

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

OF

Mid 1800s Detached Property



FOR

Mr and Mrs A Client

Prepared by:

**GEM Associates Limited**

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Marketing by:

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

0800 298 5424

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Firstly, may we thank you for using our services once again and your kind instruction, we have now undertaken a Building Survey (formerly known as a Structural Survey) of the aforementioned property.

As you may recall 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.

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

As always we recommend that you set aside time to read the report in full, consider the comments, make notes of any areas that 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 house 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 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 two storey detached property with the rear wall forming part of the boundary wall. There are gardens to the front and end of the property.

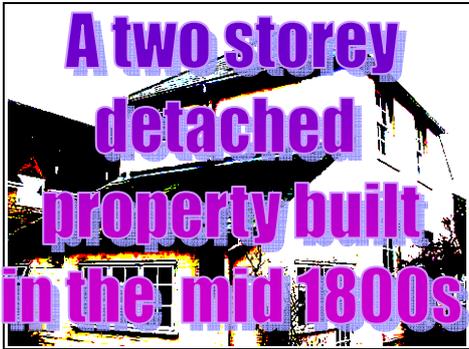
The property has been extended over the years and amended and altered and for this reason it is very difficult to date; we would estimate the mid 1800s although original parts may be much older. If the exact age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

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

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

1819	Factory work outlawed in England for children under nine.
1823	MacIntosh invents waterproof fabric.
1825	Railway transportation was born in England when Stephenson's 'Locomotion' ran from Darlington to Stockton, carrying 450 persons at 15 miles per hour (24km/h).
1833	The Factory Act of 1833 introduced a compulsory two hours schooling each day for children. It wasn't until the 1880 Education Act that school attendance became compulsory for all children up to the age of ten.
1837	Victoria becomes Queen of Great Britain.
1840	The First Postage Stamp
1854	Florence Nightingale pioneers modern nursing in the Crimea
1859	Charles Darwin proposes the Theory of Evolution
1878	Electric Street Lights are installed in London

# EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Left hand side view



Right hand side view



Rear View



Passageway leading up to the property



Passageway leading up to the property



Gate to the property

# **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

## **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Large Lounge with high ceilings
- Cloakroom
- Kitchen with store

## **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Two Bedrooms
- Shower Room

## **Outside Areas**

Front and side gardens which look they will require minimal maintenance.

# INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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

## Ground Floor



Lounge



Staircase



Kitchen



Kitchen Store



Cloakroom

## First Floor



Left Hand Bedroom



Right hand Bedroom



Shower Room

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# **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

## **EXTERNAL**

Chimneys:	Small flue
Main Roof:	A hipped pitched roof clad with slates
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	A mixture of painted render, stonework and brickwork (assumed)
External Joinery:	A mixture of painted timber sliding sash windows and timber casement windows. Painted timber fascias.

## **INTERNAL**

Ceilings:	Believed to be a mixture of lath and plaster and plasterboard (assumed), although we have not been able to see any of them
Walls:	Predominantly solid (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: Solid underfoot, assumed to be concrete. There may be some elements of a suspended timber floor, as we believe this is what it originally was.  First Floor: Joist and floorboards (assumed)

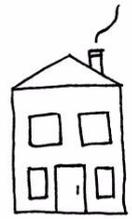
## **SERVICES**

The owner advised that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (assumed).

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 dangerous 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 fifty plus 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.

Generally we found the property in below average condition considering the property's age, type and style, but much of this relates to cleanliness and the decorative state of the property and there are a few characteristics that the property has that will be very difficult / expensive / impossible to remove, which we have identified in 'The Good', 'The Bad' and 'The Ugly' summary below.

## 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!*

- The property has potential; it will make a big difference to have all the furniture removed and a general de-clutter and good clean and redecoration.
- The garden is easily maintainable.
- Within walking distance of the shops.

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) **Gutters and Downpipes**

From the condition of the render we are not absolutely certain that the gutters are catching the rain. Unfortunately it did not rain whilst we were at the property and this would be the only way to check.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Next time it rains heavily you need to stand outside the property and ascertain if the gutters are catching the rain water and / or leaking and amend as appropriate.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would expect this to be in the hundreds of pounds, although we have not been able to check the severity of the problem, if indeed there is one.

Please see the Gutters and Downpipes Section of this Report.



Gutters and downpipes



Discolouring render



Timber fascia board behind the guttering

## 2) Flat Roof

The flat roof is covered with felt; whilst the felt is in reasonable condition it is poorly detailed being predominately flat.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You will need to patch repair the roof. Ultimately when you come to re-roof it we suggest you add a fall.



**ANTICIPATED COSTS:** The patch repairs will probably help the roof to last for 3 – 10 years before renewal is required.

Please see our comments in the Roof Coverings Section of this Report.

## 3) Plastic Based Paint

The property has had a modern plastic based paint applied. In our experience these do not work particularly well, as they don't allow the property to breathe and a brick property of this age needs to have an element of breathability to dissipate the damp. We could see areas where it is starting to come away.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** The paint should be removed and replaced with microporous paint, however in our experience this is very difficult / almost impossible to remove. You can encourage the paint to come off by using a soft brush. Ideally we would suggest you let it naturally come away and then redecorate, but this would make the property look in very poor condition and certainly wouldn't be very attractive.

Please see the External Walls Section of this Report.

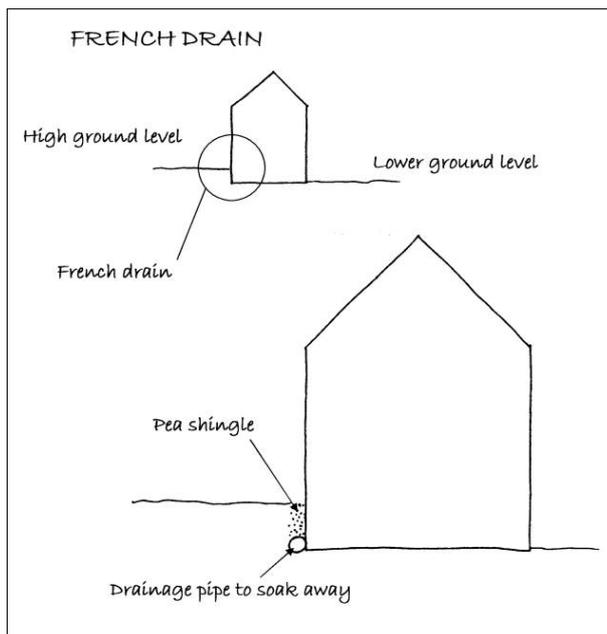
#### 4) Dampness

We found rising damp to the property, particularly to the rear wall. We think this could be due to either the gutters not catching the rainwater (that we have already mentioned) or a high ground level. Unfortunately we didn't actually access this rear wall as it is in your adjoining neighbour's garden and they were out at the time of our inspection.



Checking for dampness and finding it

We did have access to one of the gardens and were able to take photos, but from the photo it is very difficult to tell how the ground levels lie; however, we can see that there is paving which does tend to carry rainwater rather than absorb it (as the ground would), and it may be discharging onto your property's walls.



Your neighbour's side of your rear wall.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend you go round and see the neighbours and if this is the case then a French drain along the wall would be the solution.

We would draw your attention to the green moss to the right hand side of the property which indicates that little light is being gained in this area, which will add to the dampness. We could see that in the past several attempts at adding a damp proof course have been made. We would make several comments:



The pen indicates the inserted damp proof course and at the top we have a vent that is often used.

We don't generally believe in rising damp being stoppable with an inserted damp proof course and much more commonly we find the problem to relate to difference in the ground level outside and the floor level inside, and/or cement repointing, and/or leaking gutters.

**ANTICIPATED COSTS:** Investigation and the adding of a French drain would be in the region of £1,000, although it is difficult to estimate it as we have not actually seen that side of the property properly.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report and the Appendices for more information on French Drains.

#### 5) Clean, make good and redecorate

**ACTION REQUIRED:** It almost goes without saying that this property needs de-cluttering, a good clean and redecoration.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Costs for emulsions would be in the region of £1,000 - £1,250.



Gloss work tends to be the most expensive as it is labour intensive; set aside an additional sum of a further £500 - £750.

Please see the Internal Decorations Section of this Report.

## 6) Services

### Electrics

We would date the electric fuse board as being from the 1960s. Rewireable fuses are now superseded. Far better fuse boards are now available.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** NICEIC (or equivalent) electrical test and report. Replace the fuse board as soon as possible.



Dated fuse board

**ANTICIPATED COSTS:** In the region of £250 - £500, depending upon what else the tests find.

Please see the Electrics Section of this Report.

### Water Pressure

When we carried out our water pressure test by running the water we found the pressure to be low and upstairs the tap in the bathroom did not work at. This may simply be furred up pipes or it may be low pressure.

Low pressure can be a problem with a shower (we did not try the shower). You may wish to look into installing a pump shower.



The sink tap that didn't work

**ACTION REQUIRED:** When we spoke to the owners they advised that the taps did not tend to work after you flushed the toilets!

Please see the Bathroom Section and Plumbing and Heating Section of this Report.

## Old Boiler

You have an older Glow-worm wall mounted boiler. Typically these boilers are said to last 20 years; this one is at the end of its sell by date!

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You can have the option of replacing this when it eventually breaks down or pre-empting it and installing a modern condensing boiler in.

**ANTICIPATED COSTS:** Assuming that the existing pipework and radiators will accept the pressure of a new boiler we would expect costs to be in the region of £2,250 - £2,750. Quotations required.

Please see the Plumbing and Heating Section of this Report.



## Drainage runs from the kitchen back down the passageway

The drainage runs from the kitchen back down the passageway are very shallow and may be susceptible to blockages.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** There is very little you can do about this other than obtain a set of drainage rods or get to know someone who will carry out this job.



Shallow drainage run

Please see the Main Drains Section of this Report.

## 7) **Parking**

We discussed the lack of parking and you advised that you believe you may be able to buy parking spaces in the nearby car park. We certainly think this would be a better option than leaving the cars on the roadside.

Please see the External Areas Section of this Report.

## **The Ugly**

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

The only item we feel could move into the 'ugly' section is the paint problem that we have identified – both the difficulty of removing it and also the way it does tend to promote and cause dampness. Equally, another item that we considered moving into this section is the dampness in the property, which we think is most likely due to difference in ground levels.

## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

## **Maintenance**

This type of property will require ongoing maintenance and repair and a budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in good condition. This will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration.

## **DIY/Handyman Type Work**

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work that can be done over a period of time. 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 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. For unskilled labour we currently use between £75 and £100 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

If you obtain builders estimates that vary widely, we would advise the work is probably difficult or open to various interpretations and we would recommend a specification is prepared. It would probably be best to supervise the work 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:

We would suggest that you have a walk around to the neighbouring property to the rear and have a chat with your rear neighbour to see if they would be happy with having work carried out.

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

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

# **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

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

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

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

## **ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?**

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

## **SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

## **TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS**

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

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

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

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



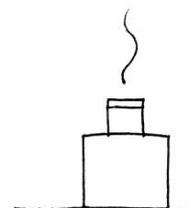
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## EXTERNAL



## CHIMNEY STACKS AND FLUES

### Chimney Stacks and Flues

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

There is a flue to the left hand side of the property. In our experience, generally, these flues should extend half a metre to a metre above roof level and usually above the ridge level.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Confirm with the existing owner if the chimney works properly.

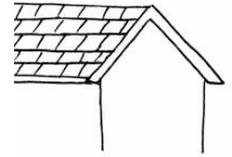


The flue is to the centre of the higher roof.

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

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

# 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.*

*The underlayer's function is to minimise wind and water damage. Dependent upon the age of your property this may or may not be present, please read on:*

We will consider the roofs in three different areas, the main roof, the side roof and the flat roof.

## Main Roof

The roof is pitched and clad in slate with a ridge tile. From what we could see the tiles are lying level and true and look in reasonable condition.



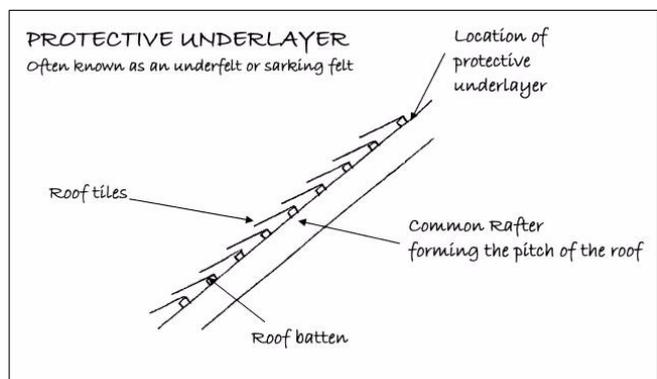
Deterioration tends to occur at the ridge and exposed areas such as the perimeter and so you should periodically check these areas.

During our question and answer session with the owners they advised that the roof had been replaced during their time at the property, which concurs with the evidence we found in the roof space – please see the protective underlayer below.

Apologies for using the same photo twice, but this one equally shows the condition of the roof

## 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 modern breathable underlayer. This type of sarking felt, as far as we are aware, has been used since 2002. It allows air flow in the loft to help prevent condensation.



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

### **Left Hand Side Roof**

This roof is a pitched and clad in slate, as previously described. There is some pattern staining where the downpipe discharges on to this roof and also at the top which we believe is due to a lack of light getting to the area generally.



Where the roof meets the main building there is a lead flashing which looks to have been added, amended or repaired.



## **Flat Roof**

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

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

The flat roof is covered with felt; whilst the felt is in average condition it is poorly detailed being predominately flat!

Please see the comments in the Executive Summary.

### General Information on flat roofs

*Flat roofs typically have a life between 20 and 30 years, depending upon the quality of workmanship, materials and decking, although some roof manufacturers do claim longer.*

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

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

Finally, all the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. Flat roofs have been inspected from upper floor windows and/or ground level.

Unfortunately we were only able to see approximately 50 percent of the main roof from ground level. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see; however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

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



# ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



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

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

### Main Roof

#### Roof Access

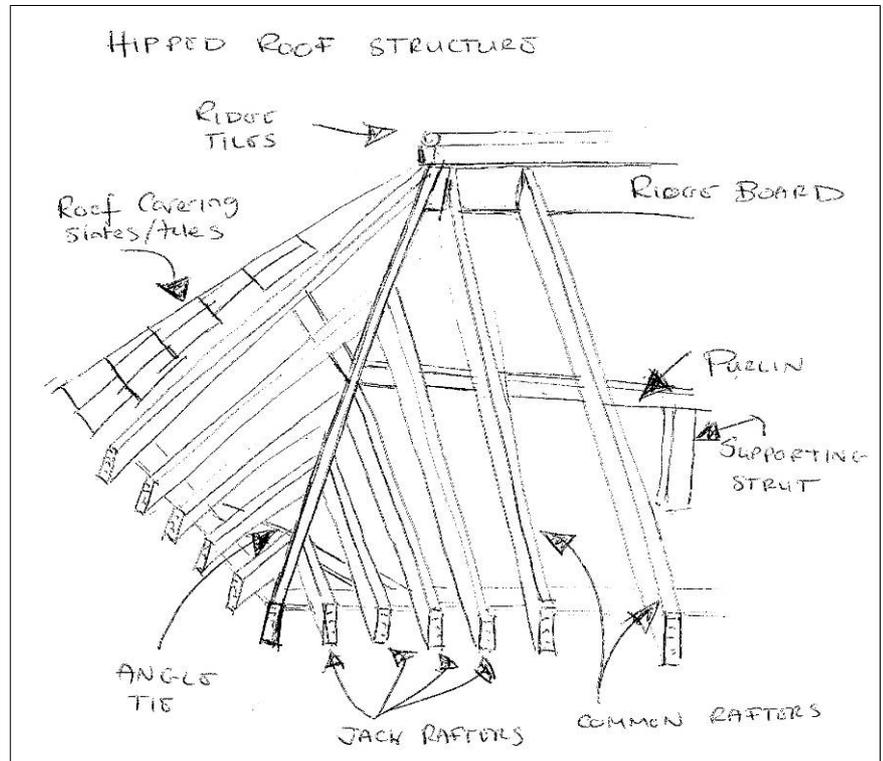
The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located in the bedroom. There is no loft ladder, electric light or floorboards. We viewed the loft space by torchlight and from the loft hatch as we were not certain what was underneath the insulation.



#### Roof Structure

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

Hipped roofs are known for slippage / movement which can occur in the structure. In this case, we feel it is within acceptable limits.



## Roof Timbers

We found the roof timbers generally in average condition considering their age. We have inspected the roof structure for:

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



Our examination is limited by the general configuration of the roof, the insulation and stored items. As mentioned what we could see was generally found to be in an average condition considering its age. We did see some timber staining; whether this is condensation or wind driven rain getting in through the roof is difficult to tell. It is, 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

No water tank was found.

## Ventilation

The roof has a breathable protective underlayer which should vent the roof, although there are arguments that these vents (very much like a tea bag with the perforation) will block up over time.

## Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

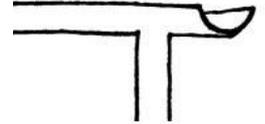
## **Electrical Cables**

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

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

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

# GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

## Gutters and Downpipes

From ground level the gutters and downpipes looked to be plastic and appeared in average condition.

The plastic used is the older style with is affected by sun light and loses its colour slightly and does become brittle over the years.



Please see our comments in the Executive Summary about the rainwater possibly missing and not being caught by the gutters to the rear in particular. We can only think that this is the reason why the property has been painted overall because dampness was getting in.

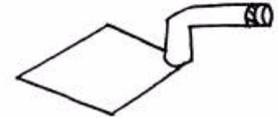
**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would always recommend that the gutters and downpipes are cleaned out, the joints are checked and the alignment checked to ensure that the gutters fall towards the downpipes.

## Soil and Vent Pipe

The soil and vent pipes are plastic; they appear to be satisfactory where a surface inspection is possible.

Finally, gutters and downpipes and soil and vent pipes have been inspected from ground level. As it was not raining at the time of the inspection it is not possible to confirm 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.

# 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 property has a mixture of materials; these are pebbledash painted render, brickwork and stonework, as you can see in the adjoining photo.



## Pebbledash Painted Render

The walls at high level to this property are finished in a pebble dash painted render. We would normally carry out a tap test to the render to try to establish if there are any hollow areas, however we have not done this in this instance as the render is at high level. With this age of render repairs will increase over the years.



Painted pebbledash render

## Render Detailing

The rendering is from the cheaper end of the market and there is no render detailing around the windows or to the base. We would literally need to see the render when it is raining to establish if it is affecting the property, but we certainly think it is contributing to dampness getting in.



Render and stonework to right hand end

## Stonework

Some of the walls to the property, probably the older walls, are formed in stonework. This is a coursed stonework with a mixture of thin joints and thick joints. This indicates to us that the stonework has been built at a different time and all came from different properties that have been made into one.



Thin joint coursed stonework to the rear of the property

Taking into consideration the age, type and style of this property we would say that the stonework and pointing overall is in average condition.



Thick joint coursed stonework to the side of the property

## Ridge in Stonework

We noted a ridge in the stonework. Water can sit on this ridge and come into the property.



Ridge in stonework

## General Information on Stone

*Stone has been used for many years, particularly where it's a local material. However the preparation is relatively expensive when compared with other building materials and, as such, was used initially for the most prestigious buildings. The use of stone in domestic structures became more general from the 15th Century and increased towards the end of the 16th century as timber became scarce but brick had not yet become established. By the end of the 17th century stone was very much the accepted building material, especially where it was a natural resource.*

## **Brickwork and Painted Brickwork**

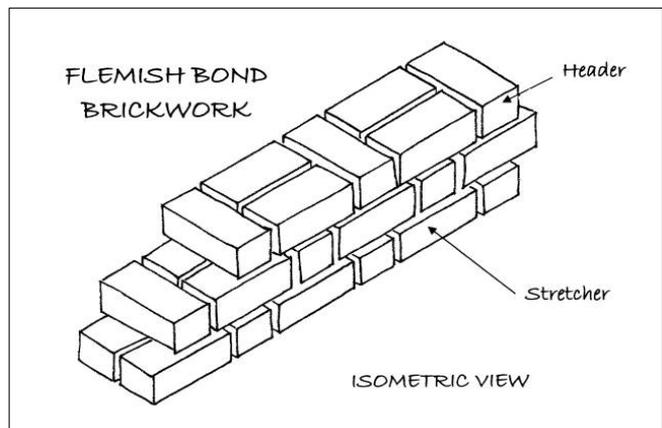
There are areas of brickwork and areas of painted brickwork. Again, like the stonework, this could have come from different buildings at different times.

The brickwork we can see is Flemish bond which was originally pointed in a lime mortar but has been repointed in a cement mortar, which is starting to have quite bad consequences to the rear of the wall. We suggest that access is gained to the neighbouring property.



Brickwork to the rear

The term Flemish Bond relates to the way the bricks are bonded together and have a pattern visible from the outside of the property that shows the end of the brick (header), then the side of the brick (stretcher), then the end of the brick, then the side of the brick, and this pattern repeats course after course, i.e. header-stretcher, header-stretcher.



Before the 19th Century, the practice of building timbers into external walls was almost universal. These were known as bonding timbers. They are, of course, prone to rot as solid walls allow dampness through. Unfortunately, without opening up the structure, we are unable to confirm if this is the case.

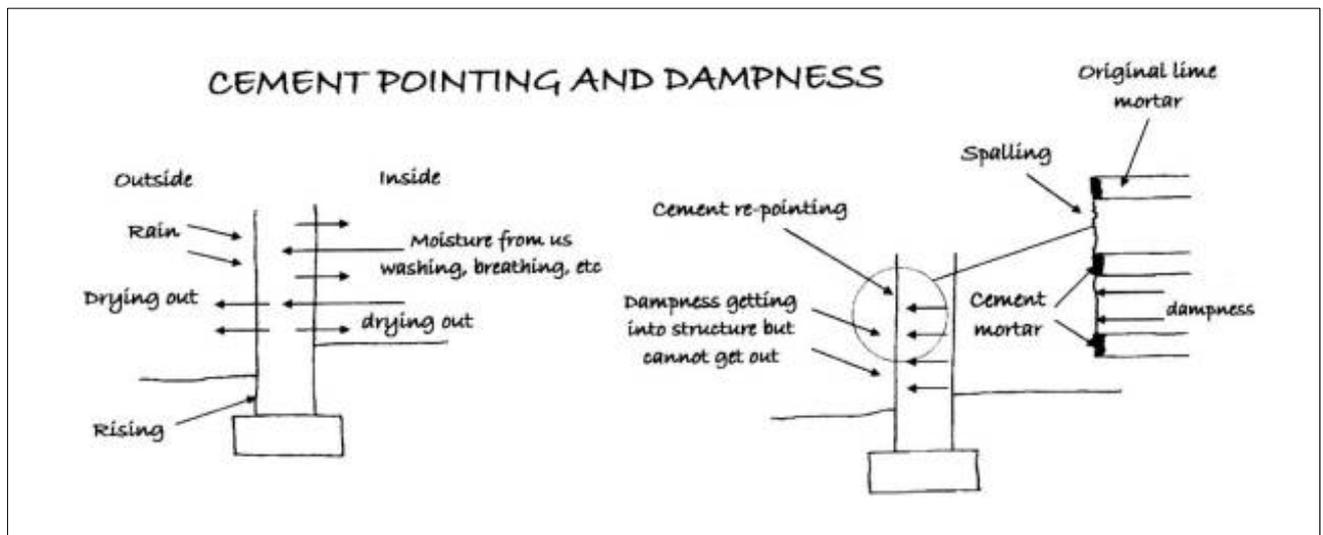


## Spalling of Brickwork and Lime Every Time

Unfortunately the brick is quite a soft red brick and is therefore starting to spall. It looks to have been repaired in the past using a cement mortar which unfortunately is making it worse and continuing the allowance of dampness into the property.



Flemish bond to the left hand side and stretcher bond to the right hand side (although it is very difficult to be certain as we have not actually been in the gardens of this area).



### Why was the brickwork painted?

There is quite a lot of brickwork that has been painted. We believe this is probably in a misguided attempt to stop the dampness coming in.

With the paint on the bricks it is difficult to see their condition, however we would take an educated guess that what has happened here is the original brickwork has started to allow in water, it has then been repointed in a cement mortar which has made the problem worse and it has then been painted over with a plastic based paint. So, the property has been moved from having a breathable wall to having one that is smothered.



Painted brickwork

## Movement

There is movement visible over the large sliding sash window. However, there are a relatively high number of openings in the property and we feel this is therefore acceptable movement. We are just concerned about the way it has been repaired. Normally we have seen repairs to brick soldier courses over windows that have had a slate wedged in to pack them together; in this case it just looks like the cracking has been filled in, therefore the brickwork could still literally fall out.



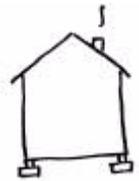
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Have a proper repair carried out with packing involved.

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, painted brickwork, stonework, pebbledash render and plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age timber lintels, rubbed brick lintels, or metal lintels are common, which can be susceptible to deterioration that is unseen, particularly if in contact with dampness.



Our comments have been based upon how the brickwork, painted brickwork, stonework, pebbledash render and plasterwork has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork, painted brickwork, stonework, pebbledash render and 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.

# **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**

It really does depend upon how old the property is. As you can see from reading the 'Walls Section' there is a mixture of different types of materials being used and these materials seem to be from a different group of ages. The basic rule is that the older the property the more shallow the foundation. We would expect everything from next to no foundations to the older parts of the property and perhaps metre deep concrete foundations to the newer extension on the left hand side.

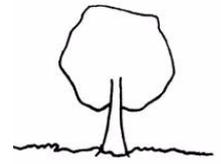
## **Building Insurance Policy**

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

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.

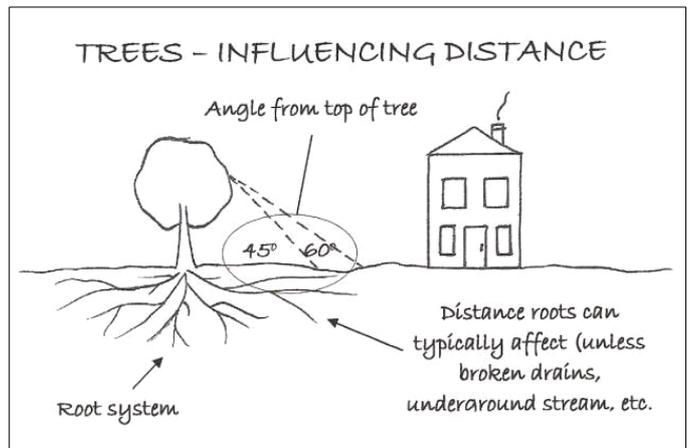
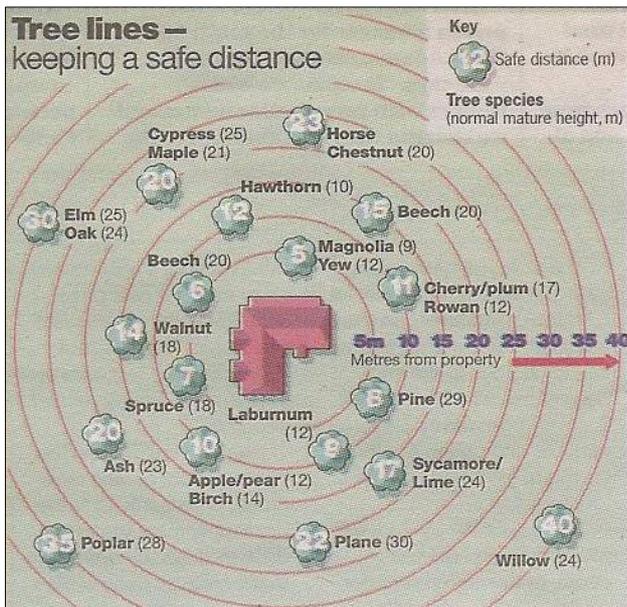
Next door's trees are very close to the building on the right hand side and need maintenance; we recommend you speak to the next door neighbours about the trees to ensure they are happy to maintain them. Damage to foundations and underground services can be caused by trees and shrubs.



Next door's trees

You also have trees in your garden that need maintenance.

If common sense is used and trees and shrubs are not allowed to overgrow the property you should not have any problems. Equally we would not recommend the removal of trees without specialist advice, as this could damage the dynamics of the soil in the area and the water table level.



## Influencing Distance Defined

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.



## 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.

With a property of this age, it's unlikely to have originally been built with a damp proof course. However based upon our random damp proof tests, we believe two damp proof courses have been inserted.

With reference to the book *'The Damp Proof Myth'* evidence shows that neither damp proof course would work within a stone wall.

The left hand extension is likely to have had a damp proof course built in, although we couldn't specifically pinpoint it.

We would comment that we found dampness.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We believe the dampness relates to the differences in ground levels and this is where we would start. We would then move on to changing the cement mortar pointing to a lime mortar and then we would move on to removing the paintwork and of course checking the guttering.

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.

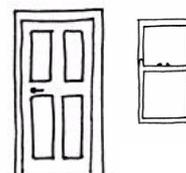


Two damp proof courses have been inserted



Close up of vent. The idea is that this increases ventilation to the property and therefore dry it out.

# EXTERNAL JOINERY



*The external joinery part of this section covers fascias, soffits and bargeboards, 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

The fascia is hidden behind the guttering in this instance and we could not see it very well. We could see that the paintwork to the gutters is coming off, therefore indicating that they are leaking, which in turn will probably mean that there is some wet rot in the fascias.



Fascia hidden behind the guttering

There is also a fascia to the flat roof extension which is in need of redecoration.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repair and redecorate.



Fascia to flat roof area

## Windows and Doors

### Sliding Sash Windows

The property has some large sliding sash windows which are single glazed and have a painted timber finish and are in average condition considering their age, type and style.

We would specifically comment about the movement to the brickwork above the window and would refer you to our earlier comments.



Sliding sash window

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As is common the sliding sash windows will need some easing and adjusting by a carpenter who is used to dealing with this type of work.

### General Information on Sliding Sash Windows

*If you have not lived in a property with sliding sash windows previously, you should be aware that typically they are draughty and rattle. There is no easy way to eliminate this problem. In our experience, a general ease and adjustment of the windows and the addition of a plastic tube draught sealer (available from most DIY stores) and regular redecoration is the best option to minimise the draughtiness of the windows in this case.*

### Timber Casement Windows

The property also has some timber casement windows, which are fairly modern; these are in average condition.



Timber casement windows

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.



## **EXTERNAL DECORATIONS**

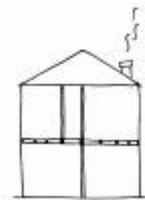
*The external decorations act as a protective coat for the building from the elements. Where this protective covering has failed, such as with flaking paintwork, the elements will infiltrate the structure. This is of particular concern as water is one of the major factors in damage to any structure.*

Generally, overall, the external decorations are in average condition and we would expect some redecoration to be required within the next few years. The real problem with the decoration is how to undecorated the walls, and we would emphasise that you should not underestimate this problem as it will cause dampness and will be verging on the impossible to remove cheaply.

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.

## INTERNAL



# CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

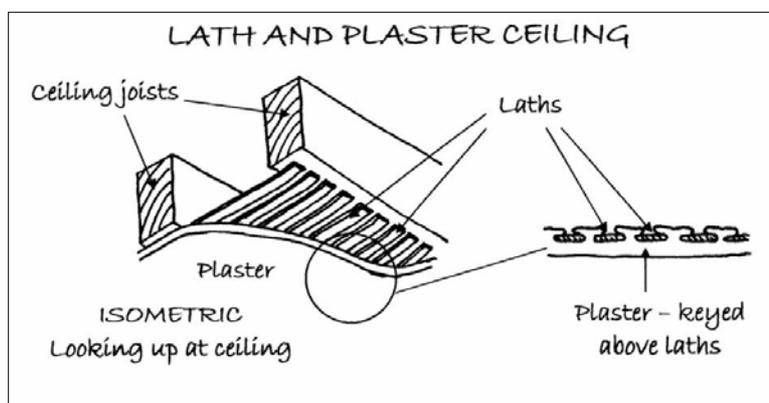
*In this section we look at the finish applied to the structural elements such as the plasterwork applied to the ceiling joists, walls or partitions, together with the construction of the internal walls and partitions. The concept of internal finishes is relatively modern. Partitioning developed originally to separate the livestock from the human occupants. Finishes have developed from this very functional beginning to their decorative nature of today.*

## Ceilings

We have not been able to see any of the ceilings and we have had to gauge what they are made from by a visual inspection. With a building of this age we believe that there are a variety of finishes from the original lath and plaster and the more modern plasterboard.

### Lath and Plaster Defined

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



### Plasterboard Defined

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

## Internal Walls and Partitions

We have carried out a tap test on the internal walls (this is not rocket science, it is literally tapping the walls and listening for the sound made) and found the majority to be solid when tapped which, for this age of property, indicates that internal construction is likely to be brickwork, with the exception of the stone wall to the side of the stairs. They don't appear to be thick enough to be stonework.

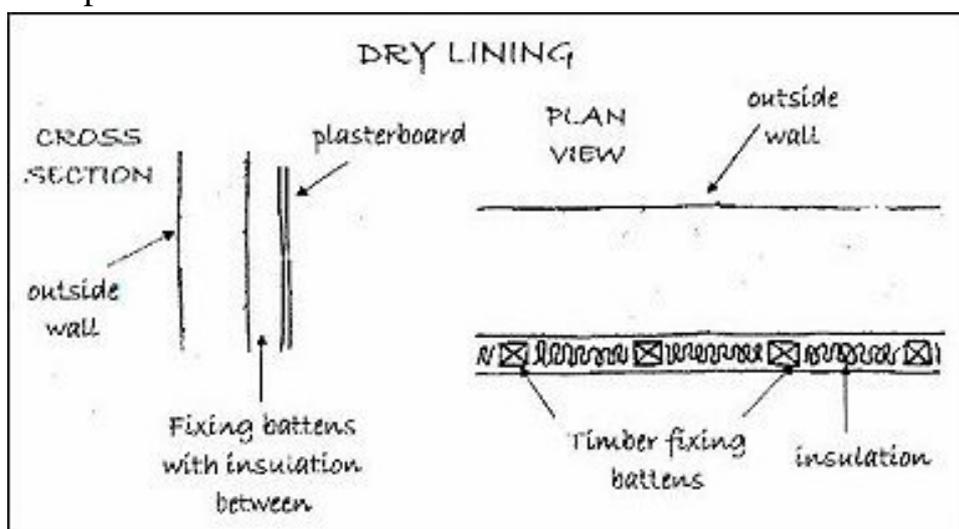


Cracking over archway on first floor

We found some internal cracking over the archway on the first floor. We believe this is due to differential movement; however we cannot be certain without opening up the structure.

## Perimeter Walls

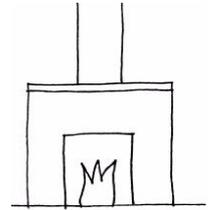
The perimeter walls are a mixture of brickwork and stonework. We believe there is also possibly some dry lining added although we cannot be certain as it may be blown plaster.



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.

# CHIMNEYBREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

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

Please see our earlier comments about the height of the flue above the roof level. It can be a very real problem that there isn't a draw on the chimney which means there can be a back-fill of smoke into the room.



Finally, it is strongly recommended that flues be cleaned and checked for obstruction prior to use to minimise the risk of hazardous fumes entering the building.

Please also see the Chimneystacks, Flues and Parapet Walls section of this Report.

# FLOORS



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

## Ground Floor

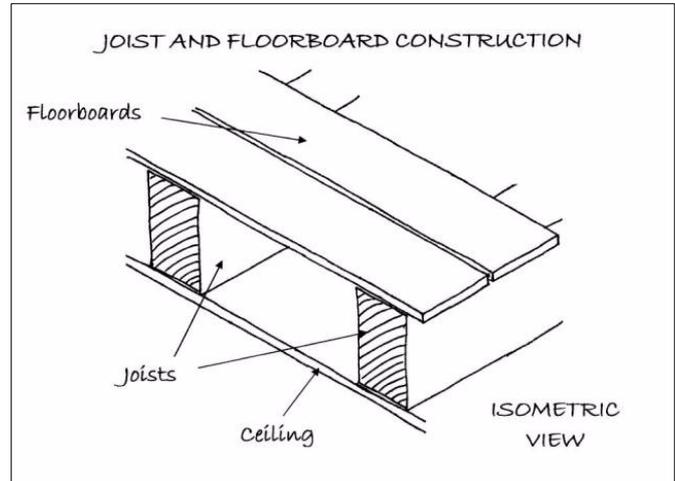
The floors felt solid underfoot so we have assumed they are formed in concrete, however, we have not opened up the floors or lifted any floor coverings. In this age of property there could literally be anything under the floors!

## First Floor

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

### Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



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

# DAMPNESS

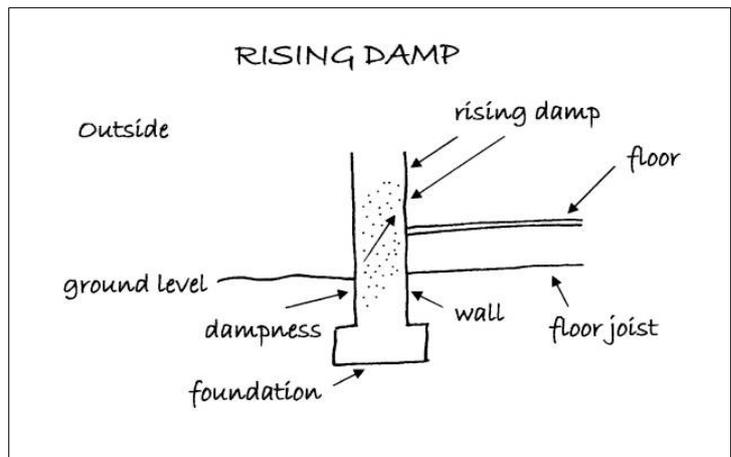


*In this section we look at any problems that are being caused by dampness. It is therefore essential to diagnose the source of the dampness and to treat the actual cause and not the effect of the dampness.*

## 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 now much debate over whether rising damp does exist after research over a ten year period.*



We carried out tests with a damp meter to a random selection of areas and we found damp.

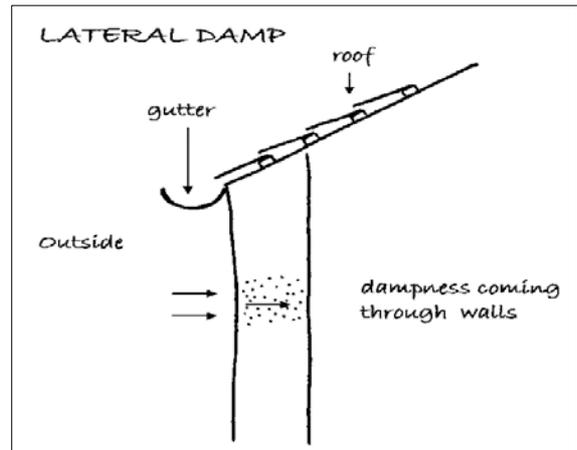
Please see our comments in the Executive summary.



Checking for dampness

## 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.*



Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to internal walls. Our readings were in line with what we would expect for this age of property, i.e. minor damp.



Checking for lateral and penetrating dampness

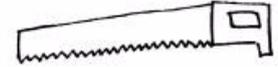
## Condensation

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

We can see no obvious signs of condensation, however it depends upon how you utilise the building. If you do your washing and then dry it without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Commonsense is needed and a balance between heating and ventilation of properties. Often opening windows to air the building, particularly first thing in the morning, resolves most condensation issues.

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**

We checked the doors to ensure that there hadn't been movement in the property and they all closed reasonably well and reasonably squarely.



## **Staircase**

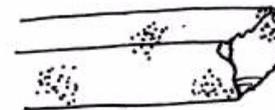
We noted that the underside of the staircase was lined where we could see it, however, part of the stairs is hidden from view. All stairs need lining for fire regulations.

## **Kitchen**

From our cursory visual inspection the kitchen looked to be in basic condition. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

# 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.*

In the areas visually inspected no evidence was found of any significant dry rot. Please remember we have not lifted up floors

## 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.*

In the areas visually inspected no evidence was found of any significant wet rot. There may be some wet rot in the fascia boards and inevitably there will be wet rot into the windows sooner or later.

## 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.*

*Recent research has shown that many woodworm chemicals do not actually work and it should be remembered that the chemicals are poisons. Also, unless great care is taken, the people applying the treatment can cause significant damage. The woodworm can only really be seen in action during the breeding season, which runs from April to July. We have therefore tried to take a pragmatic view on this matter.*

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. In this instance our view was very limited due to the insulation that has been used over the ceiling joists. However we could see some of the common rafters and the purlin (remember that we viewed the roof from our ladders at the roof access point). We did not note what we would term as any 'significant damage'.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to be 100 percent certain get the property checked when it is empty of fixtures, fittings and furniture, 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.*

Generally we thought the internal decorations were dated. You will wish to redecorate to your own personal taste.

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

# **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 (Home Information Packs) Report**

We are making general comments. You will be provided with a HIP Report that should be more specific with regard to the thermal efficiency of the property. We have not seen the HIP Report on this property so cannot comment further.

## **Roof Insulation**

A solid roof insulation has been used in the roof, rather than then commonly seen fibre glass insulation; in our experience this can work very well.

## **Walls**

The walls to this property are solid and will have a relatively poor thermal efficiency. It is very difficult to improve thermal efficiency in solid wall construction without major alterations, which will usually affect the external appearance or reduce the internal space.

## **Windows**

The windows are predominantly single glazed and sliding sash, so the thermal properties will be poor.

## **Services**

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

## Summary

In our experience the thermal efficiency of the property is average for its age, type and style.

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

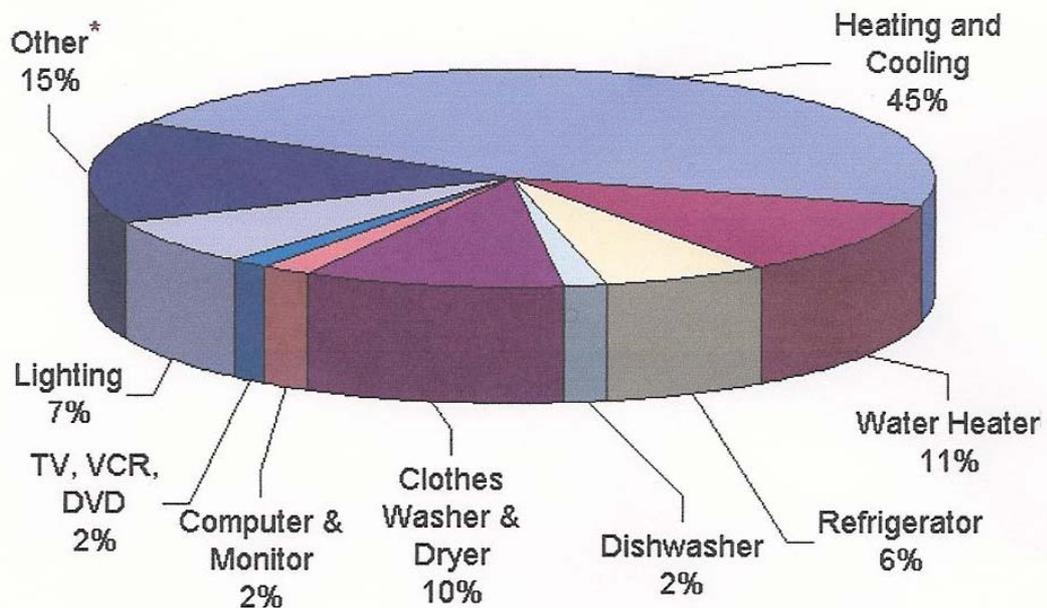
*[HTTP//www.est.org.uk](http://www.est.org.uk), which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid*

*or alternatively [www.cat.org.uk](http://www.cat.org.uk)*

*or [www.ecocentre.org.uk](http://www.ecocentre.org.uk) for an alternative technological view.*

Finally, we would advise that an energy rating is required for future house sales.

### What does my energy bill pay for?



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

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## OTHER MATTERS



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

### Security System

We did not note a security system within the house. It is a personal decision as to whether you feel one is necessary. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further. We suggest you contact a member of NACOSS (National Approval Council for Security Services), obtainable through directory enquiries, or your local Police Force for advice on a security system.

### Fire / Smoke Alarms

No smoke detectors were noted. The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply. Obviously in an existing property that is difficult, as it would mean having surface mounted wires or cutting wiring into the plaster.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend, for your own safety and for any of your holiday makers' safety, that smoke detectors be installed and are hard wired into the alarm system.

### 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.

### Asbestos

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. This was commonly used post war until it was banned only in the last ten or so years, although it is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time. We are not asbestos surveyors.

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

## **SERVICES**

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

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

# ELECTRICITY



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

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

## Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the alcove under the stairs. We would date the fuse board as being from the 1960s.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



## Earth Test

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

You may wish to add more power points, as demand for electricity seems to be ever increasing! We generally recommend to have double power points throughout a property, at least two per room and two per wall in the kitchen.



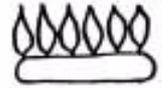
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Obtain a quotation to upgrade and replace the fuse board as soon as possible.

As the property is changing occupancy an IEE report should be carried out by a NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor.

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

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

## GAS



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

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As a matter of course it is recommended that the entire gas installation is inspected and made good, as necessary, by registered contractor (from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 the contractor working on any gas appliances or pipework will need to be on the Gas Safe register). Thereafter the installation should be serviced annually.

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

## **Water Pressure**

When the taps were run to carry out the drainage tests we checked the pressure, literally by putting a finger over the tap, and the pressure was low. It is possible that the pipes have blocked over the years and need a clean/replacement.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## **Plumbing**

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

## **Heating**

The boiler was located in the kitchen; it is a Glow-worm wall mounted dated boiler.

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

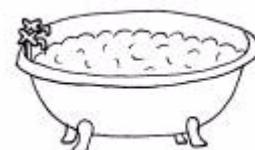
## **Ten Minute Heating Test**

We did not carry out this test on this occasion.

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.

## **BATHROOM**



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

The shower room suite looks in dated condition. The shower has a solid tray and there is an extract fan.

The sink tap did not work at the time of our inspection after the toilet was flushed. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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.

## 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 property has the benefit of mains drainage and 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. We would just remind you that the tap in the upstairs bathroom didn't work.

### Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We have identified two inspection chambers / manholes within the curtilage of the property and a further manhole just outside it.

#### Inspection Chamber / Manhole One – Near Kitchen

We found this manhole to be shallow and not discharging very well; these are typically added at a later date and are certainly not considered good practice. Unfortunately there is very little you can do to improve them without major costs.



### **Inspection Chamber / Manhole Two – Nearest to the Gate**

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



### **Inspection Chamber / Manhole Three - Passageway**

We duly lifted the cover and were pleased to find it to be deeper than the previous manholes.



### **Full Soil and Vent Pipe in passageway**

Whilst this relates to one of your neighbour's property the water-filled soil pipe did seem unusual, particularly as it was literally in the passage way.



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.

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

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

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

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

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.

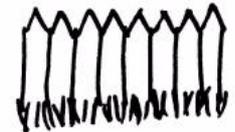
# OUTSIDE AREAS

## PARKING



The property has no parking. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## EXTERNAL AREAS



### Gardens

The owner advised us that there had been a slight problem with the fence which had come down, and that he had decided, due to financial limitations, that he was not going to put it back up, so the adjoining owner had.



We would suggest you have a meeting with the adjoining owner to see how the land lies with regard to this fence; it certainly did not look in the best of conditions.

**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

#### Rear Neighbours

We tried to contact the three rear neighbours that you have but none were in when we went round. However, a nearby neighbour did allow us into one of the gardens which is how we have taken our pictures of the rear of the property.

## **POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR**

If you wish to proceed with your purchase of the property a copy of this 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) Roof and similar renewals.
  - iv) Central heating installation.
  - v) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
  - vi) 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 link on the home page of our website: [www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk).

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

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

In this instance we have not carried out any formal or informal Local Authority enquiries.

Finally, your Solicitor should carry out any Local Authority checks and any additional enquiries he/she feels necessary, advising us if they feel that we can have further input.

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**.

## **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 4th edition published by Royal Institution of  
Chartered Surveyors Books.*

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

# APPENDICES

**GEM Associates Limited**  
Independent Chartered Surveyors

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

0800 298 5424

# **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.

## **WEATHER**

It was a mild winter's day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

We would add that some defects only become apparent upon physical occupation or are only present as a result of the extremes of weather (which are becoming a more frequent occurrence). As you may be aware 2006 was the warmest year in Britain since records began, we believe, in the 1700s; with July 2006 being the hottest July on record in Britain. 2005 was the third driest year on record in Britain with 2003 being the driest. The year 2000 was the wettest year on record and August 2004 was the wettest August on record in Britain. This may have adverse effects on lots of buildings in years to come.

## **NOT LOCAL**

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

## **OCCUPIED PROPERTY**

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

## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited due to us not opening up the floors and also not being able to view the roof space properly and having very limited access to the rear of the property.

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

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

## **Work You Cannot do Yourself**

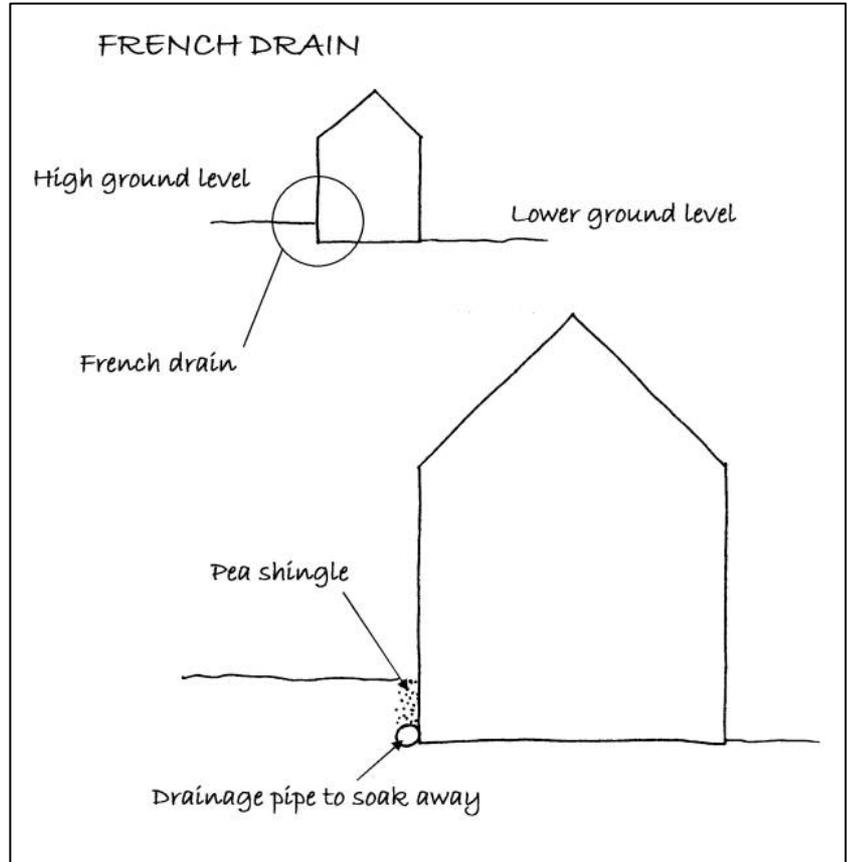
- Complete new or rewiring jobs.
- Fuse box changes.
- Adding lighting points to an existing circuit in a 'special location' like the kitchen, bathroom or garden.
- Installing electrical earth connections to pipework and metalwork.
- Adding a new circuit.

## FRENCH DRAIN

### Adding in of 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.

A French drain acts as an area where water soaks away quickly. We often recommend them close to buildings, 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.



## INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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From what we can see this is an internet based company who say they offer independent property research (in fact they say they are the only independent company), although they also advise that they are part of a property related group that has bought and sold over 60 million pounds worth of residential property, which indicates that they may have a vested interest. They do also comment that they have carried out their own independent surveys and they have at least two Hometrack recommended estate agents in each postcode area. We would refer you to the 'About us' section within their website to understand better where their information is coming from. We would comment that we have been pleasantly surprised with the quality of information provided by the company.

[Motleyfool.co.uk](http://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.

<http://www.nethouseprices.com/>

This website offers information on land registry recorded property sales, by postcode or address.

[www.globrix.com](http://www.globrix.com)

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