

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

Newbury  
Berkshire  
RG14



FOR

**Mr H**

Prepared by:

**INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS**

Marketing by:

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# **REPORT FORMAT**

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

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

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

## **TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED**

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

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



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

## **ORIENTATION**

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

## **ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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

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## SYNOPSIS

### SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two storey mid-terraced house in a block of four similar properties, all set within a residential area that we believe was originally local authority built. The property has fairly recently been updated internally and redecorated.

There are good sized mature gardens to the front and the rear including trees. Parking is on the roadside on a first come first serve basis.

We believe that the property was built between 1930's to 1950's around the War Years. During this time there was a rationing of materials and limited skilled labour available which can mean that sometimes there are unusual constructions hidden beneath what appears to be a typical construction. If the exact 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:*

1931	The Highway Code issued
1935	The driving test became compulsory
1937	The emergency (999) telephone number introduced
1940	Food rationing introduced
1941	The National Fire Service established
1944	D-Day
1948	Olympic Games held in London
1951	Truman signs Peace Treaty with Japan which ended WWII
1952	Princess Elizabeth became Queen at age 25

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# EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Rear View



Passageway to right hand side



Passageway to right hand side



Front garden



Rear garden

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## **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

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

### **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Entrance / stair area
- 2) Lounge
- 3) Kitchen
- 4) WC

### **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Two front bedrooms
- 2) Rear left hand bedroom
- 3) Rear right hand bathroom

### **Outside Areas**

The gardens are much larger than we typically see; both to the front and rear. We have heard it said that gardens of this era included an area for growing vegetables, which you certainly have room for.

Parking is on a feeder road that has been built off the main road specifically for the houses and is on a first come first serve basis. There was plenty of parking available at the time of our survey.

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

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# INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

The following photos are of the internal of the property to help you recall what it looked like and the general ambience (or lack of). We have not necessarily taken photographs of each and every room.

## Ground Floor



Lounge



Kitchen



Dining area in kitchen



WC

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**First Floor**



Front left hand bedroom



Left hand rear bedroom



Bathroom



Front right hand box bedroom



Front right hand bedroom alcove

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## **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

### **External**

Chimneys:	One brick chimney
Main Roof:	Pitched, clad with nibbed clay tiles (possibly concrete)
Main Roof Structure:	Cut timber roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic profile (shaped), there may be some of the original cast iron remaining
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Internal, with plastic section visible at roof level
Walls:	Vertical tiles and Stretcher Bond Brickwork (all assumed)
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Plastic double glazed windows with trickle vents

### **Internal**

Ceilings:	Lath and plaster and plasterboard (assumed), finished with a modern artex
Walls:	Mixture of studwork and solid (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Concrete (assumed)
First Floor:	Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)

### **Services**

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (all assumed). The electrics are located in the hallway.

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

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. This is particularly so in a summary about someone's future home when we are trying to second-guess what their priorities are, so it is important the Report is read in full.

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 150 photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if an issue has not been discussed that you are interested in or concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it; if we have not we will happily go back.

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

## **The Good**

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

- 1.0) The property is a good size and has been recently redecorated, although we appreciate this is superficial and subjective.
- 2.0) There are good sized gardens to both the front and rear, which is very unusual and if you like gardening this is a bonus.
- 3.0) The garden comes with a mature tree, although it does need the attention of an arboriculturist.

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

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## **The Bad**

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

### **1.0) Fascias and soffits**

The timber fascias and soffits are in a poor decorative condition and would benefit from redecoration. We normally take guidance from the adjoining roofs however we noted the vents on the next door roofs indicate that they have been re-roofed, however it is very difficult to see any major difference in the roofs.



Close up of soffits

**ACTION REQUIRED:** This would also be the ideal opportunity to replace them with a vented fascia and soffit like your next door neighbour has which will then allow the roof to be better vented. Alternatively, you can re-paint the fascias and soffits. We recommend that action is taken in the summer of 2012. This will also give the opportunity of clearing the gutters and checking the joints, etc.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £1,000 to £2,000; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Fascias and Soffits Section of this Report.

### **2.0) Uneven floorboards at first floor level**

This indicates that some of the floorboards have not been fixed down properly or have worked loose, or other problems (we have not opened up the floor). Typically we find that when there central heating for example is added in floorboards are not re-fitted properly.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Re-fix loose floorboards.

Please see the Floors Section of this Report.

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### **3.0) Cold bridging / condensation / add extract fans**

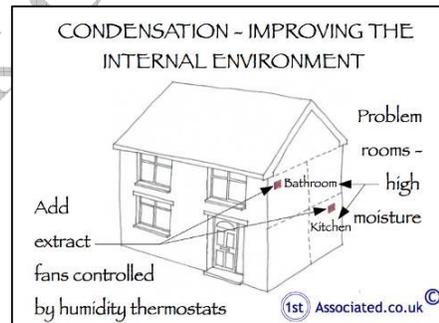
Properties such as these suffer from cold bridging, which results in condensation and is a characteristic of this era of property. Whilst we note the relatively new windows have trickle vents, which means there will be air movement in the property, we would still recommend adding better extract fans to the bathroom and kitchen which have humidity controlled thermostats that switch themselves on and off as humidity level is reached. This will help reduce cold bridging.



Cold bridging point where ceiling follows line of roof

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add new humidity control extract fans in the summer of 2012. Whether you see condensation or not very much depends on how you utilise the property.

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



Please see the Walls Section of this Report and the Appendices.

### **4.0) Textured Paint - Artex Ceilings**

We noted the ceilings have textured paint, commonly known by the trade name of Artex. Whilst this is not a problem it is fairly dated and was normally used when the ceilings were in poor condition. You may or may not like this finish.



Artex ceiling

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** Skim coat over the top of the artex (do not sand down because of the dust).

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Depends upon the number of ceilings the work is being carried out to; we would expect costs in the region of £1,000 to £2,000. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Ceilings Section of this Report.

## 5.0) Services

### Heating

This property has a solid fuel controlled heating system from what we understand. We also noted additional background heat in the form of electric radiators.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend you have a discussion with the existing owners to check you are happy with this form of heating as, from our experience, many people find it inconvenient; it is very much a personal choice.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.



Additional heater

## 6.0) Mature tree in rear garden

Whilst this tree is some distance away from the property it is a considerable height and may be of concern to insurance companies.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend an arboriculturist (not a



Mature tree in rear garden 14

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tree surgeon) look at this and would also ring insurance companies to see if it affects the insurance.

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

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.

### 7.0) Do you have a flying freehold?

More a point of information than bad – do you have a flying freehold? We have noticed that you seem to have the area over the top of the alleyway; sometimes this is known as a flying freehold as you do not actually own the alleyway beneath as it is a shared right.



Room over alleyway

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal adviser needs to check and confirm exactly what your rights, responsibilities and liabilities are with regard to this.

### 8.0) Next door's extension

Again, more a statement of fact. Next door have extended on the boundary line; possibly over the boundary line, depending on where the boundary line is within the hedge. There should be a Party Wall Notice with this.



Next door's extension



Rear left hand hedge boundary

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal adviser needs to check that all Local Authority Approvals are in place and that a Party Wall Notice has been signed and agreed.

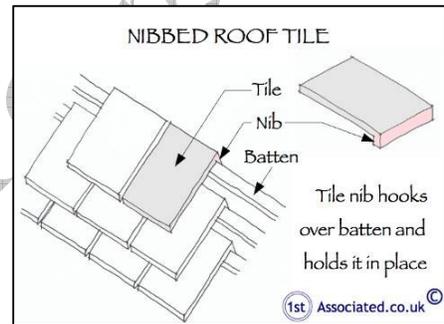
Please see the Party Walls Section of this Report.

### **The Ugly**

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

The property has a nibbed tile roof without a protective underlayer. This means that there is no second line of defence. This type of construction of roof was relatively common in years gone by, however today having a protective underlayer is normal. What this means to you is that wind driven rain will get in the property.

You can see the back of the nibbed tiles in the adjacent photo. The white pattern staining is where wind driven rain has got in.



Back of the nibbed tiles

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Many areas of the roof have been hidden with the DIY adding of different membranes.



A foil membrane



Insulation battened in place

We are very much in a Catch 22 situation with this type of problem, as the roof will ultimately need replacing and is very costly, probably in the region of £10,000 to £20,000 with the requirement to scaffold for health and safety reasons today, including often a scaffold roof as well to stop any water damage when the property is being re-roofed.

Having said all of that, not many of the nearby roofs seem to have been changed.



Nearby roofs

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** we would recommend in this case that you consider what we call a stitch in time measure. This is to use a solid insulation board (which you can stand on) with a board over the top and fix this within the roof, thereby forming a storage surface and also an extra layer of protection within the building.

However, you do need to ensure that the property is reduced in price to allow for this potential future problem. It is very difficult to say when exactly re-roofing will take place as any adverse weather, i.e. heavy rain (like we are currently having), snow fall or wind could cause the property to have roof problems. Next door have had a new roof and you will be due one in due course.

## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

## **Maintenance**

This type of property is relatively modern (i.e., less than one hundred years old) but 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, for example repainting the fascias and soffits.

We have recommended earlier in this section to add vents to your fascias and soffits. This would allow more air circulation in the roof. One concern we have with these ad hoc membranes that have been added (the foil and bagged insulation) is that they will be causing condensation to the roof battens and ultimately causing rot, but it may not be happening at all if the battens have been pre-treated (you cannot tell from a visual inspection), and we do need to make you aware of the possible problems.

## **Services**

Whilst we have carried out a visual inspection only of the services within the property and we would always recommend you have your own specific testing for each of the services.

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## Electrics

For the electrics we would recommend an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test and report by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent, which is recommended whenever a property changes occupancy.

## Heating

The heating was on during the course of the survey and the house felt pleasantly warm, however we would recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

## Drainage

Whilst we ran the tap for 15 minutes without any build up or blockages the only way to be 100% certain of the condition of the drains is to have a closed circuit TV camera report.

## Water Supply

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

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

## DIY/Handyman Type Work

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

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## **Purchase Price**

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

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

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

## **Estimates of Costs**

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

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

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## **SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION**



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

We just want to reiterate that the roof issue is a potential problem and is something that will have to be done in the future and we do feel that the value of the property will be affected by this. We are aware that banks and building societies valuation surveyors do not have to view the roofs anymore and as such they may not have noticed the problem.

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

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

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# **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

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

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

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

## **ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?**

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

## **SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

## **TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS**

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

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

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

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



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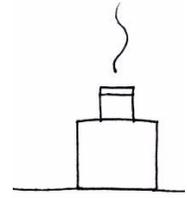
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## EXTERNAL

### CHIMNEY STACKS



*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, located to the left hand side of the property (all directions given as you face the property).

This chimney is brick finished with a lead flashing and no chimney pots that we could see. From what we could see from ground level it looked in average condition considering its age, type and style, though we would say there are aerials on the chimney which can cause damage particularly where they use a wire to fix them on in brackets, which could act like a cheese wire cutting into the brickwork.



Chimney

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Periodically inspect the chimney.

#### Flashings Defined

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

#### Flaunchings Defined

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

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## Party Walls

Party walls relate to shared items, such as the chimney and the fire walls. If you do any work on these you will need to deal with the Party Wall Act. Here is a brief explanation of it.

Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

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

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

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

Please see our article on party walls in the Appendices and please also see Chimney Breasts Section of this Report.

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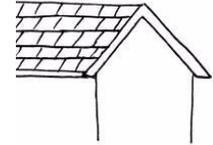
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# ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

We will consider the roofs in two areas; the main roof and front flat roof.

## Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad with a clay nibbed tile (possibly concrete), viewed from ground level, this looks in average condition considering the roof's age type and style. However, when we went in to the roof we noticed that it did not have a protective underlayer. We noticed a slight undulation in the roof. We noted a few missing and displaced tiles, as we would expect with this age of property.



Undulation in the roof



Next door has had a new roof

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a roofer spends a day on your roof repositioning the tiles and making sure it is watertight for the winter (we would also get them to quote at the same time). You need to then carry out periodic inspections with this type of roof, and mend the roof as soon as any problems are noted. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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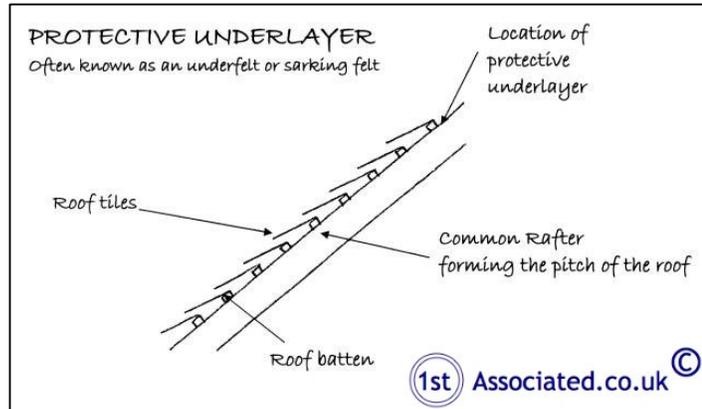
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## Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)

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



## New Roof – Catch 22

We noted there is no protective underlayer. This means that wind driven rain can get underneath the tiles and indeed we can see that this is happening from the staining within the roof. We are always in a Catch 22 with regard to this type of roof as although it is letting in some rain water it is not letting in that much due to the protective foil and insulation membranes that have been put in place.

We have taken guidance from the adjoining roofs and the majority of them do not look to have been replaced, although it is very hard to tell because the ones that has been replaced to the right and left of you are very similar and the main distinction feature is the vented soffit board. Protective underlayers have been used since the 1960's.



We could see the backs of tiles in some areas



Foil insulation which has been put on at a later date



Bagged insulation that has been put on and securely battened at a later date

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Vented soffit to left hand neighbour



Vented soffit to right hand neighbour

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Our view has been very limited by the stored items in the roof and the foil insulation and the bagged insulation. We would nevertheless say that we feel you should be budgeting for a new roof and that this should be reduced from the asking price. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

**Front Shallow Pitched Porch Roof**

*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.*

This is a shallow pitched porch roof covered with a mineral felt and looks in average condition as viewed from the front window.

There is also a very small porch roof to the back which we have not viewed.

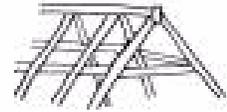
All the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. Flat roofs have been inspected from the upper floor windows.



Front porch roof

Finally, we were only able to see approximately eighty percent of the main roof from ground level via our ladder or via any other vantage point that we managed to gain. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see, however a closer inspection may reveal other defects. For further comments with regard to ventilation please see the Roof Structure and Loft Section.

# ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



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

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

### Main Roof

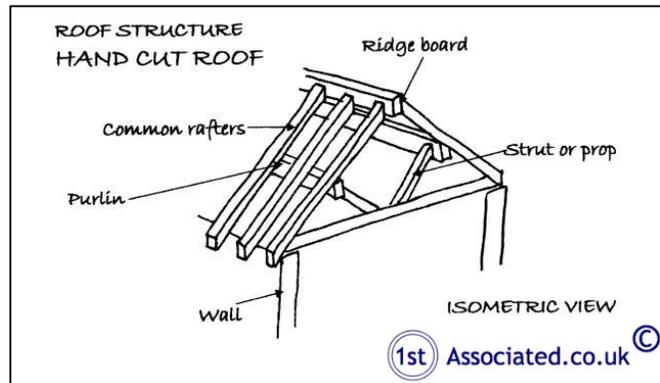
### Roof Access

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

The loft has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly, along with the amount of stored items in the roof and the foil and bagged insulation that has been fixed to the slope of the roof.

### Roof Structure

What we could see of the roof indicated this is a what is known as a cut timber roof. This is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects; however it is in line with what we typically see.



## Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

- Serious active woodworm
- Structurally significant defects to the timbers
- Structurally significant dry rot
- Structurally significant wet rot

Our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof, the mass of insulation and stored items. What we could see was generally found to be in average condition for its age, type and style. Our only comment would be that we believe a timber has been added to add extra bracing. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The only way to be 100 per cent certain is to have the roof cleared and checked.

## Fire Walls

The property has two brick firewalls which are located one to the left hand side and one to the right hand side (all directions given as you face the property).

### Fire Walls Defined

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



View of roof and extra timber



Insulation



Brick fire wall

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## **Water Tanks**

We did not see one but it may have been hidden under the mass of stored items.

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

## **Ventilation**

The roof is naturally ventilated due there being no protective underlayer.

## **Insulation**

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

## **Electrical Cables**

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

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

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

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# GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

## Gutters and Downpipes

The property has plastic gutters and downpipes, which are profile in some cases, and in are in average condition for their age, type and style. There may be some minor leaks, such as the hopper head to the rear looked to be overflowing, but most people would be happy to live with these providing repairs are carried out within the next six to twelve months.



Gutter and downpipe



Overflowing hopper head



A better surround needed around gully

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would always 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 would 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.

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### **Soil and Vent Pipe**

The property has an internal plastic soil and vent pipe which is visible at roof level.



Soil and vent pipe

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

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# WALLS

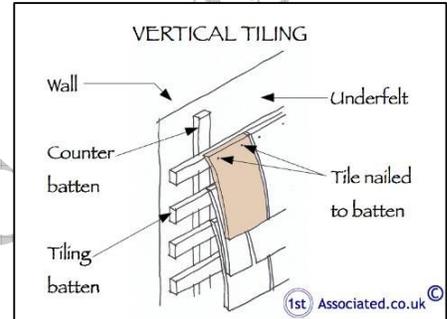


*External walls need to perform a variety of functions. These include supporting upper floors and the roof structure, resisting dampness, providing adequate thermal and sound insulation, offering resistance to fire and being aesthetically presentable.*

The walls are finished in a vertical tile at high level and brickwork at lower level to the front of the property and rear.

## Vertical Tiling

There is vertical tiling to the top half of the property in we believe a nibbed clay tile. There are a few tiles missing and displaced, as is often the case. The vertical tiles are feature of the look of this property.



Vertical tiling



Missing tile at top will allow birds in



Next door's ivy

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ask the roofer when they are looking at the main roof to also put any displaced vertical tiles back in place. We recommend you get a store of these sort of tiles for when the wind blows strongly.

We would also recommend next door's ivy is cut back.

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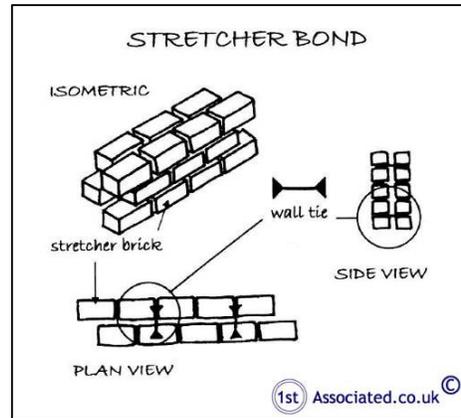
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## **Brickwork**

There is Stretcher Bond brickwork to the lower part and rear of the property.

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.



Brickwork amended under kitchen window



Stretcher bond brickwork

## **Cavity Walls**

Cavity walls were first used in Victorian times. It originates from solid walls not always being waterproof against driving rain and not providing a good degree of heat 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 would typically see horizontal cracking where there are problems. In this case we have not noted any cracking however wall tie failure is a progressive problem. We would add as there is no access to the cavity it has not been inspected and we cannot comment on the presence or condition of wall ties. As such we cannot be hundred per cent

certain with regard to this problem unless we open up the structure. From what we can see externally it appears not to have any problems.

### Cracking

We would remind you that any hairline cracks that appear need to be sealed as soon as possible to stop dampness and water getting in and causing blisters and hollow areas.



Pen indicating minor hairline cracking where some work has been carried out around the rear kitchen window

### Concrete Lintels

These may cause cold bridging.

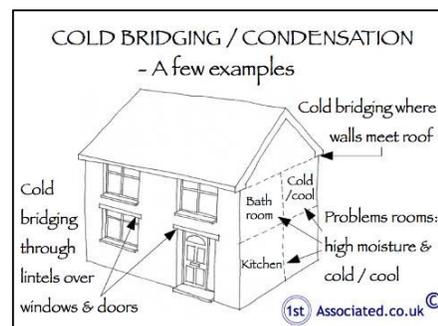
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary and article in the Appendices.



Concrete lintel

### Cold Bridging Defined

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



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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 vertical tiling / brickwork / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age concrete lintels, timber 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 vertical tiling / brickwork / plaster has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the vertical tiling / brickwork / plaster would be if it were opened up for this age, style and type of construction. We are however aware that all is not always as it seems in the building industry and often short cuts are taken. Without opening up the structure we have no way of establishing this.

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# FOUNDATIONS



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

## Foundations

Given the age of the property you may find different depths of foundations. We would expect to find a stepped brick foundation.

## Building Insurance Policy

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

It is your responsibility to check out prior to commitment to purchase that insurance is available on the property on the basis of the things we have reported in the survey. Much as we would like to we are unable to keep up with the changing insurance market and give you advice with regard to this. Please remember to talk about any cracks identified within the property. Often insurers will refer to progressive and non-progressive cracking. Unfortunately this is something we are unable to comment upon from a one-off inspection - the Building Research Establishment recommend a year of monitoring of any cracking.

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

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

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

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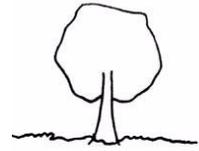
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# TREES



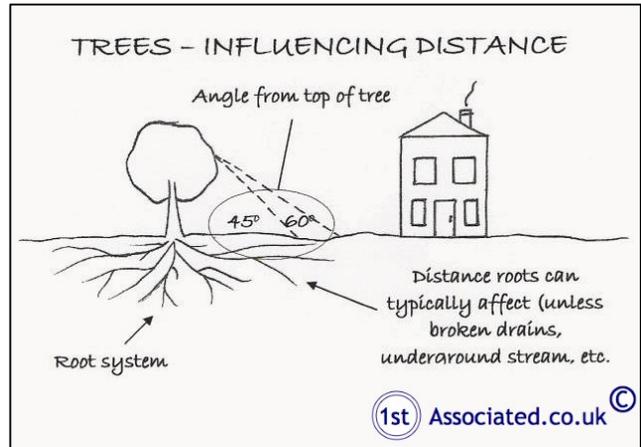
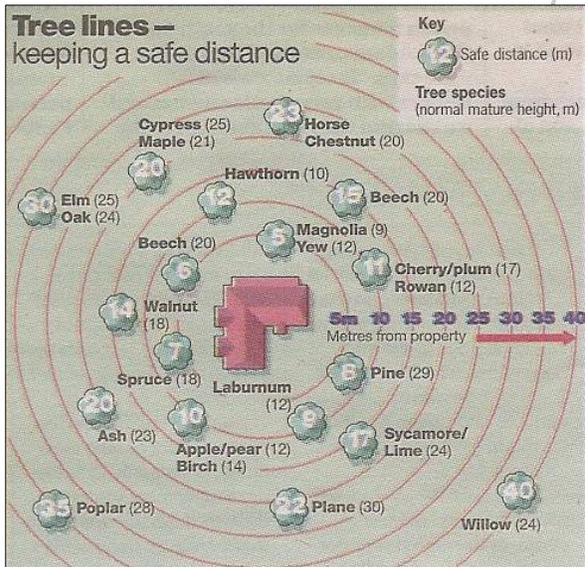
Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.

There is a large tree in your garden. Please check with the insurers as to whether they consider it within influencing distance of the property. Please see our further comments on this



Mature tree in rear garden

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to have a discussion with the insurance company before committing to purchase this property and also we recommend you obtain advice from an arboriculturalist (not a tree surgeon) in the summer of 2012. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



### Influencing Distance Defined

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

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. To the base of the property there was a thickening out which we believe is a DPC, although we could not physically see it.



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

Thickening out at base of property

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

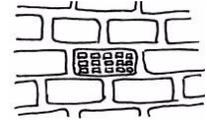
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## AIRBRICKS



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

### Middle and High Level Air Bricks

We noticed air bricks in the walls. In this era of property they were often added to help reduce condensation. As mentioned, please see our comments with regard to cold bridging, which is effectively condensation occurring on and in the structure.

Air bricks are essential to have a through flow of air as this helps to reduce the chances of wet rot, dry rot and woodworm.



Middle level air brick



High level air vent

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend humidity controlled extra fans are used in the bathroom and kitchen to help reduce the amount of condensation in the property. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

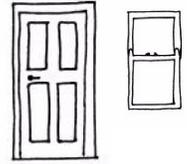
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# FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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

## Fascias and Soffits

The fascias and soffits are painted timber and we would comment they are in below average condition for their age, type and style. More interestingly, we would comment that your adjoining neighbours have vented fascias and soffits indicating that they have been re-roofed and have a protective underlayer.



We can see some detonation to the fascias and soffits



Close up of soffit

Note vented soffit on left hand neighbour's property.

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

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## Windows and Doors

The property has plastic double single glazed timber windows with trickle vents which we were advised were fitted in 2007, and which generally look to be of average quality. The only problem with improved insulation in a property such as this, even though it has trickle vents, is that it can increase condensation, which appears in the form of black mould, etc, and whilst we did not see any of this on the day of our inspection we often find people, particularly with new babies, clean up any such signs of mould very quickly.



Plastic window with trickle vent

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.

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

### Trickle Vents Defined

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

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Just to see how the windows would have originally have been in the property, there is one original metal window to the passageway and we are advised that the unusually double glazed door is not original but was put in by a previous owner.



Original metal window



Unusual glazed double doors at end of passageway

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

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# **EXTERNAL DECORATIONS**



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

There is very little to decorate, with the exception of the fascias and soffits and the issue here is more the venting of the roof and the new roof than the redecoration.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

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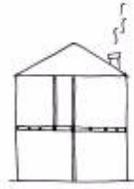
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# INTERNAL



## CEILING, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

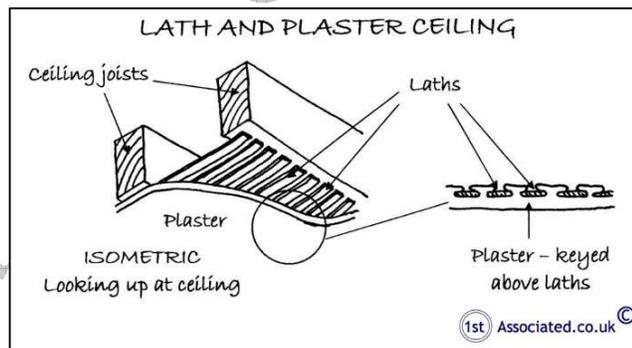
*In this section we look at the finish applied to the structural elements such as the plasterwork applied to the ceiling joists, walls or partitions, together with the construction of the internal walls and partitions.*

### Ceilings

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be lath and plaster. There may have been some replacement with plasterboard over the years.

#### Lath and Plaster Defined

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



#### Plasterboard Defined

The usual name for Gypsum plasterboard which is building board with a core of aerated gypsum, usually enclosed between two sheets of heavy paper, used as a dry lining.

### Internal Walls and Partitions

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

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## **Perimeter Walls**

Originally these would have been constructed with a wet plaster, possibly originally with a lime plaster, however they are now very smooth and we suspect they have been skim coated with a modern gypsum plaster.

We cannot be 100% certain of the wall construction without opening them up which goes beyond the scope of this report.

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

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

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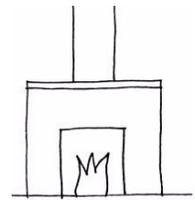
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# CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

At the time of the survey no chimneys were in use, however we were advised that heating is via a back boiler which is an old system. These really started being replaced in the 1960's. We would add that in our experience this is a very reliable system; some people are happy to live with it, other people want it changed for a more modern system.

Any chimneys that you do not propose to use should be capped and ventilated to prevent dampness.

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

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

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

Please also see the Chimney Stacks 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.

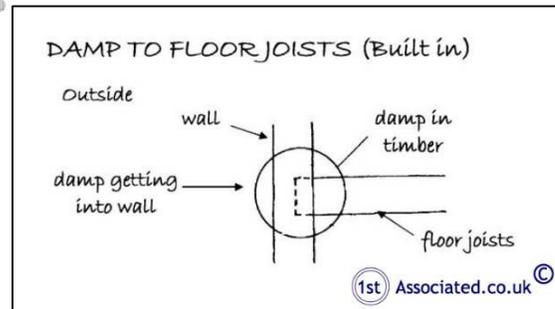
Our investigation has been restricted due to us not opening up the floor or lifted the laminate.



## First Floor

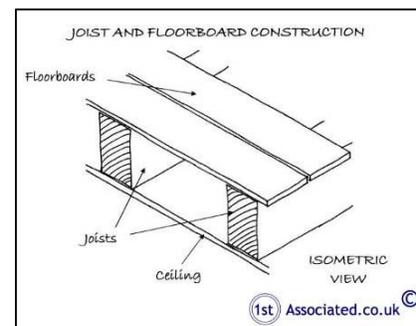
We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards with embedded timbers, as this is typical in this age of property.

Quadrant bead not finished properly on laminate flooring



### 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.



The bathroom has a tiled floor. With a wooden floor you will always get some deflection, however minor. This deflection in the floor will ultimately mean that the tiles will need re-grouting.



Tiling on bathroom floor

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

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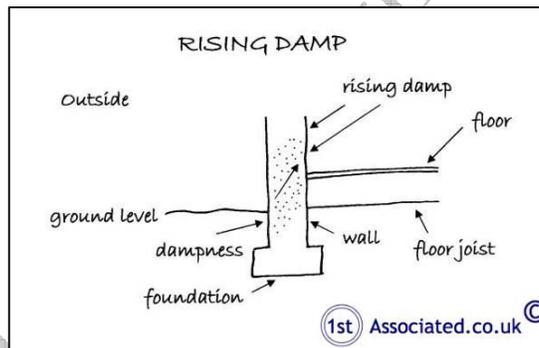


# DAMPNESS

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

## Rising Damp

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



A visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case the damp levels were average for this age, type and style of property.

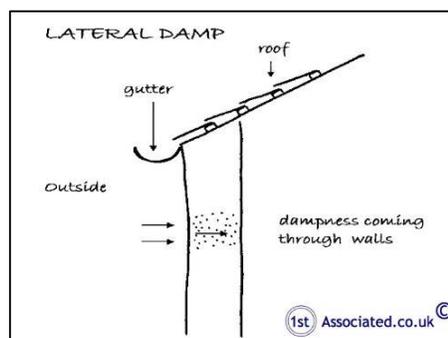


Testing for rising damp

## Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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

We used a damp meter on the external walls. In this case the damp levels were average for this age, type and style of property.



## **Condensation**

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

At the time of the inspection there were no signs of condensation but please note our comments on cold bridging. It depends upon how you utilise the building, if you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating, cooling and ventilation of properties and opening windows to air the property regularly.

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

A way of helping to reduce condensation is to have good large extract fans within the kitchens and bathrooms which are moisture generating areas.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend humidity controlled extract fans be added to kitchens and bathrooms. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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 doors are modern, we assume replacement doors, in timber and partly glazed.



Wooden panel door with glazing

## Staircase

We were unable to examine the underside of the stair timbers due to it being lined, 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.

## Kitchen

We found the kitchen in average condition subject of course to some wear and tear as one would expect.

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

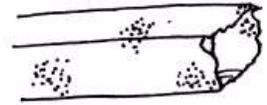
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# **TIMBER DEFECTS**



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

## **Dry Rot**

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

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

## **Wet Rot**

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

Again, we have not visually seen any wet rot during the course of our inspection. Again, there may be some in the roof but we had a very limited view of this due to the stored items and the foil and bagged insulation being attached to the pitch of the roof.

## **Woodworm**



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

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the roof we found no obvious visual signs of woodworm activity or indeed signs of past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage. In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection is usually restricted by insulation covering some

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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 100 per cent certain that there is no woodworm the only way would be to check the property when is emptied of fixtures and fittings etc.

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

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

## INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

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

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

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# THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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

## HIPs

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

## Roofs

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 300mm. We are not certain how to comment with regard to the roof; we could see approximately 100mm to 200mm insulation to the perimeter of the main roof and then you also have the lining to the pitch of the roof, which we would recommend is removed as this can cause damaged battens.

## Walls

The property has an early style stretcher bond construction which although it has the cavity it is unlikely to have been originally in filled.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Adviser to check and confirm with the sellers and their agents if the cavity has been filled and advise us if it has as this can cause problems with wall ties.

## Windows

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

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## Services

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

## Summary

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

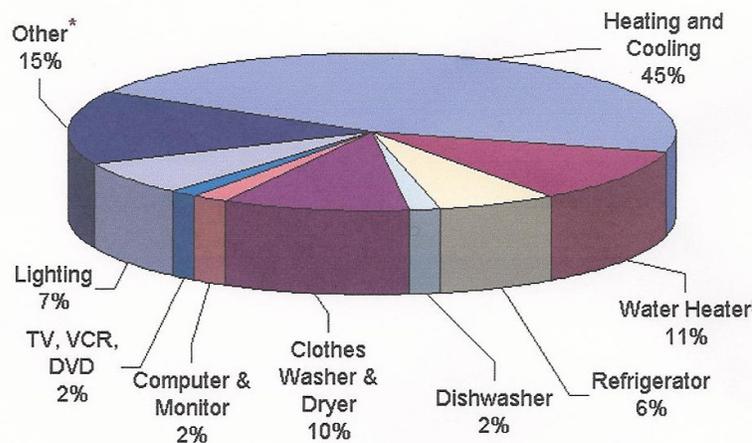
Further information can be obtained with regard to energy saving via the Internet on the following pages:

*HTTP//www.est.org.uk, which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.  
or alternatively www.cat.org.uk  
or Sustainable Energy Without the Hot Air by David J C MacKay  
HTTP//www.withouthotair.com/Videos.html to download for free or buy a paper copy as we did.*

*It is worth watching the video How Many Light Bulbs? by David J C MacKay HTTP//www.youtube.com/watch?v=UR8wRSp2IXs*

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.

What does my energy bill pay for?



\* "Other" represents an array of household products, including stoves, ovens, microwaves, and small appliances. Individually, these products account for no more than about 2% of a household's energy bills.

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## OTHER MATTERS



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

### Security

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

### Fire / Smoke Alarms

Some smoke detectors were noted. The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply. Obviously in a property of this age this is difficult, as it would mean having surface mounted wires or cutting wiring into the plaster.

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

### Insurance

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

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

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## Asbestos

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. In this case we have not noted asbestos. In this age of property it can be used for duct work, for example to the internal services.

This was commonly used post war until it was banned only in the last ten or so years, although it is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time. We are not asbestos surveyors.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to confirm you are 100 percent free of asbestos you need to have an asbestos survey carried out.

## SERVICES

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

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

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# ELECTRICITY



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

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

## Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the entrance hallway and are from the 1970's / 1980's. The fuse board looked dated and far better are now available.



Fuse board

There appears to be a general lack of socket points.



Here you can see an extension lead has been used

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## Earth Test

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



Earth Test

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that more socket points are added. As the property is changing occupancy an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test and report should be carried out by a NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

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

The kitchen and the bathroom have been upgraded and as such there should be an electric certificate for work carried out, or at least an invoice.

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

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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

The owner did not know where the controlling stopcock was located.

It is important that its presence is established in case of bursts or leaks. The stopcock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ask the owner's partner.

## Water Pressure

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

## Cold Water Cistern

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

## Plumbing

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

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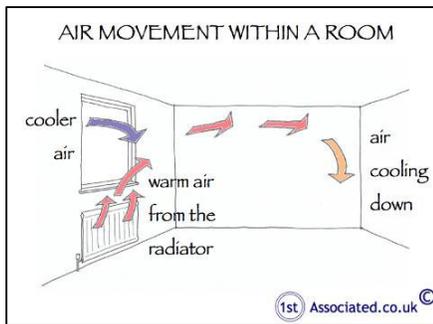
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## Heating

Heating is from a back boiler behind the fireplace.

### Internal radiators

We noted an internal radiator. We would move this underneath the windows as this gives a better circulation of air and reduce the chance of condensation.



Internal radiator

We noted some supplementary heaters.

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



Supplementary heater

### Ten Minute Heating Test

It was warm at the time of our survey and no test was carried out.

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

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

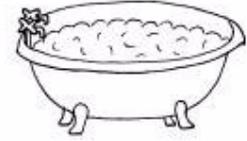
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# **BATHROOM**



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

The property has a three piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin and WC, which looks in as new condition. Please note our comments with regard to tiling on to timber floors.

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

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## MAIN DRAINS



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

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

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

### Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We have identified one inspection chambers / manholes.

#### Manholes Defined

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

### Inspection Chamber / Manhole One, located to the rear right hand side

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

From what we could see it is brick built.



Manhole to rear right hand side

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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.

Drains are normally shared in a property of this age as this was common practice in this era of property.

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

### **Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage**

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

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

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal. In this era of property they are likely to be combined drains which is where the foul water and the surface water combines. These can be a problem during heavy rainfall and peak periods, such as the 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

The main focus of this report has been on the main building. If you wish us to do a specific report on the other buildings then you need to instruct us for this separately. We are offering here a brief overview.

### OUTBUILDINGS / PARKING



There is a single outbuilding which is a prefabricated concrete construction, with what looks like a corrugated roof, although from our experience these often have asbestos roofs.



Prefabricated outbuilding



Inside the outbuilding

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

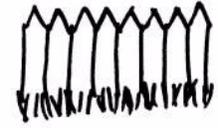
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# EXTERNAL AREAS



## Front Garden

You have a large long front garden.



Front Garden



Front boundary wall



Concrete post and wire fence  
To right hand side area

## Rear Garden

This is also a good size, with a patio area and decking at the far end.



Rear Garden



Patio area

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**Boundaries:** The left hand boundary (all directions given as you face the property) is usually the responsibility of the subject property. Please note our comments with regard to the boundary on the left hand wall.

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**

No-one answered when we knocked.

### **Right Hand Neighbours**

No-one answered when we knocked.

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## **POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:
  - i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
  - ii) Rising damp treatments.
  - iii) Cavity wall insulation and cavity wall tie repairs.
  - iv) Double glazing or replacement windows.
  - v) Roof and similar renewals.
  - vi) Central heating installation.
  - vii) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
  - viii) Removal of any walls in part or whole.
  - ix) Removal of any chimneys in part or whole.
  - x) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
- d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- e) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.
- f) Liabilities in connection with shared services.
- g) Adjoining roads and services.
- h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- i) General development proposals in the locality.

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

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

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

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

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

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

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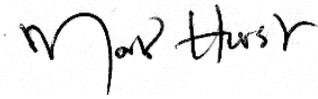
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It is our policy not to offer a conclusion to ensure that the Building Survey is read in full and the comments are taken in context.

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



For and on Behalf of  
Gem Associates Limited  
Independent Chartered Surveyors  
Hoo View House  
Stanley Street  
Bedford  
Bedfordshire  
MK41 7RW

**This Report is dated: 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012**

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## **REFERENCES**

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*Published by Estates Gazette Limited*

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

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

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

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## **LIMITATIONS**

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

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

The report has been prepared in accordance with our Conditions of Engagement dated 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2012 and should be regarded as a comment on the overall condition of the property and the quality of its structure and not as an inventory of every single defect. It relates to those parts of the property that were reasonably and safely accessible at the time of the inspection, but you should be aware that defects can subsequently develop particularly if you do not follow the recommendations.

## **ENGLISH LAW**

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

## **SOLE USE**

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

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

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## **WEATHER**

It was a showery spring day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

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

## **NOT LOCAL**

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

## **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.

## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited due to:

1. The mass of stored items in the roof space and the foil and insulation in a bag that has been fixed to the roof pitches.
2. We also have not opened up the ground floor or the first floor.
3. We did not have the benefit of meeting you at the property to talk about your specific requirements.



Mass of stored items

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## **BUILDING INSURANCE**

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

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

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

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

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

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# APPENDICES

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

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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 - British Gas or NICEIC Electrical Contractor.
2. A certificate from the local authority saying that the installation has approval under the building regulations.

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

## **Work You Cannot do Yourself**

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

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## INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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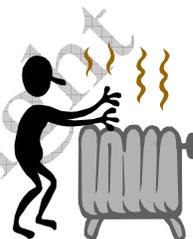
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# Condensation and Cold Bridging

## What is Cold Bridging?

### **What is cold bridging and does it always cause condensation?**

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



### **Certain types of buildings are more susceptible to condensation and cold bridging**

You often see condensation in properties, for example on a mirror in a bathroom when you have had a shower or a bath. 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.

Typically this will be a lintel. Problems can occur with concrete lintels that were commonly used in the 1970's, and also in more modern, better insulated properties, cold bridging has been known to occur on metal lintels. The problem is what to do about it.



Example of a concrete lintel – can you notice where the cold bridging would be in this photo?



A close up view of the concrete lintel

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## When is Cold Bridging Most Likely?

In our experience cold bridging is most likely on properties built in the 1930's to 1980's, most commonly in the 1970's. This is the era when we were just starting to think about insulation and we added insulation into our structures for example with cavity wall insulation or double glazed windows. This meant they were warmer which in effect 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.



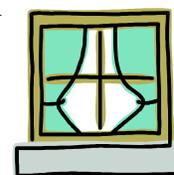
Typical 1970's house



Typical 1970's houses

## So what can you do about 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, the air ventilation and movement you can reduce considerably the chances of condensation. Airing the room which seems to have gone out of fashion where you literally open the windows in the morning to air the room is a big step forward.



## **Where do we most commonly see cold bridging?**

We would answer this in two ways. Firstly, we see as mentioned cold bridging is common in 1970's houses. It's also more common to various other factors.

The main other factor is large families or families with young children where there is a lot of washing going on and often during the winter months this washing is then dried on radiators. This is generally known as the lifestyle of the occupants.

## **Expert witness cases**

We have seen some terrible examples of this. We have been involved in several court cases as expert witnesses where landlords are being taken to court over the condensation being caused by cold bridging. The discussions that then take place in court with us as expert witnesses are, is it a design characteristic or is it a lifestyle characteristic that is causing problems.

## **Is Cold Bridging a design problem?**

We have been involved in many reports on condensation and cold bridging and some legal cases where we have been asked to act as expert witness. Really it's down to the design of the property. There are cold elements in it such as a concrete frame or concrete lintels. You have a disadvantage although, not impossible to stop the condensation it's very hard. It could also be argued that where cold bridging is occurring in a modern property you are getting interstitial condensation which is condensation within the structure which you literally can't see.



1960's concrete frame

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Concrete lintel visible externally  
but they are not always visible



Dampness and condensation around  
the concrete window lintel

### **Do lifestyle issues cause condensation?**

By lifestyle issues we mean the way the building is being used. We have come across quite a few instances where it is how the property is being used that's causing the problems. This may be due to showers being taken without extractor fans being put on or it may be due to clothes being dried internally, particularly during the winter months. It could be steamy kitchens. Some things can be helped by airing the home by opening the windows and in bathrooms and kitchens you can have extractor fans that are controlled by humidity controls on the fans. So it really is an individual answer in most cases to the problems with the property.



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## **Party Wall etc Act 1996 basics**

The following article will help you get a basic understanding of the party wall process as set out within the Party Wall etc Act 1996. We would recommend the Party Wall etc Act 1996 explanatory free booklet that is available from the office of the Deputy Prime Minister: website odpm.gov.uk

The aims of these articles are to give a basic understanding (although not detailed understanding) of the Party Wall etc Act 1996. This particular article looks at the terms used in the party wall world.

### **A party wall defined**

This is a wall that stands astride a boundary of land belonging to two or more different owners. Interestingly enough, the Act doesn't just relate to party walls (that is why we have the etc. bit) and also it redefines different types of party walls.

### **Party fence wall**

The first term we will look at is the party fence wall. This is a wall that doesn't form part of a building and stands astride the boundary line between lands of different owners. In summary, it is used to separate these lands. Typically, it is a garden wall and that is what most people would call it, but it doesn't include a wooden fence!

### **Line of junction**

The term line of junction is often used in the party wall world to mean a boundary line.

### **The other type of party wall**

This is a party wall that sits wholly on the land of one of the owners, but is used to separate or divide their land or buildings. A good example of this is where a garden wall has been built, building on one person's land and next door builds a house extension utilising this wall. Another term used in the party wall world is party structure and this is more of an all embracing term that can be used for walls or floors, for example that divide flats, but still fit the interpretation of astride a boundary of land between two different owners.

## **Who do party walls affect and more specialist terms that are used**

### **The land or building owners terms**

The first term to get used to is that a building owner, and this is usually the person that wants any work to be carried out, initiates the Party Wall Act. The second term that is often used is adjoining owner. This has slightly different connotations, as it can relate to the actual freeholder of the property or the leaseholder or leaseholders, with regard to a lease the interest has to be greater than one year. Therefore, an adjoining owner can in fact be several people or companies. These terms are very much used in abundance so you should get used to the term building owner and adjoining owner.

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## Terms used for the different sorts of surveyors

Initially in any dispute the building owner will seek advice and guidance from a specialist chartered building surveyor (also sometimes known as the unappointed surveyor). The surveyor will advise and help the building owner to serve a notice on the adjoining owner. It is only when dispute arises from this notice served that we move onto the next stage and that is where we have appointed surveyors. There will be an appointed surveyor for both the building owner and the adjoining owner. However, there is another alternative, which is where both the building owner and the adjoining owner agree on having an agreed surveyor; so this is one surveyor appointed in agreement by both the building owner and the adjoining owner to see through the Party Wall etc Act 1996.

It is the ideal situation, in our opinion, particularly with domestic disputes. However, frequently both sides wish to have their own surveyor feeling rightly or wrongly, and we would say wrongly, that the surveyor will be acting on their behalf. They are in fact not acting on their behalf but simply ensuring that the Party Wall etc Act 1996 is carried out correctly.

There is a further surveying term used and that is the third surveyor. This is the surveyor that is selected by the two appointed surveyors, so that if there are any difficulties they can hopefully be resolved. We have carried out an article specifically on third surveyors which we would refer you to.

## Why do people use the Party Wall etc Act 1996?

It is because they gain more rights than they do have under common law. However, unless the Notice is served correctly and the surveyors have authority to act, the Party Wall etc Act 1996 does not exist. We have heard it explained as if you are going to a party without an invite to get the party wall Award started.

Then, in its simplest form, the building owner will work with his party wall surveyor and the adjoining owner will work with this party wall surveyor to have whatever work the building owner is wishing to have carried out and the adjoining owner to influence the work (but not stop it) until the work is completed. This is the ideal scenario.

## How does the Party Wall etc Act 1996 work?

From a building owner's point of view they need to appoint a party wall surveyor. In our experience, we would recommend that they first of all seek advice from the surveyor as to their situation prior to instructing the party wall surveyor, as in some cases the Party Wall etc Act 1996 is not appropriate. Typically, Party Wall Notices will be required for any work that requires taking a bearing off the wall, any alterations to the wall, i.e. raising it, thickening it or cutting it down or off, demolition and rebuild or protecting work. Smaller works, such as adding a flashing or fixing a shelf (although in theory you are taking a bearing off the wall), or cutting it away to put electrical points in are too small to mention.

The key point with regard to the Party Wall Act is where there could be a consequence for structural strengthening or support, etc, or that to the adjoining property then the Party Wall etc Act 1996 applies.

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