

# COMMERCIAL BUILDING SURVEY

XXXXXXXX

XXXXXX

XXXX



XXXXXX

Prepared by:

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS



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# **CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION  
REPORT FORMAT  
SYNOPSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

## **EXTERNAL**

CHIMNEY STACKS, FLUES  
ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS  
ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT SPACE  
GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES AND SOIL AND VENT PIPES  
EXTERNAL WALLS  
FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS  
EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

## **INTERNAL**

CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES  
CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES  
FLOORS  
DAMPNESS  
INTERNAL JOINERY  
TIMBER DEFECTS  
INTERNAL DECORATIONS  
THERMAL EFFICIENCY

## **OTHER MATTERS**

SERVICES

## **APPENDICES**

LIMITATIONS

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# REPORT FORMAT

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

## **GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

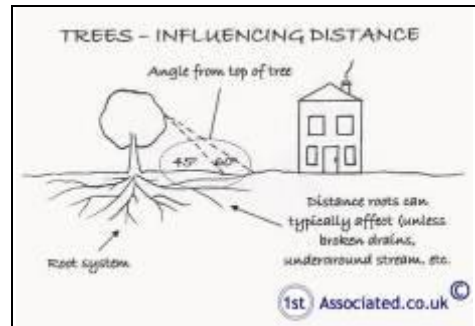
*This has been given in the survey where it is considered it will aid understanding of the issues, or be of interest. This is shown in "italics" for clarity.*

## **TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED**

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

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

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



Influencing distance of trees

## **ORIENTATION**

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

## **ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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

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## SYNOPSIS

### SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a predominantly two storey modern detached property with single storey extensions that has been extended and amended over the years. There is a balcony area to the front.

The property was originally we assume a family home which has been used in more recent times as a residential care home.

The entrance is to the left hand side (all directions given as you face the front of the property). The rear of the property where the access is and a few off road parking spaces. There are surrounding overgrown gardens.

We believe that the property was built in the 1960's/1970's and has been extended and amended several times since. If the exact 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](http://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.

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## EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view



Rear view



Balcony above lounge



Entrance middle left



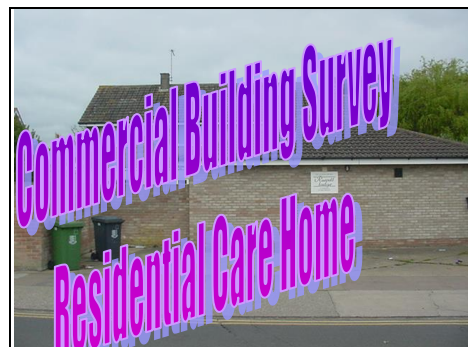
Left view



Rear left extension



Right view



Parking

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## **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

(All directions given as you face the property)

We have included a list of the facilities that we have viewed and there may be other areas. The following gives a general overview. These need to be checked and confirmed by your Legal Advisor.

### **Ground Floor – Care Home**

#### Left

- 1) Kitchen left middle
- 2) Bedroom eight left front
- 3) Internal bathroom left middle
- 4) Four store rooms rear left
- 5) Medical room
- 6) Bedrooms one, two and three left rear
- 7) Office left middle
- 8) Entrance lobby left middle

#### Right

- 9) Bedrooms four and five right rear
- 10) Bedrooms six and seven right front
- 11) Lounge front middle

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## **First Floor – Private living accommodation**

- 12) Office right front
- 13) Bedroom right rear
- 14) Lounge front left (with balcony)
- 15) Bathroom middle left
- 16) Bedroom rear left with en-suite
- 17) Bedroom rear middle
- 18) Bedroom rear right
- 19) Office right front

## **Outside Areas**

There are gardens to the front and rear of the property with access around the property. Parking to the rear for approximately four cars.

Your Legal Advisor needs to check and confirm what your legal rights are with regard to access and parking and permitted hours of work.

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# **INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS**

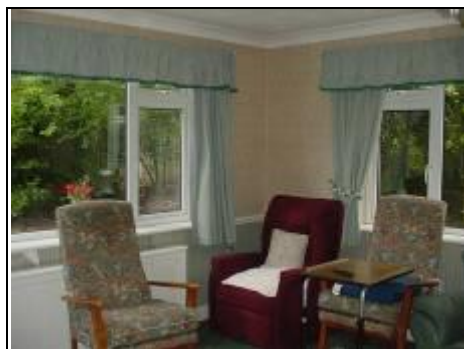
(All directions given as you face the property)

This is a photographic record of the property on the day we viewed the property.

## **Ground Floor**



Kitchen left middle



Lounge front



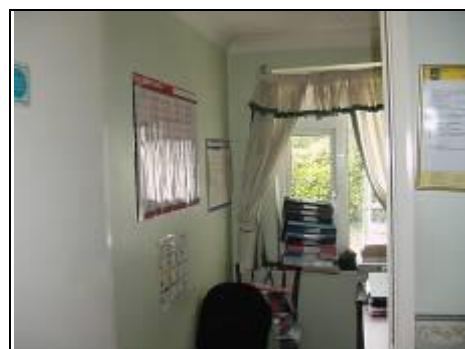
Bedroom eight left front



En-suite to Bedroom eight



Internal bathroom left middle



Office left middle

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**Ground Floor (cont'd)**



Store room one left rear



Store room two left rear



Store room three left rear



Store room four left rear



Entrance lobby left middle



Medical room left rear

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**Ground Floor (cont'd)**



Bedroom one left rear



En-suite to bedroom one



Bedroom two left rear



En-suite to bedroom two



Bedroom three left rear



En-suite to bedroom three

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**Ground Floor (cont'd)**



Bedroom four right rear



En-suite to bedroom four



Bedroom five right rear



En-suite to bedroom five



Bedroom six right front



En-suite to bedroom six

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**Ground Floor (cont'd)**



Bedroom seven right front



En-suite to bedroom seven



Lounge area



Lobby area far right

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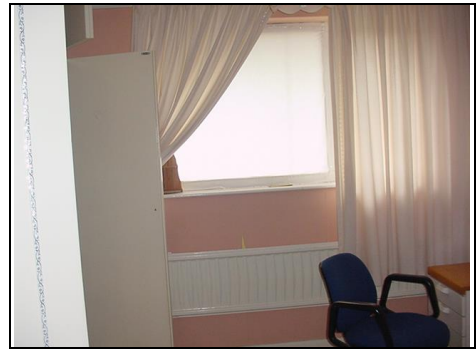
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**First Floor**



Office



Bedroom rear right



Bedroom rear middle



Bathroom



Bedroom left rear



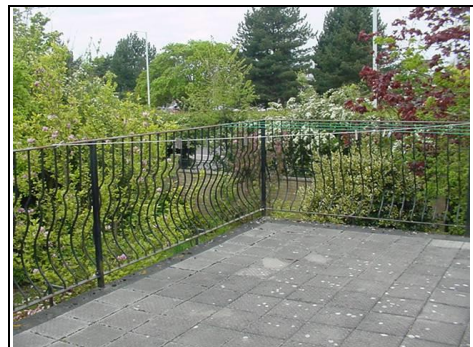
Cupboards in bedroom left rear



En-suite to bedroom left rear



Lounge leading onto balcony



Balcony

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## **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

### **External**

Chimneys:	Three brick chimneys Two to main building, one to right hand extension
Main Roof:	Pitched, clad with large interlocking concrete tiles
Main Roof Structure:	Cut timber roof
Extension roof structure:	Trussed roof to rear left extension Unable to access right side extension
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Internal (left side)
Walls:	Stretcher bond brickwork
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber /plastic/possibly overclad
Windows and Doors:	Plastic double glazed

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## Internal

Ceilings:	Plasterboard or proprietary material (assumed)
Perimeter Walls:	Blockwork with gypsum plaster (assumed)
Internal Walls	Mixture of solid and studwork (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Mixture of modern suspended timber floor and concrete (assumed)
First Floor:	Joist and floorboards/floorboard sheets onto joist hangers (all assumed)

## Services

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (assumed). We have not been provided with any test certificates or inspected at this point of time.

Heating:	There is a floor mounted boiler (no model name visible) located in the kitchen on the ground floor. Mixture of old and new radiators and covered radiators
Electrics:	The electrics are 1980's/1990's and are located in the corridor adjacent to the kitchen
Gas:	The consumer unit was located externally to the front left
Drainage:	The manholes are located three to the left and one to the front

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

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.

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 700 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 ‘Plus Points’, ‘Medium Priority’ and ‘High Priority’, to allow you to clarify and focus on exactly what the issues are.

This is a structural survey and not a check on the suitability of the property for a nursing home or a care home. We have not checked the adequacy of the en-suite shower rooms/bathrooms for residential care/nursing homes. We have however made some general comments with regard to the catering kitchen and standards that we would expect the Environmental health officer to require. We noted there was no kitchen on the first floor.

### **Plus Points**

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

- 1) The property has vacant possession.
- 2) The property has potential.

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

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## The Bad

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

### 1.0) Lightweight construction

One of the characteristics of this property is that it has a lightweight construction particularly to the original/main part of the building. This we believe is due to the building techniques where smaller sized timbers were used than traditionally would be which results in deflection to first floor level. In this particular case we can also feel the deflection to the ground floor timber floors. We can see in the roof space that the common rafters are smaller than what we would typically expect.

#### Common Rafters Defined

The rafters are the timbers, which form the slope to which the battens are secured and in turn the roof covering is also secured too.



Timbers in main roof



Close up of timbers



More typical timber thickness in the prefabricated truss roof to the rear left side single storey extension

**ACTION REQUIRED:** This is a characteristic that you need to understand and accept as part of this building as it is not possible, without partially rebuilding the property, to resolve the issues. To summarise the issues these could relate to a greater susceptibility to movement, deflection and noise transfer and limitations on how the property can be altered.

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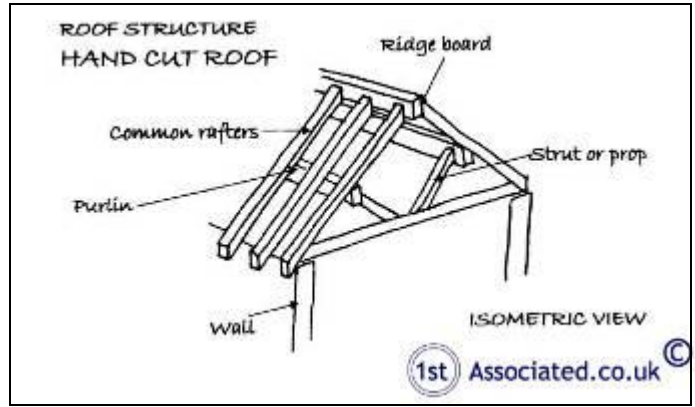
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**2.0) Main roof timbers**

We wish to reiterate this issue as it needs to be read in conjunction with the following comments. The main roof has a common rafter of about 75mm to 100mm (3 inches to 4 inches) when we would expect a deeper common rafter of 150mm plus.



Cut timber roof

Common Rafters Defined

The rafters are the timbers, which form the slope to which the battens are secured and in turn the roof covering is also secured too.

This needs to be considered a characteristic of this particular property. We sometimes come across what we term as lightweight construction properties from 1960's/1970's.

Please see the Roof Structure Section of this Report.



### 3.0) Cracking visible

We noted cracking to the right hand side areas of the property. This was in the form of predominantly raking cracks (diagonal cracks) and also some vertical cracks. We believe this is a result of the lightweight construction of the original property and the extensions that have been carried out together with some of the alterations.



Cracking to front middle

Some of the double glazed units were out of alignment which could relate to movement or it could relate to someone trying to break into the property.



Some double glazed units out of alignment

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



Cracking to rear right



It may be an optical illusion but it does look like there has been some movement to the left gable.

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Your legal advisor needs to legally confirm the above and ensure that this will limit your liability if there is any future movement in the property.



Hairline cracking

#### 4.0) Valley gutters and gutters and downpipes

##### 4.1) Valley gutters

There are a few valley gutters to the property; they need to be kept clean. For example the front valley gutter is covered with moss. We can also see that there is deteriorating felt and flashings have come loose and indeed we can see that they have been repaired many times.



Front valleys



Valley blocked with moss, etc



Lead falling off



Amateur repair

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#### 4.2) Gutters and downpipes blocked and overflowing

The gutters and downpipes have vegetation growing from them in some areas and generally need a clean.

##### Surrounding trees

We would also comment that there will generally be a fight against debris going into the gutters and downpipes due to the close proximity of many of the surrounding trees, some of which are in your garden and some of which are in adjoining properties gardens meaning you have limited control over them.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would 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. Regularly clean gutters.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds but it is high level work so may need high level access; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Gutters and Downpipes Section of this Report.



Vegetation growing out of gutters



Grass in gutters

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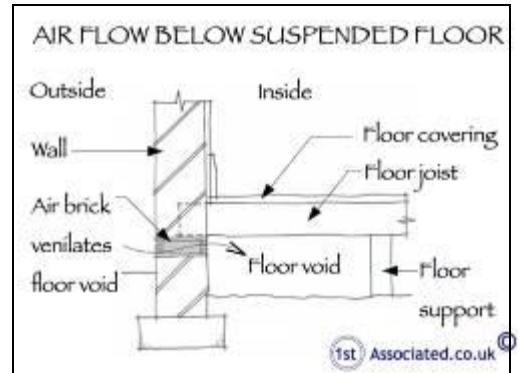
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## 5.0) Flooring

The property partly has a suspended timber floor, predominantly to the centre portion of the original property and to the rear left side. When you walk on the floor it feels lower underfoot and slightly reverberates. We recommend that you revisit and experience this once you have read the following.

We believe there is a concrete floor to the remainder of the floor but this may also be a suspended concrete floor, it is impossible to be 100% certain without opening up the floor. Suffice to say that the suspended timber floor being part of the floor is an unusual construction particularly the way it is configured, it is almost as if some of the floors started off as suspended timber floors and then have been filled in at a later date.



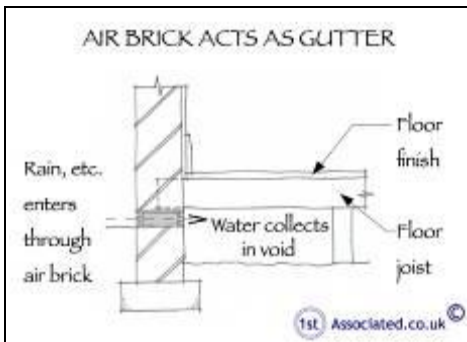
Suspended timber floor



Timber decking indicating a suspended timber floor

## 5.1) Airbricks acting as gutters

As the property has a suspended timber floor it needs an airflow underneath it to minimise wet rot, dry rot and woodworm. We noted airbricks, some of which looked to be very close to ground level and will be acting as gutters and need protecting.



Airbrick acting as gutter



Airbrick acting as gutter



Airbrick acts as gutter

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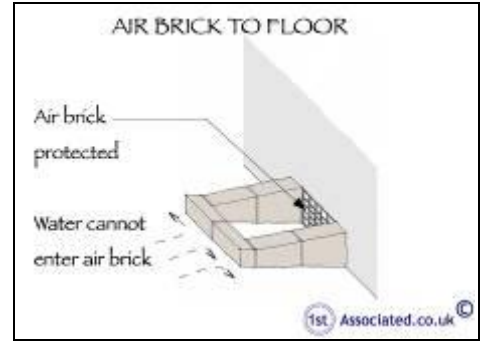
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**ACTION REQUIRED:** Open up the suspended floor to check its condition and also protect the airbricks.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds to open up the floor; we would open up as much of it as possible. Nominal cost to protect the airbricks. Ideally we would prefer to see a French drain. Please read on.



Protect airbrick

## 5.2) Slightly high ground level

As an aside, we noted that around the building in general there were some areas the soil is slightly high not giving the two courses of brick between the ground and the damp proof course.



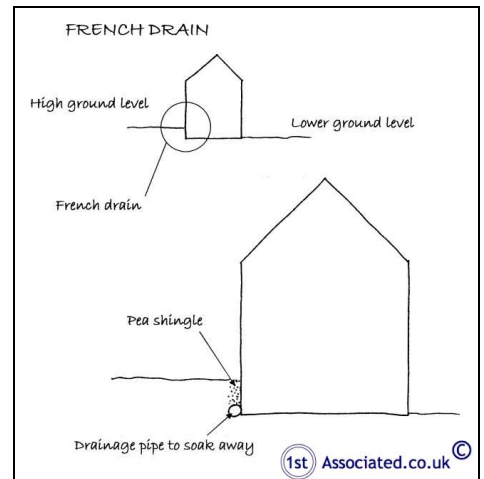
DPC slightly too low



High ground level

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally we would like to see a French drain added. We would suggest the ground level is lowered. We would be more than happy to comment on any photographs sent electronically to us.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** To lower the ground is likely to cost a few hundred pounds, possibly into the early thousands. To add a French drain likely to cost a few thousand pounds; please obtain quotations.



French drain

Please see the Airbricks Section of this Report.

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**6.0) Dated**

It probably goes without saying that much of the property is very dated particularly we would highlight the bathroom areas. Interestingly there are more bathroom facilities in the private living accommodation than there is in the actual care home accommodation on the ground floor.

**7.0) Trees**

There are many trees surrounding the property including willows on the left hand side which usually means there is water in the area which may be another possible reason for the subsidence.



Weeping willow to left

**7.1) Battle with the trees**

You will have a long term battle with the trees with falling branches and leaves and also a reduced air circulation around the building which can lead to an increased level of moss and/or mould within the property.



Impregnated moss to windows

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend an arboriculturalist is asked to comment on the trees. You need to have a cup of tea meeting with the next door neighbour on the right side who we spoke to briefly who advised that they once did work at the care home.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £250 - £750 plus cost of any work recommended; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.

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## 8.0) **Black mould and potential problems**

We noted black mould in the bathroom to the private living accommodation (middle left). This we believe is due to a lack of adequate ventilation. We would recommend you have a good large humidity controlled extract fan.

We would also make a general comment that properties such as this which are occupied all day long do tend to suffer from condensation and you do need to take this into consideration as you need to provide a healthy environment for the occupants.



Mould in first floor bathroom

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would generally recommend that you have good large humidity controlled extract fans fitted throughout the property in any humidity generating areas such as bathrooms, shower rooms, cooking areas, drying areas, washing areas.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would anticipate costs between £150 - £250 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.

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## 9.0) Fire safety

You need specialist advice with regard to fire safety depending upon how you wish to utilise the building. We are aware from meeting your builder that you do intend to make changes and use the first floor as well which will probably require a fire escape. It is highly likely that this needs to be enclosed. We noted that fire doors have been added up the stairs so it does look like some checks have been carried out on the property previously.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Specialist fire safety advice required.



Electric fire door restrainers



Example of fire door with Intumescent strips and stops around door

## 10.0) Footpath

The footpath is up and down and appears to move in some areas and is a general trip hazard. This all needs re-laying and levelling.

Please note our comments on the damp proof course requiring two courses of brickwork between the ground level or the paving and the damp proof course; this needs to be in all areas.

There looks to be some movement to the path as a whole to the rear of the property adjacent to the boundary wall. We are concerned about this and feel that this should form part of the insurance claim. Please see our comments on movement. It may in due course affect the building as well.



Trip hazard on footpath



Movement to rear of property adjacent to boundary wall

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We did note this immediately next to a high single skin boundary wall which do tend to be relatively easily disturbed. You need to ensure that the boundary wall remains in good condition.

## 11.0) Services

### 11.1) Boilers

There are two old floor mounted boilers in the kitchen. We noted that there is also a mixture of old and new radiators.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend complete new central heating system throughout the property.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Please obtain quotations.



Boilers in kitchen



Back of boiler

### 11.2) Drains – the mystery of where do the drains go

We lifted manholes to the left side of the property and to the front. We have not been able to identify where the drains from bedrooms one, two and three run as we have not found any manholes. This does lead us to believe that they go under the property which is not ideal.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Close circuit TV camera report of the drains required.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £250 - £500 for CCTV report; please obtain quotations.

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### 11.3) Possible asbestos

We always have to give a warning of possible asbestos as when this building was being built asbestos although was no longer in use as in larger quantities as was once used it still was being used for some elements.

The insulation around pipes for example was often insulated in asbestos. The pipes that we could see where the insulation had been broken away looked to be fibreglass insulation.

Our insurance company require us to advise we are not asbestos specialists and recommend you have an asbestos survey carried out by a specialist asbestos company.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to obtain an asbestos report from the existing owners or have one carried out yourself. We would always recommend having samples of any potential asbestos taken and analysed as visual inspections are limited.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £500 to £1000 (five hundred to one thousand pounds); please obtain quotations.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

### High Priority

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

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

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## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

## **Maintenance**

This type of property is relatively modern (i.e., less than one hundred years old) but has had minimal maintenance and still requires ongoing maintenance and repair. A budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in a good condition. This will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration.

## **Services**

We have carried out a visual inspection of the services and no tests have been carried out. We would comment as follows in brief. More detail is within the main body of the report.

## **Electrics**

Whilst we have carried out a visual inspection of the electrics (this is commented upon in the Electrics Section of the report) we also need to advise you of the following:

Electrical standards are always being updated. The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) recommend a test and report whenever a property changes ownership. This should be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

## **Heating**

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

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## **Drainage**

To the left side we found relatively new drains, many of them plastic but there were some older drains to the front. Where there is movement in the property we would always recommend a closed circuit TV camera report.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Closed circuit TV camera report.

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

## **Purchase Price**

We have not been asked to comment upon the purchase price in this instance.

## **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 £100 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

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

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## **SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION**

The Summary Upon Reflection is a second summary so to speak, which is carried out when we are 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:

There are a surprising number of problems for such a modern property. Further investigation is required to establish costs.

We would refer you to our comments in the Plus Points, Medium Priority and High Priority Sections 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 and contact us on any issues that you require further clarification on.

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## **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

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

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

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

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

It is important to remember that the estate agents are acting for the seller (usually known as the vendor) and not the purchaser and are therefore eager to sell the property (no sale – no fee!). We as your employed Independent Chartered Surveyor represent your interests only.

### **SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

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

This report is being carried out under our terms of engagement for Residential Building Surveys, as agreed to and signed by yourselves. If you have not seen and signed a copy of our terms of engagement please phone immediately.

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

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

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



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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 are three chimneys to this property they are located two to the main building and one to the right hand extension (all directions given as you face the property).

**Chimney One – located to the rear middle**

This chimney is brick finished with a lead flashing. From what we could see from ground level it looked in average condition considering its age, type and style.

We noted that there are aerials on this chimney which can cause damage and cut into the chimney like a cheese wire into cheese.



Chimney one

**Chimney Two – located to the right**

This chimney is brick finished with a lead flashing and looked in below average condition with weathering visible.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Recommend repointing in the summer of 2015.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £100 - £250; please obtain quotations.



Right hand side chimney

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### **Chimney Three – located to the rear**

This chimney is also brick finished with a lead flashing and looked in average condition.



Left chimney three

#### 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.

#### Spalling Defined

Spalling occurs to brick or stone when water penetrates the surface and via freezing and thawing starts to cause deterioration to the surface. This in turn allows further water penetration and the surface breaks up further. This ultimately can lead to water damage or structural damage to the area.

### **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 flues to the left side of the property for the boilers and the right hand side to the chimney which we assume is from an old boiler as we could see no other use for this chimney; you may wish to check this and remove it.

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. A closer inspection may reveal latent defects.

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

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## ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS

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

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

We will consider the roofs in four areas, the main roof, the single storey hipped roof, single storey pitched roof and the flat roof to the balcony area.

### Main Roof

The roof is pitched and clad with a roman style concrete tile to the main building and a smooth interlocking concrete tile to the right hand front and side extensions. From ground level, these look in average condition for the roofs age type and style considering there are trees surrounding the property. The smoother interlocking concrete tiles seem to be gathering moss quicker than the other concrete tiles. With this age of roof there will usually be a few missing or displaced tiles, this is nothing unusual.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Clear moss periodically with a soft brush and check valley gutters.



General view of roofs



Concrete tiles

### Valley Gutters

This property has a number of valley gutters, all of which seem to be blocked to a greater or lesser extent. Valley gutters are formed where two roofs meet and these are generally problematic.

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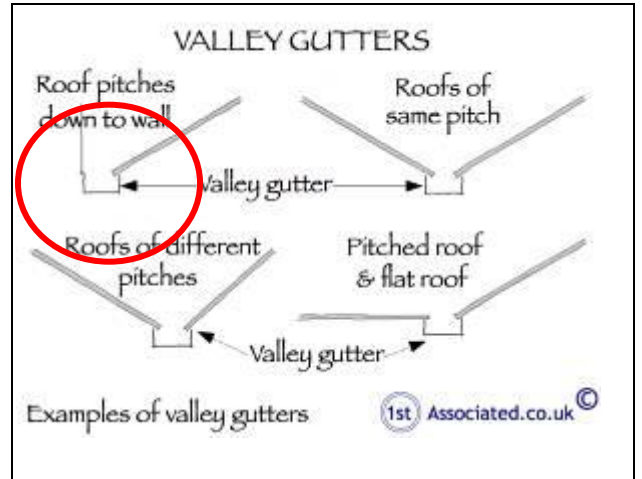
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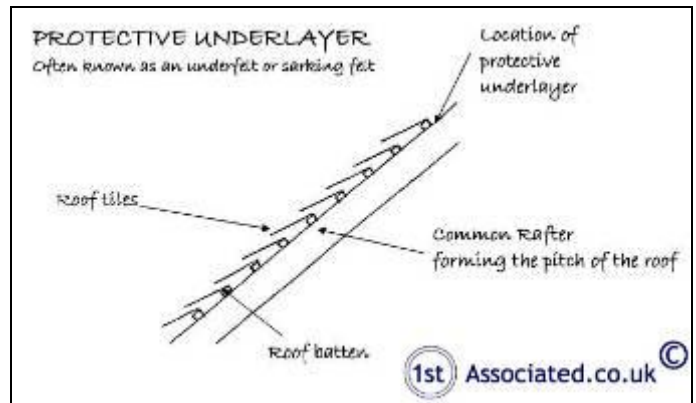
Valley gutter between main building and right side with vegetation



**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 base Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s. We generally found it to be in average condition, it is damaged in a few more places than we normally find.



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

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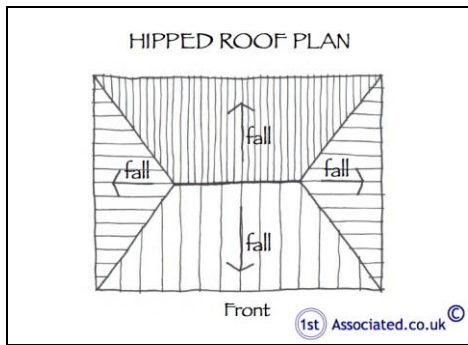
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### Rear single storey hipped roof

This roof is hipped and clad in concrete tiles.



Hipped roof



Single storey rear hipped roof

### Single storey pitched roof

This roof is pitched and clad in a concrete tile.



Concrete tiles to single storey pitched roof

### 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.*

To the balcony there is a flat roof. There were no obvious visual signs of dampness coming through the roof within the lounge area at the time of the inspection.

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Flat roof to balcony area



Balcony

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

The latest Building Regulations require flat roofs to be ventilated. Building Regulations are not retrospective but the reason for the requirement is to make sure that any moisture that enters the roof construction is dispelled by way of ventilation. We would suggest that if the opportunity arises ventilation should be provided. This will stop the possibility of fungal growth above the ceiling in the flat roof area.

### **Insulation**

Also it could not be established if there is insulation within the roof or a vapour barrier, without the vapour barrier and combined with inadequate ventilation there will be an increase in the risk of wet or dry rot.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you do re-roof we would recommend you add insulation as well as ventilation.

All the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of an optical zoom lens on a digital camera. Flat roofs have been inspected from the flat roofs themselves.

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

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

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# ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT

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

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

### Main Roof

### Roof Access

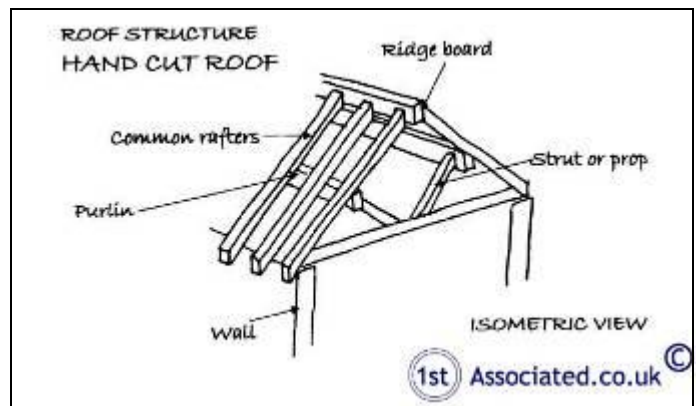
The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing. The hipped roof extension is accessed via bedroom two.

There is no loft ladder but there was an electric light and some secured floorboards. We recommend that these be added, as it will make the loft space safer and easier to use. The loft perimeter has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly.

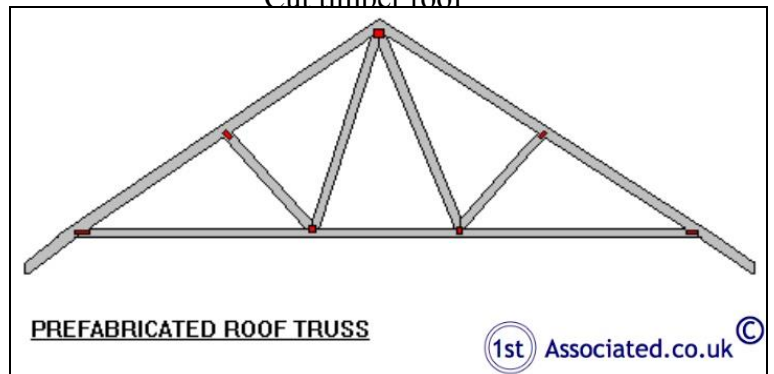
### Roof Structure

This type of roof structure has what is known as a cut timber roof to the main roof and a prefabricated truss roof to the hipped roof. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects. The timbers were below average size.

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



Cut timber roof



Pre-fabricated roof

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## Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

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

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary. The only way to be 100 per cent certain is to have the roof cleared and checked.



General view



Minor movement to purlins

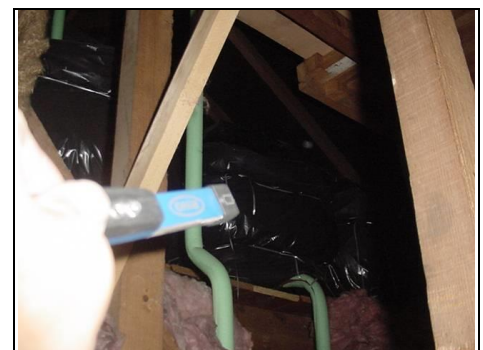
## Water Tanks

There were plastic water tanks. The main water tanks are hidden below the water tanks visible in the photograph.

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



Old water tanks



Water tanks below old water tanks

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## **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 there was insufficient quantity of wiring to comment.

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

Finally, we would ask you to note that this is a general inspection of the roof, i.e. we have not examined every single piece of the roof. 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 deterioration of the property. Regular inspection and adequate maintenance are therefore essential if serious problems are to be avoided.*

### Gutters and Downpipes

The gutters and downpipes are plastic. They are in below average condition for their age, type and style with vegetation visible.



Grass in gutters



Gutters full



Vegetation growing out of gutters

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

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

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## **Soil and Vent Pipe**

The original soil and vent pipe is visible to the gable end of the property.

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



Soil and vent pipe

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

There may be some painted asbestos pipes at high level. It is very difficult to identify these from ground level. Our comments are therefore based upon our best assumptions.

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# WALLS

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

The walls are constructed of brickwork.

## Brickwork

The property is built in a Stretcher bond brickwork in a cement based mortar. The walls look to be in fine condition with the exception of the cracking.

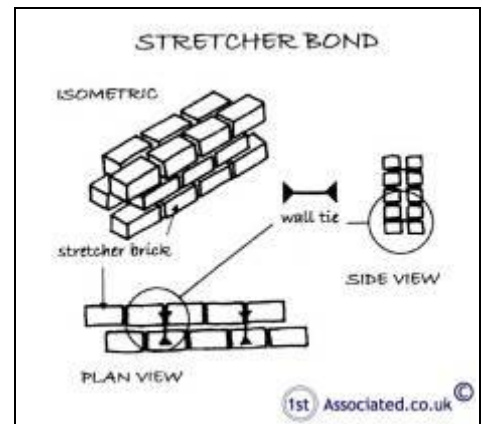
The term "Stretcher Bond" means that from the outside of the property, you can see a row of the sides of the bricks (known as "stretchers") followed by a course above of the same stretch of bricks set off so the joint is centrally above the "stretcher". This pattern would repeat throughout.



Stretcher bond brickwork

## Cavity Walls

Cavity walls were first used in Victorian times. It originates from solid walls not always being waterproof against driving rain and not providing a good degree of thermal insulation. The design of cavity walls makes them relatively unstable and they depend upon the wall ties.



Stretcher Bond brickwork

## Wall Ties

Walls of cavity construction should incorporate ties to hold together the inner and outer leaves of masonry. We would typically see horizontal cracking where there are problems. In this case we have not noted any cracking however wall tie failure is a progressive problem. We would add as there is no access to the cavity it has not been inspected and we cannot comment on the presence or condition of wall ties. As such we cannot be hundred per cent certain with regard to this problem unless we open up the structure.

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## Cracking

We would remind you that any hairline cracks that appear need to be sealed/repointed as soon as possible to stop dampness and water getting in.

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



Cracking to front middle

## Cold bridging - Concrete lintels

Concrete lintels do often cause problems with cold bridging.

### Cold Bridging Defined

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



Cold bridging / thermal bridging

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

Our comments have been based upon how the brickwork / plasterwork has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork / 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 concrete foundation originally and the newer extensions are also likely to be a concrete foundation.

### **Trees nearby**

It is also possible because there are trees nearby to the property that the foundations were deeper than we would normally expect. It does depend upon what trees were present when the property was built.

### **Building Insurance Policy**

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

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

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

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

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

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XXXXXXXX

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

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

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# TREES

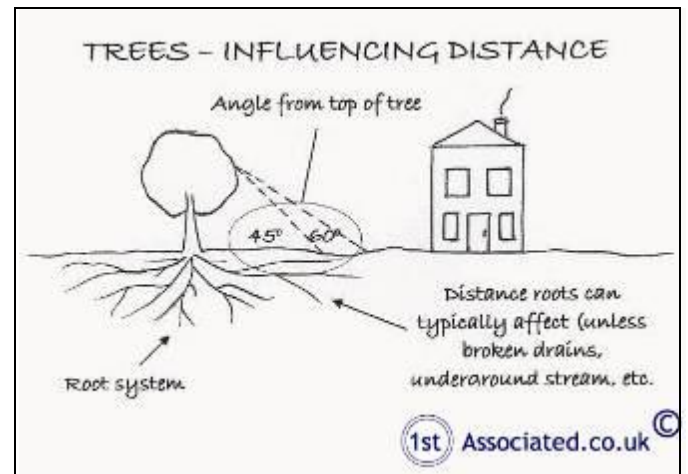
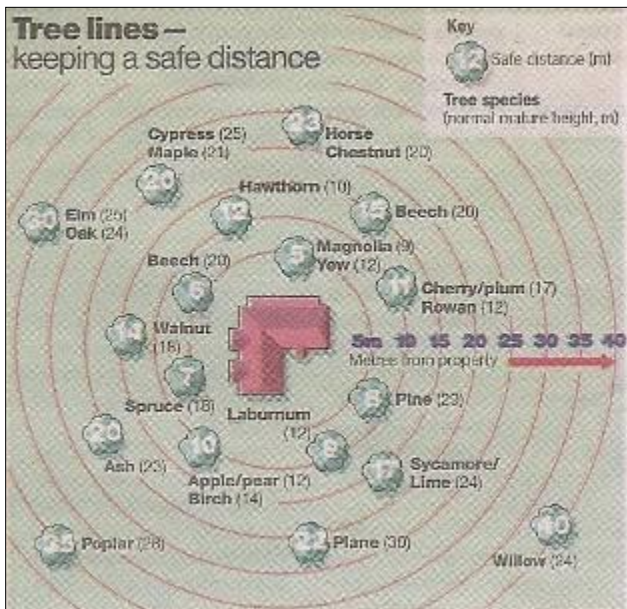
Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.

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:** We would recommend an arboriculturalist (not a tree surgeon) is asked to view the property and give a ten year plan for maintenance.



Weeping willow



Influencing distance of trees to a property

## Influencing Distance Defined

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

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

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## **DAMP PROOF COURSE**

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

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, we can see a damp proof course (DPC) which is slightly too low.

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



DPC slightly too low

Your attention is drawn to the section of the report specifically dealing with dampness.

Finally, sometimes it is difficult for us to identify if there is a damp proof course in a property. We have made our best assumptions based upon our general knowledge of the age, type and style of this property.

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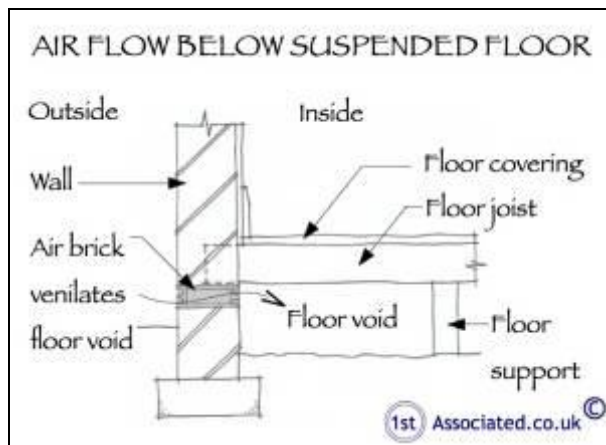


## AIRBRICKS

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

### Low Level Air Bricks

Air bricks are essential to have a through flow of air as this helps to reduce the chances of wet rot, dry rot and woodworm. In this case we noted an airbrick acting as a gutter.



Suspended timber floor



Airbrick acting as gutter

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

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

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# FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS

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

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

## Fascias and Soffits

The fascias and soffits are a mixture of timber and plastic, possibly overlaid. Some of the soffits are vented and some are not vented. We would comment they are in average condition for their age, type and style.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As you are aware the gutters are full of vegetation, etc and need clearing. Once they have been cleared we recommend that you check a section to the main roof of the fascias and soffits by drilling into it to see if it has timber beneath. Make sure gutters and downpipes are watertight before carrying out any work on fascias and soffits.



Fascias

## Windows and Doors

The property has plastic double glazed windows with trickle vents which generally look to be of an average quality. Some of the double glazed units were out of alignment which could relate to movement or it could relate to someone trying to break into the property.



Some double glazed units out of alignment

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



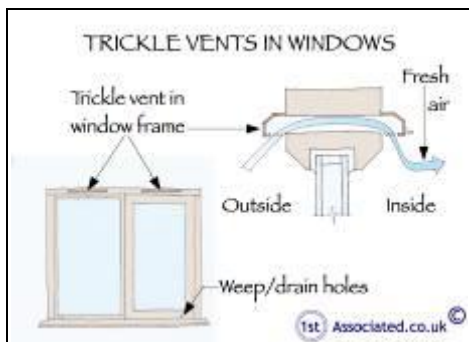
Impregnated moss to windows

### **Transferable Guarantees**

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

### **Trickle Vents Defined**

Trickle vents allow a trickle of air through, therefore stopping/reducing the likelihood of condensation occurring within the property.



Trickle vents



Trickle vents

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 is minimal from what we recall.

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**

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be plasterboard or a propriety boarding.

### 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.

## **Internal Walls and Partitions**

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

## **Perimeter Walls**

In buildings of this age, type and style the perimeter walls are often blockwork with gypsum plaster. We have not opened up the perimeter walls so we cannot be certain of the structure of them.

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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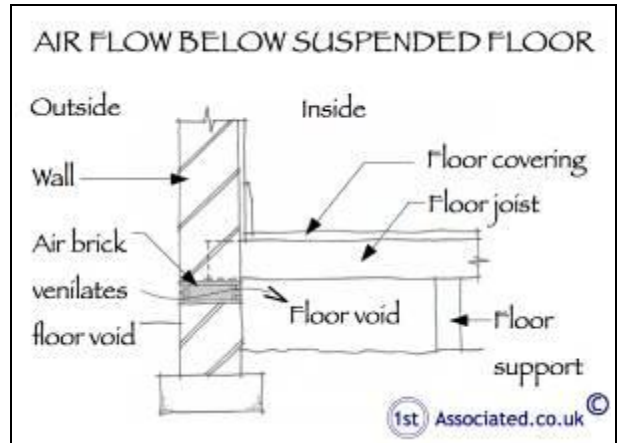
# FLOORS

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 property has predominantly a suspended timber floor to the centre portion of the original property and to the rear left hand side which require air movement underneath to minimise wet rot, dry rot and woodworm, and a solid floor to the remainder.

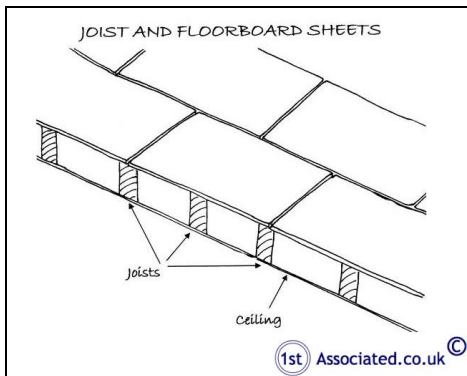
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



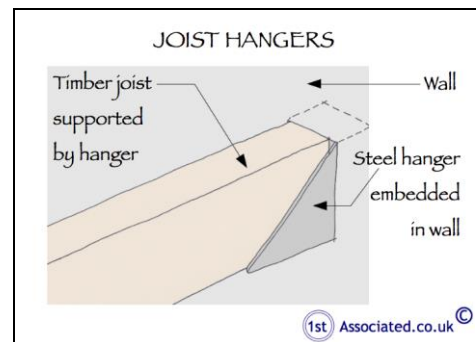
Suspended timber floor

## First Floor

We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboard sheets onto joist hangers.



Joist and floorboard sheets



Joist hangers

Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with fitted carpets, floor coverings, laminated 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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## 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.*

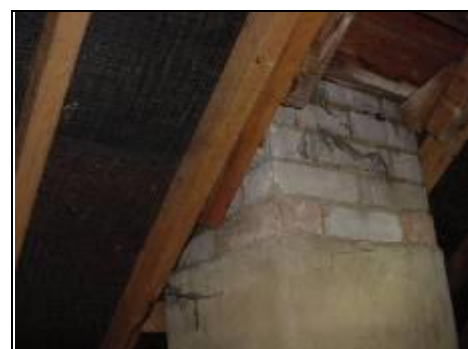
There are three chimneys we can see. At the time of the survey no chimneys were in use. There were some original chimneys to the building when it was a house and there was one to the right hand side which has been used as a flue and a boiler. This needs to be checked whether it is still in use; we could not see any indication that it was.



Chimney breast in bedroom six

There was some dampness getting in around the chimneys.

Finally, we will comment on the condition of the chimney breast where we can see the chimney breast. If we can see a chimney breast has been removed we will inspect for signs of movement and advise. However, often the chimney breasts are hidden and we do not comment as modern techniques for adding support can concealed very well particularly when plastered over.



Dampness around chimney

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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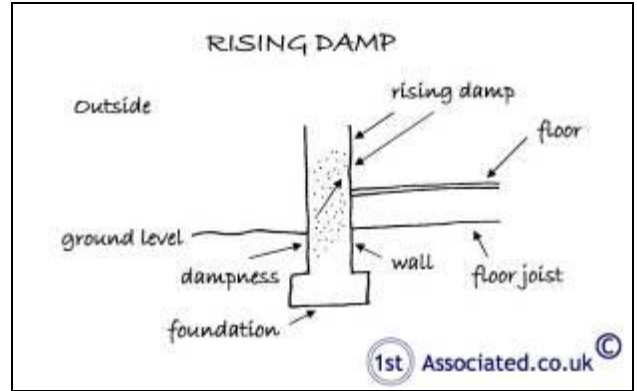


# DAMPNESS

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

## Rising Damp

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



A visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we have found some minor rising damp which is possibly due to the property being empty and the slightly high ground levels.

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

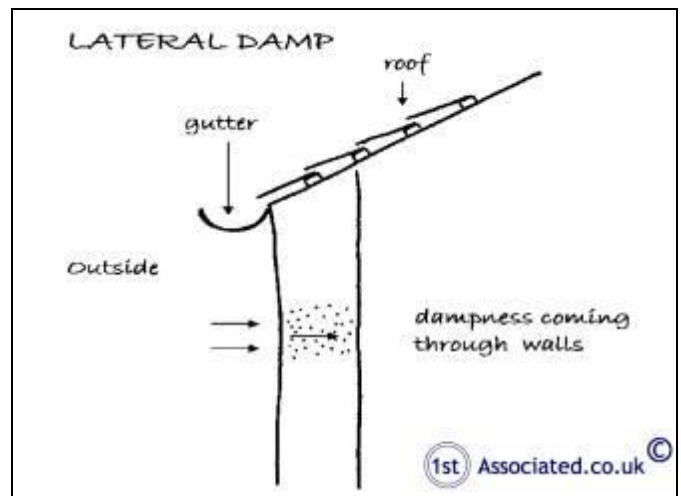
Rising damp



Testing for rising damp

## 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

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



Testing for lateral dampness

## **Condensation**

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

At the time of the inspection the property was empty so there was no signs of condensation visible however these types of property with this type of occupier we believe are prone to condensation.

Common sense is needed and a balance between heating, ventilation of properties and opening windows to air the property regularly.

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

## **Extract fans in kitchens and bathrooms**

A way of helping to reduce condensation is to have good large extract fans with humidity controlled thermostats within the kitchens and bathrooms.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend large humidity controlled extract fans be added to kitchens and bathroom and any humidity creating areas.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would anticipate costs between £150 - £250 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 DETAILING**

*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**

Doors are very important in this property as they also act to stop the spread of fire. We noted for example that fire doors have been added upstairs which we assume is part of regulations as they have not been decorated, etc.

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



Folding doors

### **Fire Doors**

In a property such as this it is fire doors that we are most concerned about as fire doors offer a break in a worst case scenario where a fire occurs. We therefore recommend checking the doors around the stairs area) and kitchen and any other high risk area where there are fire doors in place.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The entirety of the fire system requires testing and an overall fire plan putting into place.

### **Staircase**

There is a metre wide staircase. Generally this is for domestic access and it is required usually to be wider in public buildings. We are aware from discussions with your builder you are looking to use the upstairs; there may be a requirement to increase the width of the stairs.

### **Catering Kitchen**

The property has a catering kitchen on the ground floor. We found the kitchen in dated condition, subject of course to some wear and tear as one would expect. The catering equipment has not been inspected, as we are not expert in this area, you should seek expert advice. We have assumed that the catering equipment meets Local Authority approval and is appropriate for use.

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to have a “cup of tea” meeting with the Environmental Health Officer before you commit to the purchase the property to discuss the general condition and standards within the property.

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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## **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. Please see our comments with regards to the airbricks acting as gutters, there is a possibility of dry rot being under the floor.

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

### **Wet Rot**

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

We have not visually seen any signs of significant wet rot during the course of our inspection. However if there is overcladding to the fascias and soffits there could be wet rot present. Also please note our comments with regard to the suspended floor and the airbricks acting as gutters.

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that the floors are opened up to check their condition.

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## **Woodworm**

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

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

We would comment in this instance that there is a possibility of woodworm in the floor so it does need opening up to check its condition.

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

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

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

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## **INTERNAL DECORATIONS**

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

Internal decorations are in dated condition.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Redecorate.

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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## **THERMAL EFFICIENCY**

*Up until the mid 1940s we did not really consider insulation in properties. Post war insulation started to be introduced gradually. In the 1970s it was upgraded following the fuel crisis and in more recent years there has been an emphasis on it, as if only a consideration in fuel prices would also add with regard to the availability of continuing fossil fuels. Care has to be taken that properties are not insulated disproportionately to the ventilation as this can cause condensation and you should be aware that you need to ventilate any property that is insulated.*

### **Roofs**

Insulation was present in both roofs of between 200mm to 300mm. Building Regulations requirements are 300mm.

### **Walls**

The property has a stretcher bond construction. It is likely to have been insulated, your legal advisor to check and confirm.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Adviser to check and confirm if there is insulation within the walls and advise us by return before the legal completion of the purchase to comment further, as often where insulation has been added at a later date it can cause damage to the wall ties.

### **Windows**

The windows are double glazed and therefore will have reasonable thermal properties.

### **Services**

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

### **Summary**

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

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## **OTHER MATTERS**

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

### **Security**

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

### **Fire / Smoke alarms**

As you are going to have disabled/less abled people in the property we would always recommend a hard wired fire alarm system. We have not tested the existing system.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to have the existing fire system checked or completely renewed.

### **Insurance**

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

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

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

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

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## 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 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.

### Electrics

The electrics are located in a cupboard within the hallway. This area should have a level of fire rating as required by the fire officers.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a specialist electrical contractor is appointed prior to the legal commitment to purchase this property to offer estimates to re-wire to an Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) standard.



Electrics

As the property is changing ownership 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.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Likely to cost thousands of pounds; quotations required.

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## Lighting

The current lighting is dated in some areas. You need a specialist to check and confirm the lighting is appropriate for how you intend to use the building.

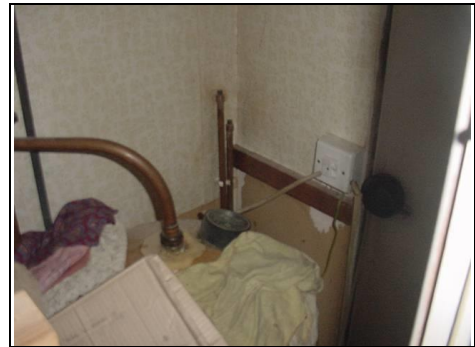
**ACTION REQUIRED:** The lighting should be appropriate for the use and upgraded as necessary.

## Heating

The property has two floor mounted boilers (no model name visible) located in the kitchen on the ground floor. There are hot water cylinders which are factory lagged which means they are relatively new (last twenty years). There is a mixture of old and new radiators which you may wish to convert to new convection heaters.



Boilers in kitchen



Hot water cylinder

## Fuel – Gas/Oil

The respective safety standards to be applied and most full repairing and insuring leases require a test certificate. All services to Gas Safe Standard or equivalent.



Gas unit front left

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## **Drains - Inspection Chambers / Manholes**

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

We have identified four inspection chambers / manholes.

### Manholes Defined

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

### **Inspection Chamber / Manhole One located to the rear left**

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

From what we could see it is plastic built.



Manhole one rear left

### **Inspection Chamber / Manhole Two located to the middle left**

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

From what we could see it is cement finished.



Manhole two middle left

### **Inspection Chamber / Manhole Three located to the front left**

We duly lifted the cover and found there were roots visible.

From what we could see it is brick built.



Manhole three front left

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**Inspection Chamber / Manhole Four located to the front middle**

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

From what we could see it is plastic built.



Manhole four front middle

We have not carried out a drainage test. We could not find where the drains from some of the rooms were running so they may be hidden.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that a closed circuit TV camera report is carried out. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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## **EXTERNAL AREAS**

### **Boundary wall**

There is a single skin brick wall to the rear. This is integrally unstable and also is starting to spall. This is due to weathering on both sides.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repair and check regularly.

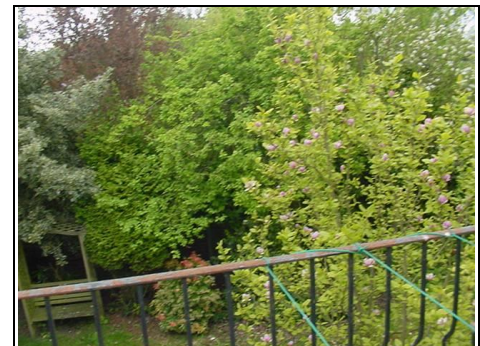


Spalling single brick wall

### **Balcony**

The railing to the balcony is rusting.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Apply rust stop agent and redecorate.



Balcony rusting

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## **STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

### **Fire Safety/Fire Alarms/Emergency Lighting**

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Specialist advice should be sought.

### **Disability Discrimination Act**

You should be aware that it is now a requirement to give reasonable access to the disabled and make reasonable amendments to the property as is necessary.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You should ask to see if a report has been carried out in line with the Disabilities Act highlighting areas that can be improved or have been improved.

### **Asbestos Register**

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. This was commonly used post war until it was banned only in the last ten or so years, although it is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time.

It is now a requirement for any public building to have an asbestos register, indicating whether there is or is not asbestos and if so where it is.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** An Asbestos Register should be provided by the outgoing owner/occupier.

You should note that work involving products containing asbestos is covered by Health and Safety legislation and you are recommended to seek the advice of the Local Authority Environmental Health Officer before proceeding with any such work.

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.

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**Certificates to be obtained from owner/occupier**

Test certificates to be provided on:-

- 1) Asbestos - Up to date asbestos report with samples.
- 2) Chimneys - Certificates confirming chimneys have been swept.
- 3) Drainage – closed circuit TV camera report.
- 4) Electrics – An Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) standards test and report to be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.
- 5) Environmental Health certificates and latest reports - we recommend you meet with the Environmental Health Officer before you legally commit to purchase.
- 6) Fire Safety/Fire Alarms/Emergency Lighting - we recommend you have a Fire Specialist to review the building prior to legally committing to purchase.
- 7) Gas Safe inspection and test report (you need to see heating in working order)
- 8) Lighting - The lighting needs to be checked to ensure it is suitable for the purposes for which you wish to use it.
- 9) Man Safe System - Ensure there is a full man safe system for maintenance access and that this has been tested.
- 10) Security System test
- 11) Any proposed planned maintenance that the owners are proposing to carry out on the building before it is sold.

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

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

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# APPENDICES

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## **LIMITATIONS**

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

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

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

## **ENGLISH LAW**

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

## **SOLE USE**

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

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

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## **WEATHER**

It was warm and pleasant at the time of the inspection.

Our weather seems to be moving towards the extremities from relatively mid range.

## **NOT LOCAL**

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

## **EMPTY PROPERTY**

The property was unoccupied but had been left as if occupied. We were 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.

## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been limited as:

- 1) We did not have a full view of the roof due to the insulation covering the ceiling joists and general configuration of the roof.
- 2) We did not open up the walls as we could not see a way of doing this without causing damage.
- 3) We did not open up the ground floor or the first floor as we could not see a way to do it without causing damage.

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- 4) The property was empty we did not have the benefit of talking to the owners or them answering our usual question and answers.
- 5) We didn't have the benefit of meeting you at the property to talk about your specific requirements although we did meet your builders.
- 6) We have carried out a structural survey; we have not carried out a suitability survey for use as a nursing home. We would be more than happy to comment further but we have not received details of proposed use.

## **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.

Marketing by: \_\_\_\_\_

[www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk)

0800 298 5424



**USE CLASSES ORDER**

Town and Country Planning Act (TCPA) Classes Order	Use/Description of development	Permitted Change to another use class
<b>A1:</b> Shops	The retail sale of goods to the public: Shops, Post Offices, Travel Agencies & Ticket Agencies, Hairdressers, Funeral Directors & Undertakers, Domestic Hire Shops, Dry Cleaners, Internet Cafés, Sandwich Bars (where sandwiches or other cold food are to be consumed off the premises).	No Permitted Change
<b>A2:</b> Financial & Professional Services	Financial Services: Banks, Building Societies & Bureau de Change. Professional Services (other than Health or Medical Services): Estate Agents & Employment Agencies. Other services which it is appropriate to provide in a shopping area: Betting Shops. (Where the services are provided principally to visiting members of the public).	A1 (where there is a ground floor display window)
<b>A3:</b> Restaurants & Cafés	Restaurants & Cafés (i.e. places where the primary purpose is the sale and consumption of food and light refreshment on the premises). This excludes Internet Cafés which are now A1.	A1 or A2
<b>A4:</b> Drinking Establishments	Public House, Wine Bar or other Drinking Establishments (i.e. premises where the primary purpose is the sale and consumption of alcoholic drinks on the premises).	A1, A2 or A3
<b>A5:</b> Hot Food Take-away	Take-aways (i.e. premises where the primary purpose is the sale of hot food to take-away).	A1, A2 or A3
<b>B1:</b> Business	a) Offices, other than a use within Class A2 (Financial Services) b) Research and development of products or processes c) Light industry	B8 (where no more than 235 sq.m.)
<b>B2:</b> General Industrial	General Industry: use for the carrying out of an industrial process other than one falling in class B1.	B1 or B8 (B8 limited to 235 sq.m.)
<b>B8:</b> Storage & Distribution	Use for storage or distribution centre.	B1 (where no more than 235 sq.m.)
<b>C1:</b> Hotels	Use as a Hotel, Boarding House or Guesthouse, where no significant element of care is provided.	No Permitted Change
<b>C2:</b> Residential Institutions	Hospital, Nursing Home or Residential School, College or Training Centre where they provide residential accommodation and care to people in need of care (other than those within C3 Dwelling Houses).	No Permitted Change
<b>C2A:</b> Secure Residential Institution	Use for a provision of secure residential accommodation, including use as a prison, young offenders institution, detention centre, secure training centre, custody centre, short term holding centre, secure hospital, secure local authority accommodation or use as a military barracks.	No Permitted Change
<b>C3:</b> Dwelling Houses	Use as a Dwelling House (whether or not as a sole or a main residence), a) by a single person or people living together as a family, or b) by not more than six residents living together as a single household (including a household where care is provided for residents).	No Permitted Change
<b>D1:</b> Non-Residential Institutions	Clinics & Health Centres, Crèches, Day Nurseries & Day Centres, Museums, Public Libraries, Art Galleries & Exhibition Halls, Law Court, Non-Residential Education & Training Centres. Places of Worship, Religious Instruction & Church Halls.	No Permitted Change
<b>D2:</b> Assembly & Leisure	Cinema, Concert Hall, Bingo Hall, Dance Hall, Swimming Bath, Skating Rink, Gymnasium, or area for indoor or outdoor sports or recreations, not involving motor vehicles or firearms.	No Permitted Change
Not in any use class (Sui – Generis*)	A use on its own, for which any change of use will require planning permission. Includes, Theatres, Nightclubs, Retail Warehouse Clubs, Amusement Arcades, Launderettes, Petrol Filling Stations and Motor Car Showrooms.	No Permitted Change
	Casinos - following declassification planning permission is needed for any premises, including D2 premises, to undergo a material change of use to a casino.	D2

\* Where uses do not fall within the four main use classes they are classified as sui-generis. We have provided examples of some sui-generis uses but this list is not exhaustive. (Correct April 2006)

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