

JOB REFERENCE: XXXX

## RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

XXXX

XXX

Bedford  
Bedfordshire  
MK43 XXX



FOR

Mrs X

Prepared by:

XXXXX

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS



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## **CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION  
REPORT FORMAT  
SYNOPSIS  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

### **EXTERNAL**

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**

ELECTRICITY  
GAS  
PLUMBING AND HEATING  
BATHROOMS  
MAIN DRAINS

### **OUTSIDE AREAS**

GARAGES/OUTBUILDINGS / PARKING  
EXTERNAL AREAS

POINTS FOR LEGAL ADVISOR

### **APPENDICES**

LIMITATIONS  
ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS  
GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Firstly, may we thank you for your instructions of XXX; we have now undertaken an independent Building Survey (formerly known as a Structural Survey) of the aforementioned property. This Survey was carried out on XXX.

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**

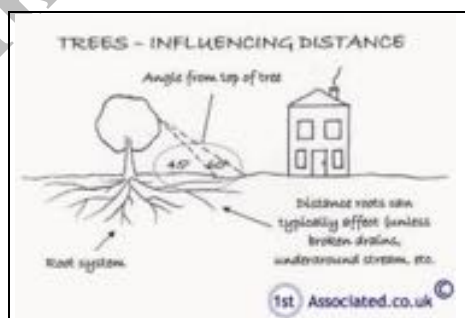
Throughout the Report, we have endeavoured to define any technical terms used. This is shown in "Courier New" typeface for clarity.

### **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.



Right side of semi-detached



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 semi-detached right side two storey property with linked garage. To the front there is a good sized garden and driveway. To the rear is a smaller garden that sits on a sloping site with a tree hedge to the rear; your legal advisor to establish who owns the rear boundary and who has responsibilities/liabilities.

We believe that the property was built in the 1970's to 1980's. This is the era when we were starting to consider energy efficiency in buildings and also looked at the economics of building in fine detail. It was also the era of the 1970's boom. If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

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

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

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

- 1970-1973 Property Boom and again in the late 1970's. The average house price in 1975 when adjusted to current prices was about £85,000, the average price of a property now is double to treble that – even with the boom prices we wish we had bought a few!
- 1974 New Year's Day is celebrated for the first time as a public holiday
- 1975 Computing giant Microsoft is founded, now a world leader
- 1976 The first commercial Concorde flight took off from France.
- 1978 The World's first test tube baby is born in Great Britain
- 1979-1991 The Thatcher Years, Britain's first female prime Minister is elected
- 1979 Mother Theresa awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for giving help and comfort to those living in poverty
- 1981 The Queen's second grandchild, Zara, is born to Princess Anne and Mark Phillips

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**LOCATION PLANS**



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## EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view



Rear view  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Street view



Right view  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Front drive and garden with tree



Rear garden

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## **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

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

### **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Entrance hallway with stairs
- 2) Front lounge
- 3) Rear right kitchen
- 4) Rear left dining room
- 5) Garage subdivided into two areas



### **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 6) Landing
- 7) Front bedroom
- 8) Middle bathroom with separate WC
- 9) Rear right bedroom
- 10) Rear left bedroom



### **Outside Areas**

To the front there is a good sized garden and driveway. To the rear is a garden that sits on a sloping site with a tree hedge to the rear.

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

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## INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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

### Ground Floor



Front lounge



Front lounge



Rear right kitchen



Rear left dining room



Garage front store



Garage rear area

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**First Floor**



Landing



Front bedroom



Middle bathroom



Separate WC



Rear right bedroom



Rear left bedroom

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## **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

### **External**

Main Roof:	Pitched, clad with concrete tiles, ridge tile vents Unequal pitches
Main Roof Structure:	Pre-fabricated truss roof
Front Dormer Window Roof:	Felt roof
Entrance canopy roof:	Glass reinforced plastic flat roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Internal (assumed)
Walls:	Stretcher Bond Brickwork Vertical tiling to front dormer window (all assumed)
Fascias and Soffits:	Mixture of plastic and timber
Windows and Doors:	Plastic double glazed windows without trickle vents
Garage:	Large felt flat roof Stretcher Bond Brickwork Metal shutter door to front Timber door and window to left Plastic gutters

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## **Internal**

Ceilings:	Plasterboard Textured paint finish (all assumed)
Perimeter Walls:	Wet plaster
Internal Walls:	Mixture of solid and hollow (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Solid underfoot, assume concrete
First Floor:	Joist and floorboards on joist hangers (assumed)

## **Services**

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

Heating:	There is a Worcester boiler located in the roof space on the right wall.
Electrics:	The electric fuse board is 1980's/1990's and is located in the cupboard from the dining room on left side.
Gas:	The consumer unit was located under the stairs
Drainage:	The manholes are located to the front

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

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

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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

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

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

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

### The Good

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

- 1.0) The property has potential.
- 2.0) The location suits you well from what you have explained to us.

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) Asbestos flue within roof space

There appears to be an asbestos flue within the roof space. We can only see a small amount of what we believe to be asbestos as we did not have full access due to the mass of stored items within the roof.



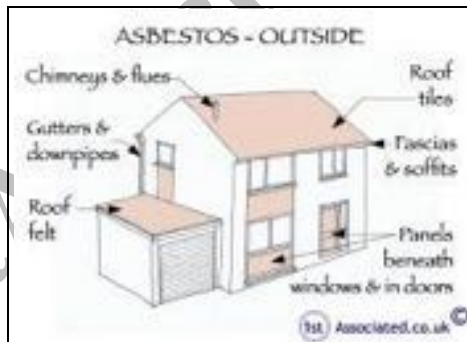
Close up of asbestos flue



Asbestos flue

When this property was built asbestos was a common popular material which was used almost as commonly as wood.

The generic sketches show typical areas where asbestos can be found in these properties.



Asbestos - outside



Asbestos - inside

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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To clarify, the fireplace in the lounge, we believe has the asbestos flue and no chimney as it is vented through the ridge of the property.



Ridge vents to yours and next doors property



Front fireplace with asbestos flue

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The only way to be one hundred percent certain with regards to Asbestos in a property is to have an Asbestos report with samples taken and the recommended action carried out.

We would always recommend any asbestos is removed from a property as it can not only be dangerous, it can affect the value of the property.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £500 - £1,000. Asbestos costs can vary considerably; we are forever surprised at the variety in quotes. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Other Matters Section of this Report.

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## 2.0) Dormer roof

There is water sitting where the pitched roof meets the flat roof and we can see there has been a repair to the flashing.



Repair to flashing  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Water tipping/sitting on front flat roof  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~

## 3.0) Sloping site

The property sits on a sloping site and because of this rainwater and ground water need to travel from the top of the site to the bottom with the building in the way. As the property slopes towards the house you may get water onto the paved area. Sloping sites are not as good as level sites and buildings on them are integrally unstable. You need to understand this is a characteristic of any building sitting on a sloping site.



Sloping site



Sloping site



Slope towards house

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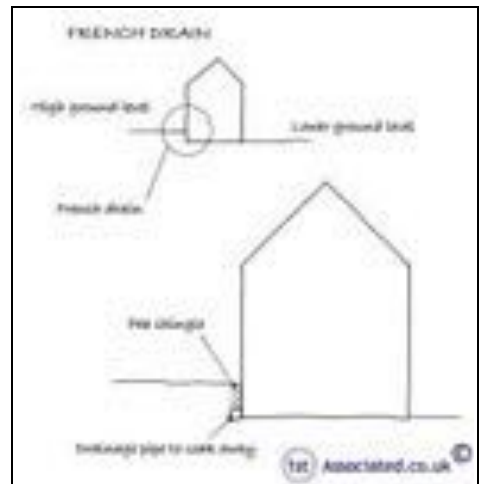
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**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend a French drain to divert water around the property which will help reduce some of the effects of the sloping site.



French drain

#### 4.0) Condensation

We need to start by saying generally these houses are more likely to have condensation in them as they have a problem known as cold bridging which many properties of this era have which we will explain later.

However this property has a fundamental problem with the extract fan within the bathroom discharging humid air into the roof space, this needs to be altered and the extract needs to go to external air as it normally would.



Bathroom extract



Extract from bathroom



Extract from bathroom discharging into roof

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Change extraction flue (also known as elephant trunk!) with an opening in the external wall and vent to external air.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

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## **Stored items and damp problems**

There are lots of stored items within the roof which unfortunately are adding to condensation problems. The stored items include general files, etc and also duvets and clothing, which we believe are acting like a sponge in the roof particularly as the extract fan is discharging humid air from the bathroom into the roof.



Clothes stored within roof space

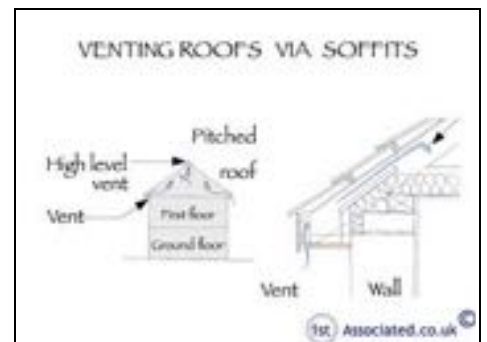
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Clear roof. This should be carried out by the existing owners although we have been surprised as to what gets left behind when people move house.

## **Improving airflow within the roof**

It looks like they have tried to improve airflow within the roof by adding spacers to the protective underlayer. Another way of adding ventilation is to add ventilation to the soffit boards.



Spacer to protective underlayer



Venting roofs via soffits

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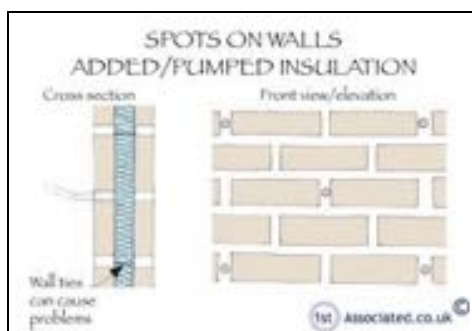
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## 5.0) Walls and spots on brickwork/mortar

We noted spots to the brickwork which is likely be where insulation has been inserted or there is an outside chance it is wall tie replacement. We spoke to the person who had opened the house for us and they advised that they had contacted the owners and they thought it was wall insulation. However adding wall insulation is not as simple as just putting insulation in as there can be problems with wall tie deterioration and also dampness in the property.



Signs of pumped insulation to walls



Circular cement fillets where insulation added and/or wall ties



Wall tie failure

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal advisor to check and confirm what these spots/holes relate to and advise us before you legally commit to purchase the property.

Your legal advisor needs to check whether the insulation has a CIGA Cavity Insulation Guarantee Agency certificate to see if the wall ties were appropriate before the insulation was added as inserted insulation can cause deterioration of the wall ties. Contact CIGA at XXX, telephone XXX. If there is not a CIGA certificate then it does not mean it is necessarily a problem however ideally we would recommend opening up a small section of the wall to check the condition of the insulation and the wall ties.

In a worst case scenario the wall ties will need to be replaced however having said that we cannot see any of the horizontal cracking that we would normally expect to see in a situation where the wall ties need repair.

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**6.0) Fascias and soffits**

We have already mentioned fascias and soffits with regard to adding ventilation. We did note the fascias and soffits are in a dated/deteriorating condition.



Deterioration to fascias and soffits of the house



Rot to garage fascia

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that the fascias and soffits are redecorated ideally within the next few years during the warmer months when you could look at also adding ventilation to them.

**7.0) Double glazed windows**

There is deterioration to the seals of the double glazed windows. We could also see black mould to some of the windows; see comments below.



Black mould to windows and rubber seals perishing



Double glazing rubber seal perished

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## 8.0) Condensation likely

There are various signs throughout the property that it has suffered from condensation. We could see areas of black mould particularly around the windows. We can also see some areas look to have been painted over for example to the rear right bedroom in the corner. Please see our earlier comments with regard to condensation problems.

We discuss during the course of this report the management of humid air/condensation within the property. A good quality humidity controlled extract fan will help a lot and doors, etc need to be kept shut when having showers and baths.



Black mould



Condensation in rear right bedroom



Black mould painted over in rear right bedroom

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

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

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## 9.0) Cold Bridging

Cold bridging is a feature of this type of property. Please see our article in the Appendices at the back of the report.



Cupboard underneath the pitch of the roof susceptible to cold bridging



Heat loss through sloping ceilings

### 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

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**10.0) No safety glass to glazed doors?**

We cannot see a British standard safety kite mark on the glazed doors and we therefore have to assume that this glass is not safety glass and it can shatter.



No safety kite mark to glazed doors



Double doors to lounge



Fluted glass above doors not safety glass

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Check with the owners if this is safety glass or not. We would recommend replacing the glass with safety glass if it is not safety glass.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Set aside the sum of £75 to £200 per door depending upon the quality of glass/door you wish to have; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Internal Joinery Section of this Report.

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## 11.0) Trees to rear

There are overgrown trees to the rear of the rear garden.



Trees to rear



Trees to rear  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to check who owns the boundary and where exactly is the boundary. Cut back trees and maintain as appropriate.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £300 - £600; please obtain quotations.



Boundary

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.

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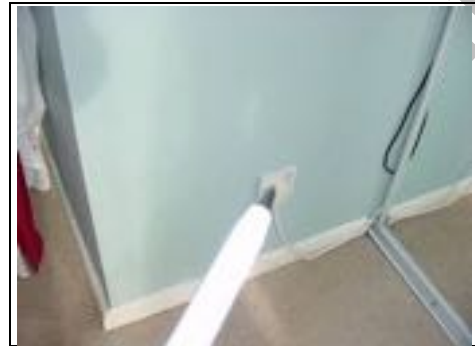
**Services**

**12.0) Dated electrics**

The electrics are dated with not enough socket points. We noted that the socket points are single and there are many extension cables on these.



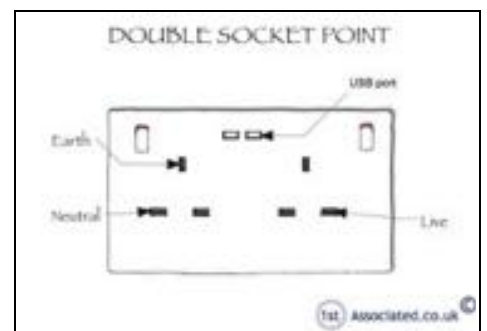
Lack of socket points



Single socket

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add additional socket points and change the single socket points to double socket points, you may wish to use the newer socket points with USB ports (see sketch).

We recommend an Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) test and report to be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.



Double socket with USB

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £500 - £1,000 for additional socket points. £250 - £500 for a test and report plus any work recommended; please obtain quotations.

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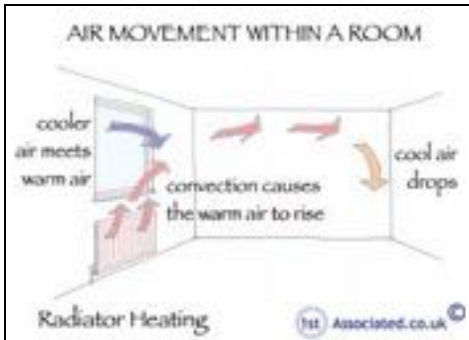


### 13.0) Dormer heat loss and single panel radiators

The property has single panel radiators. These may not warm the property to the heat that you desire and also may not get air circulating as quickly as you want particularly in the front bedroom with the dormer roof.



Single panel radiator

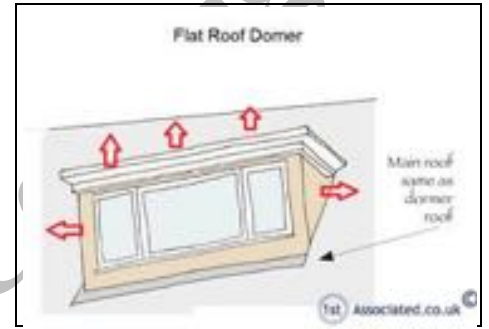


Air movement



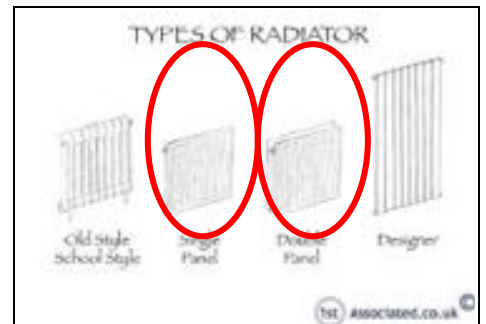
Front dormer

~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~

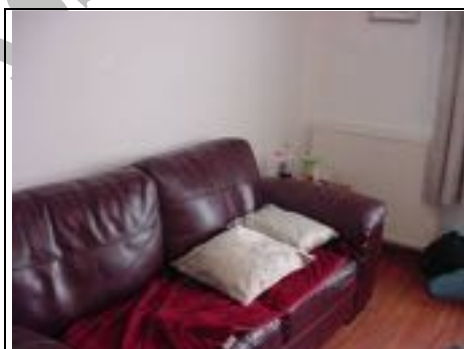


Dormer heat loss

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend you upgrade to double panel convection radiators. We would recommend the radiator in the lounge is moved under the window. Originally windows had panels underneath as seen on a nearby property, some have glazed the panels and in your case brick has been put underneath.



Replace single panel radiators with double panel convection radiators



Lounge radiator



Glazed panel (not your property)

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**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £100 - £200 per modern double panel convection radiator; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

### **The Ugly**

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

### **Characteristics of this type of property**

There is nothing which we feel falls within this section providing you are happy with the characteristics and associated costs of the property which we have mentioned throughout the report and that you are happy to carry out the work and the investigations that we have recommended.

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## Other Items

### Studio in the garden

As discussed with regards to the studio in the garden we would always recommend a 'cup of tea' meeting with your neighbours. It should be remembered that the studio will need planning permission and building regulations if you put foundations down. There are various other ways of siting the studio building without needing approval.

Also, you should remember there is a limit to the size of the garden studio and you need to have appropriate amenity space for such things as drying clothes and outside areas.

#### Planning Permission Defined

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

#### Building Regulations Defined

This is a legal requirement to show that the alterations carried out will be structurally sound. It looks at the way the building is built ensuring that good practice occurs, setting out a minimum standard of building and also Health and Safety.

### Garage options

Our prices include VAT and are a guide, you may obtain discounts if you know a friendly builder (and make good cups of tea, etc!).

#### 1) **Option One - minimum spend**

This would be where you add a door entrance to the garage and a window and a door entrance into the kitchen, extend the drainage system to allow for supplying and fitting a WC and wash hand basin and possibly a shower as well. Add walls to sub-divide the area. The dimensions of the circled area need checking.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £5,000 - £10,000  
depending upon the quality of fixtures and fittings,  
etc. Please obtain quotations.



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## 2) Option Two – upgraded area

As option two with additional things to make the area warmer such as adding insulation to the roof and/or the walls and/or the floors. As discussed this can be in the form of timber decking with insulation beneath it to the floors and dry lining to the walls and an insulation either between the roof joists or on top of the decking.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £7,500 - £15,000 depending upon the quality of fixtures and fittings and how much insulation is being used; please obtain quotations.

## 3) Option Three

Obtain planning permission and building regulations to have work carried out and make the building into a legally habitable building. We also recommend the adding of a pitched roof with this option.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £10,000 - £15,000; please obtain quotations.

### Other extensions nearby

Below are examples of extensions nearby. One of the best things to do is to talk to the neighbours about what they have done.



Example of single storey extension nearby



Example of single storey extension nearby



Example of two storey extension nearby

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## **Maintenance**

This type of property is relatively modern (i.e., less than one hundred years old) but nevertheless 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**

Whilst we have carried out a visual inspection only of the services within the property and we would always recommend you have your own specific testing for each of the services. We also need to advise you of the following:

## **Electrics**

The electric fuse board is 1980's/1990's and is located in the cupboard from the dining room on left side. We would recommend additional socket points are added. The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) recommend a test and report whenever a property changes occupancy. This should be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

## **Heating**

There is a Worcester boiler located in the roof space on the right wall. We would recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

## **Drainage**

We were unable to lift the manholes. As we were unable to lift the manholes we recommend a closed circuit TV camera report of the drains particularly as you are looking at adding to the drainage by adding a toilet, wash hand basin and possibly a shower.

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

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### **DIY/Handyman Type Work**

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

### **Purchase Price**

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

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

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

### **Estimates of Building Costs**

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

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

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## **SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION**



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

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

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

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

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## AERIAL VIEW – 360 PHOTOS

Where permission has been obtained from the owners we have carried out aerial photographs using an aerial drone, stationary drone or a mono-pod pole (where the environment and weather is suitable).



Drone



Front and right view  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Front roof and dormer  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Rear view  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Garage roof  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Entrance canopy  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~

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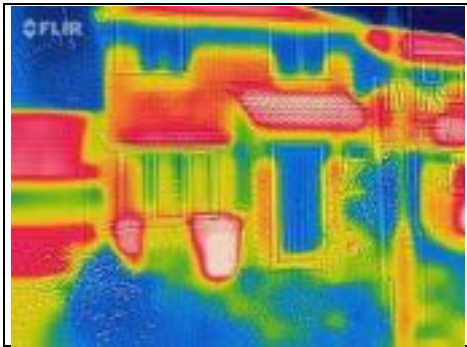
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## THERMAL IMAGE PHOTOGRAPHS

Thermal imaging photography can establish warm and cold areas, it also helps us identify materials within the property. In this case we have not carried out any thermal imaging as the property was not pre-heated and therefore we would not have obtained any beneficial results. Below are example thermal image photographs (not your property). We would be happy to return once you are in the property and carry out thermal imaging.

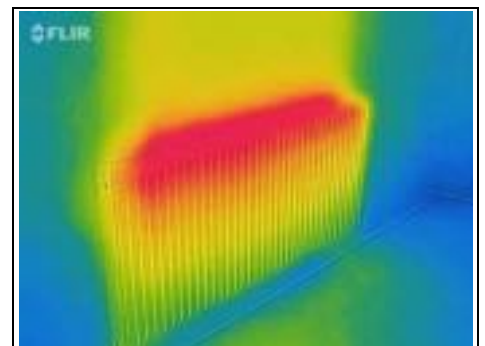
(Key to the colours; blue = cold, red = warm, green/yellow = cool)



Example thermal image with the red areas showing the warmth of the sun  
(Not your property)



Example thermal image  
(Not your property)



Heat from radiator  
(Not your property)

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## **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

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

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

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

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

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

### **SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

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

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

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

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

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



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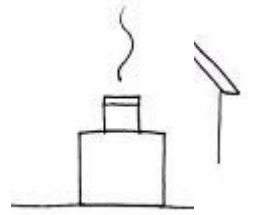
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## EXTERNAL

### 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:

- 1) Main roof
- 2) Dormer roof
- 3) Garage roof
- 4) Entrance canopy

#### Main Roof

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

There is some slight moss on the roof. We recommend removing moss with a soft brush, we do not recommend high pressure cleaning or chemicals are used on a roof.



Vented ridge tiles

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Carry out periodic inspections and maintenance of the roof, as required.

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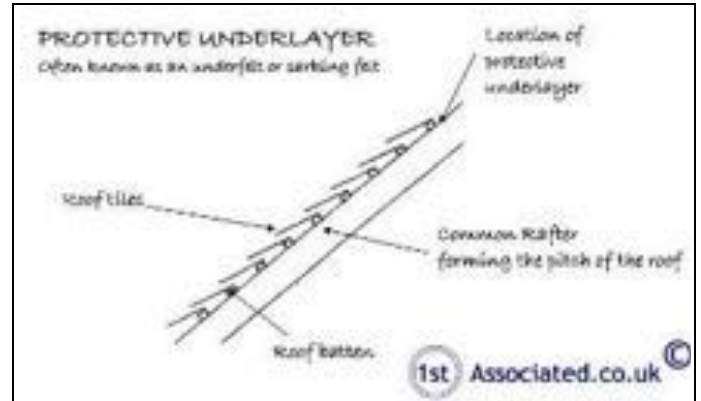
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## **Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)**

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



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, with damage in some areas which is what we typically find.

There is venting to the protective underlayer in the form of spacers which have been added after the original construction and are sometimes put in place if condensation is occurring in the roof.



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



Spacers to help air ventilation

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## Flat Roofs

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

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

## Dormer Windows

*Dormer windows are often used where rooms are formed within the roof space and have the advantage of allowing light into the area and also giving the head space to allow them to be stood next to.*

The dormer window has a flat felt roof, the cheeks of the dormer are horizontal boarding and vertical tiling and the windows are plastic double glazed without trickle vents.

Generally we would comment for their age, type and style they are in slightly below condition. We would particularly draw your attention to water tipping/siting on the roof and we can see there has been a repair to the flashing.



Front dormer window



Repair to flashing  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Water tipping/sitting on front flat roof  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~

Finally, Dormer windows have been viewed from ground level and literally from the dormer windows themselves.

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## Entrance canopy

The front entrance has a glass reinforced plastic roof which looked in average condition.



Front entrance roof

## Garage Roof

Please see External Areas Section.

If you are amending the garage then you need to consider various things with regard to the flat roof. If you are having people in it and humid generating items such as showers then you will have to consider condensation and adding ventilation.

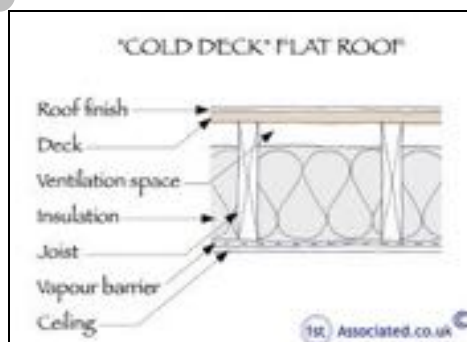
## Ventilation

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.

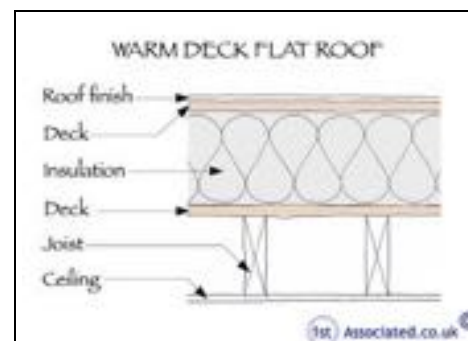
## Insulation

If you want people to stay in the garage area or work from it then you may wish to look at insulation.

We do not believe there is any insulation in the roof or a vapour barrier. A modern roof would tend to look like the cold deck flat roof or preferably like the warm deck flat roof sketches below. Without the vapour barrier and combined with inadequate ventilation there will be an increase in the risk of wet or dry rot.



Cold roof



Warm roof

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XXX, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK43 XXX

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

Finally, 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**

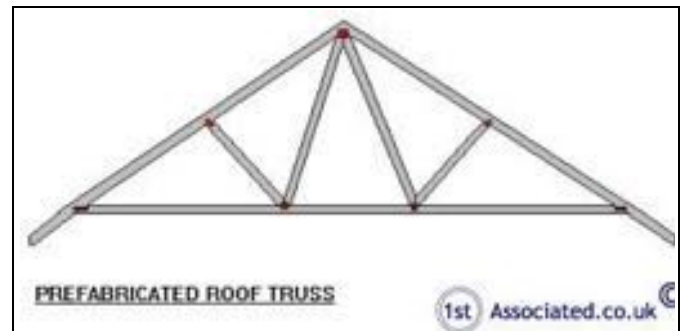
#### **Roof Access**

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing. There is no loft ladder, electric light. We recommend that these be added, as it will make the loft space safer and easier to use.

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

#### **Roof Structure**

The property has a pre-fabricated trussed roof rafter. These are made in a factory and transported to site and then lifted into place. Without the manufacturer's calculations and installation details we cannot comment categorically on the roof.



Pre-fabricated roof truss

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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



General view of inside of roof

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The only way to be one hundred percent certain is to have the roof cleared and checked.

## **Party Wall**

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

Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Etc. Act 1996

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

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

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## **Fire Walls**

The property has a brick firewall located to the left hand side (all directions given as you face the property). The firewalls are also Party Walls.

### Fire Walls Defined

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

## **Water Tanks**

There was so much stored items in the roof that we could not see if there was a water tank or not.

## **Ventilation**

There is ventilation to the ridge tiles and spacers to the protective underlayer.



Spacers to help air ventilation

## **Insulation**

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

## **Electrical Cables**

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

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

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

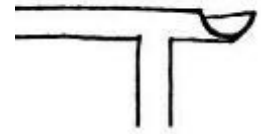
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## GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

### Gutters and Downpipes

The gutters and downpipes are plastic. They are in average condition for their age, type and style with the exception of the garage which we have discussed in the External Areas Section.

There may be some minor leaks but most people would be happy to live with these providing repairs are carried out within the next six to twelve months.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend you stand outside the property next time it rains heavily and see how well the drains cope with the rainwater particularly looking at the guttering and the joints.

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

### Soil and Vent Pipe

We assume the property has internal soil and vent pipes which are visible at roof level.



Soil and vent pipe



Soil and vent pipe

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

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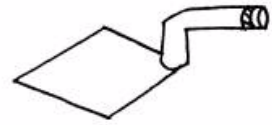
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## WALLS



*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 to the main walls with boarding and vertical tiles to the dormer.

### Brickwork

The property is built in a Stretcher bond brickwork in a cement based mortar.

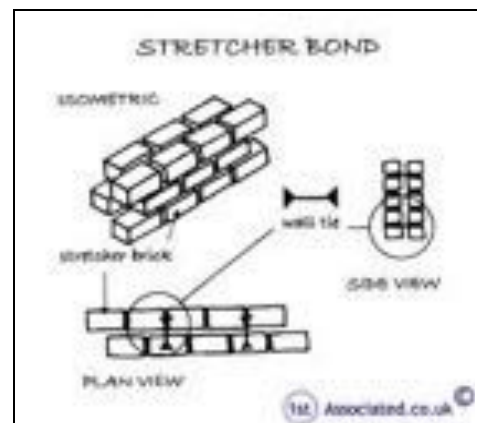


Stretcher bond brickwork

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.

### 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

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## 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 one hundred percent certain with regard to this problem unless we open up the structure.

## Insulation or not?

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

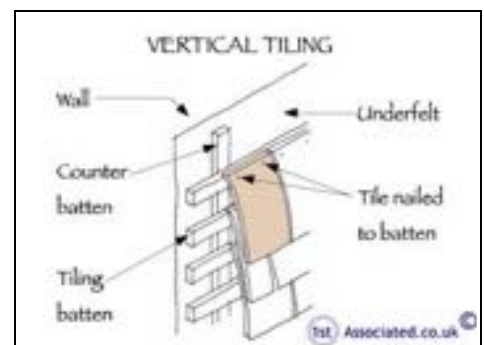
## Vertical tiling

The dormer is clad in vertical tiles. We could see some slipped tiles.

Tiles may be fixed directly to a wall or battens, or indeed counter battens. It is necessary to nail all tiles and it is also good practice to use an underfelt and lap the tiles to approximately two inches (30 mm).



Slipped vertical tiling to dormer



Vertical tiling

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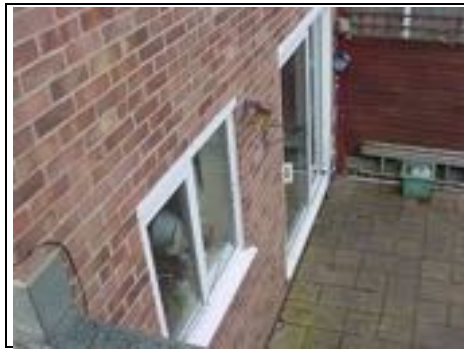


## Cold Bridging

The property has concrete lintels. Cold bridging is a feature of this type of property. Please see our article in the Appendices at the back of the report.



Concrete lintel



Concrete lintels above windows



Concrete lintel



Cupboard underneath the pitch of the roof susceptible to cold bridging



Heat loss through sloping ceilings

### 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

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brickwork / vertical tiling / boarding / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age concrete 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 / vertical tiling / boarding / plasterwork has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork / vertical tiling / boarding / 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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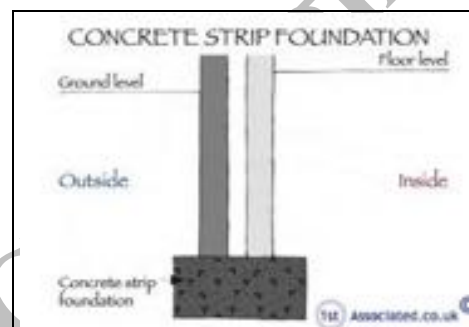
## **FOUNDATIONS**



*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**

We would expect to find a concrete foundation typically known as a concrete strip foundation going down to a metre or slightly deeper dependent upon the age of the property.



Concrete strip foundation

### **Clay**

This property stands on clay. Clay has two properties; one of which is it retains water and the other is that it moves depending upon its water content. It is therefore more susceptible than most conditions should drains leak or trees be allowed to overgrow, or if it is within a water course, etc. It is not unusual to have some settlement in properties built in clay.

### **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. We would refer you to our comments with regard to building insurance throughout this report. We would always recommend that you remain with the existing insurance company of the property.

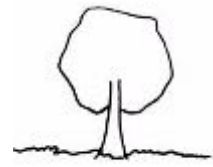
Finally, we have not excavated the foundations but we have drawn conclusions from our inspection and our general knowledge of this type, age and style of property. As no excavation has been carried out we cannot be one hundred percent certain as to how the foundation has been constructed and we can only offer our best assumptions and an educated guess, which we have duly done.

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# TREES

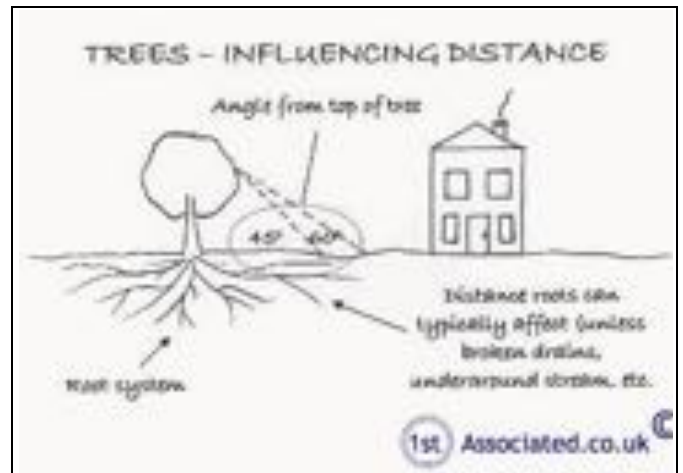
*Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.*

There are trees to the rear of the garden. As discussed you need to establish whose boundary this is and who carries out the cutting back of the trees as they look overgrown. We do not believe the trees are 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.



Trees to rear  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend the trees are cut back and maintained.



Influencing distance of trees to a property

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Influencing Distance Defined

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

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

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## **DAMP PROOF COURSE**

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

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, where we could see it on the side of the property the damp proof course is two and a half brick courses.



Damp proof course

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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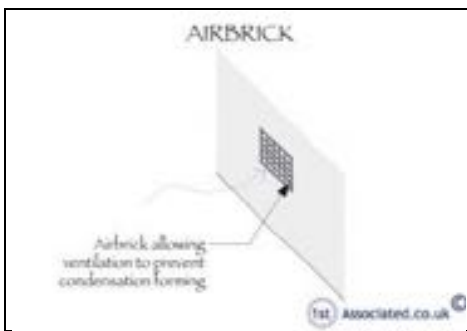
## AIRBRICKS



*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.*

### Airbricks

Air bricks are to help air circulation within the property. We are not sure whether they are venting or not. If you recall there was a lot of stored items in the kitchen cupboards.



Airbrick



Airbrick to kitchen



Stored items

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ensure the airbricks are clear.

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.

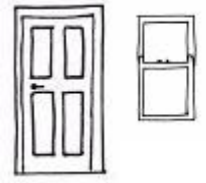
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## FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



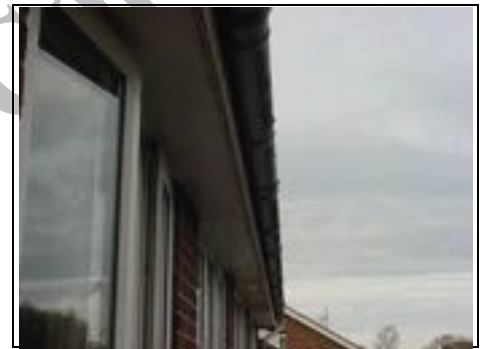
*This section covers fascias, soffits and bargeboards and windows and doors, and any detailing such as brick corbelling etc.*

*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 timber. They are painted and we would comment they are in below average condition for their age, type and style with rot visible to the garage fascia (see External Areas Section).

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



Deterioration to fascias and soffits

### Windows and Doors

Originally this property would probably have had aluminium double glazed windows with plastic double glazed windows being fitted later, probably in the 1980's/1990's. We can see the double glazing is the older style without trickle vents. They generally look to be average quality for their age, type and style.



Black mould to windows and rubber seals perishing

We would draw your attention to the fact that sealed double glazed units can fail, particularly as a result of poor workmanship during installation. In this case the seals are perishing which we believe relates to condensation. 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.

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

### **Concrete lintels**

The windows have concrete lintels above.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the External Walls Section.

### **Transferable Guarantees**

Although these windows are old 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

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.*

The fascias and soffits are dated and deteriorating and will need redecoration in the next few years. You need to check that the gutters and downpipes are not leaking onto them which are best viewed when it next rains heavily.

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



# CEILING, 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 there may be some proprietary boarding as this was fairly common in this era of property. We noted an area of black mould which has been painted over in the rear right bedroom, there may also be other areas painted over.



Black mould painted over in rear right bedroom

We are not sure whether this is an optical illusion or not, there looks to be a slight dip in the ceiling. There may have been very slight movement in the structure due to the openings on the rear however there are no obvious visual signs on the outside of the roof.



Has there been a lift in the ceiling?



Rear roof

### 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.

### Modern Plaster Defined

Usually a Gypsum plaster which can be applied with a skim coat to the ceilings or the walls over either an older or modern plaster.

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Proprietary boarding Defined

Proprietary boarding are one off specially manufactured boards commonly used in years gone by which are now popular again.

**Textured paint ceiling**

Some of the ceilings have a textured paint finish (commonly known as artex).



Textured paint



Textured paint

**Internal Walls and Partitions**

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

**Perimeter Walls**

The perimeter walls are finished in wet plaster. Again, we cannot be one hundred percent certain of the wall construction without opening them up which goes beyond the scope of this report. This comment has been based on the visual look of the wall which is relatively “smooth” and normally means a modern finish.

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

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

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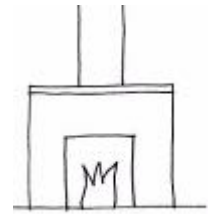
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## CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

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



Front fireplace with asbestos flue – do not use unless new chimney installed



Vent in front room for fireplace

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

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

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

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

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

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## FLOORS



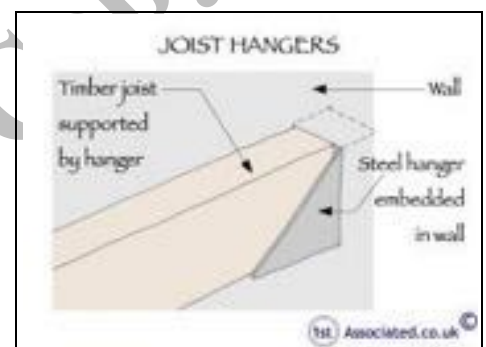
*Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.*

### Ground Floor

The floors felt solid under foot so we have assumed that they are constructed in concrete.

### First Floor

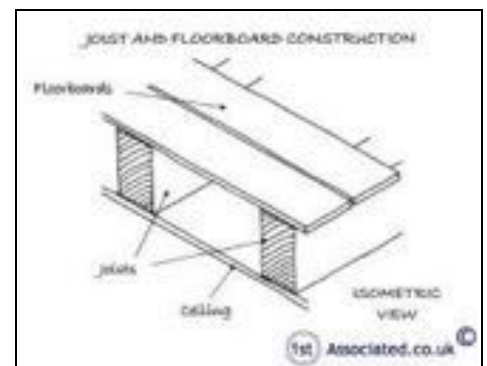
We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards on joist hangers, as this is typical in this age of property.



Joist hangers

#### Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



Joist and floorboards

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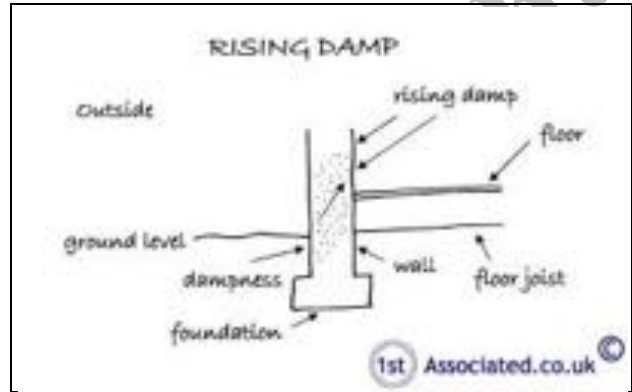
## DAMPNESS

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



### Rising Damp

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



Rising damp

A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we have found no significant rising damp.

This is based on our damp meter readings, as well as our knowledge and skill in identifying dampness in this age, type and style of property.



Testing for rising damp

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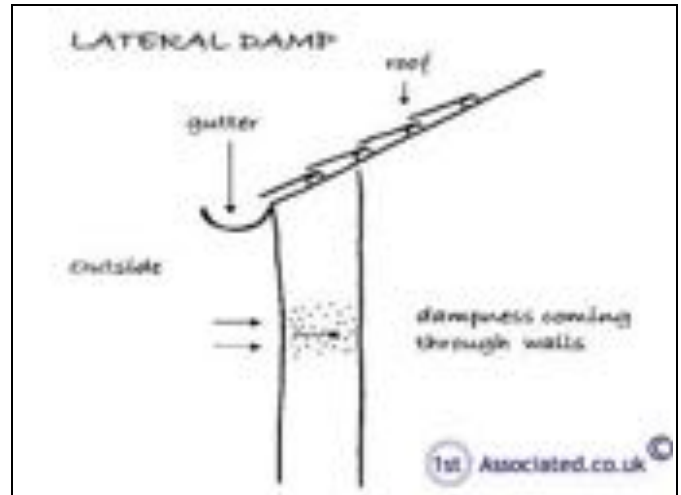
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## Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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



Lateral damp

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 there were significant signs of condensation.

However, it depends upon how you utilise the building. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. You need to have a balance between heating, cooling and ventilation of properties and opening windows to air the property regularly.



Black mould

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

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



Black mould painted over in rear right bedroom

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

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

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

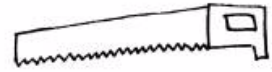
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## INTERNAL JOINERY



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

### Doors

The property has timber panel doors and glazed doors. Some of the doors are worn.

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



Glazed door worn

### Staircase

We were unable to examine the underside of the stair timbers due to it being lined where we could see it, which precluded our inspection, so we cannot comment further upon the stair structure. We can, however, say that the lining gives a resistance to the spread of fire if such circumstances were to occur.



Under stairs cupboard full of stored items

### Kitchen

We found the kitchen in average condition, subject to some wear and tear as one would expect. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

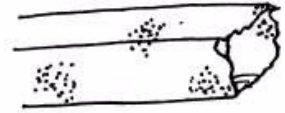
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## **TIMBER DEFECTS**



*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/White Rot**

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

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

### **Wet Rot/Brown Rot**

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

We noted wet rot to the garage fascia.

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



Rot to garage fascia

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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.

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

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

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

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## INTERNAL DECORATIONS

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



Internal decorations are in average condition for a family house. You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste.

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

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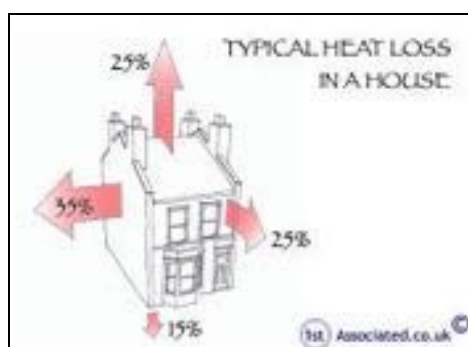
## THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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

### Roofs

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



Typical heat loss



Insulation

### Dormer Roof

Please see our comments on the dormer roof and cold bridging.

### Walls

The property has a stretcher bond construction. In this age of property there is usually insulation.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Adviser to check and confirm if there is insulation within the walls and whether it was installed originally or not and advise us as there can be problems where insulation is added at a later date.

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## **Windows**

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

## **Services/Boilers**

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend you ask the owners for energy bills and service records for the past few years.

## **Summary**

Assuming the above is correct, this property is average compared with what we typically see. Please note we have not seen the Energy Performance Certificate.

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

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

*or alternatively www.cat.org.uk (Centre for Alternative Technology)*

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

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

## **HIPs**

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

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



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## OTHER MATTERS



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

### Security

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 NSI (National Security Inspectorate), obtainable through directory enquiries, or your local Police Force for advice on a security system.

### Fire / Smoke Alarms

Some smoke detectors were noted we believe these to be battery operated. The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply.

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



Alarm to be replaced

### Insurance

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

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

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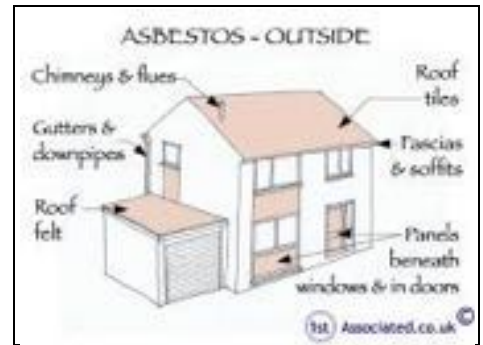
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## Asbestos

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. In this case we have noted asbestos to the flue within the roof space.

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



Asbestos externally

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

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

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## **SERVICES**

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

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

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## ELECTRICITY

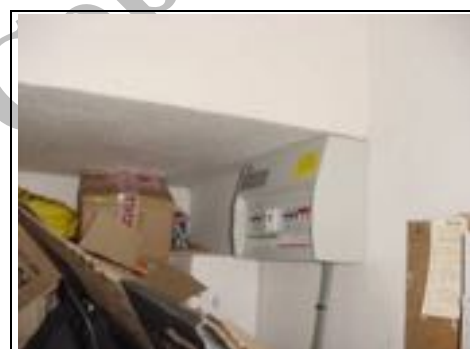


*It is strange to think that electricity only started to be used in domestic properties at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with gas lighting still being the norm for a good many years after.*

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

### Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the cupboard from the dining room on left side. The fuse board looked 1980's/1990's and better are now available. We would recommend additional socket points are added; please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Fuse Board

### Earth Test

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



Earth test

**ACTION REQUIRED:** 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

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and to provide suitable certification for any works carried out after 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005. Any comments made within this report or verbally do not change this requirement.

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

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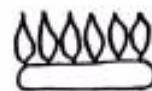
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## GAS



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

We are advised that the property has mains gas. David Ireson advised the consumer unit is located in a cupboard in the hallway (not seen due to stored items).

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

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

### Carbon Monoxide

No carbon monoxide monitors were noted.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** It is recommended that an audible carbon monoxide detector is fitted (complying with British Standard EN50291) within the property. Carbon monoxide detectors are no substitute for regular servicing of gas installations and their flues.

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## **PLUMBING AND HEATING**



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

### **Water Supply**

If you recall, I mentioned that the stopcock is normally under the kitchen sink. This was double checked by the occupier at the time of the survey (David Ireson) and he advised it was in the right cupboard as you enter the kitchen in the area that you were considering having a door.

### **Water Pressure**

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

### **Cold Water Cistern**

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

### **Plumbing**

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

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## Heating

There is a Worcester boiler located in the roof space on the right wall.

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



Boiler within roof



Flue from boiler within roof

## Ten Minute Heating Test

The heating was on during the course of the survey and it was pleasantly warm.

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

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

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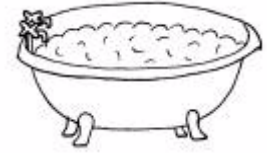
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## **BATHROOM**



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

### **Bathroom and separate WC**

The property has a two piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath and wash hand basin which looks in average condition.

There is a separate WC adjacent to the bathroom. The toilet seat is damaged and we recommend replacement.



Damaged toilet seat

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

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## **MAIN DRAINS**



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

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

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

### **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 two 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 – Front of garage**

We have not lifted the manhole as it is inset therefore are unable to comment.



Manhole in front of garage

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## **Inspection Chamber / Manhole Two - Middle of driveway**

We have not lifted the manhole as it is inset therefore are unable to comment.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a closed circuit TV camera report of the drains particularly as you are looking at adding to the drains.



Manhole to middle of driveway

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

## **Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage**

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

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

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal. Normally in a property of this age the rainwater drains discharge into a soak away.

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

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

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## OUTSIDE AREAS

The main focus of this report has been on the main building. We have taken a cursory inspection of the outbuilding and would be happy to return and carry out a survey if so required.

### GARAGE/PARKING



#### Garage

The property has a link garage with a felt roof. The garage has been subdivided with storage to the front and floor and ceiling added to the rear so can no longer gain car access



Garage to front



Rear view of garage



Front store area



Front concrete floor and rear timber floor



Close boarding to roof

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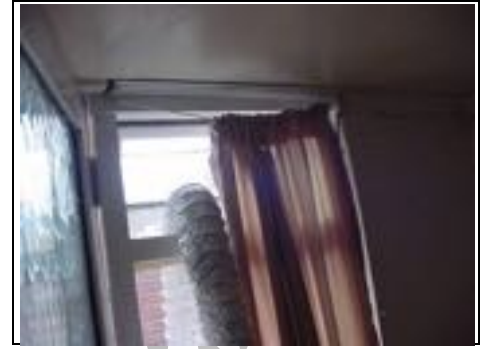




Garage



Tumble dryer and extract



Extract from tumble dryer through window

## Garage Roof

The garage has a flat roof covered in felt with a felt flashing. The water discharges to the rear of the property (in theory) however it is being caught by the shed on the rear. To the front of the property on the right side there looks to be water discharging as there is rot to the fascia board. If you re-roof we would recommend upgrading to a lead flashing as they are more pliable and tend to last longer.



Garage flat roof



Felt flashing



Rot to garage fascia



Shed adjacent to garage



Garage – water discharging on end gutter



Garage gutter overflowing onto shed

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## **Parking**

The front of the property has off-road parking.

## **Front Garden**

To the front there is a good sized garden and driveway.



Front garden

## **Rear Garden**

The rear garden has a grassed area and patio that sits on a sloping site with a tree hedge to the rear.



Rear patio area



Rear garden and trees



Step in garden due to sloping site

## **Boundaries**

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

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

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## **Neighbours**

### **Left Hand Neighbours**

We knocked at the time of the inspection but there was no response.

### **Right Hand Neighbours**

We knocked at the time of the inspection but there was no response.

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## **POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

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

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

However, with regard to Environmental reports or similar general reports on the environment please see our article link on the [www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk) Home Page.

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

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

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

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

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XXX, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK43 XXX

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

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

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

For and on Behalf of  
XXX  
Independent Chartered Surveyors  
XXX

**This Report is dated: XXX**

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## **REFERENCES**

The repair and maintenance of houses  
*Published by Estates Gazette Limited*

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

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

House Builders Bible  
*By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press*

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## **LIMITATIONS**

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

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

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

## **ENGLISH LAW**

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

## **SOLE USE**

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

## **APPROVALS/GUARANTEES**

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

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

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## **LAYOUT PLAN**

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

## **WEATHER**

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

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

## **NOT LOCAL**

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

## **OCCUPIED PROPERTY**

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

## **JAPANESE KNOTWEED**

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

A recent BBC news report dated April 2018 states that the latest research has been carried out by Swansea University, where they carried out trials near Cardiff and Swansea and tested 19 main methods of controlling the plant and they found that none of these methods eradicated it; [bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-43882916](http://bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-west-wales-43882916).

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to carry out your own research on this matter/due diligence before you legally 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, general configuration of the roof and stored items.
- 2) We did not open up the walls as we could not see a way of doing this without causing damage.
- 3) We did not open up the ground floor or the first floor as we could not see a way to do it without causing damage.
- 4) We had a limited inspection due to the stored items including the kitchen cupboards.
- 5) We did not have the benefit of talking to the owners or them answering our usual question and answers. We spoke to a relative David Ireson.
- 6) We thank you for taking the time to meet us during the survey.



Stored items within roof



Landing cupboard full of stored items

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## **BUILDING INSURANCE**

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

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

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

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

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

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# APPENDICES

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

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

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

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

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

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## **INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# French Drain

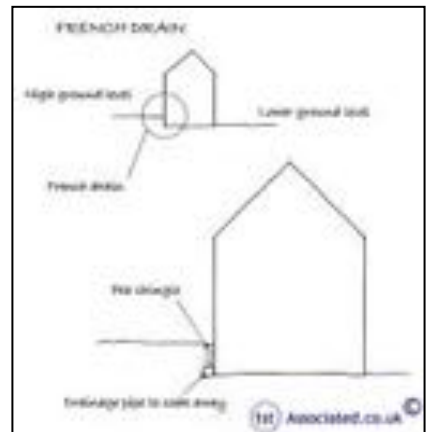
## Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

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

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

## What use is a French drain?

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **The French pond!**

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

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# How Condensation and Cold Bridging can affect 1970s properties

## What is cold bridging and how does it work?

A term and a problem called cold bridging we believe will become more common in years to come. We are finding more and more examples of Cold Bridging. This happens in certain types of property and to some extent it could be argued that it is a characteristic of that type of property and quite a complex issue to resolve. Unfortunately it means condensation is more likely.



1970's property with cold bridging to the roof beams and the lintels

## Cold Bridging

Cold bridging is caused by a colder element in the structure or fabric of the building allowing coldness to pass through. When warm moist air is present in the property and it passes through the colder elements of the structure we have what is known as Cold Bridging. This is often caused by a combination of issues. It can occur from things such as having a shower or a bath, cooking or clothes washing, particularly if you are drying washing on the radiators.



1970s property

## Cold bridging in commercial properties

It could, in commercial properties, be a large gathering of people breathing (this can cause a lot of humidity) in a building that has stood cold and empty for some time such as a church, village hall, sports centre or a crèche. These human atmospheres create a climate, which can result in condensation on the cold elements of the structure and fabric if the room is not ventilated properly.

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## Certain types of buildings are more susceptible to Condensation and Cold Bridging

### Our sketch on Cold Bridging

This is a good indication of the typical things that cause Cold Bridging in a house and how extraction from humidity generating areas such as the kitchen and the bathroom can reduce problems. You do need to look at how you live in the house.



Cold bridging/condensation

### Cold Bridging isn't just about condensation on mirrors

Cold Bridging isn't just about condensation on mirrors. Not only can it be an original characteristic of the building it can be encouraged by all types of extension and alterations.

Cold bridging is far worse than condensation as it is caused by an element in the structure, which you can do very little to change without great expense.

### Buying a modern building

If you buy a 1970's property for example, with concrete lintels that cause cold bridging, this is a characteristic of the property and it is very difficult to change. However not only could it be a characteristic of the building it could also be caused by alterations that you make to the building.



A close up view showing there is a concrete lintel over the door and window. This is where the cold bridging occurs causing condensation inside

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## To give you some examples of Cold Bridging

As mentioned above typically Cold Bridging can be caused by lintels and also by beams (which effectively are big lintels). These were very commonly used in 1960's and 1970's buildings and can lead to condensation over doors and windows. We mentioned a 1960's building but here are some examples of concrete lintels that were commonly used in the 1970's which today have caused cold bridging over the door and which in turn had led to condensation and deterioration of the paintwork.

Cold Bridging can also occur on metal lintels. We note that some modern metal lintels now have insulation in them, which we assume is to reduce cold bridging.

## Cold Bridging when is it likely to occur?

In our experience we have seen cold bridging occurring in:

- 1) Eras of properties where there are warm elements and colder elements to the building.
- 2) Where you have a mixture of warm rooms and cold rooms.

For example: Lounges and main bedrooms tend to be warmer than guest or spare bedrooms most of the time. Also sometimes rooms can warm up due to large areas of glass and thermal heat gain, which is very true in some conservatories also.

- 3) Humidity internally is high
- 4) Where it is colder but by no means very cold outside

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## Problems with 1970/1980 era properties relating to Cold Bridging

Let us take a look at the 1970's/1980's era of property to give an example of the problems we have come across with this era.

The 1970's is an era where we had just begun to think about insulating due to the oil crisis and where we added insulation into our structures

For example with:

1. cavity wall insulation or
2. double glazed windows.

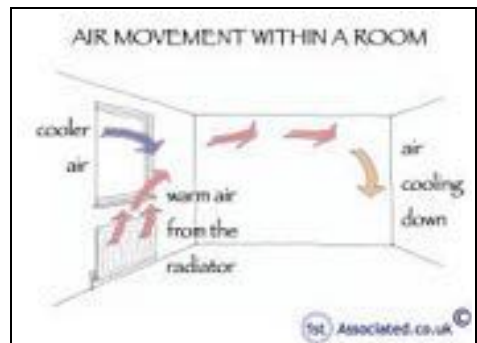
This meant they were warmer which has meant the significance of a lintel, over a door or window, being colder and allowing the transfer of coldness becomes much more important. This results in condensation that we commonly see above windows in this age and era of property.

### How to solve Cold Bridging

The difficulty is resolving cold bridging. Normally, where condensation is involved, if you get the balance of warm and coolness of the air, ventilation and movement you can reduce considerably the chances of condensation. Airing the room by opening the windows, which seems to have gone out of fashion, can help considerably.



Cavity walls insulated



Air movement within a room

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## Where do we most commonly find Cold Bridging?

Our thoughts on this have very much changed as we used to say that cold bridging was typically found in properties from the 1960's/1970's. However we are increasingly finding it in a broader range of properties, particularly Victorian properties, where people are trying to live to modern standards of heating and insulation without understanding that the properties need to breathe as well. We have also found cold bridging in properties where extensions have been carried out and where the extension has been built to a different standard to the original property.



Trickle vent

## Cold Bridging can your lifestyle be a factor?

This is often a contentious and difficult question, particularly where the occupier is a tenant and there is a disagreement between the landlord and the occupier as to why there is mould in the property. In our experience the major factor is the size of the family living in a property. This is especially the case with large families with young children and where in turn there is a lot of washing of clothes being done. This is particularly the case in the winter months, with the wet washed clothes being dried on radiators. Also general hygiene washing and not to mention cooking to feed everyone all lead toward a more humid atmosphere.



Era when timber (renewable source) windows returned with double glazing

This is generally known as the lifestyle of occupants and can be a major factor particularly where there are legal cases as to the problems within a property.

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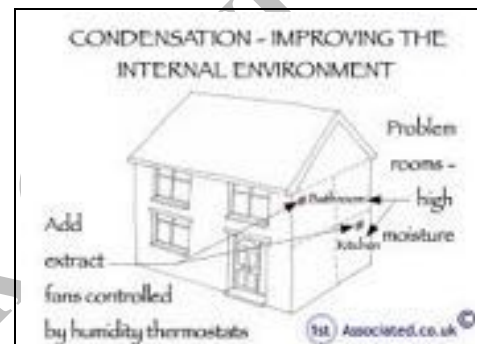


## Is Cold Bridging and Condensation a design problem or a lifestyle problem?

This really is a difficult question to answer. We have been involved in a number of cases as expert witnesses or advocates and the answer can vary. We would comment that there are factors that can be changed and factors that can't be changed. For example, the occupiers' lifestyle can in most cases be amended. This may involve the occupier having an understanding of the problems they are causing. For example, drying lots of washing on a radiator inside may be causing excessive moisture in the atmosphere. Equally not opening the windows and closing or sealing up vents can be a problem.

### Design of the Building

Sometimes it really is down to the design of the property. Where there are cold elements in it, such as a concrete structural frame or concrete lintels, when these are in contact with moist air condensation occurs. Sometimes this is impossible to stop but often it is possible to reduce it by having a better circulation of air with a better heat and coolness balance and the removal of any moist air.



Condensation

### Things to remember about an air brick

If you are thinking about adding an air brick then you need to be aware that airbricks don't actually allow that much air through. Although externally a nine by three air brick has a lot of gaps, as these gaps taper, it is generally considered that only about one inch square of air regularly passes through the grills.



Air brick may not ventilate room enough

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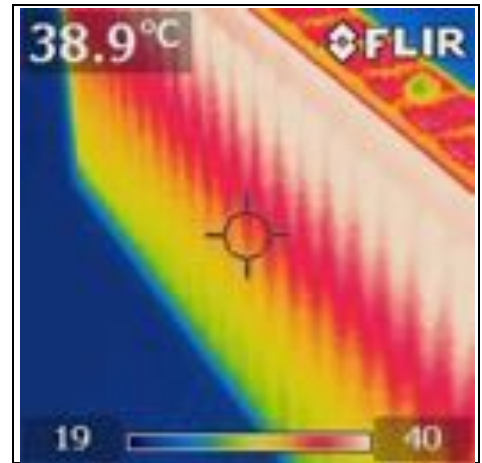


## In the winter we have condensation problems but in the summer we don't

The different seasons mean that the building reacts differently. Anyone who has lived in an old property will know that windows and doors particularly sliding sash windows will swell during the winter months.

There can be similar issues with a property where, regardless of your lifestyle, during some of the different seasons, for example the winter or a wet spring, taking a shower can relate in condensation even with extract fans running (although this is far less likely).

It also depends on what the humidity level is outside as this can be greater than inside. The moisture/humidity will then seek out colder rooms such as spare bedrooms and the corners of cupboards. When you open these at a later date you will be surprised to find black mould.



Double panelled radiator thermal image



Condensation visible on metal return of window

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