

Modern Example Residential Building Survey



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GENERAL 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 more 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 are aware that a report of this size is somewhat daunting and almost off-putting to the reader because of this.

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.

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THANK YOU

We thank you for using our building surveying services and thank you for taking the time to meet us at the property during the building survey.

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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

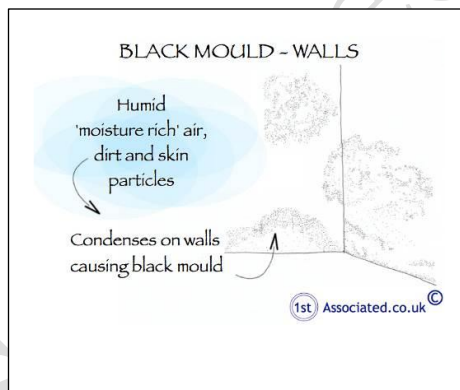
Throughout the Report, we have endeavoured to define any technical terms used. This is shown in "Courier New" typeface for clarity.

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. We also use sketches to give guidance and clarity on various issues in the property and we use them to help you understand the issues, scenarios and situations better.



Black mould



Black mould/dampness

ORIENTATION

For the purposes of the report, we have taken the front entrance door as the front. 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.

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SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two storey mid-terrace property of a block of four which has had a rear flat roof extension with gardens to the front and rear.

The property has a higher than average water table level in the area. Looking at historic maps as far back as 1895 it looks like this area has generally been a marshy area although it has been used for nursery gardening as well as farming.

The owner advised he thought the property was built in 1967, it does look typically like a property built post-war in the 1950's-1970's. If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| 1960 | The average house price in England is only £2,500 |
| 1966 | England beat Germany to win the 1966 World Cup at Wembley |
| 1970-1973 | Property Boom at start of 70s the average house price was £4,057 by 1975 average house price had quadrupled to £19,925 |

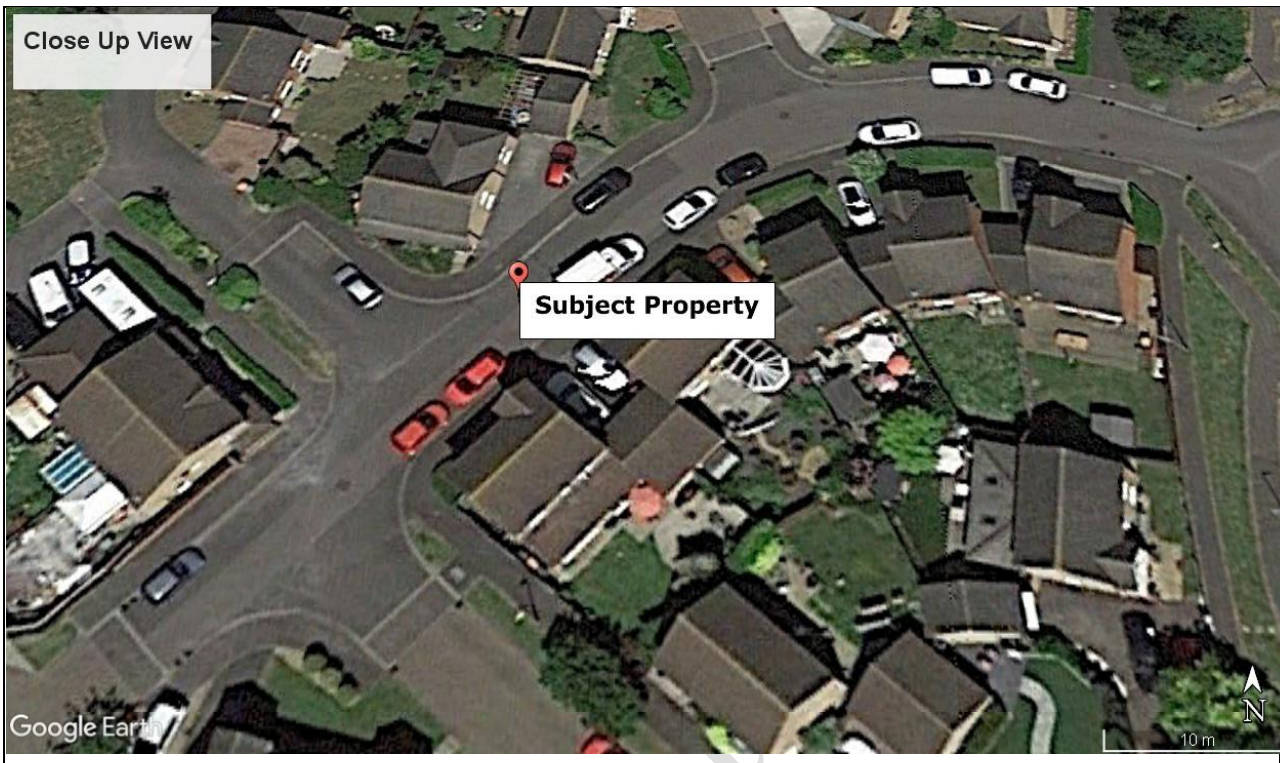
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LOCATION PLANS



Note; The photographs identify the building and are not necessarily where the boundaries, etc, are.

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EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



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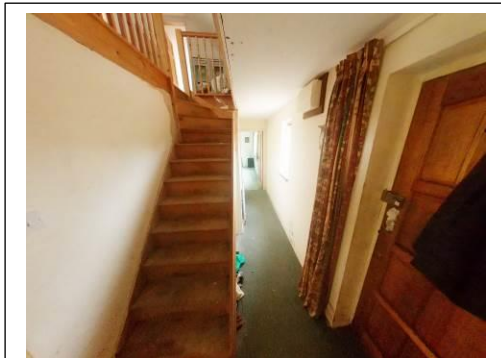
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INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS - ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

The following are a sample of internal photographs from many different properties we have surveyed.

Ground Floor



Entrance hall



Front of through lounge



Middle of through lounge



Rear dining area under flat roof



Kitchen



Kitchen

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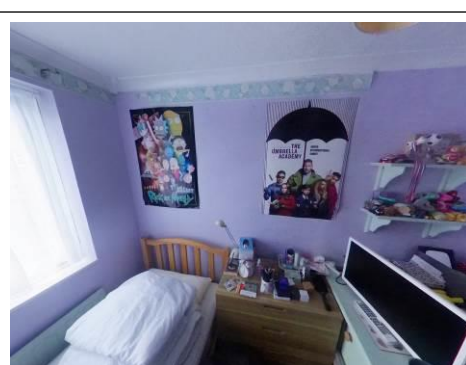
First Floor



Landing



Front right bedroom one



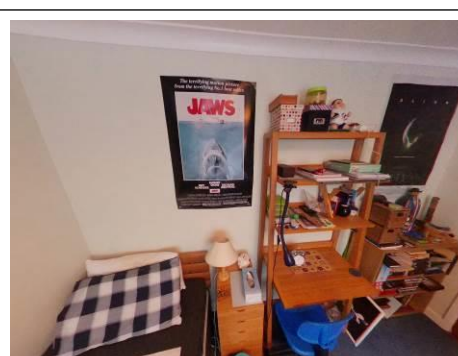
Front left bedroom two



WC rear left



Bathroom rear left



Rear right bedroom three

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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Chimneys/Flues	One brick chimney
Main Roof	Pitched, clad with concrete tiles
Main Roof Structure	TRADA style roof structure
Gutters and Downpipes	Profile Plastic
Rear Roof	Flat roof, covered with mineral felt with felt flashing
Soil and Vent Pipe	Cast iron soil and vent pipe to rear left corner
Walls	Stretcher bond brickwork (assumed)
Fascias and Soffits	Plastic with no running vent (assumed)
Windows and Doors	Plastic double glazed windows with trickle vents

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Internal

Ceilings	Finished with textured paint that looks to be from the asbestos era
Perimeter Walls	Modern gypsum plaster finish (assumed)
Internal Walls	Predominately solid (assumed)
Ground Floor	Solid underfoot, assumed concrete
First Floor	Joist and floorboards (assumed)

Services

Drainage	The manholes are located to the rear of the property.
Gas	Consumer unit not found
Electrics	The electric fuse board is 1960s and is located in the hallway
Heating	There is a wall mounted Worcester boiler located in the roof space

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summaries are not ideal as they try to précis often quite complex subjects into a few paragraphs. We believe that the black mould problem relates to condensation in the property which we have discussed within the section below however the property also needs air movement and ventilation and heating.



It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focused 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 (including 360 degree/aerial photos) 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.

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 and how it is affecting you if you do want to sell the property.

INTRODUCTION

This property was built in an era after the war when we were looking to build houses fairly quickly and new materials and techniques were developed;

For example, this house has elements of asbestos which at the time was considered a new material with many good properties.

As you are probably aware asbestos now has lots of health hazards identified which is why we are recommending within this report removal or making it safe.

These houses were built before the 1970's oil crisis which is an era in which we did not consider good insulation of houses although some elements to insulate the house have been added more recently which is the case with many of the houses built post war 1950's/1960's.

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You have asked us to comment on how to reduce the dampness and black mould in the property. You need to be aware that often dampness and condensation is a combination of issues and often it is not an instant solution but we do believe that you need to deal with the cause of the problem rather than just dealing with the effect which is often what people do.

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) These properties are larger than typical modern properties with good sized gardens (if you like gardening).

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

THE BAD

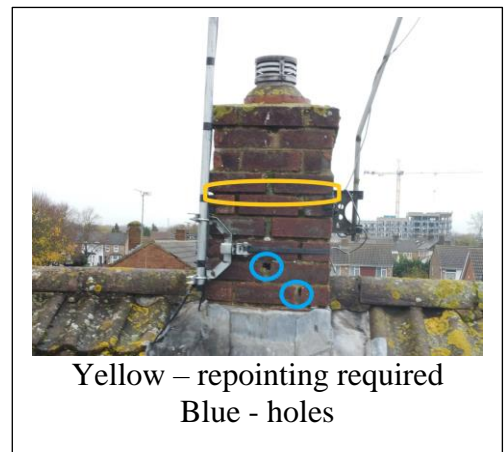
Problems / issues raised in the 'bad' section are usually solvable, but often need negotiation upon.

1.0) Chimney

The chimney is weathered and in need of repointing. This should be a shared cost with your neighbour on the right hand side.

ACTION REQUIRED: Repair and repoint.

ANTICIPATED COST: If this can be carried out from a ladder and crawler boards we would expect costs in the region of £500 - £1,000 and more if scaffolding is required; please obtain quotations within the next two months.



Yellow – repointing required
Blue - holes

Please see the Chimneystacks Section of this Report.

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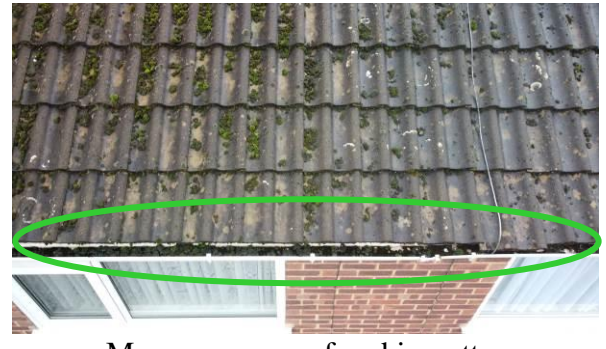


2.0) Main roof and moss

There is some moss on the roof particularly to the rear. The moss can cause accelerated deterioration and also blocks gutters. There looks in turn to have then been overflowing of the gutters which may discharge down the walls of the property making them damp and less energy efficient than dry walls.



Moss to front gutters



Moss on rear roof and in gutter

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend removing moss with a soft brush and trowel, we do not recommend high pressure cleaning or chemicals are used on the roof tiles as they can damage the tiles.

You need to regularly clear the gutters and ensure they are free flowing and not blocked with moss.

Also, clear the moss off the rear flat roof periodically.



Discoloration to gutters of rear single storey extension

ANTICIPATED COST: £500 - £1,000; please obtain quotations as soon as possible, ideally within two months of this report.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section of this Report.

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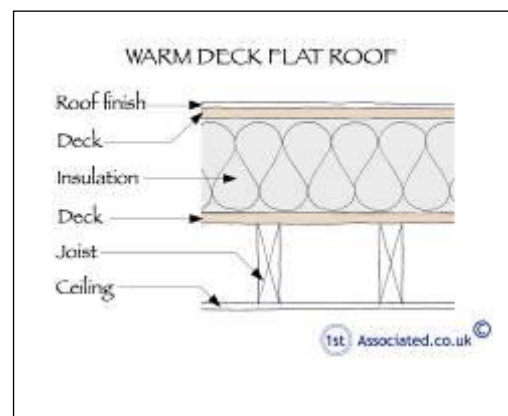
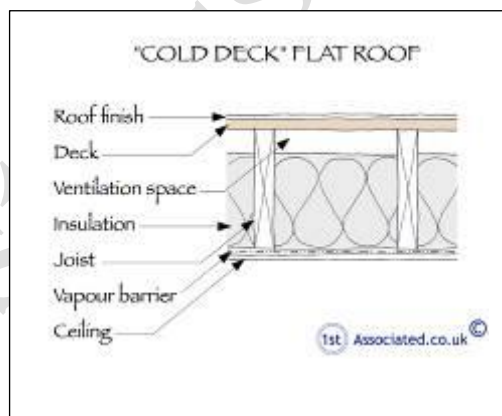
3.0) Rear flat roof

The rear flat roof is flat with minimal fall on it which may seem a strange comment but we would expect a flat roof to have a fall of about fifteen to twenty two degrees and this is why we would term this as a flat, flat roof. We can see moss on the flat roof which may have come off the main pitched roof.



Improvements to the rear flat roof

We think that the rear flat roof will have a minimum amount of insulation and as such thermal efficiency of the roof could be improved by adding insulation although it is fairly difficult to retrospectively fit. However, insulation could be fitted when the roof is re-roofed. We would also advise that we much prefer to see a lead flashing than a felt flashing. It is likely to currently have what is known as a cold decking with a small amount of insulation. In modern properties it is common to use a warm decking.



ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend re-roofing with a cut to fall insulation and detailing such as lead flashings, etc.

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ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £2,500 - £5,000; please obtain quotations within the next two months.

4.0) Black mould and condensation

We can see black mould throughout the property and also condensation occurring. This era of property generally has an above average possibility of getting black mould and condensation due to the way it has been constructed and how we have changed how we use properties over the years. However, with care we think you can improve the present conditions.



Bathroom extract with black mould around it



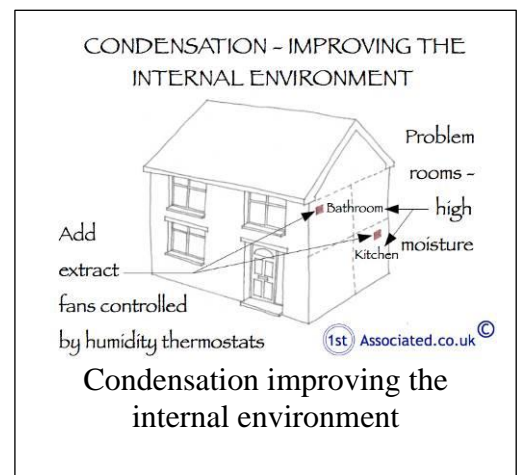
Black mould in front left bedroom



Condensation occurring to end window in kitchen

4.1) Extraction

Ensure that any humidity generating areas have good extraction. 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.



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Drying clothes inside



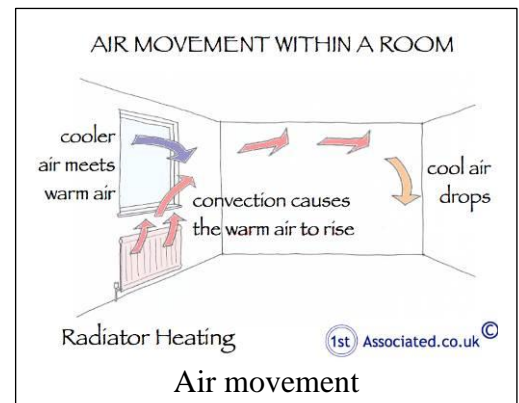
Air filter over cooker but no extraction in kitchen noted

You also need to remember to clean down any showers that are used to the walls and any panels and shut doors when using bathrooms, etc. as this will help reduce the amount of moisture travelling around the property.

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

4.2) Improve air circulation and ventilation

A way of helping to reduce black mould and condensation is to improve the air circulation and ventilation in the property. We would recommend that the existing single panel radiators are increased to double panel radiators and internal radiators are moved under windows to help airflow. You will need to check with a heating engineer that the boiler has suitable British Thermal Units. See our comments in the Services Section.



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4.3) Allowing airflow

The house and the roof needs to also have a good clear space of area to allow air to circulate. We would recommend clearing the roof and clearing the building generally which will help air circulation and minimise the black mould that tends to sit behind units such as the area within the front left bedroom and also goes to areas of cold bridging; please see our section on cold bridging.

4.4) Cold Bridging

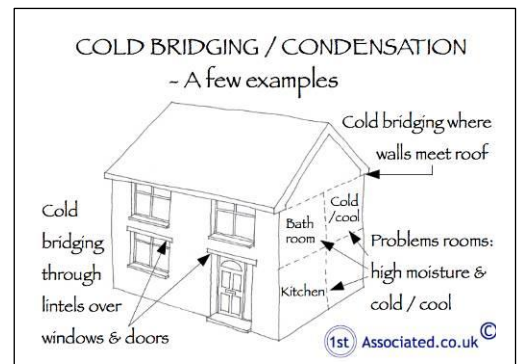
You need to be aware that this property can suffer from cold bridging. This is cold elements in the structure, often above windows where there are sometimes concrete lintels and also the corners of cupboards and the corners of walls which are cooler and there is little air movement can be areas where black mould gathers.

Black mould defined

Black mould can be problematic in this type of property. It is a combination of humidity carrying skin particles and dust and dirt around the property.

Cold Bridging/thermal bridging Defined

Cold bridging/thermal 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.



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4.5) Condensation to pipework in lounge

It may be that condensation is occurring on the pipework. It is very difficult for us to understand this without opening up this area as the pipework is covered up.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to open up this area to see what is going on and forward photographs to us to comment further.

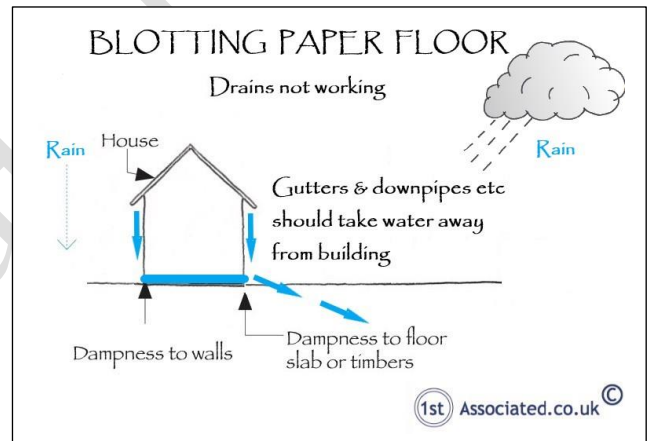


Deterioration to middle of through lounge where pipes are concealed

4.6) High water table level?

We believe the water table level in the area may be higher than we typically find. When looking at historic maps it looks like the area was quite marshy. We believe that due to this the ground floor slab could be acting like blotting paper absorbing moisture in the surrounding grounds.

In addition to this, it looks like the drains to the front have been blocked and this can lead to further dampness getting in the property. It also should not be discounted there may be leaking supply pipes.



Mould next to building on rear left side



Decorative French drain down left side of property



Mould around the base of the single storey extension to rear

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Decorative French drain defined

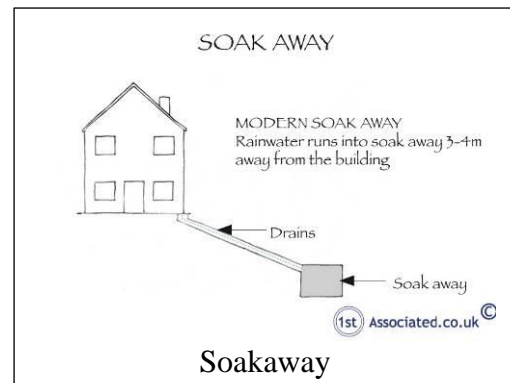
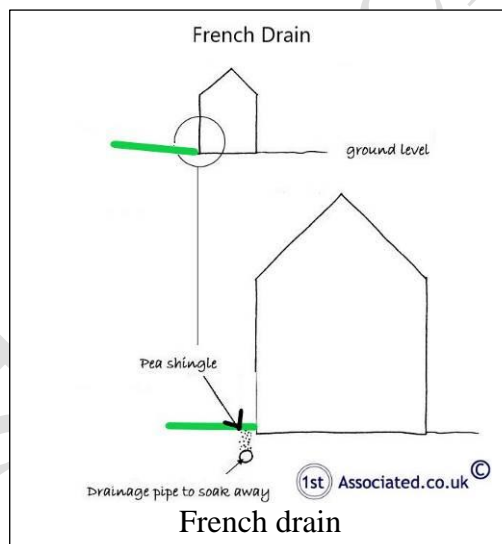
There is French drain to the side of the property which normally helps take water away but this looks to be decorative.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to carry out further investigation with regard to whether there are any leaking drains or pipes in the area.

We would recommend that ground levels around the property are lowered (a DIY type job). Also, we would recommend cutting the bush away to the front as you would also be able to see whether the vertical crack on the inside of the property is also on the outside and also it would allow sunlight and air movement to get around the property better.



If this does not improve following the above recommendations we would then suggest a French drain and/or land drain is added to divert the water around the property and is discharged into a manhole (subject to obtaining approval) and/or a soakaway added (which will be additional cost) which will help reduce some of the effects of the sloping site.



ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £2,500 – £5,000 for a French drain if you can go into the existing drains, more if it needs a soakaway; please obtain quotations within the next two months.

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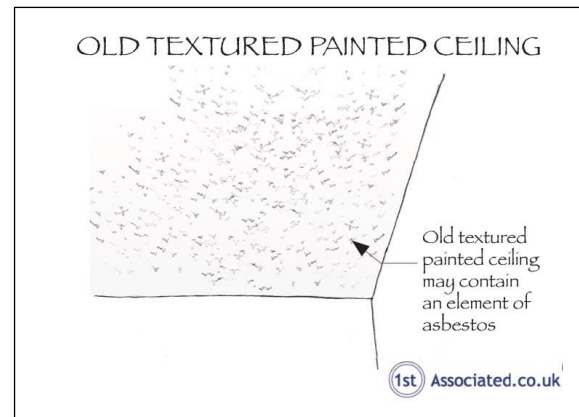
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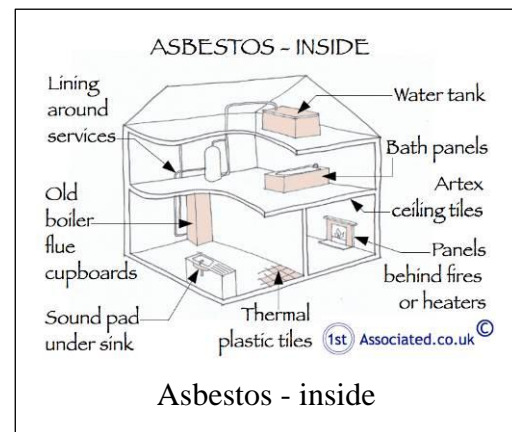
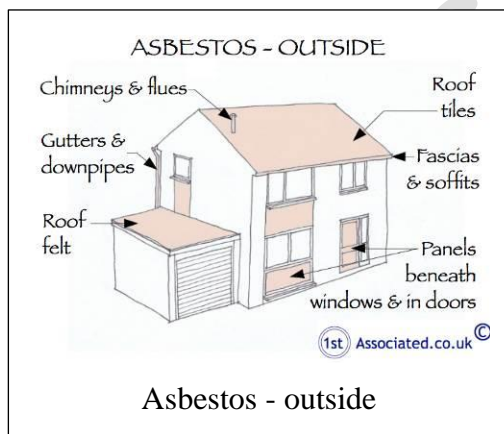
5.0) Asbestos

There is a disused asbestos water tank in the roof space and there looks to be textured paint used throughout the property which contains asbestos.



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.



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: 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. This needs to be carried out as soon as possible as this would put some people off buying the property.

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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: Asbestos costs can vary considerably; we are forever surprised at the variety in quotes. Please obtain quotations within the next two months.

Please see the Other Matters Section of this Report.

6.0) Energy efficiency

We noted there was no EPC on this property. We did note other properties have ratings of D and E which is the poorest rating you can get.

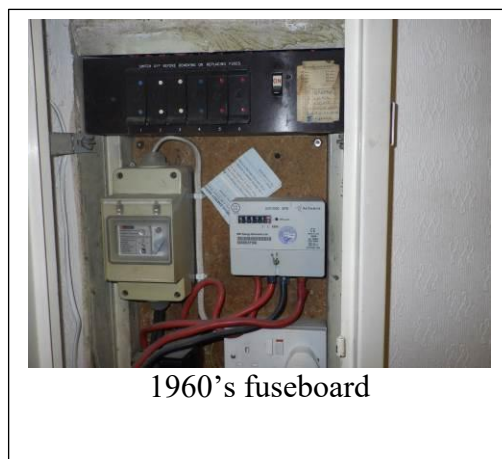
ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend speaking to some neighbours who have Energy Performance Certificate D ratings and you will be able to see what improvements and alterations they make. We are more than happy to discuss this with you.

SERVICES

7.0) Dated fuse board

The fuse board is 1960's and better are now available. We noted an above average level of extension leads being used which generally means there are a lack of socket points.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend a new fuse board with a metal casing; modern standards require half hour to one hour fire resistant casing around a fuse board.



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

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

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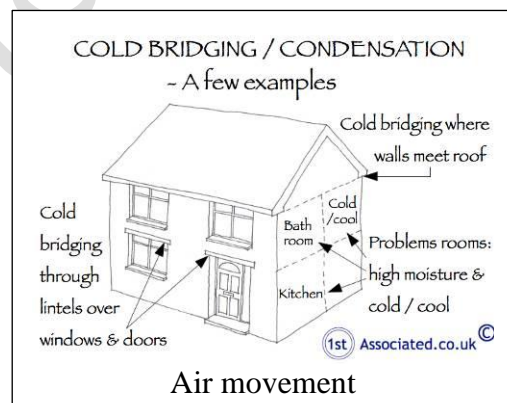
ANTICIPATED COST: We expect costs in the region of:-

- 1) £250 - £500 for a test and report
- 2) £250 - £500 for a new fuse board
- 3) £500 - £1,000 for additional socket points and updating
- 4) Plus any further work recommended

Please obtain quotations within the next two months.

8.0) Internal radiators

We noted the radiators in some areas are internal/not under the windows which is the usual position. This is often carried out on cheaper central heating systems to save the labour and piping costs of positioning the radiators underneath the windows. However, it then reduces the air movement in the room which can lead to black mould.



Single panel radiators

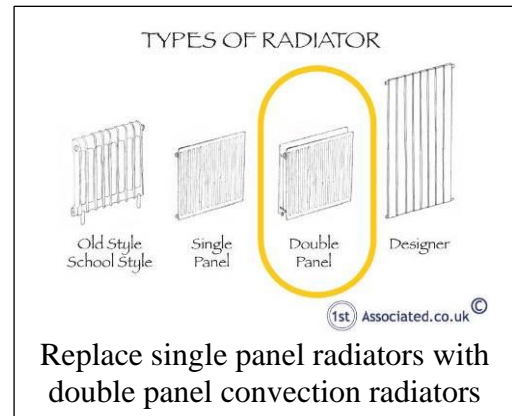
The property has single panel radiators. These may not warm the property to the heat that you desire. We much prefer to see double panel convection radiators.

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ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend you move the radiators underneath the windows as this gives a better circulation of air and reduces the chance of condensation.

You may wish upgrade to double panel convection radiators.

We do not recommend drying clothes on the radiators.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £150 - £300 (one hundred and fifty to three hundred pounds) per double panel convection radiator; please obtain quotations.

9.0) Drainage

In this case the front manhole was blocked.

Manholes Defined

Access areas usually large enough to fit a person in so work can be carried out. Manholes are used where there is a change in direction of pipes or new pipes join the main run. It is a good location for clearing any blockages.



ACTION REQUIRED: Clear the drains.

We would recommend a closed circuit TV camera report to check the condition of the drains. This is likely to be a shared drain and therefore a shared cost.

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

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

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THE UGLY

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

We think the amount of black mould and condensation is quite bad and as such our recommendations need to be carried out as soon as possible.

PLAN OF ACTION

- 1) Add large, good quality humidity controlled extract fans to the kitchen, the bathroom and any humidity generating areas for example rooms that are used for drying clothes internally during winter months, for example the front left bedroom (we would assume that clothes will be dried externally during the warmer months). By large extract fans we mean 150mm.
- 2) We would recommend clearing the moss from the roof and from the gutters. This will need to be regularly carried out which is generally best in the summer months when the moss dries. You need to keep an eye on it from time to time. Initially we would do it as soon as you can; you did mention when your son is coming home he is useful in helping with this type of thing.

ANTICIPATED COST: You indicated that you are likely to do this work yourself, we would comment be careful when working at high levels.

- 3) Unblock the front drain which can be carried out with a pressure jet. You should speak to the neighbour on the right hand side as this should be a shared cost.
- 4) Have a heating engineer look at the Worcester boiler to check that it has the right number of Thermal Units to increase the single panel radiators to double panel radiators and also put the radiators underneath the windows rather than having internal radiators to allow a better throughflow of air. You need to instigate a regular heating regime in the property to help dry it out.
- 5) Clean down the black mould that is visible with a vinegarette or bleach; the jury is still out as to which is the best. You need to make sure that you have dealt with the causes as best you can before cleaning down.

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- 6) Clear out the roof space and clear the house as much as possible.
- 7) Redecorate internally using water based breathable paints. With regard to the mouldings you will have to look at each ceiling in turn and decide.

The textured paint could be asbestos – we recommend getting an asbestos report and carrying out work as they recommend. We are not asbestos surveyors but often the recommendation is to encapsulate the textured paint which you can do with a sticky plaster.

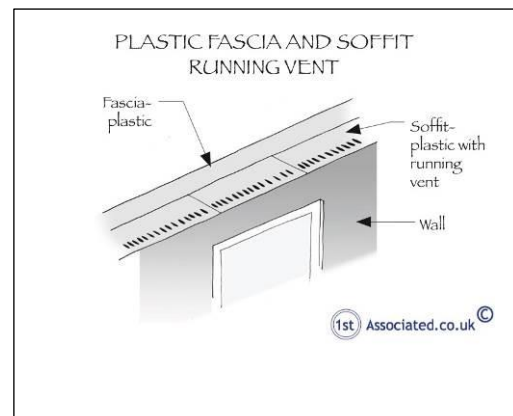
Painting over cracks

Before you paint over any cracks you should photograph them and have a record of where they are as then you will be able to see if they re-appear. It is always best to have a record and then write down exactly where everything is located.

- 8) With the coming of the better weather we would recommend repointing the chimney; this should be a shared cost with your neighbour.
- 9) Look at the flat roof to see if there is any water coming in through it and get this patched remembering that this is a flat, flat roof and as such you will get water sitting on it and a moss build-up that needs to be cleared from time to time.

- 10) We would recommend adding a vented soffit board and air vents to the ridge to allow a throughflow of air in the roof space.

ANTICIPATED COST: £1,500 - £3,000; please obtain quotations.



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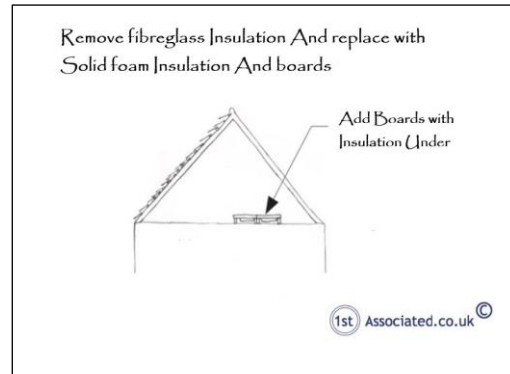
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11) Also, increase the insulation to 300mm. We would recommend a loft board with insulation is used throughout the roof space as this also allows some ventilation to the ceiling joists.

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



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SERVICES & YOUR OWN INDEPENDENT TESTING

Whilst we appreciate the focus of the report is on the dampness/condensation in the property we did note that you have some old services particularly the electric fuse board and also older style single panel radiators within the property.

Electric Fuse Board

The electric fuse board is dated/1960s and is located in the hallway.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend a new fuse board with a metal casing as soon as possible as the property is damp and electricity could be conducted; modern standards require half hour to one hour fire resistant casing around a fuse board.

We recommend a test and report and any recommendations should be carried out by a NICEIC registered, or equivalent, approved electrical contractor or similarly approved.

Heating

There is a wall mounted Worcester boiler located in the roof space; please see our earlier comments with regards to the single panel radiators and internal radiators.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend upgrading the radiators to double panel radiators. We would also recommend the system be tested and overhauled and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

Water Supply

There is danger in older properties of having leaking water supply pipes and this may be adding to the water table level. We would recommend that you speak to the water company to ask them if they have carried out replacements. Also, ask the water company if they can carry out a test to check if there are any water leaks.

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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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.

DIY/Handyman Type Work

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work however we do not know what your skill level is and the equipment you have therefore you need to take care when carrying out work. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

Market Value

We have not been asked to comment upon the market value 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.

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 (preferably three quotes). The cost of building work has many variables such as the cost of labour. For unskilled labour we currently use between £75 and £125 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradespeople we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradespeople. 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 probably be best to supervise the work if it is complex, both of which we can do if so required.

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SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



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

There are a number of issues to consider here. You do need to be aware that not carrying out our recommendations could lead to further problems at a later date. We are happy to discuss these with you further.

With winter coming we feel the work should be carried out as a matter of urgency.

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

Throughout the Report we have recommended obtaining quotations within the next two months. 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.

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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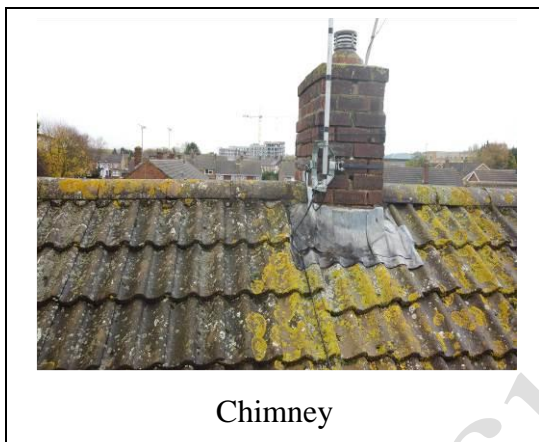
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AERIAL VIEW - 360 PHOTOS

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).



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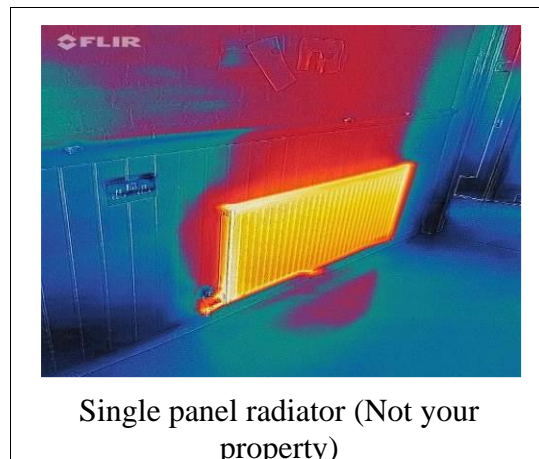
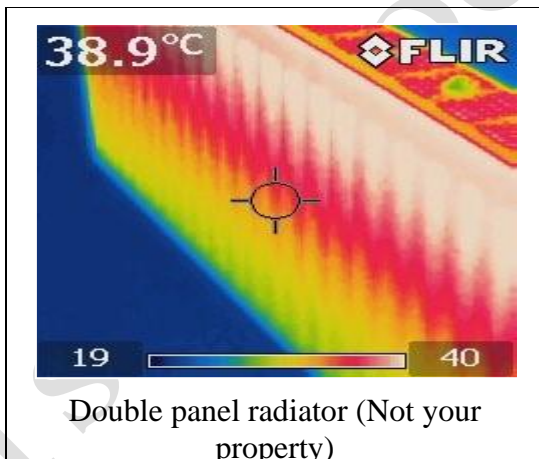
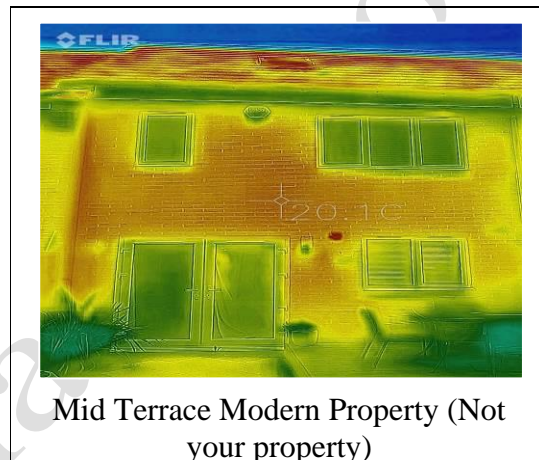
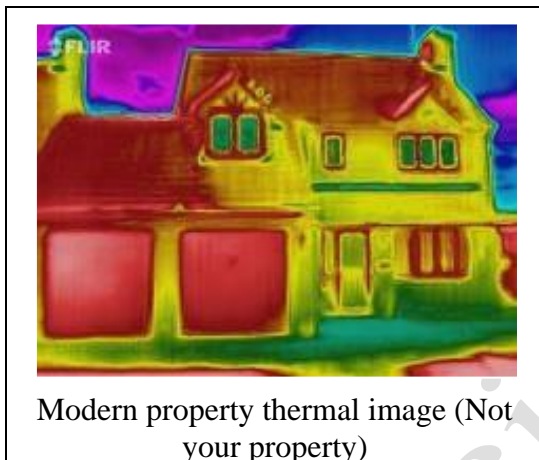


EXAMPLE THERMAL IMAGE PHOTOGRAPHS

- Not Your Property

Thermal imaging photography can establish warm and cold areas, it also helps us to identify materials within the property. In this case we have not carried out any thermal imaging. Below are example thermal image photographs (not your property).

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



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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 Freehold or Long leasehold, with no unusual or onerous clauses.

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 - just phone us.

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



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EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS



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

There is one chimney to this property located on the right which sits on the Party Wall (all directions given as you face the property).

Chimney One – Front Right

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

The flaunchings were made from cement and are in average condition.

Flaunchings Defined

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

We noted aerials attached to the chimney which we are not keen on as it can destabilise the chimney.

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



Chimney needs repointing

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FLUES

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

The property has a cast iron flue with a lead flashing to the rear left. The cast iron is rusting and it looks like the lead needs making good. Also, note the moss to the rear roof.



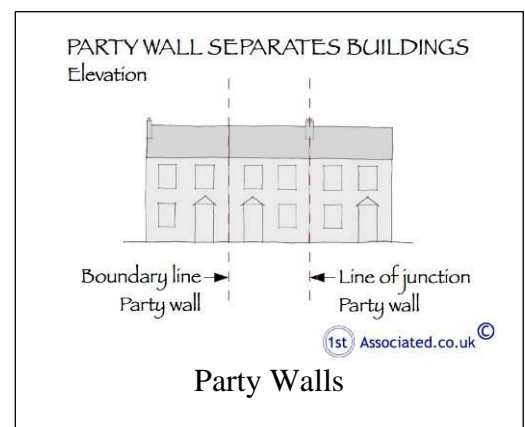
PARTY WALLS

The party wall relates to shared items, such as the chimney and firewall. If you do any work on these, you will need to deal with the Party Wall Etc. Act 1996. 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, requires agreement under the Party Wall Etc. Act 1996. We would be more than happy to offer you help and advice in this matter.



Specifically, in this case we would comment that for any work to the chimney we recommend you consult with your neighbour before you do anything, this should be a shared cost all things being equal.

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

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

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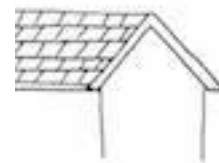
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MAIN ROOF COVERINGS



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 two areas:

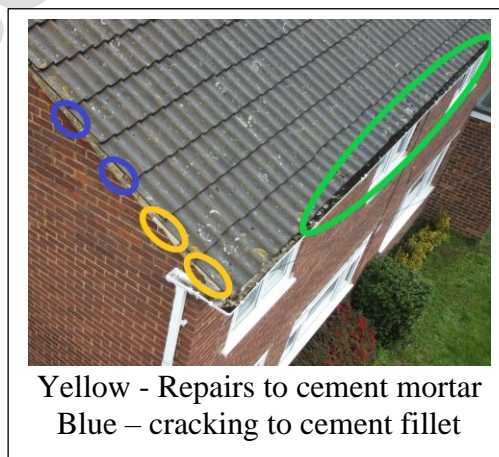
1. Main Roof
2. Rear Flat Roof

Main Roof

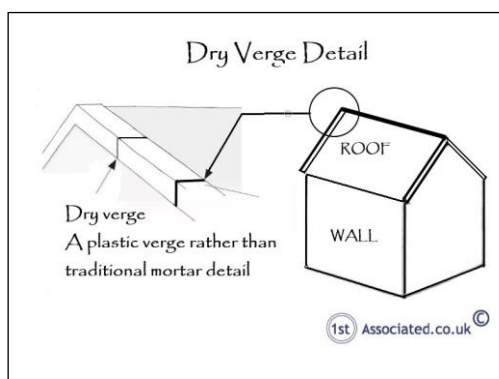
The roof is pitched and clad with concrete tiles and, from ground level, this looks in slightly below average condition considering the roof's age, type and style with a moss covering. There looks to have been repairs to the side of the roof which look relatively new. We do not recall you advising about these during the course of our survey; please feel free to telephone us. We have also highlighted some examples of cracking to the cement fillet; it may be worth you putting a plastic covering over these to stop water getting in.

Moss

The moss was particularly bad on the rear of the roof.



Yellow - Repairs to cement mortar
Blue – cracking to cement fillet



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

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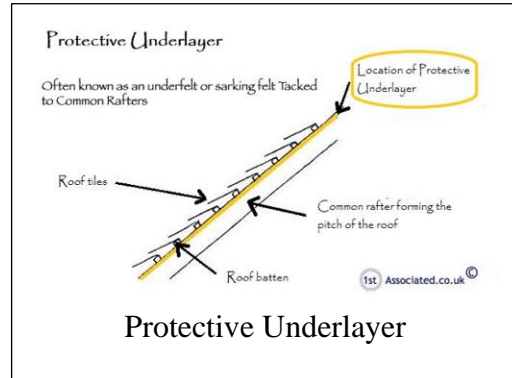
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PROTECTIVE UNDERLAYERS

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.



When we inspected the loft space, we found a Hessian based bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s. We generally found it to be in average condition with damage in some areas/areas that were not fitted particularly well, which is what we typically find.



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

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.

Rear Flat Roof

The flat roof is located to the rear and is covered with mineral felt. We would comment it is in slightly below average condition for its age, type and style with a moss covering. This roof has a mineral felt flashing, we would much prefer to see lead.

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

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

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

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ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



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.

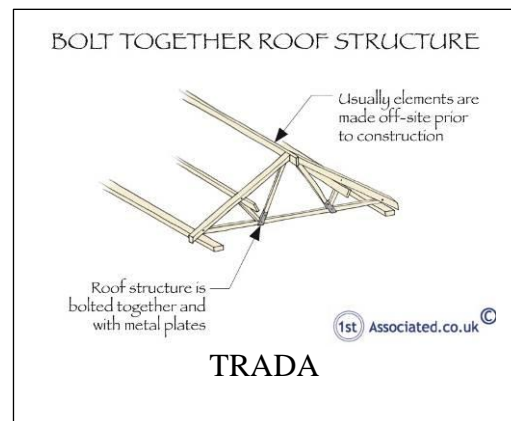
MAIN ROOF ACCESS

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch in the landing. There is a loft ladder, electric light and secured floorboards which make the loft space safer and easier to use.

The loft had a lot of stored items which limited our viewing slightly and we would recommend these are removed as soon as possible.

ROOF STRUCTURE

This type of roof structure has what is known as a TRADA style roof truss. These are bolted together and are relatively unusual. The Timber Research and Development Association (TRADA), originally based at Princes Risborough but partly relocated to Watford, were the forerunners of the modern day pre-fabricated truss. We have never come across any problems, with the exception of the bolts rusting.



Without the manufacturer's calculations and installation details we cannot comment categorically on the roof.

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ROOF TIMBERS

We have inspected the roof structure for:-

1. Serious active wood destroying insects
2. Structurally significant defects
3. Structurally significant wet rot and dry rot

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



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

Common Rafters Defined

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

Purlins Defined

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

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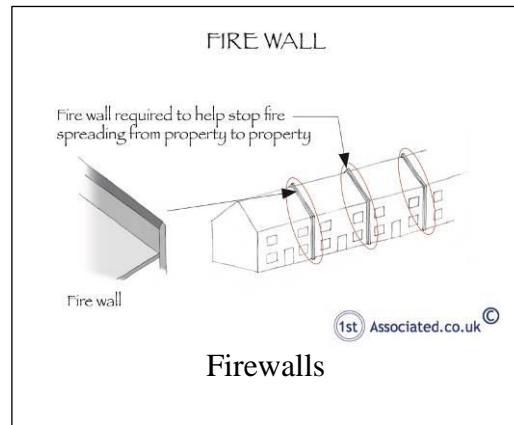


FIREWALLS

The property has one firewall located to the right side (all directions given as you face the property). The firewall is also a Party Wall. There looks to have been some repair work carried out, you may know about this as you have been in the property a long time.

Firewalls Defined:

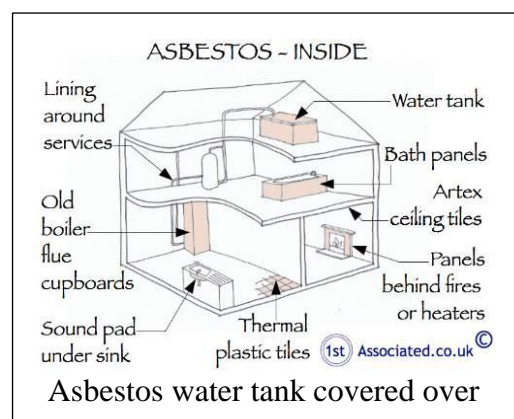
Firewalls help prevent the spread of fire through roofs and are a relatively recent Building Regulation requirement.



WATER TANKS

There is a disused asbestos water tank which is covered over and no longer in use.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend removing the water tank safely. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



VENTILATION

No ventilation was noted.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend adding vents.

INSULATION

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

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ELECTRIC CABLES

We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of the wiring found in the roof. In this case, there was insufficient quantity of wiring to comment.

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

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

GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES

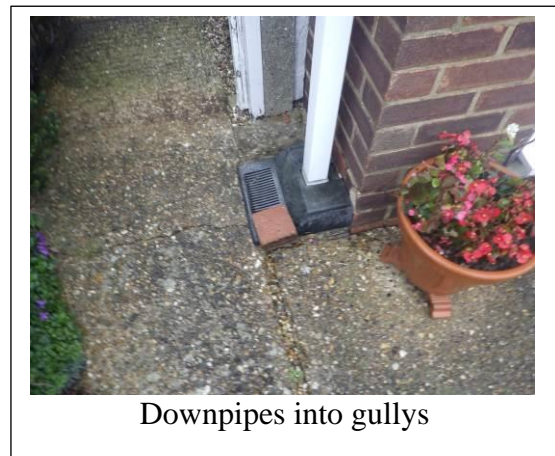
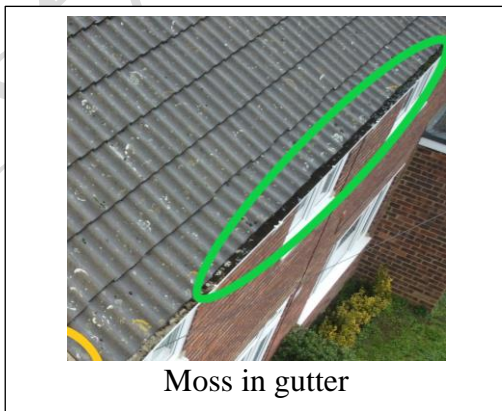


The function of the gutters and downpipes is to carry rainwater from the roof to the ground keeping the main structure as dry as possible.

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

The property has profile plastic gutters and downpipes. They are in average condition for their age, type and style however have moss within the gutters.

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.



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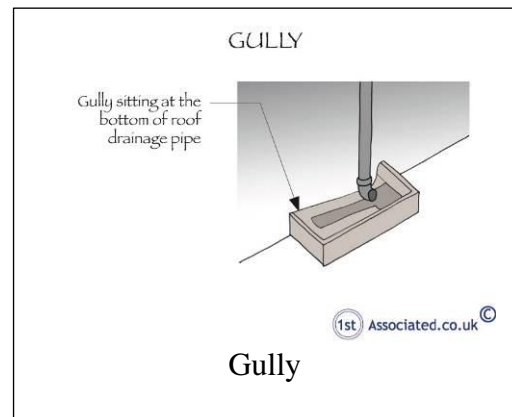
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Gullies Defined:

Gullies are useful for the rainwater downpipes to discharge into, as they allow any leaves and other similar debris that have been collected to not go into the main drainage system causing blockages.



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

The property has cast iron soil and vent pipes which need redecoration. The cast iron may be saveable but it may be more economical to replace, we always recommend trying to save if at all possible.

In our experience, cast iron soil and vent pipes last longer than plastic providing they are regularly maintained by this we mean redecorated and any cracks repaired.



ACTION REQUIRED: Redecorate in the warmer months of XXX. Please see our comments in the Flues Section.

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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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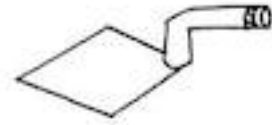
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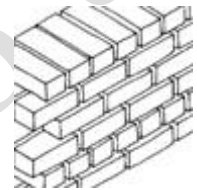
WALLS



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 finished with brickwork.

BRICKWORK



The property is finished in a Stretcher bond brickwork in a cement based mortar. This is from the era when it was unlikely that insulation was added, in fact from what we can see it looks like insulation has been added at a later date.

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.



Repairs to the brickwork/blocking up of an opening

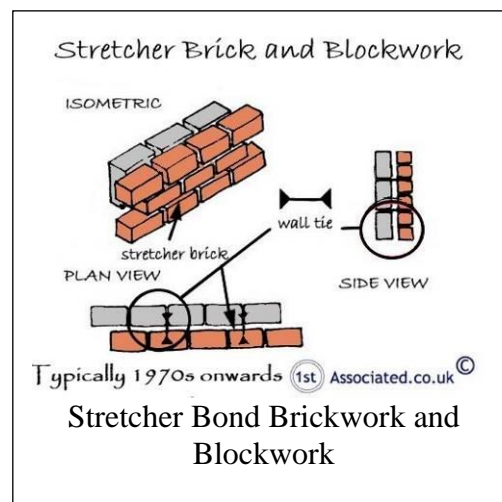
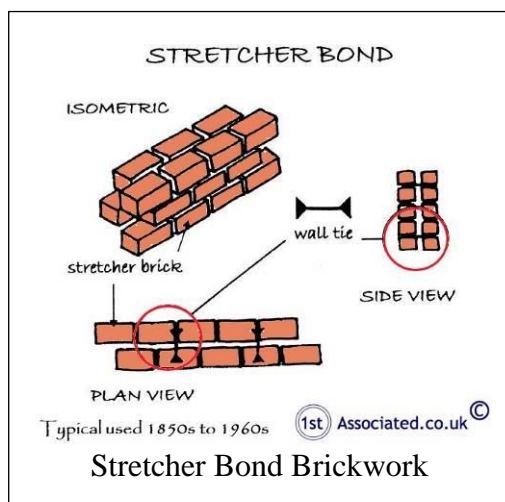
From within the roof space it looks to be a brick and blockwork Stretcher Bond brickwork based upon the party walls/firewalls however there is an outside chance there is a brick and brick therefore we have included both sketches.

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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.

Wall Ties

Walls of cavity construction should incorporate ties to hold together the inner and outer leaves of masonry. We usually look for horizontal cracking where there is older style stretcher bond brickwork, such as this, to see if the wall ties are rusting and forcing open the brickwork.

In this instance we could not see significant horizontal cracks however wall tie failure is a progressive problem. We would add as there is no access to the cavity it has not been inspected and we cannot comment on the presence or condition of wall ties. As such we cannot be hundred per cent certain with regard to this problem unless we open up the structure.

Insulation added?

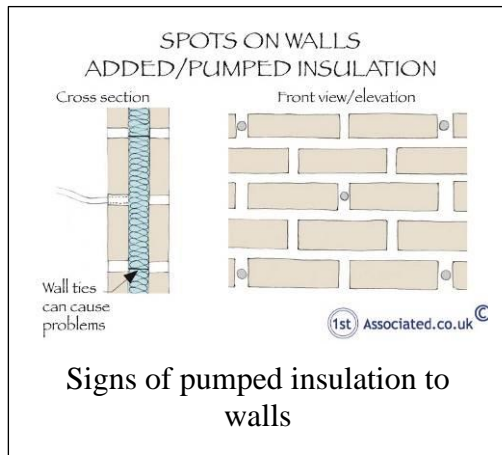
We noted spots to the brickwork which is likely to be where insulation has been inserted or there is an outside chance it is wall tie repairs/replacement and we would comment there have been problems with insulation allowing dampness in.

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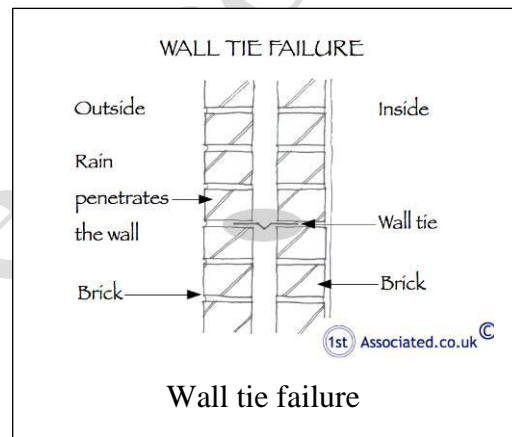
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ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend you look through your records and provide us with any information as to whether wall insulation has been installed and if it has a CIGA (Cavity Insulation Guarantee Agency) certificate as this would then give us some more information as to whether the wall ties were appropriate before the insulation was added as inserted insulation can cause deterioration of the wall ties otherwise the wall will need to be opened up and the wall ties checked. Contact CIGA at Vimy Court, Vimy Rd, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 1FG, telephone 01525 853300, ciga.co.uk.



In a worse case scenario, the wall ties will need to be replaced however having said that we cannot see any of the horizontal cracking.

Lintels

We discussed lintels and were advised there were not any lintels in some areas. This was generally because there were structurally load bearing windows in place which are often metal and these then over time were often replaced with double glazed plastic windows which simply do not have the strength which can cause problems and cracking.

Cracking

There is some slight cracking above the windows.

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

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

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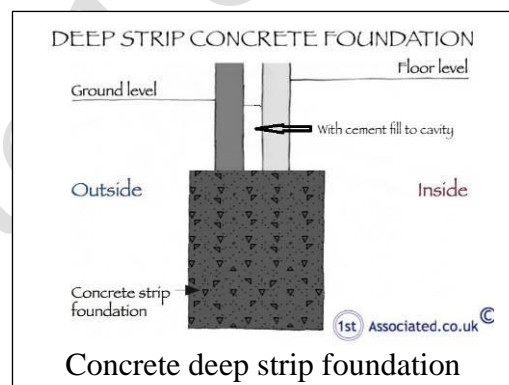
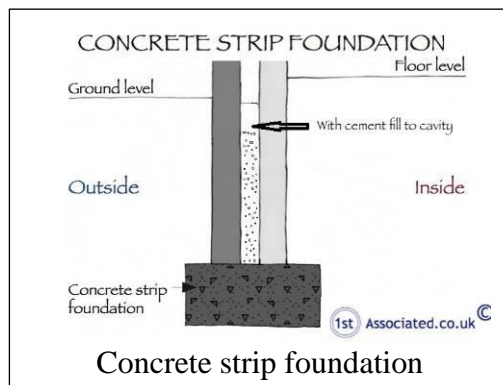




FOUNDATIONS

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

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



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

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CRACKS

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

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

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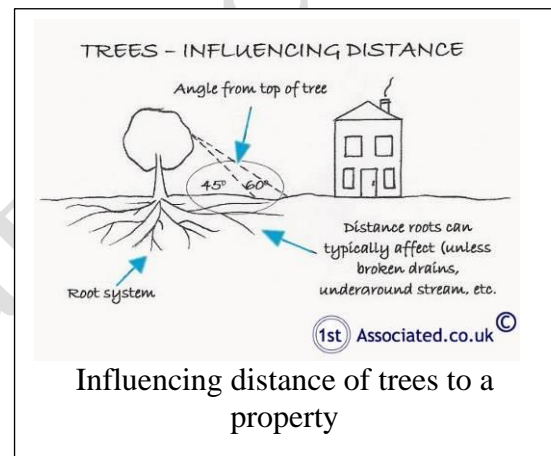
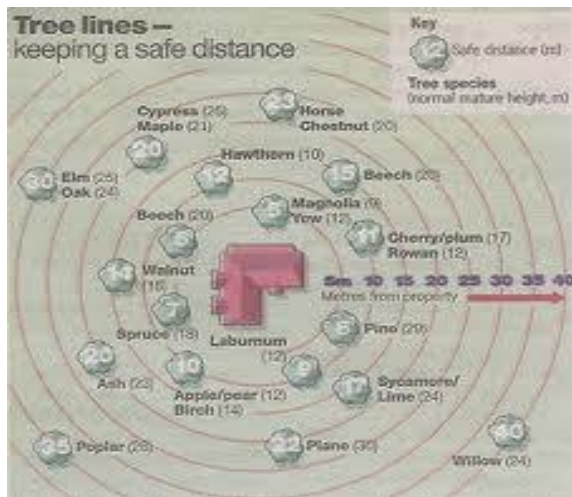


TREES, BUSHES AND VEGETATION



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

There are no trees within what we would term as influencing distance but you do need to speak to your insurance company as they may have a different interpretation for insurance reasons.



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.

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.

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

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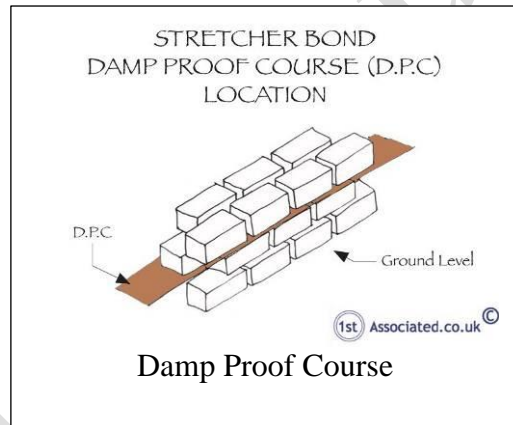


DAMP PROOF COURSE



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. The DPC is difficult to see (a good trades person will usually hide the DPC); in this era of property it is likely to be plastic based.



Please note our comments about lowering the ground level around the property.

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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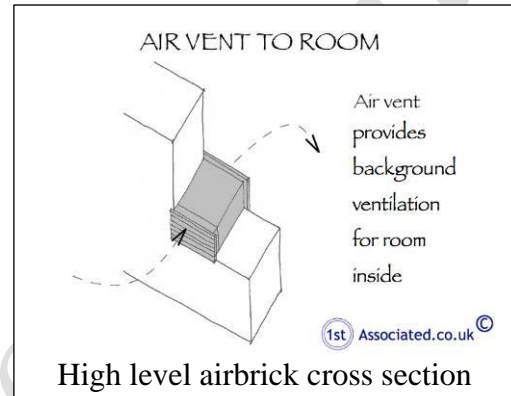


HIGH LEVEL AIR VENTS

High level air vents are to help air circulation within the property. In this case, there is an air vent to the front which you advised that you had blocked up with an open/closable vent. It would be better if it was in use.



Front air vent



High level airbrick cross section

ACTION REQUIRED: Ensure the air vents are clear and useable.

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

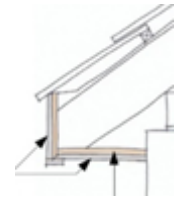
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FASCIAS AND SOFFITS



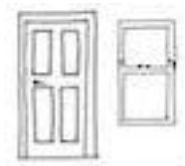
This section covers fascias, soffits and bargeboards and windows and doors, and any detailing such as brick corbelling etc.

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.

The fascias and soffits are plastic and we would comment we had a limited view as they were hidden by the gutters. We would comment they are in average condition for their age, type and style.



WINDOWS AND DOORS



The property has plastic double glazed windows with trickle vents. Generally, we would comment they are a reasonable quality for their age, type and style. However we prefer the windows to be installed further back so water does not get around the window reveal.

We noted condensation to the windows and would recommend this is cleaned every day; you can actually get window vacuum cleaners for moisture which work quite well and we would recommend that you get one of these. We did obtain some high damp meter readings around the windows but this could relate to condensation.

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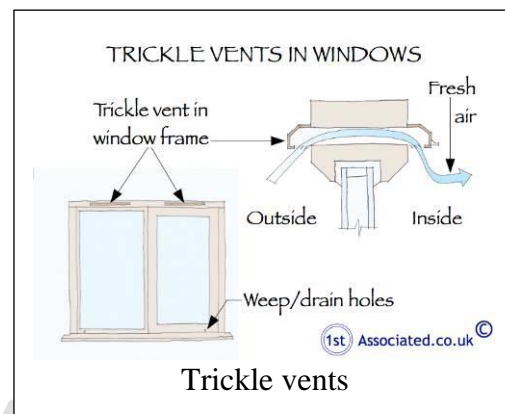
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We would draw your attention to the fact that sealed double glazed units can fail, particularly as a result of poor workmanship during installation. Failure of the seal leads to condensation between the two panes of glass and simply replacing the affected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

Trickle Vents Defined

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



Building Regulations Approval/Transferable Guarantees/FENSA certificates

Enquiries should be made as to the existence of any Building Regulations Approval/transferable guarantees/FENSA certificates by your Legal Advisor.

Generally it is considered that double glazed units have a life of about twenty to thirty five years (20 to 35 years) depending upon the quality of the original windows and standard of workmanship, location, severity of weather, etc.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor to specifically ask the existing owners if they have got Building Regulations Approval and Federation Self Assessment Scheme (FENSA) certificates.

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 DECORATION AND CLEANING



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 external decorations are in relation to the painted cast iron soil and vent pipe and also cleaning of the gutters and downpipes once they have been cleared of moss.

Finally, ideally external redecoration and/or cleaning is recommended every four to five years dependent upon the original age of the paint/plastic areas, its exposure to the elements and the materials' properties. Where this is not carried out repairs should be expected. Ideally redecoration and/or cleaning should be carried out during the better weather between mid-April and mid-September.

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

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INTERNAL

CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES



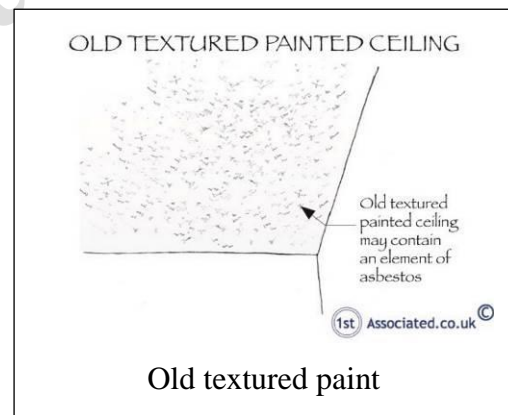
In this section, we look at the finish applied to the structural elements such as the plasterwork applied to the ceiling joists, walls or partitions, together with the construction of the internal walls and partitions.

CEILINGS

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

Textured paint

Some of the ceilings have a textured paint finish (commonly known as Artex). You should be aware that Artex is generally used where there are uneven walls or possibly even where dampness is coming in through the walls. Care should be taken with Artex as Artex prior to 1984 may contain an element of asbestos.



We would advise we are not asbestos surveyors and recommend asbestos surveyors are instructed and that you have your own asbestos survey carried out.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would advise to take care and do not rub down or sand the textured paint in case it does contain asbestos.

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.

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INTERNAL WALLS AND PARTITIONS

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

Walls Removed

We assume walls have been removed to give access into the rear single storey flat roof extension. This should in theory have Building Regulations approval; your legal advisor to check and confirm.

PERIMETER WALLS

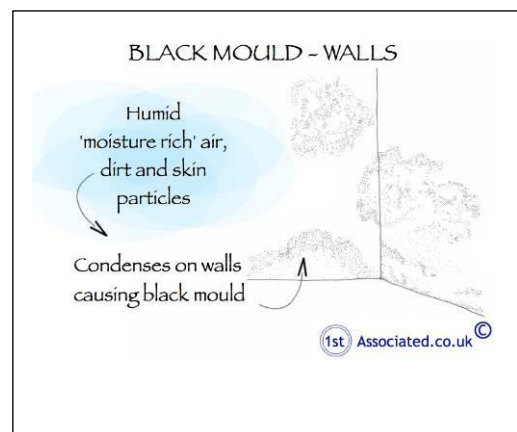
Originally these would have been constructed with a wet plaster. We now believe they have had a skim-coat of plaster.

This comment has been based on the visual look of the wall which is relatively “smooth” and normally means a modern finish.

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

Black mould

As we have mentioned elsewhere within the report there is dampness in the property in the form of black mould which we believe is being caused by a combination of reasons such as condensation and possibly some rising damp although it is difficult to distinguish between the two.



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

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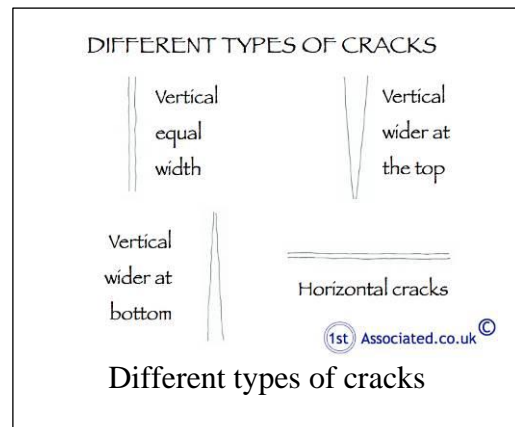
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CRACKS

You advised us of some cracking in the plaster. We could not see any equivalent cracks on the outside with the exception of over some windows.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to monitor and draw to the attention of your insurance company if the cracking continues.



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.

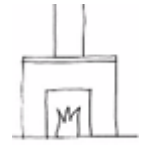
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CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



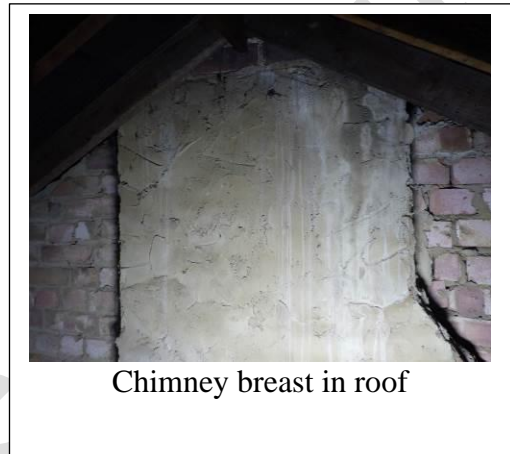
With the advent of central heating fireplaces tend to be more a feature than an essential function in most properties.

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

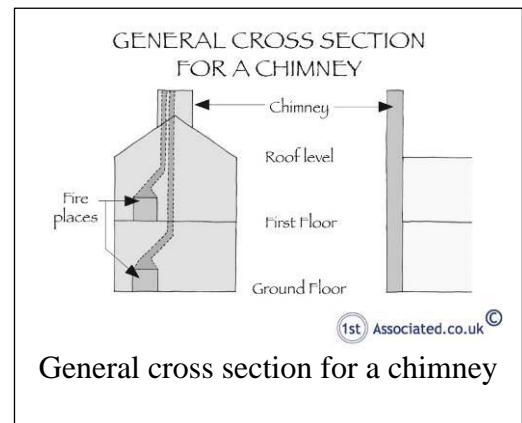
At the time of the survey no chimneys were in use. Any chimneys that you do not propose to use should be capped and ventilated to prevent dampness.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments regarding the chimney/s and how they need repair and maintenance.

If you do intend to use the fireplaces then we recommend a chimneysweep checks the lining and that the chimney/s are clear and open up the chimney pots.



Chimney breast in roof



General cross section for a chimney

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.

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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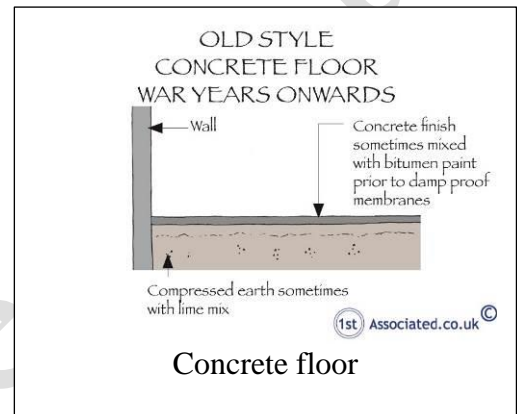
FLOORS



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.

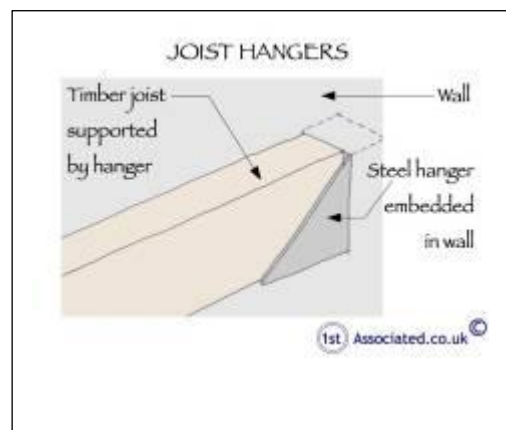


FIRST FLOOR

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



Floorboards in front right bedroom



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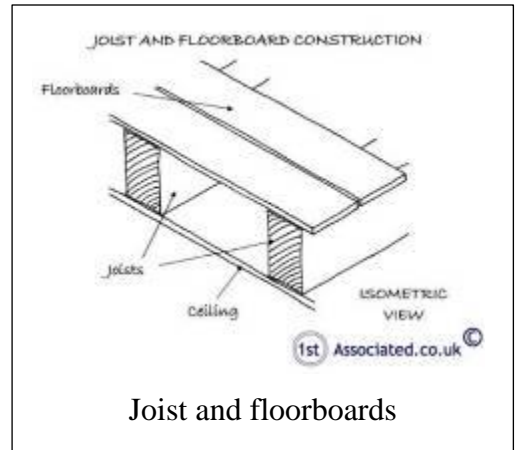
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Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



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

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DAMPNESS

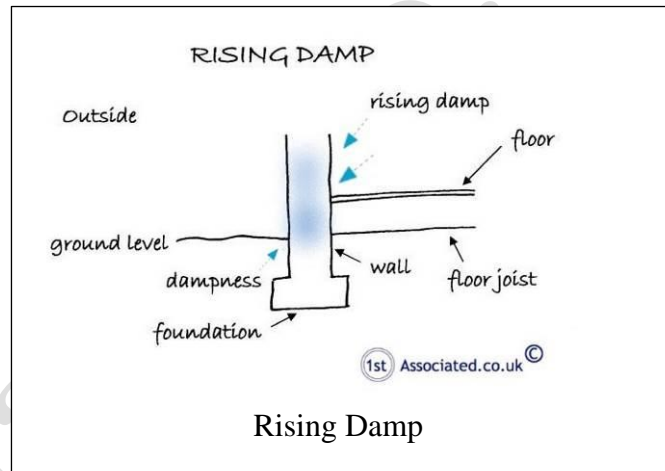


In this section, we look at any problems that are being caused by dampness. It is therefore essential to diagnose the source of the dampness and to treat the actual cause and not the effect of the dampness.

RISING DAMP

We need to start by saying there is much evidence pointing towards true rising damp being fairly rare.

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



A visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case, we have found dampness that we think may be condensation, possibly 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.



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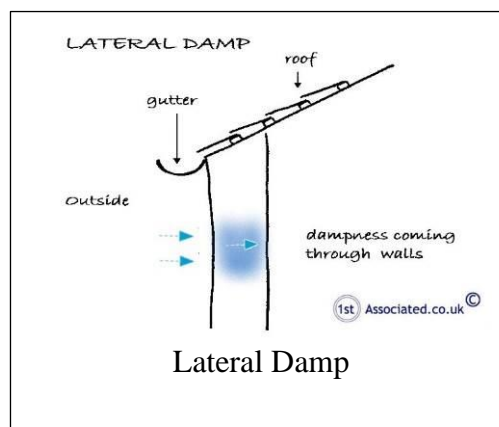
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LATERAL DAMPNESS

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.

We used a resistance meter on the external walls. We have found significant lateral dampness near the window which again we believe is likely to be condensation.



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.

CONDENSATION/BLACK MOULD

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

At the time of the inspection there were significant signs of condensation/black mould; please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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/venting the area you will, of course, get condensation. You need to have a balance between heating, cooling and ventilation of properties.

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 any areas where you intend to dry clothes which are moisture generating areas.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend large good quality humidity controlled extract fans are added to the bathroom, shower room, kitchen and any humidity generating areas:

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For example, rooms 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.

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 veneer doors which were typical of this era of property.



Veneer door

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.



Staircase lined

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.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary with regards to extraction in this area.

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.

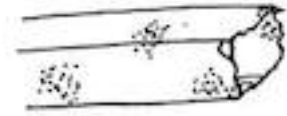
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TIMBER DEFECTS



This section considers dry rot, wet rot and wood destroying insects and beetles. 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/white 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 have not visually seen any signs of significant wet rot/brown rot during the course of our inspection.

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

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WOOD DESTROYING INSECTS

(such as woodworm and beetles, etc)

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



The roof is usually the main area where we look for wood destroying insects. Within the areas we inspected we found no obvious visual signs of significant wood destroying insects activity or indeed past signs of significant wood destroying insects activity that has caused what we would term ‘structurally significant’ damage. In many properties there is an element of wood destroying insects that are not active.

Wood Destroying Insects Defined:

By this we mean wood boring insects. Historic England identify between 20 and 30 different types. For the avoidance of doubt, we would refer wood boring insects to include beetles and/or similar however we do not identify specific types.

Our inspection is usually restricted by insulation covering some of the timbers and general stored items in the roof, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings.

ACTION REQUIRED: If you wish to be one hundred percent certain that there are no wood destroying insects the only way would be to check the property including the roof when it is emptied of fixtures, fittings and stored items. Please see our comments about emptying the property.

Finally, 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.

The internal decorations are in need of redecoration due to the black mould. We are advised in our vendor's questionnaire the property was last decorated in the bathroom in XXX.

ACTION REQUIRED: Once you have carried out the work mentioned in the Executive Summary repair, prepare and redecorate; the sooner the better.

You do need to be aware that may be some re-plastering needed when you carry out the redecoration.

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



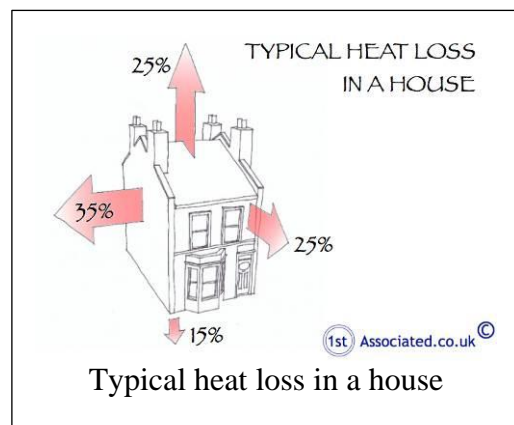
Up until the mid 1940s we did not really consider insulation in properties, for example it was only in the 1960s that we started putting insulation in the roof and then it was about 50mm, in the 1970s this was upgraded to 100mm. Then we started to think about double glazing and cavity wall insulation. 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.

General

Properties of this era will generally not be as thermally efficient as a modern property. We really started adding insulation following the oil crisis in the 1970s. Having said that, modern properties range considerably in their thermal efficiency as we develop and improve our methods of insulating buildings.

ROOFS

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



WINDOWS

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

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WALLS

The property has a Stretcher bond construction. In this age of property it was not usual to have insulation.

ACTION REQUIRED: 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 Vimy Court, Vimy Rd, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 1FG, telephone 01525 853300, ciga.co.uk.

In a worse case scenario, the wall ties will need to be replaced however having said that we cannot see any of the horizontal cracking however the paint could be hiding this.

SERVICES / BOILERS

The property has a Worcester boiler which we are advised was installed in XXX. It is essential for the services to be regularly maintained to run efficiently.

ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE (EPC)

We have not been able to find an EPC and would recommend that an EPC is carried out. This will also help you with regard to what work to carry out on the property.

SUMMARY

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

Further information

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

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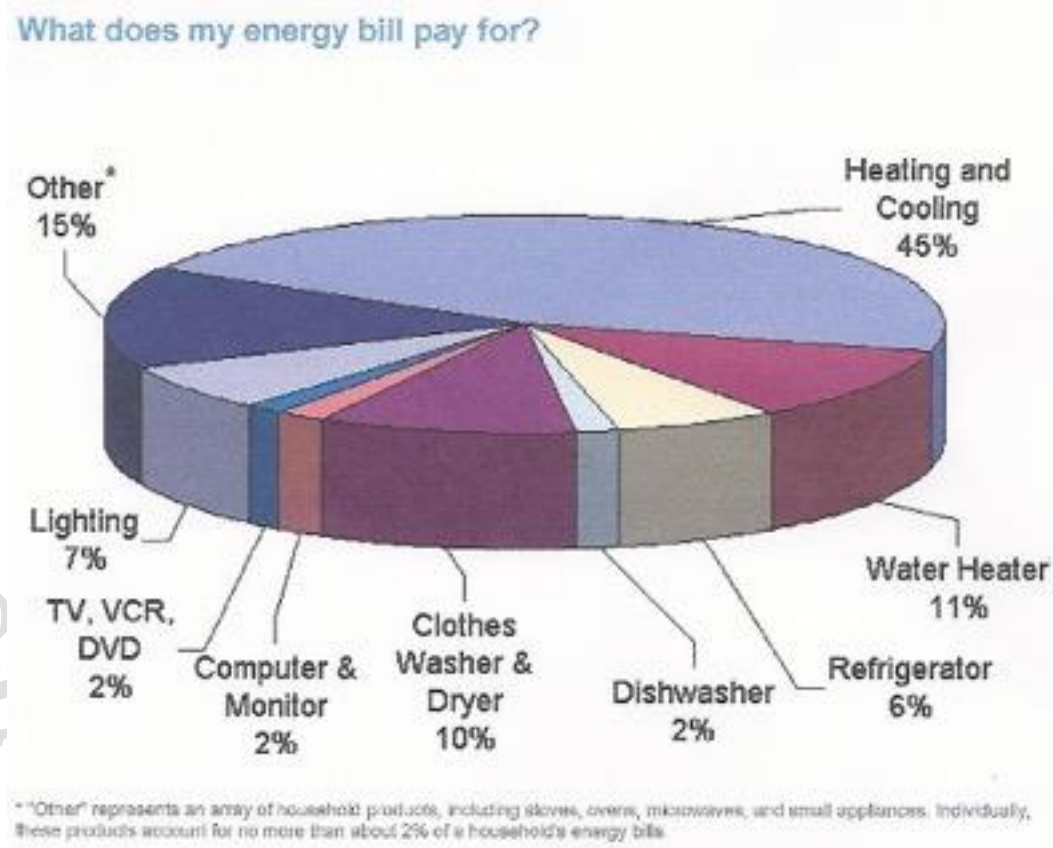
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1. *www.gov.uk, Google: 'Energy Grants' and 'Energy Efficiency'. There is generally information available on the website which is constantly being updated.*
2. *www.cat.org.uk , www.cat.org.uk (Centre for Alternative Technology)*
3. *You Tube Video: The Hypocrisy of Being Green by Belinda Carr*
4. *It is worth watching the video How Many Light Bulbs? and Sustainable Energy Without the Hot Air by David J C MacKay – can be viewed on YouTube.*

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, we prefer detectors to 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.

ASBESTOS

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. In this case, we have noted asbestos to the water tank in the roof space and the textured paint to the ceilings; please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

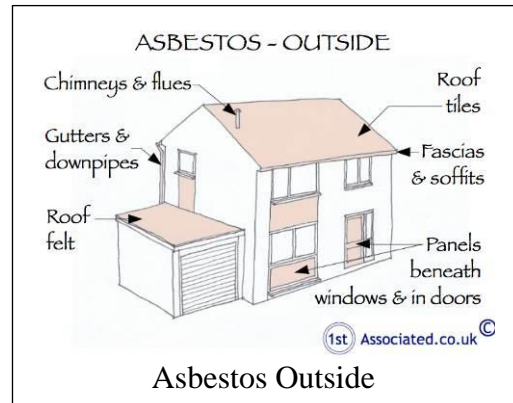
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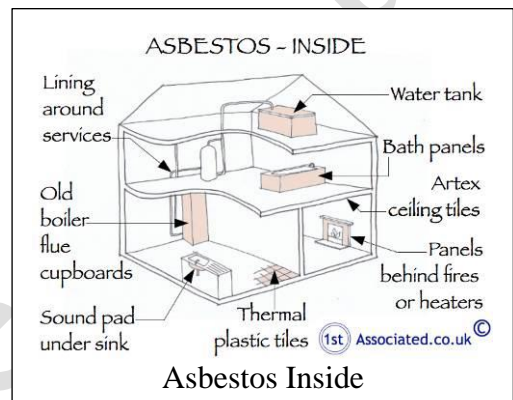


In years gone by asbestos was as commonly used as wood and can be found in all sorts of places. Asbestos was used post war until it was banned only in the UK relatively recently. It is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time where products were imported from countries where it is not banned. Properties built before 2000 could have asbestos within them.



We are Building Surveyors and not Asbestos Surveyors and as such the only way to be a hundred percent certain with regards to Asbestos in a property is to have an Asbestos report 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.

BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY



We are sometimes asked with regard to the Broadband Connectivity in the area. We have identified some websites which we believe are useful for this:

www.broadband.co.uk

Advises whether there is phone line broadband or Superfast or Ultrafast broadband in an area.

www.ofcom.org.uk

Allows you to check broadband availability, check mobile availability and run a speed test.

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ELECTRICITY



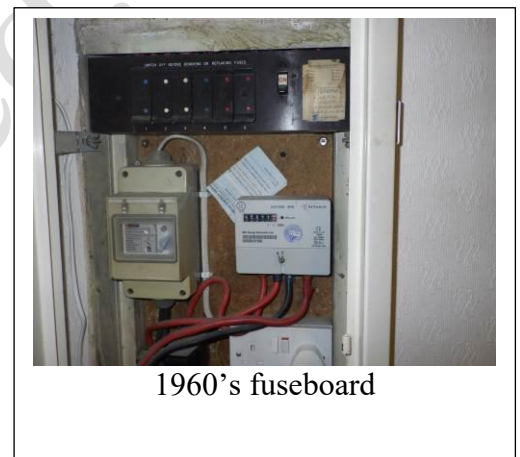
It is strange to think that electricity only started to be used in domestic properties at the turn of the 19th century with gas lighting still being the norm for a good many years after.

Periodic inspections and testing of electrical installations is important to protect your property from damage and to ensure the safety of the occupants. Guidance published by the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) recommends that inspections and testing are undertaken at least every 10 years (we recommend every five years). 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 hallway.

The fuse board looked 1960's and better are now available.



1960's fuseboard

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 satisfactory

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ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend a new fuse board with a metal casing; modern standards require half hour to one hour fire resistant casing around a fuse board.

We recommend a test and report and any recommendations should be carried out by a NICEIC registered, or equivalent, approved electrical contractor or similarly approved.

All work carried out since 2005 should have suitable certification which will be required if/when the property is sold.

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

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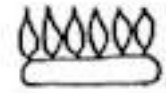
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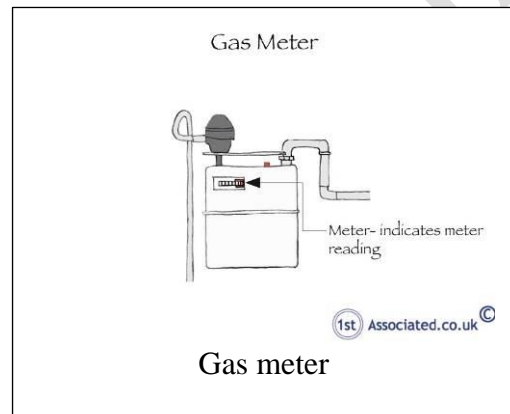
GAS



There is very little we can check for in a gas installation, we do inspect to make sure there is a gas supply, 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 and the consumer unit is located in a cupboard under the stairs.

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. It should be noted that carbon monoxide monitors can also be incorporated in many fire alarms.

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

We were advised by the owner in the Vendor Questionnaire that the internal stopcock is in the Kitchen, immediately to the left of the entrance door in a cupboard and the external stopcock is located at the end of the front garden, where it meets the public footpath.

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

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

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

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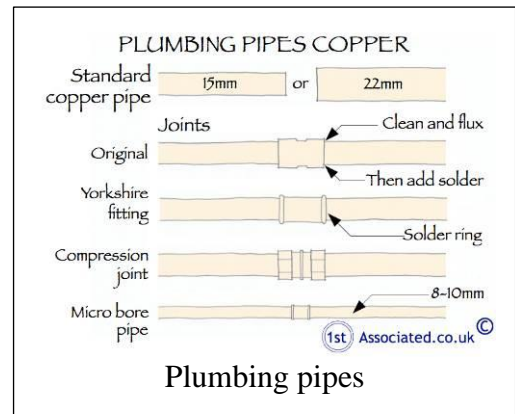
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PLUMBING

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.



HEATING

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

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 and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.



TEN MINUTE HEATING TEST

The owner / occupier at our request turned on the heating for approximately ten minutes. We checked the radiators and these were warm.



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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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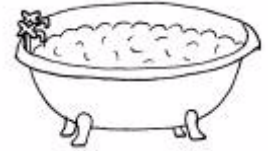
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BATHROOM



In this section we consider the overall condition of the sanitary fittings.

Bathroom

The property has a two piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath and wash hand basin with a separate WC, which looks in average condition with the exception of the black mould and the dampness visible.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend large good quality humidity controlled extract fans are added to the kitchen, the bathroom and any humidity generating areas for example rooms 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.

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.

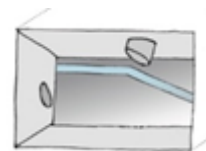
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MAIN DRAINS



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; you could ask your water board to confirm this.

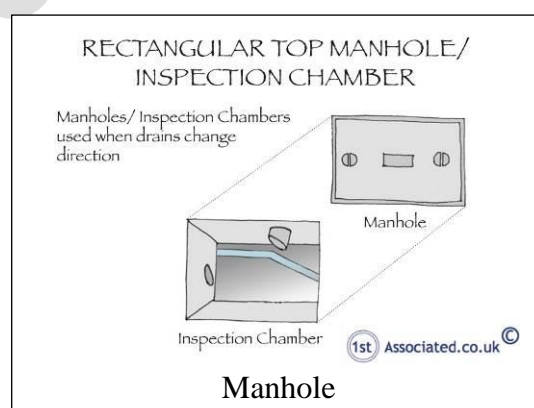
Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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 - located to the front left

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

From what we could see it is finished with brick.

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Front manhole



Front manhole blocked

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

Inspection Chamber/ Manhole Two - located to the rear left

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

From what we could see it is finished with brick.



Rear left manhole two clear

We have only undertaken a visual inspection of the property's foul drains by lifting covers and running water from the taps within the house.

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.

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Future Development and Drains

From 1st October 2011 the water authority took over responsibility for shared private sewers. These private sewers are now public sewers. However, general drainage searches will not show the location of all the public sewers within the boundary of a property and other such matters that may restrict development.

The water authority's prior consent is required to build within 3 metres of a public sewer. The owner is responsible for the cost of obtaining the water authority's consent which may include the re-routing of the public sewer. If you intend to carry out any such development at the property you should obtain a speciality drainage report to ascertain the route of the sewers and drains.

Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

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

In this era of property, they are likely to be combined/shared drains which are where the foul water and the surface water combines. These can be a problem during heavy rainfall and peak periods, such as the 8/9 o'clock rush to work.

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

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

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OUTSIDE AREAS

SUN MAP

The Sun Map shows the sun's path as it travels around the property on a specific date; the date can be seen at the very bottom of the picture. The arrows show the sun's position using a 24 hour clock face around the property.



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GARAGE / PARKING

Garage

The property has a garage which we have not viewed.

Parking

Parking is on the roadside on a first come first served basis.



EXTERNAL AREAS

Front Garden

There is a reasonable size front garden.

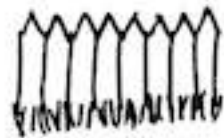
Rear Garden

There is a large garden to the rear with access to the garage (not viewed). There is a paved area adjacent to the building and a path to the left hand side.

Boundaries

Since 1948 the left-hand boundary (all directions given as you face the property) is usually the responsibility of the subject property.

There is normally a 'T' marking which boundary is yours on the Deeds which you can obtain from the Land Registry.



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ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor to check whose boundary is whose.

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

Neighbours

Left 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

Should this property be sold then the type of points raised by your legal advisor will be as follows:

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:
 - i) Removal of any chimneys in part or whole.
 - ii) Certificates confirming chimneys have been swept
 - iii) Roof and similar renewals.
 - iv) Cavity wall insulation and cavity wall tie repairs.
 - v) Amendments/removal of any walls in part or whole.
 - vi) Double glazing or replacement windows.
 - vii) Drainage location, maintenance and repairs.
 - viii) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
 - ix) Rising damp treatments.
 - x) Asbestos
 - xi) Boiler and central heating installation and maintenance.
 - xii) Electrical test and report.
 - xiii) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
 - xiv) Have there been any structural problems referred to insurance companies, any insurance claims, monitoring or underpinning, etc.
 - xv) Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)
 - xvi) 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.

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- h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- i) General development proposals in the locality.
- j) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.
- k) Confirm from enquiries that no underground tunnels, wells, sewers, gases, mining, minerals, site reclamation/contamination etc., exist, have existed or are likely to exist beneath the curtilage of the site upon which the property stands and which could affect the quiet enjoyment, safety or stability of the property, outbuildings or surrounding areas.
- l) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.
- m) Any outstanding Party Wall Notice or the knowledge that any are about to be served.
- n) Most Legal advisors will recommend an 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.
- 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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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**.

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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

Period House Fixtures and Fittings
By Linda Hall
Published by Countryside Books

The Rising Damp Myth
By Jeff Howell
Published by Nosecone Publications

The Great Housing Boom: Housing In Victorian England
By Jacqueline Banerjee, PHD

Putting Life into Perspective House Price Information
Source: Sunlife.co.uk

Wikipedia.org – We have used Wikipedia as a general reference for historic information. Also, most areas often have Historic Societies for good knowledge of history of the area.

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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.

The Report remains our copyright and anyone forwarding on a copy of the Report without the surveyor's written approval could be liable to legal action should legal action be taken against the surveyor or the surveying company in any form:

For example: legal action or negative information or defamatory comments being posted on the internet.

We also refer you to our Terms and Conditions.

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.

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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.

SKETCHES

We have used sketches throughout the report, these are for illustration purposes only and we would not expect these to be used as technical details for work being carried out. We would be more than happy to advise further if you wish specific help on any elements.

WEATHER

It was cold 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. This may have adverse effects on many buildings in years to come or the not too distant future.

As you are probably aware there has been some record breaking weather recently:

2018 being the driest start to a summer on record

December 2015 was the wettest month on record

August 2004 the wettest August on record in many areas

2003 was the driest year on record

2000 was the wettest year on record

In 1914 the Meteorological Office began recording weather although there are informal diary records as is evidence of plant growth, etc. which also indicates weather patterns and is available for a much longer period.

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FLOODING

We are often asked about floods and how likely is the property to flood. We no longer think it is possible to predict due to our changing weather patterns and rainfall often being more intense. We simply do not have a crystal ball good enough to be able to advise of the certainty on this matter, other than the obvious that if you are near rivers, springs and on a sloping site you are more likely to flood than most. We have, however been involved in some cases where flooding has occurred when it has not occurred for many decades/in living memory and this we feel is due to new weather patterns; we do not believe there is a one hundred percent accurate way to establish if a property will flood or not.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to carry out your own research on this matter/due diligence.

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 BBC news report dated April 2018 states that 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. See our article:

<https://buildingsurveyquote.co.uk/japanese-knotweed-buildings-and-resveratrol/>

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ACTION REQUIRED: You need to carry out your own research on this matter/due diligence and be aware that Japanese knotweed 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 have not had certificates forwarded onto us with regard to work carried out on the property.
- 5) The stored items in the property limited our inspection.

THANK YOU

We thank you for using our building surveying services and thank you for taking the time to meet us at the property during the building survey.

BUILDING INSURANCE

We do not advise with regard to building insurance. You need to make your own enquiries. Some areas may have a premium, some buildings may have a premium and some insurers may be unwilling to insure at all in certain areas. You need to make your own enquiries. 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 .

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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
4. Condensation and Cold Bridging in modern properties

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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

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

www.halifax.co.uk and www.nationwide.co.uk

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

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www.hometrack.co.uk

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

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

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

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

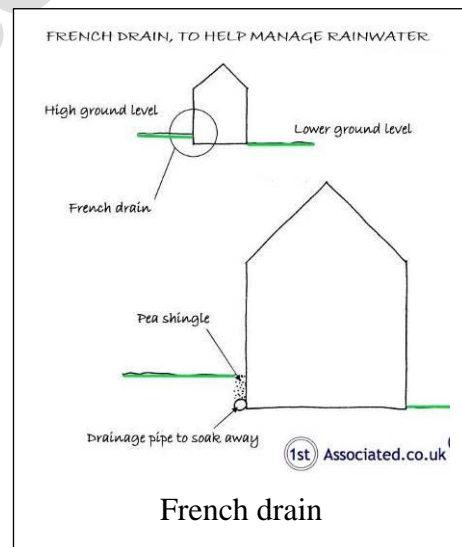
We are finding where we are asked to look at damp walls and damp floors or damp problems in general that commonly it is because the external ground level is higher than the internal ground level, or airbricks have been blocked, or simply paving slabs, decking or briquettes have been used to form a patio 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 being 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 a stand and then turf over. This is how a basic French drain is carried out.

The French drain system that we would recommend

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

These are usually made of glass reinforced polyester and have been available in this form since the mid-1980s. 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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Condensation and Cold Bridging in modern properties

Cold Bridging what does this mean?

How does cold bridging work?

Cold bridging is a term and a problem 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.

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.



Mock Georgian modern sliding sash windows



Modern plastic sliding sash window

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Cold bridging in larger modern buildings

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.

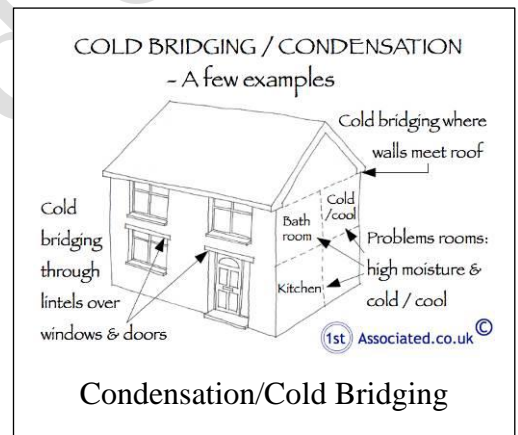


Modern houses

Condensation and Cold Bridging in susceptible buildings

Here is 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 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.



Mock Georgian modern sliding sash windows

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Buying a modern building

If you buy a modern 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.

When is Cold Bridging Likely?

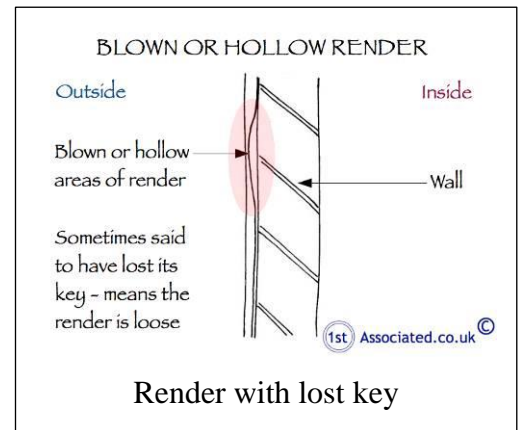
In our experience we have seen cold bridging occurring in:

- 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 modern era properties relating to Cold Bridging

Let us take a look at the modern era of property to give an example of the problems we have come across with this era.

The 1970s 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

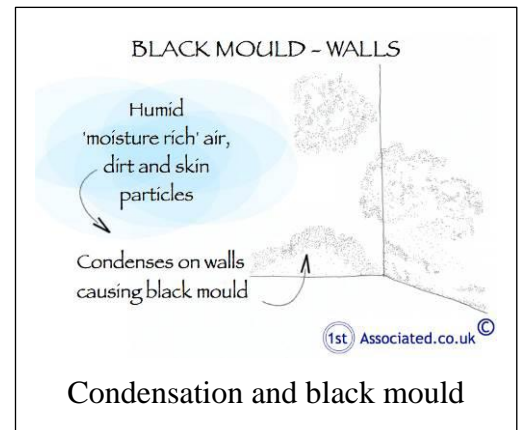
For example with:

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

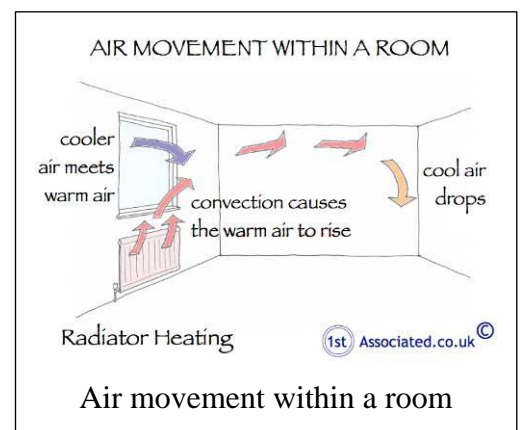
This meant they were warmer which has meant the significance of a lintel, over a door or window, being colder and allowing the transfer of coldness becomes much more important. This results in condensation that we commonly see above windows in this age and era of property.

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.



Condensation and black mould



Air movement within a room

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Where do we most commonly find Cold Bridging?

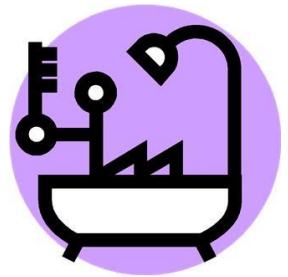
Our thoughts on this have very much changed as we used to say that cold bridging was typically found in properties from the 1960s/1970s. However we are increasingly finding it in a broader range of properties, particularly Victorian properties, where people are trying to live to modern standards of heating 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.



Heat loss via poorly insulated roof

Can life style be a factor in 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 1960s/1970s. 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.



Can lifestyle be a factor in Cold Bridging?

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.



Drying clothes on a radiator can cause condensation

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Lifestyle and cold bridging

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 leads toward a more humid atmosphere.

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.

Design problem or a lifestyle problem what causes cold bridging and condensation?

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.



Small extract fan needs to be improved

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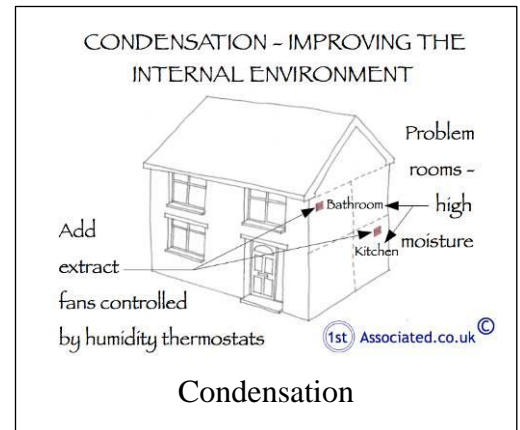
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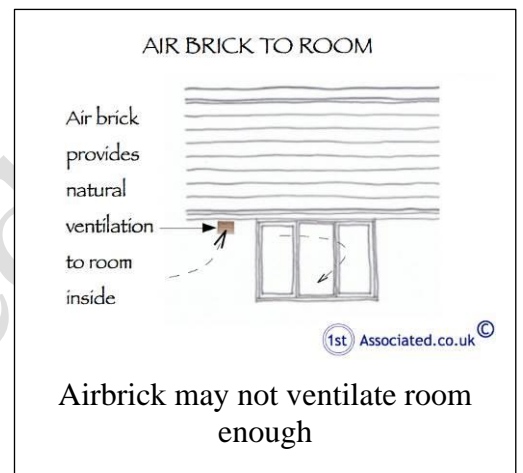
Design of the Building

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.



Things to remember about an airbrick

If you are thinking about adding an airbrick 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.



What's happening in brand new housing?

It could be argued that we still do not know what is happening in brand new houses that are highly insulated. We have been involved in one legal case where a modern heat exchange system was being used where it was simply not possible to have a shower in the property without causing condensation, even with the windows open and taking other measures. Our concern is what is happening to this condensation? It was not visible on the surface so is it visible as interstitial condensation? We still think there will be problems to be found in modern properties. As Chartered Surveyors we like to see things that have been in use for sometime work before we would recommend them.



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Seasons change and cold bridging occurs

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 glazed windows and loft insulation in a modern property



Condensation on window

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