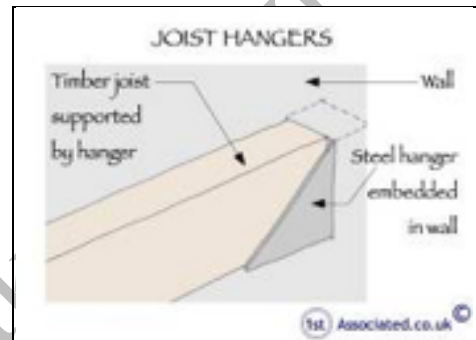
We have assumed that the first-floor construction is joist and floorboards with embedded timbers and joist hangers. As mentioned this first floor/ceiling is a contradiction of a mixture of old and new timber techniques.



Embedded timbers



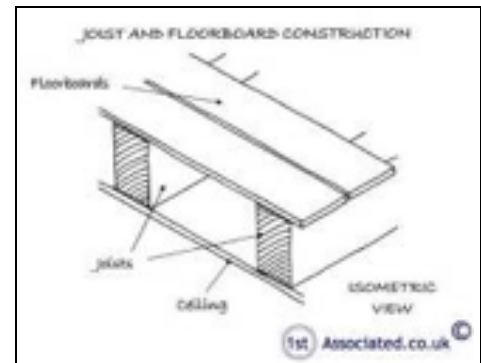
Timber joist hangers to support floor



Joist hangers

### Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



Joist and floorboards

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary with regards to deflection.

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

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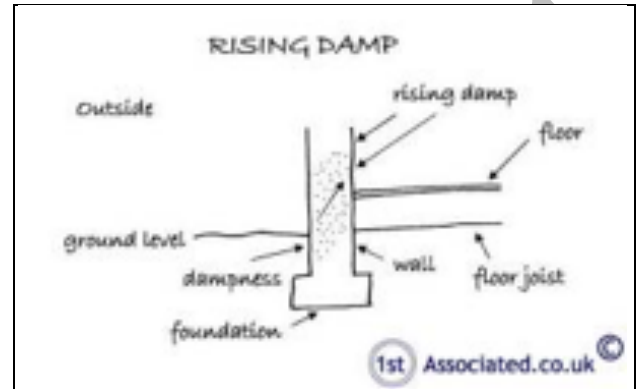
## **DAMPNESS**

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



### **Rising Damp**

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



Rising damp

A visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we have found significant rising damp.

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



Rising damp



High damp meter reading of 101

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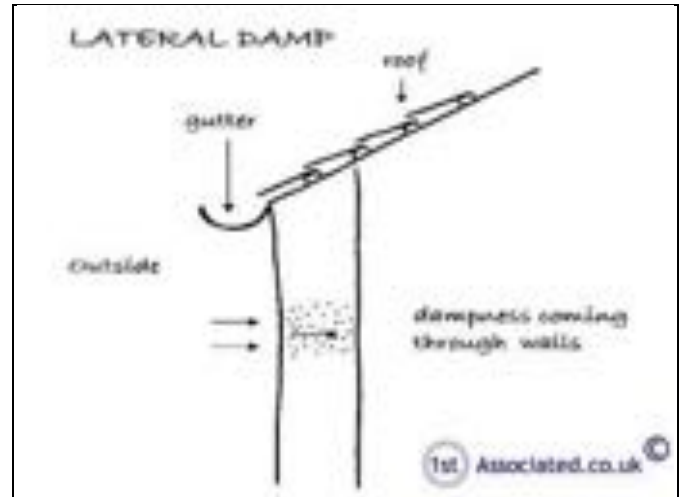
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## Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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



Lateral damp

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

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

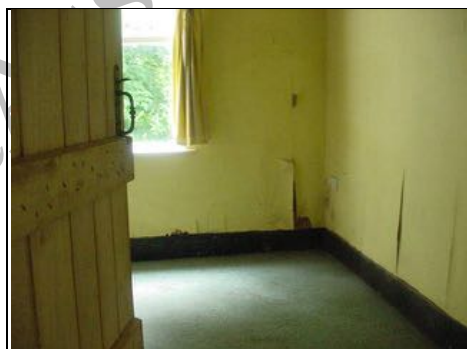


High damp meter readings between 80 to 100 (normally 30-60)

## Condensation/black mould

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

At the time of the inspection there were signs of condensation/black mould in the rear right room and the left room. The improvements that we have mentioned will help considerably.



Black mould in rear right room



Black mould

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Of course it depends upon how you utilise the building. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating, cooling and ventilation of properties and opening windows to air the property regularly. One of the advantages you will have is that you will have windows that can be opened and you will be starting to get the building to breathe which means it can get rid of any humidity on its own that you create.

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

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

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

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would anticipate costs between £250 - £500 per extract fan depending upon the wiring required; quotations required.

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

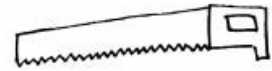
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## **INTERNAL JOINERY**



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

### **Doors**

The property has ledge doors.



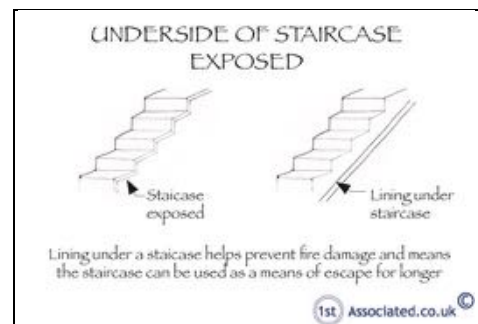
Ledge doors

### **Staircase**

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



Stairs not lined



Underside of staircase exposed

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## **Kitchen**

We found the kitchen in below average condition. The worktop is worn, we believe this could be replaced and perhaps the doors and have a kitchen that is useable until you decide to do the kitchen extension. The barn could even be converted into a living area to rent out/use for friends, relatives, etc.



Worn out worktop in kitchen

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

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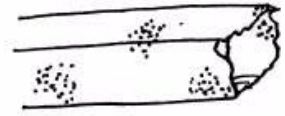
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## **TIMBER DEFECTS**



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

### **Dry Rot**

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

We have not visually seen any significant dry rot during the course of our inspection. We would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had a limited view of the roof particularly the left side. It may be possible there is some, although this is unlikely.

### **Wet Rot**

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

We noted lots of wet rot! For example, to the cladding to the porch and barn and the windows, the window frames were coming completely away. There is soft rot to the sole plate and the timber frame it is built upon. There is a lot of repair work required, in some areas it would be more economical to replace such as the windows for example as they were never a particularly good quality.

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



Rot to sills



Cladding to porch has holes and wet rot

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## Woodworm



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

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the roof we found visual signs of significant woodworm activity or woodworm.

In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection is usually restricted by insulation covering some of the timbers and general stored items in the roof, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings.

We would comment in this instance that there looks to be frass onto the board which we did not see at the time of our inspection; we have only noticed this on the photographs however photographs can be deceptive with the way light is thrown upon them.



Woodworm



Frass?

### Frass defined

The chewed up sawdust that the beetle leaves behind. A light coloured dust and a light coloured hole indicates this is relatively recent. Obviously if it is a darker coloured frass, or darker coloured hole, it means it is older and the woodworm may have gone.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to monitor the roof and put some woodworm traps in there. We believe a general improvement in the environment should help. If you wish to be one hundred percent certain that there is no woodworm the only way would be to check the property when is emptied of insulation ideally during the spring when we would be happy to return if you telephone our office.

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

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

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## INTERNAL DECORATIONS

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



Internal decorations are generally very colourful from the lime green of the kitchen to the yellow of the rear right dining room to the purples of the lounge area. The plaster is deteriorating. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary as to how to repair this prior to redecorating.



Lime green of kitchen



Purple of lounge

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

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## WELLS



*In older properties, it is very common to have a well, either within the bounds of the property or a shared well.*

We would expect a property like this to have a well somewhere around the property, we were unable to find one.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal Advisor to specifically ask where the well is.

Finally, all older properties would have had a water supply nearby often a well. Where we have not found a well it may be because the well has been filled in many years ago, or built over when amending or extending the property.

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## THERMAL EFFICIENCY



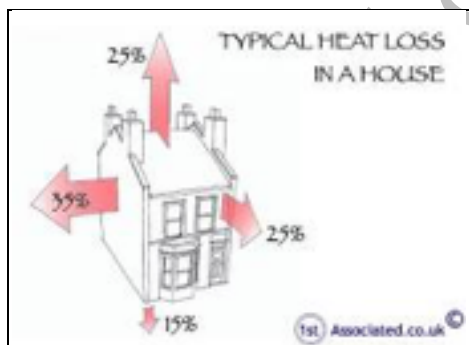
*Up until the mid 1940s we did not really consider insulation in properties, for example it was only in the 1960s that we started putting insulation in the roof and then it was about 50mm, in the 1970s this was upgraded to 100mm. Then we started to think about double glazing and cavity wall insulation.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

### General

Older properties will not be as thermal efficient as a modern property.

### Roofs

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 300mm. In this instance, there is 200mm to 300mm.



Typical heat loss



Mass of insulation

### Walls

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

As the building is not listed you could in theory add an external insulation layer around it however you would then lose a lot of the character of the property.

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## Windows

The windows are in poor condition and will have next to no thermal properties.

## Services

There is an oil boiler located in the Services Room. If you could obtain any records with regards to bills this would be interesting and give an indication as to your energy bills. 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 slightly below average compared with what we typically see. Please note we have not seen the Energy Performance Certificate.

Further information can be obtained with regard to energy saving via the Internet on the following pages:

*HTTP//www.est.org.uk, which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.*

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

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

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

*SPAB (Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings are researching how best to insulate older properties and it is worth checking their website for the latest information at [www.SPAB.org](http://www.SPAB.org)*

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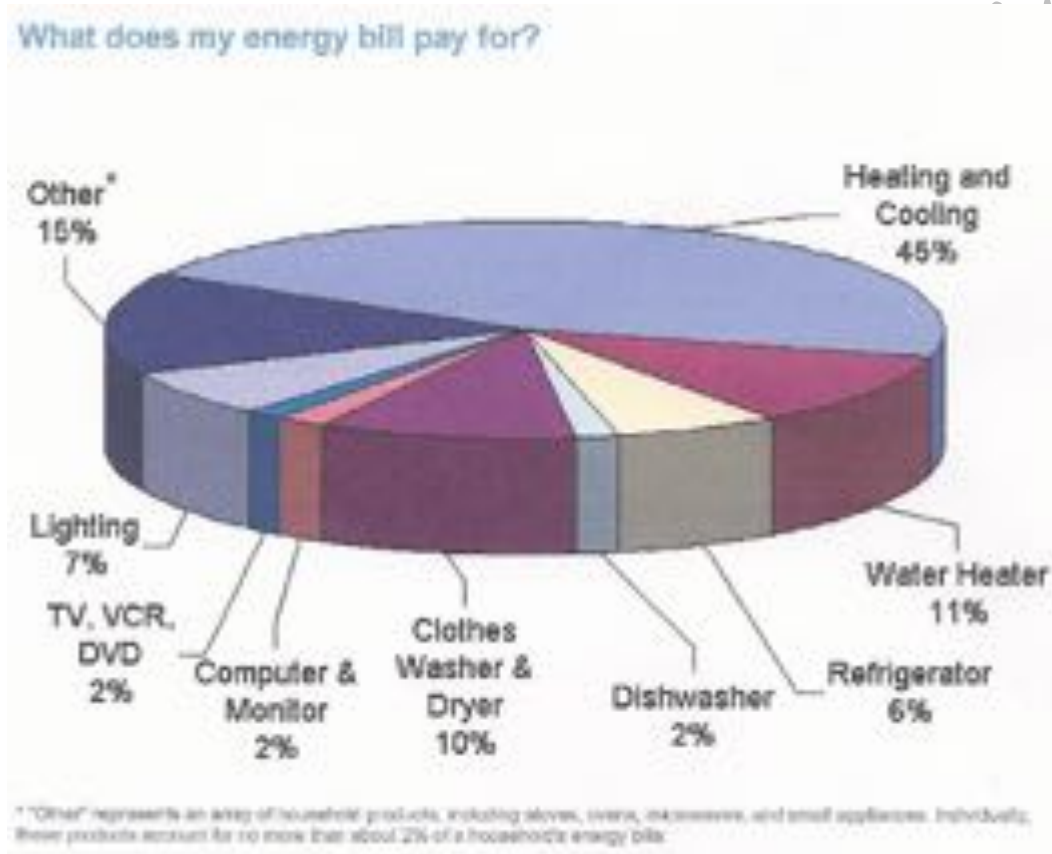
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## HIPs

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

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



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## OTHER MATTERS



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

### Security

We can see a box to the front of the property. We can only assume that a security system has been installed and we are not sure whether it is working or not, there were cameras and warnings. You need to make further enquiries.



ADT alarm system



Alarm



Security warning to barn

A good alarm system should not only help reduce break-ins but also help reduce your insurance. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Further information should be obtained from the vendor and the installer.

### Fire / Smoke Alarms

No 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 that is difficult, as it would mean having surface mounted wires or cutting wiring into the plaster.

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

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of work to the property you could hard wire an alarm system and security camera to ensure the property is secure when you are away.

### **Insurance**

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

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

### **Asbestos**

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos.

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

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

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

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## **SERVICES**

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

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

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# ELECTRICITY



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

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

## Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the Services cupboard off the barn. The fuse board looked more modern than we were expecting. It looks like it has been upgraded relatively recently (last ten to twenty years). Some of the switch points were fairly new. However, we do have concerns there is older wiring in the property. We really do not think it is worth the risk of carrying out all the refurbishment work you are going to do without having a test and report on the electrics and having it upgraded with such things as extra socket points, etc.



Fuse Board

## Earth Test

We usually carry out an earth test in the kitchen area to the socket point that is normally used for the kettle. In this case the electrics were switched off therefore we were unable to test.



Earth test

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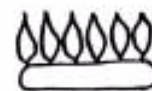


**ACTION REQUIRED:** Due to the amount of work you are carrying out we believe it is worth having the electrics checked and as the property is changing occupancy an Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) test and report and any recommendations should be carried out by a NICEIC registered, or equivalent, approved electrical contractor or similarly approved.

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

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

## OIL



All appliances, pipework and flues should be subject to an annual service by a competent OFTEC registered engineer. 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.

### Oil Tanks

We were pleased to see that the oil tanks are plastic. These usually replace the older metal tanks that can rust and they typically have a double lining, meaning that if they leak they leak into the outer lining.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal Advisor needs to check and confirm whether there is any guarantee or warranty available with the tank.



Oil tank near parking area

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## **PLUMBING AND HEATING**



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

### **Water Supply**

We noted that there was a stopcock within the services room however as the owner was not present we could not ask our usual questions.

The stopcock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness.



Water supply

### **Water Pressure**

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

### **Cold Water Cistern**

We have not found a water tank. We can only assume that the water is directly fed to the taps. The original idea behind a water tank was to help water pressure and to give an emergency supply of water.

### **Plumbing**

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

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## **Heating**

There is a floor mounted boiler located in the Services cupboard off the barn within the main house. It would be great if the boiler was working; you need to have it checked or ask the estate agents/existing owners to switch the heating on.



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**

There was no owner / occupier at the property and therefore we do not turn the heating on in case there is a problem with it.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend you return to the property with the estate agent to turn the heating on to ensure it is working.

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

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

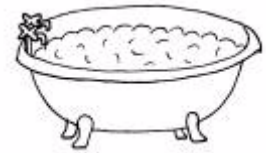
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## **BATHROOM**



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

### **Bathroom**

The property has a three-piece bathroom suite, consisting of we believe a cast iron bath, wash hand basin and WC, which looks in average condition.



Cast iron bath

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

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## MAIN DRAINS



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

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

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



Running tap

### 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.*

### No Manholes Found

In older properties, often there were no manholes. Drainage was a relatively new invention that has been added at a later date.

Manholes are used where there is a change in direction of pipes or new pipes join the main run. It is therefore a good location for clearing any blockages. In this case, we were unable to see any manholes.

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

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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### Manholes Defined

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

### **Inspection Chamber / Manhole One**

We did not lift the manhole cover therefore are unable to comment.



Drain we didn't lift

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. We noted that some of the downpipes discharge against the building and some of them discharge into gullies. In this type of building it is likely to be discharged onto the ground, possibly into the main drains.

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

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

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## **OUTSIDE AREAS**

### **PARKING**



There are at least two spaces to park on. We would comment the road was busier than we expected so it is worth your legal advisor checking and confirming if there is any major development going to go on in the area.

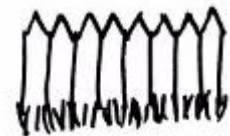


Parking

### **Access Road**

Your legal advisor to check who is responsible and liable for the road and if there is a shared cost to maintain it such as a sinking fund as your property is worthless without having an access to it.

### **EXTERNAL**



### **Rear Garden**

There are gardens surrounding the property and we believe there is some acreage with it. Your legal advisor needs to confirm exactly what land is included. Once you finish work on the house you may wish to secure the garden area, etc better. Please see our comments with regards to cutting back the trees.

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Garden to left



Gate and fence to left



Garden behind house

We are finding decking is becoming slippery over the years when not regularly maintained and can be an ideal space for living under for wildlife.



Decking



Old barbeque



Area where dog kennels were

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of a few hundred pounds to remove the decking and make good; quotations required.

### **Boundaries**

Often with older properties the boundaries are subject to negotiation and local practice. You do need to make sure that your solicitor is aware of the complications that can occur with older property boundaries and ensure that your deeds accurately mark where your land is.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal adviser to check whose boundary is whose.

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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**

In this case, the neighbours were quite a distance away so we have not actually checked on them, however it is well worth visiting them to see if there are any niggling problems.

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## **POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

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

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- j) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.
- k) Confirm from enquiries that no underground tunnels, wells, sewers, gases, mining, minerals, site reclamation/contamination etc., exist, have existed or are likely to exist beneath the curtilage of the site upon which the property stands and which could affect the quiet enjoyment, safety or stability of the property, outbuildings or surrounding areas.
- l) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.
- m) Any outstanding Party Wall Notice or the knowledge that any are about to be served.
- n) Most Legal advisors will recommend an Environmental report 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 Environmental reports 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 Environmental reports or similar general reports on the environment please see our article link on the [www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk) Home Page.

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

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

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

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

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XXXX, Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire WR15 XXX

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

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

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

For and on Behalf of  
XXX Limited  
Independent Chartered Surveyors  
XXX

**This Report is dated: XXXX**

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## **REFERENCES**

The repair and maintenance of houses

*Published by Estates Gazette Limited*

Life expectancies of building components

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

Surveying buildings

*By Malcolm Hollis*

*Published by Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Books.*

House Builders Bible

*By Mark Brinkley*

*Published by Burlington Press*

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## **LIMITATIONS**

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

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

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

## **ENGLISH LAW**

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

## **SOLE USE**

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

## **APPROVALS/GUARANTEES**

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

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

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## **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 dry at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

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

## **NOT LOCAL**

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

## **EMPTY PROPERTY**

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

## **JAPANESE KNOTWEED**

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

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

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## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

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

- 1) We did not have a full view of the roof due to the insulation covering the ceiling joists and general configuration of the roof. We could not see the left side very well.
- 2) We did not open up the walls as we could not see a way of doing this without causing damage.
- 3) We did not open up the ground floor or the first floor as we could not see a way to do it without causing damage.
- 4) The property was empty we did not have the benefit of talking to the owners or them answering our usual question and answers.

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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## APPENDICES

1. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
2. Information on the Property Market
3. Article - French Drain
4. Article - Solar The Options
5. Article - Energy Efficiency, have we got it all Wrong?

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

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

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

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

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## **INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# **French Drain**

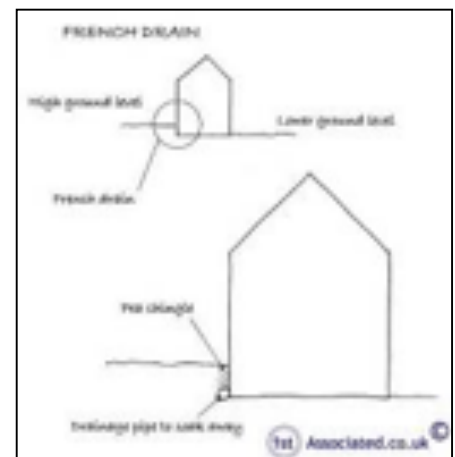
## **Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem**

We are finding where we are asked to look at damp walls and damp floors or damp problems in general that commonly it is because the external ground level is higher than the internal ground level, or airbricks have been blocked, or simply paving slabs, decking or briquettes have been used to form a patio area. This then discharges any rainwater against the building. Quite often the solution is to add a French drain.

Whilst French drains are quite simple and are basically nothing more than trenches filled with gravel, although there is a bit more to them, as we will explain, they are almost a D.I.Y. job for most people and they are relatively easy to install and are low cost. However, you do need some care and attention, otherwise you can install what we have heard referred to, as the French pond.

## **What use is a French drain?**

A French drain is a trench, the width of approximately six inches or 300 millimetres wide, or the width of your spade, and is approximately twice the depth, i.e. 12 inches or 300 millimetres. In most cases this will suffice, however, where there is a great deal of ground water you may wish to make the trench wider and deeper.



The French drain acts as an area where water soaks away quickly. We often recommend them close to building, but not next to the building, as this helps reduce the ground level and/or take any water that is directed at that area away. For example, where a patio has been put in place which aims any rainwater at part of the wall. As mentioned, whilst a French drain is a D.I.Y. job, it does need some understanding of how it works.

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### **French drains must be on a slope**

The piping that goes at the base of a French drain should be perforated or, as we did years ago for land drains, there should be gaps between each pipe. It should be set onto a bed of firm ground and the pipes should on a fall to the drain. Whilst you should be able to ensure there is enough fall by sight, we also like the idea of rolling a marble from one end to the other.

You will then need to put the pipes down, fill the trench with half an inch, to an inch, of good sized gravel. You can leave it at that, or in addition you can cover with sand and then turf over. This is how a basic French drain is carried out.

### **The French drain system that we would recommend**

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

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

### **The French pond!**

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

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## **Solar The Options**

### **Solar the Options**

The aim of the website articles are to attract internet traffic and therefore it is written slightly differently to normal report formats where we end up repeating sections several times.



The sun is almost an endless supply of energy unlike fossil fuels that we are depleting at an incredible rate. We have approximately 30-40 years of fossil fuels remaining assuming that we keep our consumption of 17 million barrels each day.

Most people are aware of solar panels which can be fitted to generate energy but it can take some time for the energy saved to payback the initial cost of installing them. But how many people consider how they can use the sun to heat their homes for free through design.

Most of us have access to some level of solar energy, it is how we harness this that is the question.

We have divided this into two areas passive solar and active solar.

### **Passive solar**

When buying a new home do you consider its orientation? South facing gardens are desirable as they will get the most sun during the day when you want to use them. Living spaces with south facing windows will also benefit from the sun entering and warming the space in the winter months. This is less important for kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms which are used less often or mostly in the mornings and evenings. North facing living areas will be cooler.



Houses could also be extended with a conservatory or sunspace but again these should ideally be orientated south. Sun enters the space and heats it up during the day if you use

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materials with good thermal mass the heat will be absorbed and slowly released when the sun goes down. There should be some kind of thermal separation between the conservatory/sunspace and the main heated house so that when there is no sun, heat is not lost through the large areas of glazing. It is an absolute environmental taboo to heat a sunspace as glass has poor insulating properties and you are essentially wasting heat. Care should also be taken to avoid overheating during summer months. This is why sunspaces are preferred nowadays to conservatories which tend to get too hot in summer. Sunspaces have a solid roof and overhang to block out the high summer sun. In the winter when you want the free heat, the sun is lower and can still enter.

## **Orientations of the Sun**

This starts with the very basics or orientating the property towards the sun and having larger windows in the side which can gain from the sun and smaller in the side that does not. Also, the use of the right type of glass to maximise this is important as is making sure there is the right amount of ventilation in it to circulate air throughout the property. Passive solar engineering can take the form of glazed porch/entrance hallway to have a large number of glazed windows on the side of the property.

## **Active Solar**

This ranges from standard solar panels to modern photovoltaic PV panels to new developments such as where the solar panels follow the path of the sun to maximise the energy they receive to concentrated PV systems where what we understand is a dish with mirrors.



Go to the [BritishEco.latestprojects.info](http://BritishEco.latestprojects.info) website and get the 20 things you must know about solar PV systems before you buy.

Concentrated solar power CSP and uses lenses or mirrors to concentrate a large area of sun for a small area, it is converted into heat which drives a heat engine, usually a steam turbine. This should not be confused with concentrated photovoltaic which is CPV, this focuses a large amount of sunlight onto a small area of the solar PV to generate electricity and is a much cheaper method and maybe the way forward.

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There are two main types of active solar systems; solar thermal and photovoltaics. Solar thermal uses the heat from the sun to heat water and photovoltaics generate electricity. Both types of panel can be retrofitted on an existing home, although solar thermal requires a hot water cylinder and will not work with gas condensing boilers. Panels can also be integrated into the roof or fitted as tiles which is more visually attractive but might be more feasible for new build projects.

Since the government introduced the feed-in tariff, photovoltaic panels have become more desirable as energy companies will pay the home owner a tariff for the amount of electricity they generate and also for any surplus electricity which is fed back to the grid. This means that the payback period is now shorter. To give you an idea, I spoke to someone recently who had fitted 2kWp of PV on the roof of their home and had just received their first tariff payment of £64 for 11 weeks generation and supply. There are different types of PV panel monocrystalline is more efficient so you need a smaller panel to generate as much electricity as a less efficient panel, however these tend to be more expensive also so it is worth doing your research or seeking guidance from an expert.

PV systems which track the sun tend to be used more in commercial projects but are a way of getting the optimum performance from panels which are most efficient when facing south and lose some efficiency as the sun moves from the east and to the west. Technology is constantly progressing and new products coming on to the market (such as PV film), but to qualify for the feed-in tariff the system must be accredited under the microgeneration certification scheme. This can be a lengthy process for manufacturers so newer products may not yet be accredited and this should be checked. The installer must also be accredited.

## **Innovations in Solar Technology**

David Faiman working with Zenith Solar

Degree from University of London and research at Oxford University . He is professor at Ben-Gurion and lives in a passive solar house (of course) in Sde Boker , Israel where all its heating is taken care of by the sun.

website: [zenithsolar.com](http://zenithsolar.com)

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They have produced a system which they quote is 75% efficient and has a solar collector of 11m<sup>2</sup> with 1200 flat facets of thin mirrors which concentrate solar radiation onto a single 100cm receiver which converts the solar radiation into electricity and thermal energy by means of high performance photovoltaic cells which is then fed to the Grid via a DC-AC adapter for its use.

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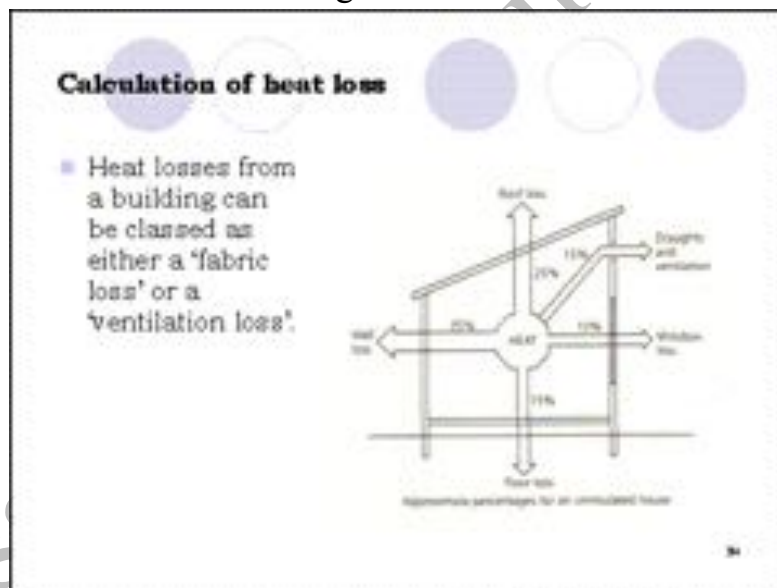


## Energy Efficiency, have we got it all Wrong?

Energy used to be cheap in the 1970s we are now forever being told by the utility companies that the only way is up, isn't it interesting how they always put their prices up before winter?

Since the oil crisis in the 1970s we have focussed on more and more energy efficient properties and it is probably fair to say the government has via Building Regulations with its concerns with climate change, the earth's resources and sustainability having a massive impact on how we construct our buildings to get a better thermal efficiency. But have we been steered in the right direction by the government?

### Constructing without insulation



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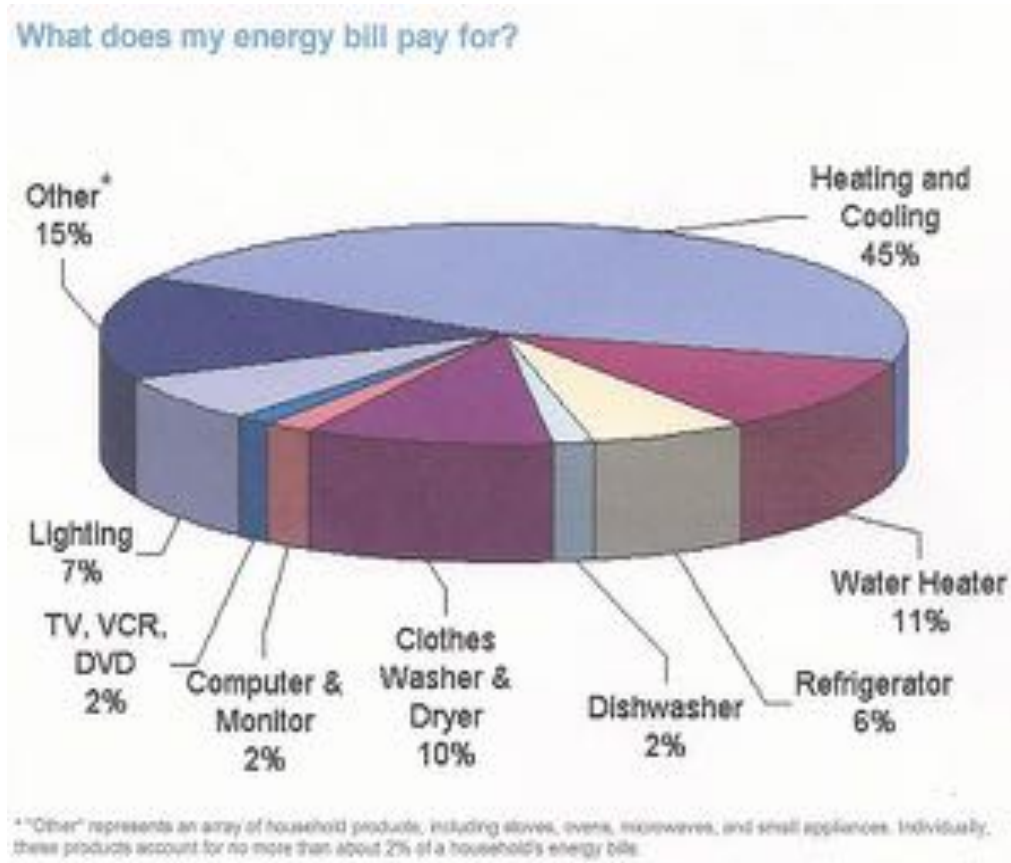
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It could be argued that we have always constructed with insulation although it has not been the primary purpose of the material. We look at the different eras of property:- Tudor/Elizabethan/Jacobean vernacular architecture was very much about building from the local material which were readily available as we did not have transport system to move materials miles, we did in cases where major buildings were built such as castles and churches. Materials were transported partly for a function reason and partly for a status reason particularly stone. However, the majority of buildings were built from local materials which were normally timber or rubble, interestingly these materials had thermal mass properties which we will discuss in detail later on.

Georgian/Regency the large six by six buildings with sliding sash windows and grand entrances and doors with decorative fan lights over the top. These were brick or stone and gave a very palacious feel, the ceilings were becoming more commonplace which added insulation, heating was via an open fire and lighting via gas or oil or candle light we started to move towards buildings we would recognise being commonly available today. Victorian/Edwardian there are still a massive amount of these available today, it was the start of the transport era with canals, railway and the Industrial Revolution. The standard

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types of housing had slate roofs, cast iron gutters, Flemish Bond brickwork, sliding sash windows, single glazed but in two larger panes. Local vernacular varieties for buildings such as the use of chalk and flint in the Chiltern area, use of sandstone known as carr stone in the Norfolk area, use of Jurassic limestone in Oxford, Cambridge, York and Edinburgh and granite being used in the West Country still nevertheless these houses consisted of settlers from the weather, heating via real coal fires in each of the rooms and commonly were relatively small inside often 12 foot square/ 3.65m<sup>2</sup>. Again, the vast majority of houses used thermal mass of the materials for the way heat was retained. The landlords of the day often associated with providing housing for industry such as mills, mining etc... Remember this was the age of drainage being the latest mod con for the common man. War Years thought about some building but our efforts were elsewhere, at the end of the war we looked a non-traditional factory type buildings particularly for Local Authority housing. Many of the war factories were then being taken up by the production of building systems. Whilst they looked at building differently in the mass production in the need to house many people coming back from the war and re- house those that had been left with bomb damaged buildings and those from the general slums and squalors. Proportionally they stayed fairly similar to Victorian/Edwardian houses and the focus was very much on speed with new materials being introduced. This introduction of new materials was interesting as this was the first time they had the capacity to draw materials from almost anywhere subject to the economics of it all. This resulted in non-traditional housing which used lighter weight materials such as cladding panels be it concrete or metal. These properties did not tend to have the thermal mass of properties of years gone by and as a result often suffered from being cold such as the aptly named Airy houses which were actually named after a Minister that was involved in them gaining permission but probably was more apt as the air just seemed to pass through them and this also resulted in condensation problems where as we got the benefit of central heating systems the warm environment started to lead us towards having condensation issues.

Modern 1970s onwards thermal efficiency started to be thought about and the use of insulation in roofs, from memory the first insulation that was used was accidental as it was the wood cuttings left from the roof, the first intentional use of insulation was probably the polystyrene beads insulation was added to with various ranges of fibreglass insulation which ranged from the very itchy to itchy!! It is only more recently with regard to roofs the natural fibre insulation and bagged fibreglass insulation (why did we not think of this before). In some cases, close celled insulation board such as those used by Kingspan and Celotex are now being used.

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## The Milton Keynes Energy World Experiment is still going on

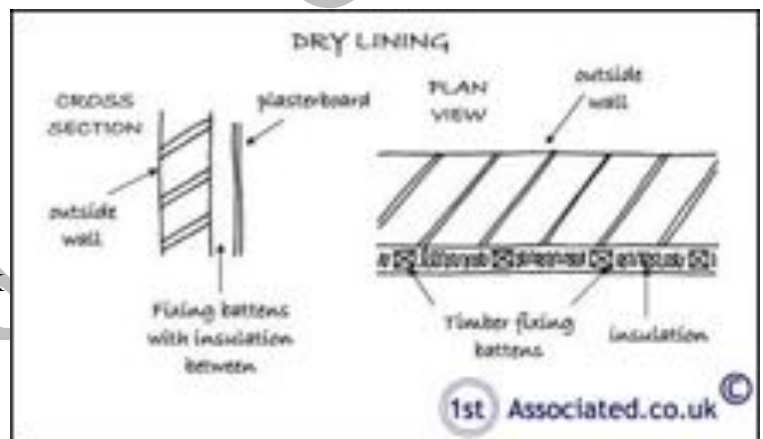
We refer you to our article with regard to Energy World that was set up in Milton Keynes in 1986 and ultimately ended up as the SAP rating that we now use on all properties throughout the UK when they are sold or rented out. In normal market conditions, they give advice as to how to improve energy efficiency, whether anyone ever carries them out is debatable! A view has been aired that they are a waste of time and certainly do not help the sales process.

The basis of our thoughts come from if a cavity wall is such a good idea for walls why are not we doing a similar thing for floors and roofs or are we just in a different format?

### Walls and insulation through the years

Following the war it became more common to build with cavity wall construction originally we believe that the main thing was to stop dampness penetration however it did have the added benefit of a gap between the brick outer and the brick inner wall. As time progressed the brick inner wall with tie bars remained although they had gone

from being a corrosive metal to being a stainless steel or galvanised metal and today a plastic wall ties are used in a block work wall. The stages in cavity wall development meant that the cavity was partially filled with the idea that the air gap allowed air to convect around within it with the inner wall being a block with a better thermal quality than the original brick and of course as with many things in the building industry being driven by cost. Bigger blocks and more dense blocks were used and eventually dry lining internally. None of these had the high levels of mass that an older solid brick wall would have or indeed a stone wall as the insulation was not from a mass of brickwork or blockwork as it was in two separate leaves. From our understanding the insulation reflects back the heat rather than absorbing it in a mass wall construction and then giving it back out.



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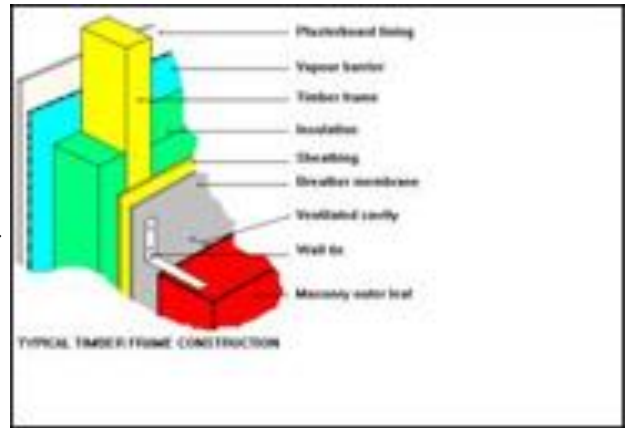
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Whilst on the outside the walls look quite similar apart from the brick course change or the stonework coursing has remained the same there is a cavity hidden behind this and although modern block wall behind this possibly dry lined. This is the construction sandwich that we would term light weight but not as light weight as the industrial non-traditional methods that were used post the war but not as light weight as modern



timber frame construction which is what the next generation of houses were built to with the brick outer face, cavity wall with insulation and a timber studwork inner face. In addition to this type of wall there is one other type of wall that has been developed which is a hybrid this is where it was built as a cavity wall from the war years onwards but the cavity was not filled. It has very much been the hard sell of the insulation industry and of government that cavity should be insulated indeed the government believe in giving incentives to filling in cavity with insulation. In older cavity built insulation scenarios it was very much the case that this meant the cavity was bridged and this could pass from one side to the other. More modern cavities were advised not to do this as the insulation material does not allow this but we have not had any personal experience of this.

### The insulation of roofs through the years

We still find a few roofs without any insulation at all, normally within leased properties such as public houses or older multi occupied houses such as the mansion houses of the 1920s to the 1940s or the Art Deco flats of the 1940s to the 1960s where no single person has taken ownership of such things as the roof space. However, the majority of houses we find have 150-200mm of roof insulation, sometimes it is a mix of insulation from the older almost felt like insulation or the small foam chippings we are coming across more and more the 270-300mm of insulation which we literally find very difficult to go in the roof as you cannot see the joists as the insulation is thicker than the joists which should come with a disclaimer that it is dangerous to walk in the roof. It is unfortunate that this depth of insulation can hide things such as woodworm and perhaps damp areas but is very much the norm. What we do find is that insulation in these roofs is very often blocked by the insulation with no plastic pre-formers at the perimeter eaves detail. Indeed, many have literally had insulation without any thought for ventilation of the property.

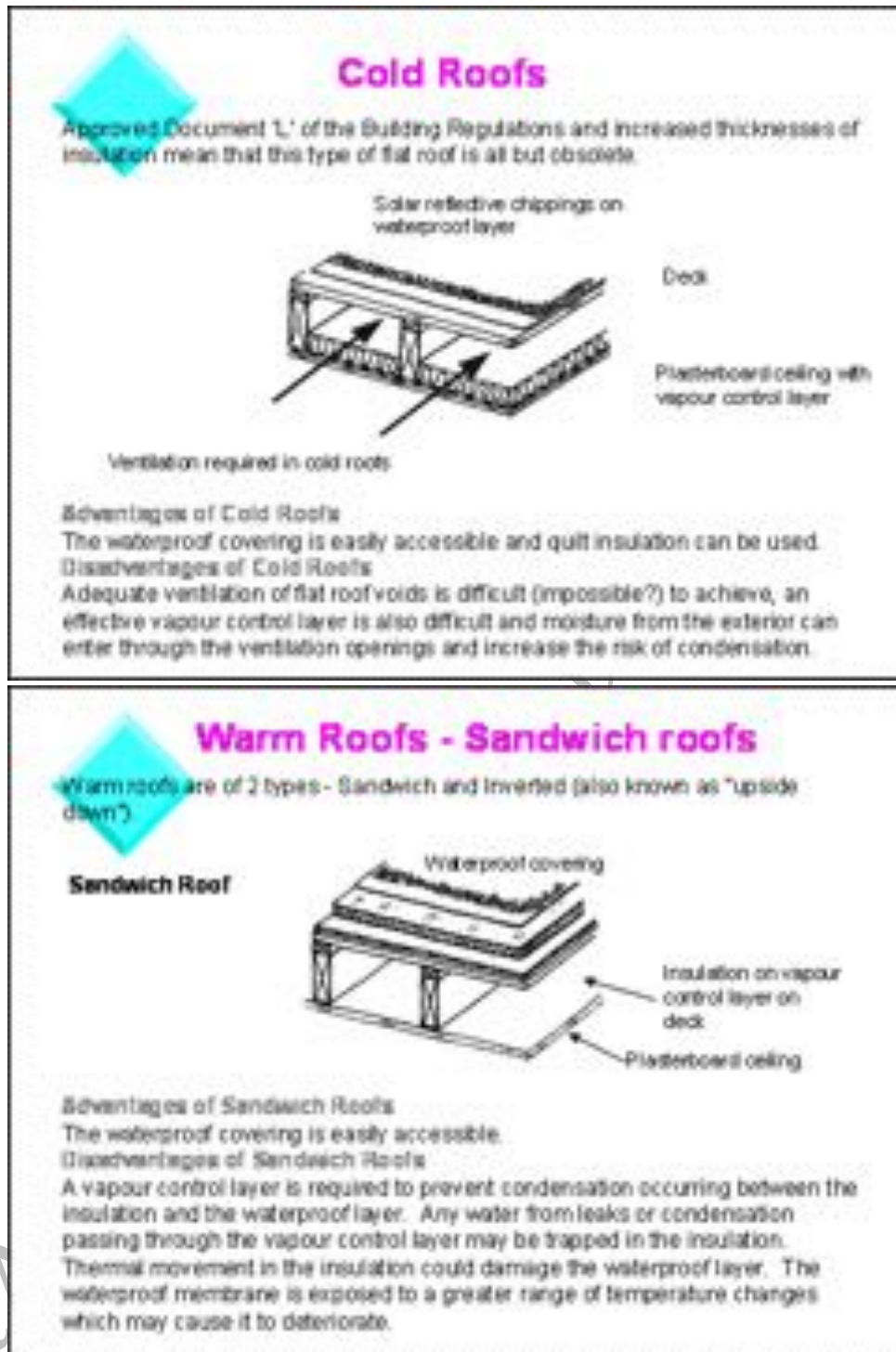
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## Floor Insulation

It is only in recent years that insulation has been in the floor has been added, we believe it is Building Regulation 1994.

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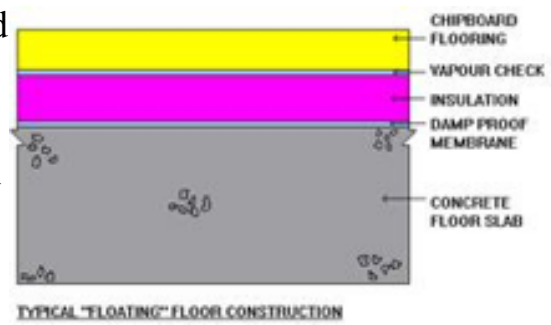
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All these insulation measures have been developed without thinking about thermal mass of the property too much. The advantage thermal mass gives is the fact that it soaks up excessive heat and gives it out over a period of time by this can mean over a year. Whilst it often means the pouring of large slabs concrete which many from a sustainable point of view would argue is not the concrete we should be using it does mean that we will be warm.



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