

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

Sheffield



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0800 298 5424

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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.

REPORT FORMAT

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

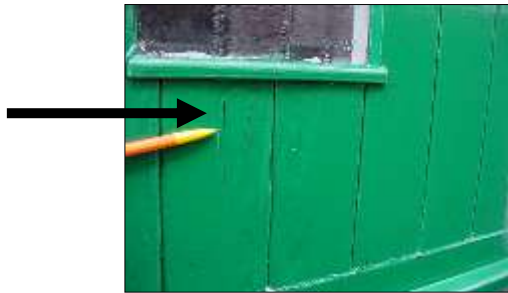
GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

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

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



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

ORIENTATION

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

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a three storey detached property on a relatively new residential estate. The property has the benefit of off road parking and a single integral garage (although at the time of our inspection the garage was absolutely full of stored items). The property sits on a hill/sloping site. To the rear there is a garden that is mainly covered with wood decking which effectively hides the sloping site.

This property is typical of properties built in the 1980's/1990's; this date was confirmed as being the likely date of construction by the occupier. If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

1970	Decimalisation
1973	Britain enters the European Economic Community
1976	The first commercial Concorde flight took off
1977	Elvis Presley found dead
1979-1991	The Thatcher Years
1980	John Lennon Shot Dead
1982	Falklands Conflict between Britain and Argentina
1988	Margaret Thatcher became the longest serving British Prime Minister for this century
1989	Berlin Wall falls
1990	Nelson Mandela freed
1994	The Channel Tunnel is opened
1997	Death of Diana, Princess of Wales

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view



Rear view



Left hand view



Right hand view



Front drive/garden



Rear garden/decking

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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 hall with stairs
- 2) Through lounge right (original utility room removed)
- 3) Single integral garage left
- 4) Utility room rear added
- 5) W.C. rear

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Through lounge right
- 2) Kitchen/dining room rear
- 3) Bedroom front left

Top Floor

The top floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Master Bedroom with en-suite front
- 2) Double bedroom rear right
- 3) Single bedroom rear left
- 4) Bathroom middle left

Outside Areas

The property is on a sloping site. The front of the property has off road parking and a single garage. To the rear there is a garden that is mainly covered with wood decking which effectively hides the sloping site.

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

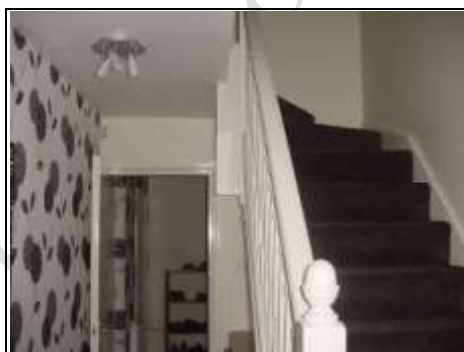
(See External Areas at end of report for garage)



Through lounge looking towards rear
(advised where utility room once was)



Through lounge looking towards
front



Entrance hall/stairs



Utility room rear left



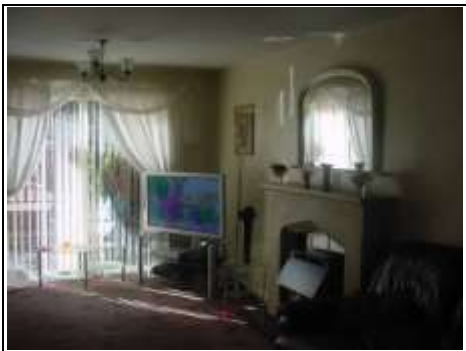
W.C.

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First Floor



Through lounge



Dining area in through lounge



Kitchen



Dining area in kitchen



Bedroom



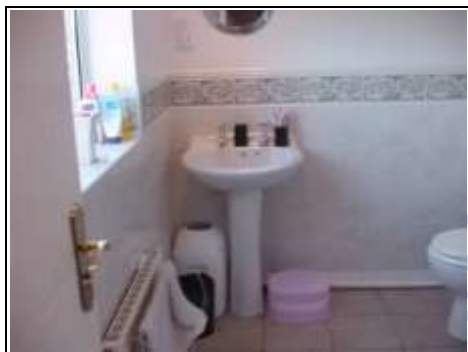
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Top Floor



Master bedroom



En-suite to master bedroom



Bathroom



Single bedroom rear left



Double bedroom rear right

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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Main Roof:	Pitched and gabled roof, clad with concrete tiles and valley gutters
Roof Structure:	Prefabricated roof truss
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Internal (assumed air inlet valves)
Walls:	Upper level: Brick face Lower level: Stone face
Fascias and Soffits:	Plastic, possibly overcladding timber (assumed)
Windows and Doors:	Plastic double glazed windows with trickle vents

Internal

Ceilings:	Plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Predominantly studwork, there may be some dry lined solid walls (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Suspended timber or concrete floor (assumed)
First/Top Floor:	Joist and floorboard sheets (assumed joist hangers)

Services

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (all assumed). The boiler is located in the kitchen and is an Ideal Standard wall mounted boiler. The electrics are located in the garage and are original from when the property was built (1980's/1990's).

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.

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 250 photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if an issue has not been discussed that you are interested in or concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it; if we have not we will happily go back.

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

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

The Good

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

1.0) The size of the property.

2.0) Off-road parking.

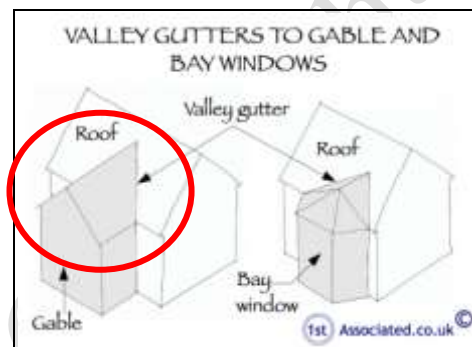
We are sure you can think of other things to add to this list.

The Bad

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

1.0) Valley gutters

This property has valley gutters. Valley gutters are formed where two roofs meet and these are generally problematic. The cement does look like it is starting to deteriorate.



Valley gutter



Close up of valley showing the cement is starting to deteriorate

ACTION REQUIRED: We believe that repair will be needed within the next five years, possibly quite soon, therefore you do need to carry out periodic inspections to check that no cement has fallen out/damp getting in.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section of this Report.

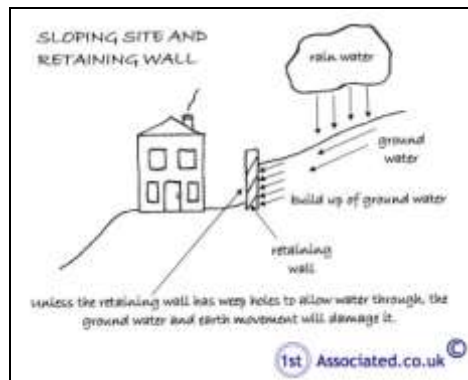
2.0) Sloping site

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

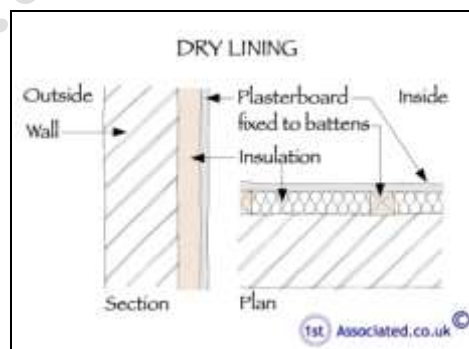
The property sits on a sloping site which means that any rainwater or ground water needs to travel from the top of the plot to the bottom.



Sloping site



We were unable to see the rear wall of the property properly due to the dry lining.



We were unable to see the rear wall of the utility room as it is dry lined. Note: also repainting of ceiling may be hiding dampness coming in identified by the pen

We can however see that the rear retaining wall to the right hand side (strictly speaking this may not be all in your property but it is the best we have to look at) would benefit from weep holes to allow water to pass through it rather than build up pressure behind it. We can only make assumptions as to whether the same thing is occurring to the rear wall unless we open it up. There is no obvious smell in these rooms of dampness but we are well aware there were a lot of stored items in these rooms.

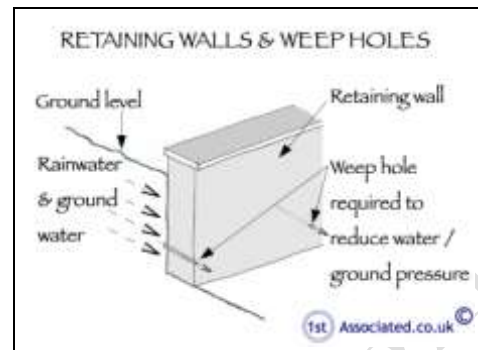
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Retaining wall on right hand side



Rainwater travelling from the top of the sloping site to the bottom



Mould on stonework



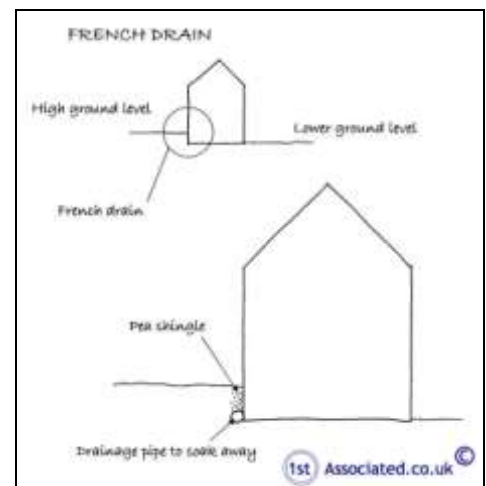
Moss appearing on brickwork and top of stone of retaining wall



Rot to base of doors indicates that rainwater is going into the building rather than around it

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend a French Drain or running gully around the property to allow rainwater to pass around the building rather than through it. This, providing there haven't already been any problems caused, will reduce any dampness in the property.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £2,500 - £5,000 as this is difficult and awkward work. As the drains are positioned on the left hand side of the property you should be able to get into these. Please obtain quotations.



Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

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3.0) Decking

3.1) Decking and capillary action

We noted that the wood decking to the rear of the property sits directly against the house. This can lead to dampness via capillary action. We always recommend that decking is at least 100mm away from the house walls.



Decking runs directly to the building at rear of property

3.2) Decking and vermin

We would also recommend putting poison under the decking as they are a great home for vermin. You mentioned that you had seen a rat trap; we didn't see one during the course of our survey but we did notice poisonous food located in the roof space. The reason vermin are attracted to particular houses/areas is because it is a warm, dryish area and food being regularly available.

We have been involved in a legal case where one house repeatedly had vermin in the form of rats with the other adjoining houses not getting the same problem. In that particular legal case we believe it was down to the lifestyle of the occupiers being the reason why there was vermin in the property.

ACTION REQUIRED: Take up the decking so there is at least 100mm gap between the decking and your house. Put poison underneath the decking, ensuring it is kept away from children and animals, of course.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £250 to £750 or a good few weekends of DIY (the removal of the decking will of course have to be carried out to allow the French drains that we suggested earlier in this section); please obtain quotations.

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4.0) Condensation likely

We can see that the humidity creating areas such as the kitchen, the bathroom and the en-suite have a higher than average chance of getting condensation. This is because the extract fans are small and are full of dust and dirt and need a good clean.

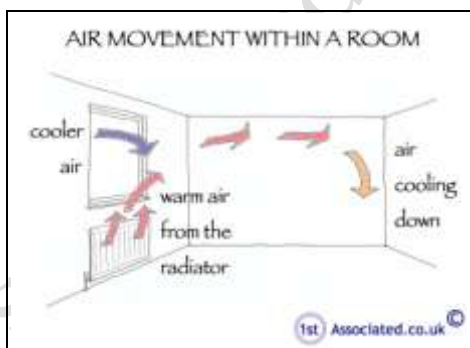


Small extract fan in second floor bathroom



Extract fan in en-suite needs work

The shower to the master bedroom en-suite has signs of mould which we believe is due to lack of air movement and excessive humidity.



Mould to shower

We would strongly recommend that you replace existing fans with large extract fans which are humidity controlled. As mentioned when we had our telephone conversation we feel that we are still very much in the experimental age with the increases of insulation that we are using in our properties which are sometimes not appropriately matched with ventilation.

In this case we can see the windows had trickle vents but they give relatively small amounts of ventilation in a property; you still need to air it by opening the windows occasionally.

Trickle vents defined

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



Trickle vent

ACTION REQUIRED: Large extract fans with humidity controlled thermostats to be installed within the kitchens and bathrooms which are moisture generating areas.

ANTICIPATED COST: Diamond drilling required to make the openings larger. We would expect costs in the region of £500 - £1,000 as these are wet areas; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

5.0) New kitchen needed and update to bathrooms

The worktops in the kitchen were worn and a door was missing at the time of our inspection. Whilst you may be able to replace the worktop it would then make the rest of the units dated so you would be looking towards a new kitchen.



Worktop is worn



Close up of worn worktop



Worn worktop

ACTION REQUIRED: Replace kitchen.

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ANTICIPATED COST: You can spend as much or as little as you wish on a kitchen. We would add that the bathrooms ideally need updating. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Internal Joinery Section of this Report.

6.0) Leaking en-suite shower

We believe that the en-suite shower unit is leaking. This may be as simple as a joint that leaks when compressed and the trap on the wastepipe.



Leak to shower unit

ACTION REQUIRED: You can open up the shower tray (which doesn't look in particularly good condition), but we have always found it difficult to put shower trays back together again! Unfortunately whilst this is probably a relatively small problem, it could mean that you have to have a new shower tray or at least the sides to it.



Leaking shower

ANTICIPATED COST: Shower trays and the shower cubicles are always in our mind very expensive with prices seeming to range from £250 upwards. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Bathrooms Section of this Report.

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7.0) Lots of use, some abuse

We noted in some areas the decoration and fixtures and fittings are in below average condition, for example the toilet seat, the skirting and door architrave have all suffered from damage by the dog.



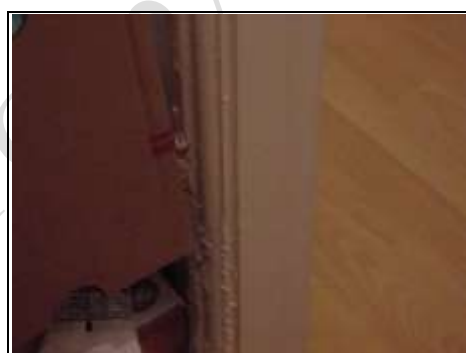
Door to garage damaged. This should be a fire door.



Damage by dog



Damage to skirtings



Damage to architrave

We also noted doors to the staircase had their door closers removed (known generically as Perco door closers which is their trade name) or have broken and not been replaced. We talk a bit more about the fire risk in the next section.



Perco door closer



Perco door closer

Perco Door Closer Defined

This is a central door closer that acts as a fire break closing the door and stopping the transfer of fire.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would suggest that you have a good look at the property again as there are lots of stored items hiding areas. We feel that you would probably agree the majority of it would benefit from redecoration and replacement and repairs in some places where the dog has caused damage.

ANTICIPATED COST: Depending on whether you like DIY decoration or not, this could run into a thousand pounds or so or many thousands of pounds, again depending upon decoration standards that you require. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Internal Joinery Section of this Report.

8.0) Fire risk

Three storey properties such as this are always a concern if there is a fire as to how do the people on the top floor escape. Originally the doors to the stairway were fitted with door closers to ensure the stairs were not used like a chimney to spread fire from one floor to the next.

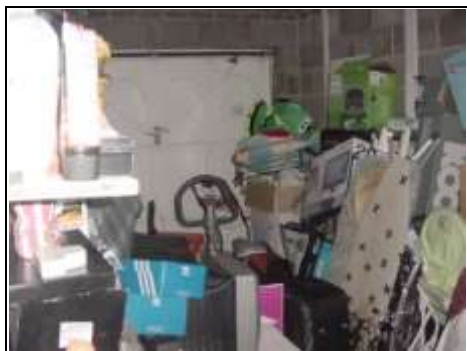
ACTION REQUIRED: You need to reinstate these or improve your fire alarm system in the property. We have carried out improvements to a fire alarm system in a three storey property relatively recently which cost £2,000; this was for a commercial quality fire alarm system on a house of multiple occupancy, i.e. a rented house.

ANTICIPATED COST: Replace the door closers which are likely to be a few hundred pounds or a few thousand pounds if you wish to put a fire alarm system in; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Other Matters Section of this Report.

9.0) Lots of stored items blocking our view

This house has far more stored items than we usually see in a property. In fact the garage has probably got our record for the fullest garage that we have seen this year but equally there were items placed against many of the walls.



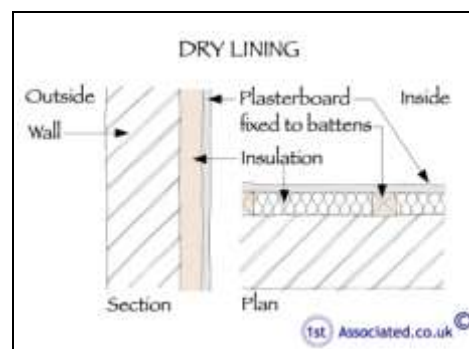
Garage completely blocked



Stored items

In addition the property is dry lined which stops us from seeing if any dampness is coming through.

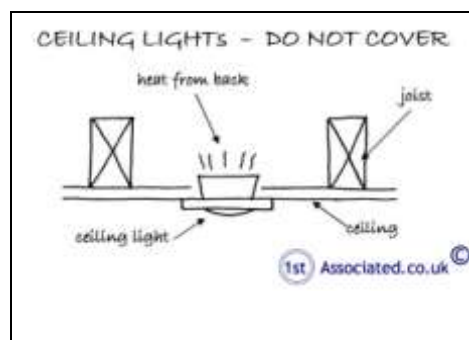
Please see the Limitations Section of this Report.



10.0) Services

10.1) Ceiling lights

The property has electric lights to the ceiling in a variety of ages. In some instances these ceiling lights can cause problems as the heat given off has in some cases lead to outbreaks of fire; these tend to be in the older type of ceiling lights and we recommend that where ceiling lights are used that the rear of the light is not covered; this is particularly the case in rooms with a loft space above it where stored items are placed in it.





Ceiling lights in kitchen



Older style lights



Gaps where lights are is good but shouldn't be covered further

ACTION REQUIRED: Check when putting stored items into the roof that you do not cover the lights

The Ugly

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

There is nothing which we feel falls within this section providing you are happy with the characteristics of the property which we have mentioned throughout the report.

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Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Maintenance

This type of property is relatively modern (i.e., less than one hundred years old) but nevertheless still requires ongoing maintenance and repair. To some extent it is harder to maintain internally than an older property as the walls just don't wear as well or take impact and damage. Equally because it is such a high property it can be difficult to main things such as the gutters. A budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in a good condition. This will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration.

Services

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

Electrics

The Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE) recommend a test and report whenever a property changes occupancy. This should be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

Heating

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 have lifted the manhole cover to the front the only true way to find out the condition of the drains is to have a closed circuit TV camera report to establish the condition of the drains. In this age of property there have often been leaks over the years.

ACTION REQUIRED - SERVICES: We would reiterate that we recommend with regard to all services that you

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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.

Purchase Price

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

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Estimates of Building Costs

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

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

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:

1. The rainwater travelling from the front to the back of the property doesn't have a definite route other than through the building.
2. There were lots of stored items in the property which limited our view but we feel that providing you accept that the building is tired and look to completely redecorate including a new kitchen and bathrooms and you put this into your calculations when making an offer on the price (discount needed).
3. There are the usual issues with the property being a tall property with access to the gutters and other similar issues.

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

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

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

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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.

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

**1980's/1990's
Three storey
detached**



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EXTERNAL

ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

We will consider the roofs in two areas, the main roof and the low level porch roof.

Main Roof

As is the case with most three storey buildings the roof is quite difficult to see particularly to the front in this case. What we can see is a pitched and gabled roof clad with a concrete tile and, from ground level, this looks in average condition from a limited view, considering the roofs age type and style. There is some slight mossing on the ridge and also to the fascias and soffits.



Main roof

ACTION REQUIRED: Carry out periodic inspections and maintenance of the roof, as required. Potential problems are blocking up of the gutters and the valley gutters. Please see below.

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Valley gutter

Just to reiterate valley gutters can be a problem area and look to be in this case with the cement deteriorating in the valley gutter.



Valley gutter

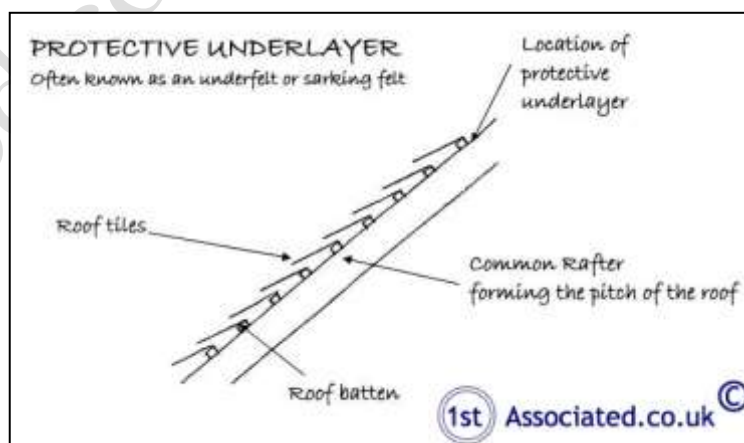


Close up of valley showing the cement is starting to deteriorate

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

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

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



When we inspected the loft space we found a felt reinforced hessian.



Felt reinforced hessian

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Single Storey Roof to front entrance porch/garage

There is a single storey pitched roof over the entrance porch/garage which is clad in concrete tiles with a lead flashing. The flashing was coming away.

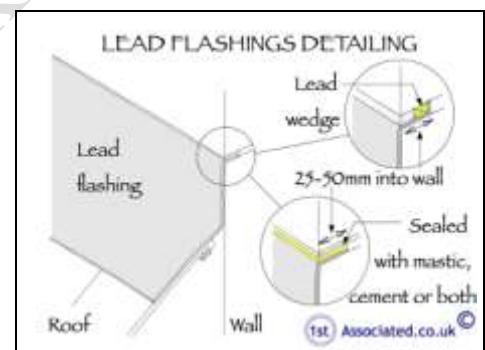


Flashing coming out



Close up of flashing

ACTION REQUIRED: Re-fix lead flashing using plumb mate.



All the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera.

Finally, we were only able to see approximately thirty percent of the main roof from ground level via our ladder. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see, however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

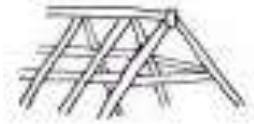
For further comments with regard to ventilation please see the Roof Structure and Loft Section.

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ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

Main Roof

Roof Access

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the top 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.

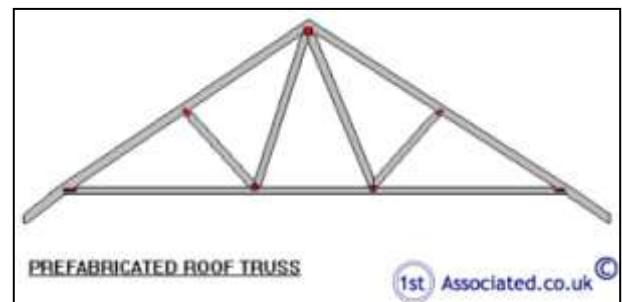
The loft (perimeter) has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly. We had limited access into the roof due to the mass of insulation.



Danger sign

Roof Structure

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



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



Prefabricated truss

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

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

Water Tanks

There was a plastic insulated water tank.

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!



Water tank

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Ventilation

We could see ventilation to the soffits.



Vents to soffits

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 they were hidden by the mass of insulation.

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

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

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GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

Gutters and Downpipes

The gutters and downpipes are plastic.



Gutter and downpipe

We noted that the rainwater goods discharge directly into the ground, a practice that we are not keen on as they are often prone to blockages. Ideally, they should be changed to a gully system.



Downpipes going directly into ground

There may be some minor leaks to the gutters caused partly possibly by being blocked particularly at high level; most people would be happy to live with these providing repairs are carried out within the next six to twelve months.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would 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 soil and vent pipe which is likely to be an air inlet valve which are known by their trade name of Durgo valves. We noted a boxed in duct in the cloakroom which we believe is an air inlet valve. This is likely to be to all the soil and vent pipes. It is strange is that we can see a soil and vent pipe on the next door property but not on your property.



Next doors property soil and vent pipe

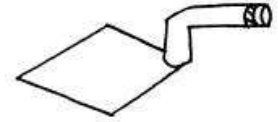
Finally, gutters and downpipes have been inspected from ground level. As it was not raining at the time of the inspection it is not possible to confirm 100 per cent that the rainwater installation is free from blockage, leakage etc. or that it is capable of coping with long periods of heavy rainfall.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

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WALLS



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

The walls are constructed of brickwork to the upper parts and stonework to the lower levels with brick quoins to the corners.



Brickwork/stonework

Brickwork

The property is built in Stretcher bond brickwork.

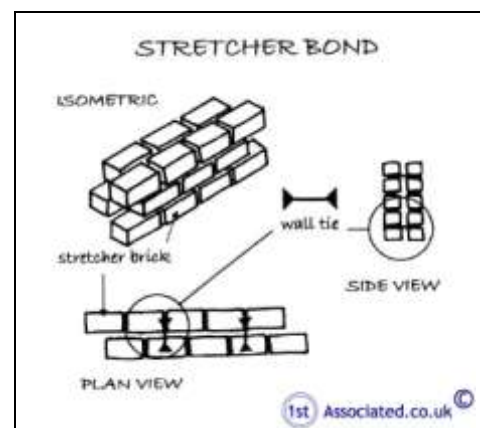


Brickwork



Quoins on corner of 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.



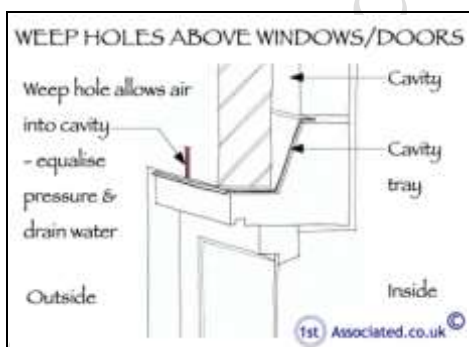
Cavity Walls

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.

Weep holes



Weep holes

Render

The property has some small areas of render which looked in average condition.



Brickwork/render

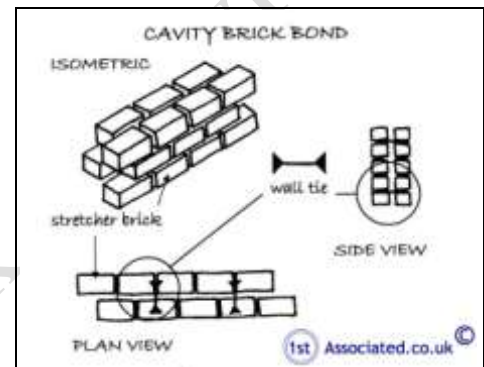
Stonework

The lower parts of the property are clad in stonework. We believe this to be a cavity bond construction as it is very difficult to get through building regulations if we build in the traditional manner with stone.



Stonework

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



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

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FOUNDATIONS



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

Foundations

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

Building Insurance Policy

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

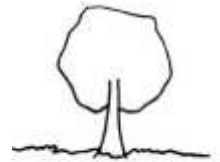
It is your responsibility to check out prior to commitment to purchase that insurance is available on the property on the basis of the things we have reported in the survey. Much as we would like to we are unable to keep up with the changing insurance market and give you advice with regard to this. Please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

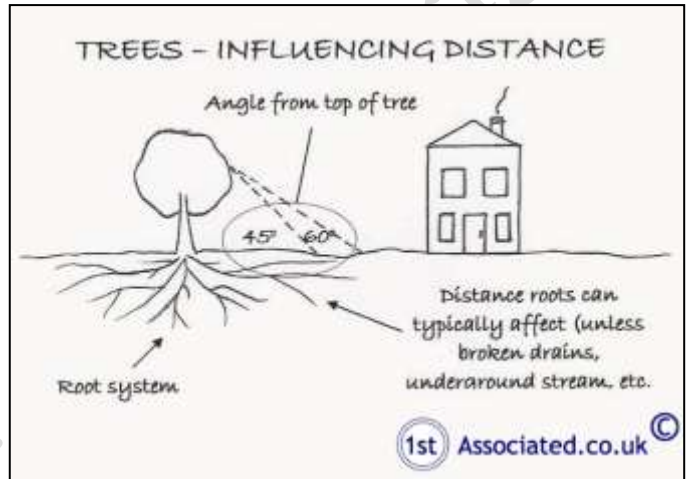
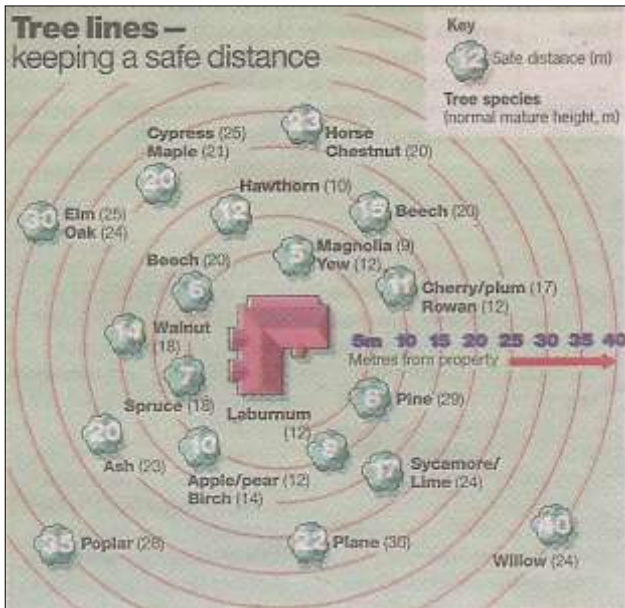
Finally, we have not excavated the foundations but we have drawn conclusions from our inspection and our general knowledge of this type, age and style of property. As no excavation has been carried out we cannot be 100 percent certain as to how the foundation has been constructed and we can only offer our best assumptions and an educated guess, which we have duly done.

TREES



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

There are no trees within what insurance companies would term as influencing distance of the property.

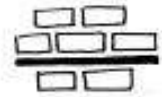


Influencing Distance Defined

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

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.



DAMP PROOF COURSE

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

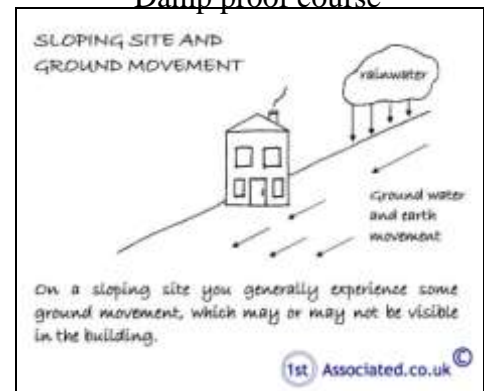
All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, we noted to the left hand side a stepped damp proof course that followed the line of the sloping site.



Damp proof course

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

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

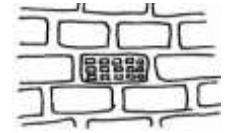


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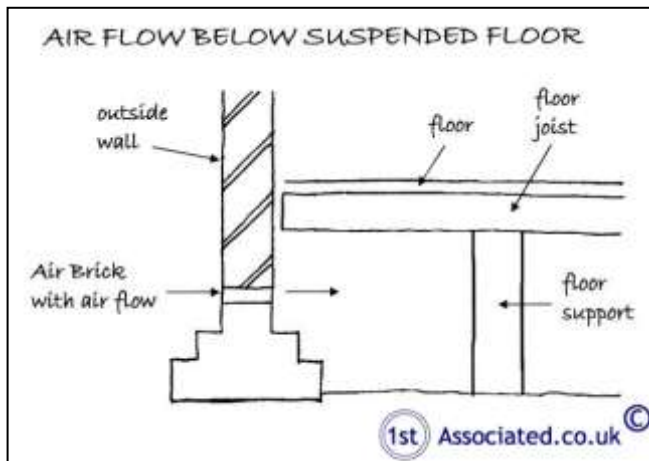
AIRBRICKS



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

Low Level Air Bricks

The property is likely to have a suspended timber floor, possibly a concrete floor. Air bricks are essential to have a through flow of air underneath the floor which is important in this case as it is likely to be getting damp from the rainwater travelling from the top of the sloping site to the bottom through your house.



Air brick

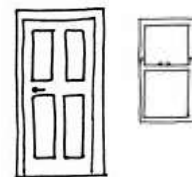
Finally, we have made our best assumptions based upon our visual inspection of the outside of the property and our general knowledge of this age, type and style of construction. We have not opened up the walls/floor, unless we have specifically stated so in this section.

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FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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

Fascias and Soffits

The fascias and soffits are timber and are vented. There is a possibility they are overclad which is unusual on such a new property although from what we can see from the small fixings it does look like they are possibly overcladding a timber fascia and soffit. A way of testing them is to drill through them to see if there is wood underneath. If there is wood underneath, then we would recommend they are replaced. If you do find they are timber, please contact us and we will explain further our thoughts behind this.

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



Fascia and soffit



Unusual vent in fascia



Windows and Doors

The property has plastic double glazed windows with trickle vents and small window sills, which generally look to be of a average quality. The window sills surprised us as they effectively mean that any water from the window that runs down the window to the sills then drips against the brickwork so we believe in the long term there will be pattern staining and possibly moss beneath the windows.



Front window



Trickle vent



Very unusual the window sills are not projecting out

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.

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 the render area to the front and timber decking and associated fences.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

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INTERNAL

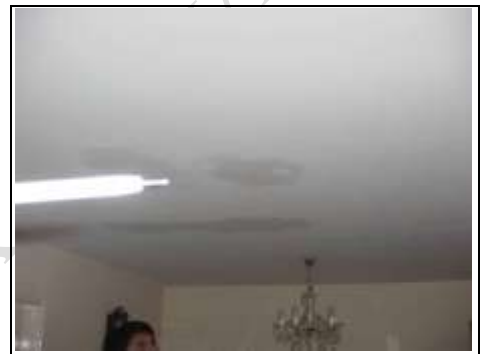


CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

Ceilings

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be plasterboard or there may be some proprietary boarding such as wall board. We asked the owners about the marks on the ceiling, which he advised us had come about due to moving partitions. These look more like damp stains to us which may have come about from leaks from the kitchen above or in a worst case scenario the retaining wall to the rear of the property.



Marks to ceiling in ground floor lounge

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

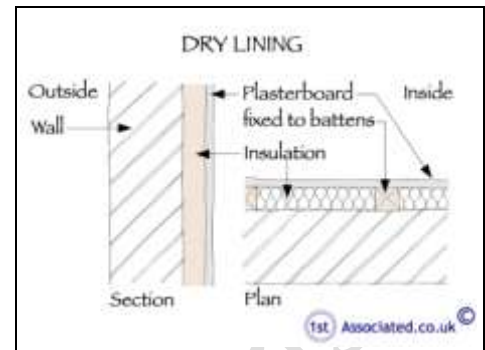
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Perimeter Walls

There may be some dry lined solid walls, also known as false walls. 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.

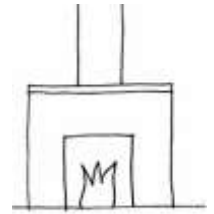
We cannot comment upon the condition of the structure hidden behind plaster, dry lining, other applied finishes, heavy furniture, fittings and kitchen units with fitted back panels.

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CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

The chimney breasts are located to the right hand side (all directions given as you face the front of the property). They are a feature; if you look at the right hand side of the property you will see there is no chimney or chimney breast relating to the fireplace.



Fireplace in first floor lounge



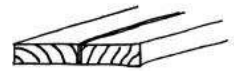
No chimney or chimney breast
on right hand side

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.

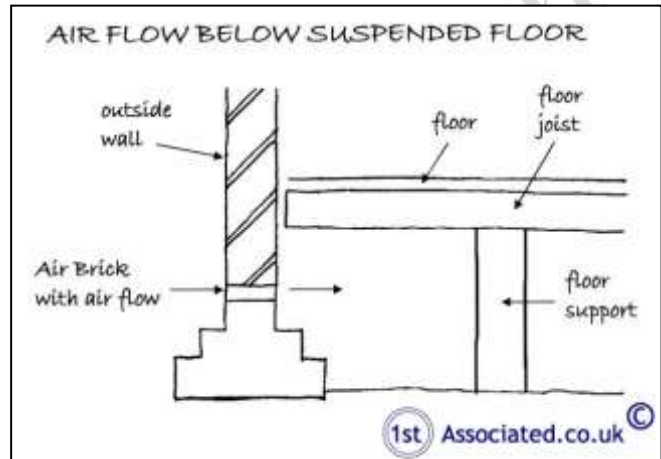
FLOORS



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.

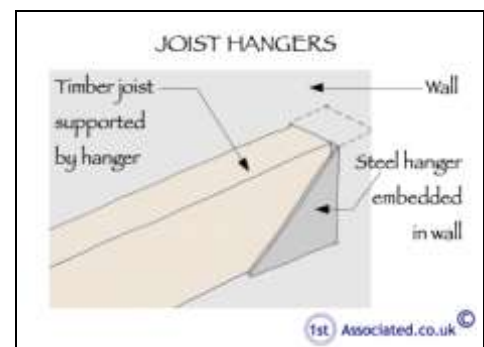
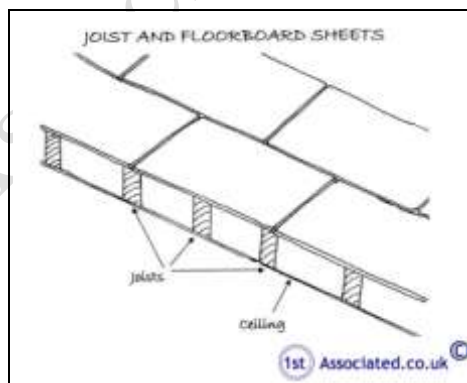
Ground Floor

The ground floor to the property is a suspended timber or concrete floor. We were not 100% sure as we have not opened it up. Either way it does require air movement underneath to minimise wet rot, dry rot and woodworm. We only noted airbricks to the front, additional vents may need to be added. Ideally we would like to have opened up the rear wall of this property to see what the construction was.



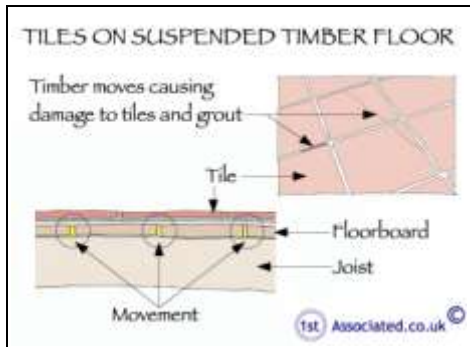
First/Top Floor

We have assumed that the first and second floor construction is joist and floorboard sheets with joist hangers, as this is typical in this age of property.



Tiles

We noted tiles were laid on wood at first floor level and also in the bathrooms and the kitchen.



Tiles on landing

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

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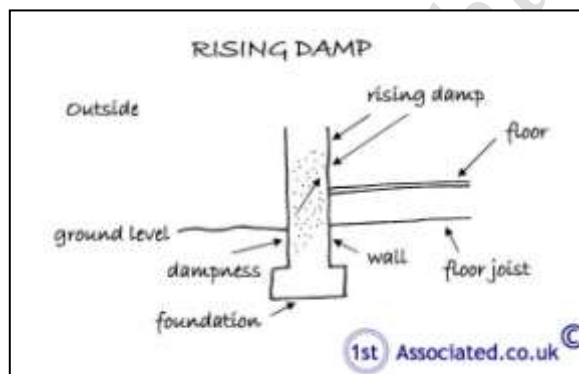


DAMPNESS

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

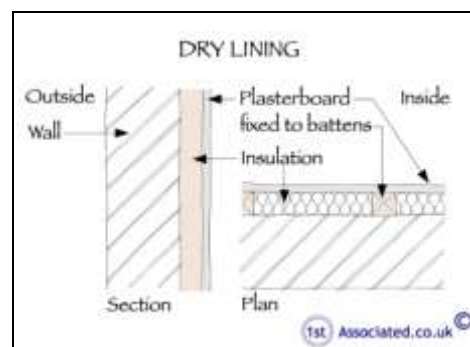
Rising Damp

Rising damp depends upon various components including the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation of the material, amongst other things. Rising damp can come from the ground, drawn by capillary action, to varying degrees of intensity and height into the materials above. There is a strong argument that true rising damp very rarely is found.



A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter are normally taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we were unable to test for rising damp due to the dry lining.

As you know we are concerned there is some dampness getting into the rear of the property.

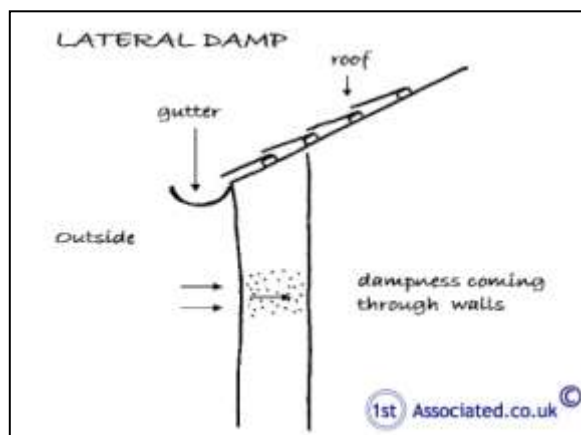


ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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.

Again, we were unable to check for lateral dampness due to the dry lining. Once again, we are concerned that



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dampness may be getting in to the rear of the property.



Check for lateral dampness not possible due to dry lining

Condensation

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

At the time of the inspection there were signs that this property would get condensation when occupied. We took surface temperature readings and these were in line with what we would expect.



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

Surface temperature reading

Extract fans in kitchens and bathrooms

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

ACTION REQUIRED: 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.

INTERNAL JOINERY



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

Doors

The property has modern hollow core doors known as egg box doors.



Hollow core door



Damaged door

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

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.

External staircase

We noted an external concrete staircase to the left hand side of the property. Our thoughts are that this may be a bit of a waterfall when it rains hard. You need to stand outside the next time it rains heavily.



Concrete staircase to left hand side

Storage

We were pleased to see built in cupboards in some of the bedrooms, something that many modern properties do not have.



Built in cupboards to master bedroom

Kitchen

We found the kitchen in below average condition with a missing door and worn worktops. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend a replacement kitchen. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

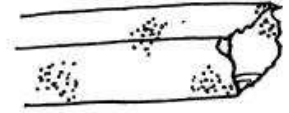
Finally, it should be noted that not all joinery has been inspected. We have viewed a random sample and visually inspected these to give a general overview of the condition. Please also see the External Joinery/Detailing section.

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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.

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

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Woodworm



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

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the roof we found no obvious visual signs of 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 the mass of insulation covering some of the timbers.

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.

We would recommend a full redecoration throughout the house and there are also some repairs required (note the dog damage photos).

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.



Mass of insulation

Walls

The property has a stretcher bond construction. In this age of property they will have insulation.

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

Windows

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

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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. Our concern is with regards to condensation rather than the insulation level.

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.

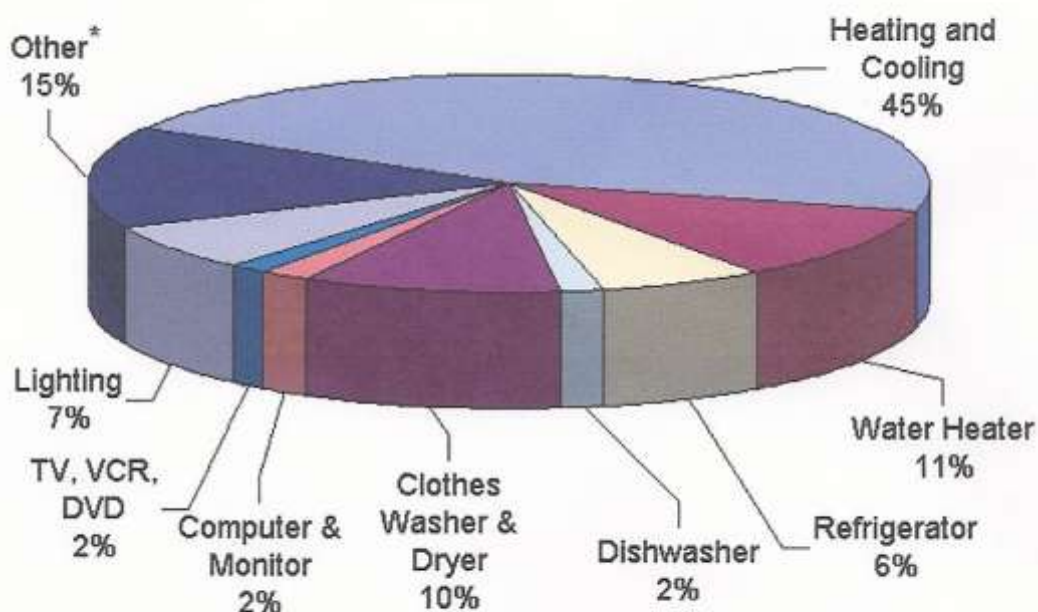
or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

*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=UR8wRSp21Xs*

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 MATTERS

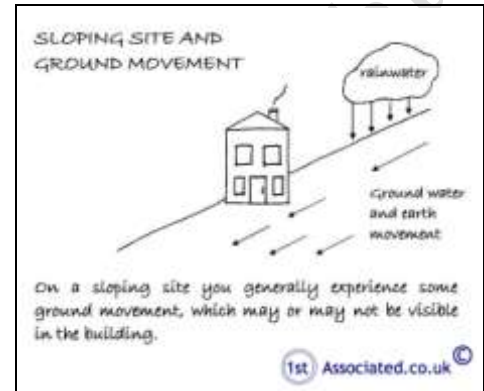


In this section we put any other matters that do not fit under our usual headings.

Sloping site

Any property on a sloping site is more susceptible than one on a flat site; it is simply the laws of gravity. Foundations normally allow for such occurrences, particularly in new properties. There can still be some minor movement.

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



Security

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

ACTION REQUIRED: Further information should be obtained from the vendor and the installer at a later date.



Alarm

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.



Smoke alarm

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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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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 19th century with gas lighting still being the norm for a good many years after.

Periodic inspections and testing of electrical installations is important to protect your property from damage and to ensure the safety of the occupants. Guidance published by the 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 garage. The fuse board looked original from when the property was built in the 1980's/1990's and better are now available.



Fuse Board

Earth Test

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



Earth test

ACTION REQUIRED: As the property is changing occupancy an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test and report should be carried

out by a NICEIC registered, or equivalent, approved electrical contractor or similarly approved.

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

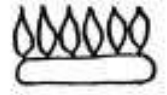
For basic general information on this matter please see the appendices at the end of this report.

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

We are advised that the property has mains gas. The consumer unit is located on the left hand side of the property.

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



Gas meter

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

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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 didn't know where the internal or external stopcocks were. It is important that their presence is established in case of bursts or leaks. The stopcock and other controlling valves therefore have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness. We were unable to find them but there were a lot of stored items in the house as previously mentioned.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ask the owners to show you where it is.

Water Pressure

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

Cold Water Cistern

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

Hot Water Cylinder

There is a factory insulated hot water cylinder. This cylinder will therefore have a good thermal efficiency, although not as good as the more modern hot water cylinders.



Factory insulated cylinder

Plumbing

The plumbing, where visible, we believe comprises copper and plastic piping which we are not keen on as we are finding that the plastic joints tend to deteriorate. No significant leakage was noted on the surface, although most of the pipework is concealed in floors, walls and ducts.

Heating

The boiler was located in the kitchen; it is an Ideal Standard wall mounted boiler.

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



Boiler

Ten Minute Heating Test

The owner / occupier at our request turned on the heating for approximately ten minutes. We checked the radiators in the en-suite bathroom to the master bedroom and these were warm.



Heating working

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

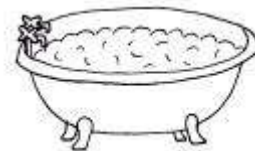
We cannot comment on the condition of the water service pipe to the building. It should be appreciated that leaks can occur for some time before signs are apparent on the surface.

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BATHROOM

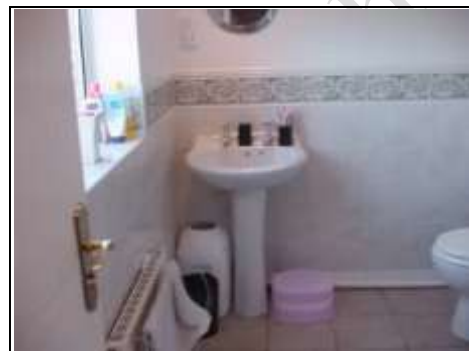


In this section we consider the overall condition of the sanitary fittings such as the bathroom, the kitchen, the utility room and the cloakroom.

En-Suite Bathroom

The en-suite to the master bedroom comprises a shower, wash hand basin and WC. We believe the shower is leaking.

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



En-suite to master bedroom

Bathroom

The property has a three piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin and WC, which looks in average condition, subject to some day-to-day wear and tear, as one would expect.



Bathroom

Ground floor W.C.

This comprises a W.C. and wash hand basin.



W.C.

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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 manhole and one rodding eye.

Manholes Defined

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

Manhole One located to the front left hand side

We duly lifted the cover and found it to be free flowing at the time of our inspection. From what we could see it is plastic.



Manhole one

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Rodding Eye

We duly lifted the cover and found it to be free flowing at the time of our inspection. From what we could see it is plastic.



Rodding eye

Water meter

We were unable to open this as the owner couldn't find a key but we believe it is a water meter.



Water meter

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

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

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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.

Normally in a property of this age the rainwater drains discharge into a soak away.

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

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

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OUTSIDE AREAS

The main focus of this report has been on the main building. 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.

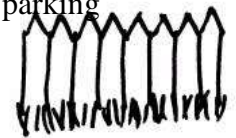
GARAGES/PARKING



The property has a single garage and off-road parking.



Garage/parking



EXTERNAL AREAS

Front Garden

The front garden is mainly given over to parking.



Front garden

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Rear Garden



Rear garden looking towards property



Rear garden



Grass put in about six months ago

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

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

Neighbours

Left Hand Neighbours

Advised there are no problems.

Right Hand Neighbours

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

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POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:
 - i) 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.
- 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 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.

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

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

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REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses
Published by Estates Gazette Limited

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

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

House Builders Bible
By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

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LIMITATIONS

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

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

The report has been prepared in accordance with our Conditions of Engagement 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 dry warm 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.

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INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited due to lots of stored items throughout the property and a mass of insulation within the roof. We didn't open up the ground floor, first floor or second floor. We didn't have the benefit of meeting you at the property to talk about your specific requirements which always helps us. We would add to this that we were accompanied by the occupier during the entirety of the survey.



Garage completely blocked



Stored items



Stored items

BUILDING INSURANCE

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

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

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

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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

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APPENDICES

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

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THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

1. A certificate showing the work has been done by a Government-approved electrical installer - NICEIC Electrical Contractor or equivalent trades body.
2. certificate showing the work has been done by a Government-approved electrical installer - British Gas or NICEIC Electrical Contractor.
3. 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 do's and don'ts.

Work You Cannot do Yourself

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

- Installing electrical earth connections to pipework and metalwork.
- Adding a new circuit.

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INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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

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

www.hometrack.co.uk

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

www.motleyfool.co.uk

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

www.rightmove.co.uk

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

www.zoopla.co.uk

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

———— Marketing by: ————

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

French Drain

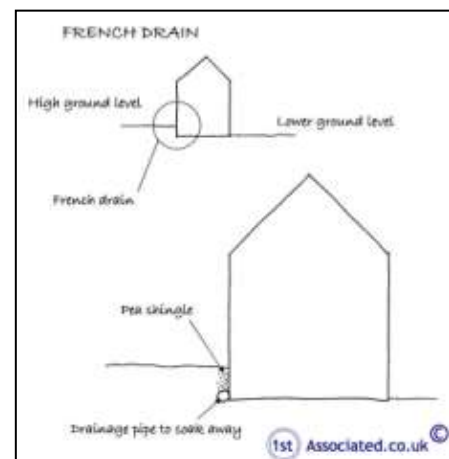
Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

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

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

What use is a French drain?

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



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

French drains must be on a slope

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

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

The French drain system that we would recommend

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

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

The French pond!

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