

**COMMERCIAL BUILDING SURVEY**  
**OF**  
**A Listed 18<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial Property**  
**Restaurant / Bed and Breakfast Establishment**  
**Abingdon, Oxfordshire**



**FOR**  
**Mr C**

**Marketing by:**

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

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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 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 property with a basement, situated in a row of shops in a secondary town centre location. The front of the property sits directly onto the pavement and to the rear there is a small courtyard. There are also single storey extensions and alterations that have been carried out over the years and also a free standing storage unit.

There is just about enough parking space for one car; although the property adjoins a shared car park to the rear.

We believe the property to be two to three hundred years old, although much of the structure that would help us to identify this is hidden. If the exact age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds or alternatively the Listed Building description may identify specific features and age of the property.

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

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

1702	Work begins on Buckingham Palace
1714	Fahrenheit takes temperature
c.1720	Grand Tourists in Italy
1739	Dick Turpin hanged in York
1740	Shakespeare and Chaucer form Poets Corner
1744	France and Britain at war again
1750	The start of the Industrial Revolution
1760	George III becomes king
1768	Captain Cook sails for the Pacific on the Endeavour
1783	Britain recognised American Independence
1787	First fleet transporting convicts to Australia sets sail
1793 – 1800	The Grand Union Canal was built
1819	Factory work outlawed in England for children under nine years old.

# EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front View



Rear View



Street View

# **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

## **Ground Floor**

### **Front of House Trading Area**

- Waiting / Bar Area with Servery
- Restaurant Area
- Well
- Ladies Toilets with two w.c.s
- Gentlemen's Toilets with trough urinal and one w.c.

### **Back of House**

- Kitchen Area
- Separate Food Storage Area
- Link Area between Restaurant and Kitchen (used as a wine storage area)
- Cellar

### **First Floor – Trading Area**

- Two Double Guest Bedrooms with en suite facilities
- One Family Guest Bedroom with two double beds with en suite facilities
- One Single Guest Bedroom with en suite facilities
- Owners bedroom (once part of the restaurant kitchen)

### **Second Floor**

- Ladies Toilets and Gentlemen's Toilets (once part of the restaurant)
- Two Bedrooms for staff accommodation
- Internal Bathroom
- Two Storage Rooms

### **Outside Areas**

Limited space – parking for one small car.



# 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 Trading Area



Restaurant Side



Restaurant – Looking towards the bar / waiting area



Restaurant – Looking towards the central feature chimney area



Gentlemen's Toilets



Ladies' Toilets



**Ground Floor Back of House**



Kitchen



Stairs to Cellar



Cellar – note the metal 'I' Beam

**First Floor**



Room One  
Double Room



Room One – En Suite



Room Two  
Single Room



Room Two - En Suite Shower Room



Room Three  
With two double beds



Room Three - En Suite



Room Four  
Double Room



Room Four - En Suite



Owners Room  
Front Left Hand Side (old kitchen)

## Second Floor



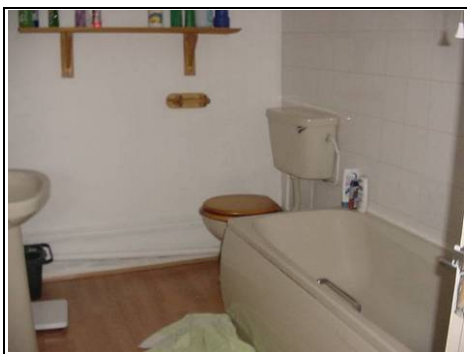
Front Left Hand Side Bedroom



Rear Right Hand Side Bedroom



Front Middle Bedroom



Internal Bathroom



Old Gents Toilets



Owners Room  
Front Left Hand Side (old kitchen)

# **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

## **EXTERNAL**

Chimneys:	Three chimneys, two brick and one stone
Roofs:	A pitched main roof, clad with clay and concrete tiles. A rear felt flat roof and a rear plastic sheet flat roof.
Gutters and Downpipes:	A mixture of Cast Iron and Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	A mixture of Cast Iron and Plastic
Walls:	Finished in painted render
External Joinery:	Painted timber single glazed windows and painted timber fascias and soffits

## **INTERNAL**

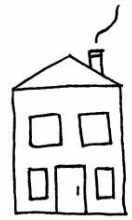
Ceilings:	A mixture of lath and plaster and plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	A mixture of solid and studwork (assumed)
Floors:	Basement: Dressed stone slabs  Other Floors: A mixture of joist and floorboards and floorboard sheets (assumed)

## **SERVICES**

We are advised by the owner that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage (no grease trap), mains 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.

When purchasing the lease on a business we believe there are three elements you need to consider, these are:

## **The Business**

Ultimately only you will be able to establish how good the business is, however we would comment that this is an established business with the added benefit of bed and breakfast (assuming that the Fire Regulations and Environmental Health Office requirements are satisfactory).

## **The Lease**

The quality of the lease needs to be discussed with your Legal Advisor and understood. You need to understand your rights, responsibilities and liabilities when you sign for a lease of this nature. We ask that your Legal Advisor brings any onerous or unusual clauses to our attention. We assume this is a 'standard' full repairing and insuring Lease; we would normally prepare a Schedule of Condition on a property such as this, we are more than happy to complete this; please advise us upon receipt of this document if you wish us to carry out a schedule.



## The Property

There are many aspects to look at property-wise, both from its condition at the moment, to its condition in relation to the lease (or in this case a 'standard' full repairing and insuring lease, as we have not seen the one specifically relating to this property).

Generally we found the property to be in below average condition considering the property's age, type and style. We would normally divide the Executive Summary into 'The Good', 'The Bad' and 'The Ugly', however in this instance we have divided it into 'The Good', 'The Ugly' and 'The Bad', to help distinguish what in our mind are the main issues.

## The Good

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

- The bed and breakfast decoration is 'as new' (or six months old).
- The property also has some of the original features left, which add to the overall character of the property, such as the well.

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

## The Ugly

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

### 1) Flat Felt Roof

The flat felt roof is blistering and the decking beneath is soft and the flat roof is flat! (It should have a fall of 12° - 15°).

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that ultimately complete replacement is necessary, including the decking beneath.



We recommend when you do re-roof that you use a high performance felt and insulation cut to falls (to ensure the roof has a fall on it and that you have better insulation) and lead flashings. We would also give consideration to opening up the roof so that it can be accessed and also improving the roof window / roof light. The owner made some comments about the roof windows being too heavy, but we think this is because the roof structure itself is in a poor condition. We would not be surprised if the structural supporting timbers in the roof had to be replaced as well once the roof is opened up.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would expect costs to be in the region of £10,000 - £20,000 for the above work. We also believe that you should give consideration to replacing the plastic sheeting. Quotations should be obtained.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section of this Report.

## 2) Electrics

Two of the fuse units have 1960s style rewirable units, which are not acceptable today.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Replace the fuse boards and have an Institute of Electrical Engineers test and inspection.



Water sitting on the roof



Poor flashing detail and blisters to the felt



1960s fuse board on the top floor.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £1,000 - £2,000 depending of course on what is found. We would also ask that you take the opportunity to make general improvements to incorporate how the business will develop over the future years.

Please see the Electrics Section of this Report.

### 3) **Fire Regulations**

We would recommend that you get your solicitor to double check that full fire approval has been obtained for the bed and breakfast areas, as it does not appear to meet current requirements. Similar should be said for the property throughout. These range everything from the fire alarm system not being hard wired into the mains electricity (the battery operated fire alarms that were checked were dead); the fire exit signs not being to modern standards; the fire extinguishers not being identified and labelled, the fire break walls in the roof, and many missing fire doors. You also need to check that the ceilings have been lined suitably to meet Fire Regulation standards as well.



Central door closer (known as a perco door closer). The doors generally need upgrading to fire doors and door closers added.

We are also concerned about the 'chimney effect' where fire transfers from one floor to the next and the unfinished work in the owner's bedroom.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that a specialist is brought in to look at your obligations under the Fire Regulations Self Assessment, which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006.

Please see the Other Matters Section of this Report.

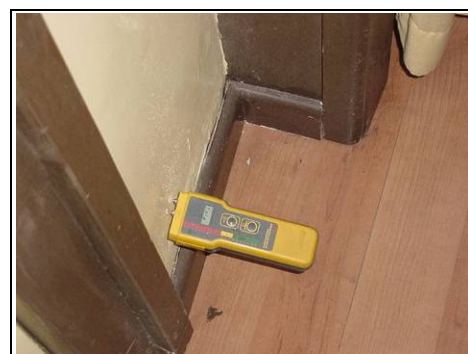
#### 4) **Disability Discriminations Act**

As far as we could see no provision has been made for the Disability Discrimination Act at all.

Please see the Other Matters Section of this Report

#### 5) **Rising Damp**

Rising damp is in the property throughout. We believe that part of the problem is the external ground level is higher than the internal ground level.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to bring this to the attention of the Freeholder. This is an improvement that needs to be made; dependent upon the Leasehold terms it may or may not be your responsibility.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** To insert a damp proof course would also generally mean replastering internally to a height of approximately one meter and then of course redecoration, which in this case would be disruptive to business. We would expect costs in the region of £5,000 - £10,000 but quotations must be obtained.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

#### 6) **End of Lease Redecoration**

Although we have not seen a copy of the Lease, it is common and usual for them to require redecoration every three to five years and a final redecoration upon leaving the property. The property does need redecoration and it does not look to have been redecorated externally for some time, particularly at high level and to the rear where we could see bare timber. If it is not redecorated soon then some of the windows will start to rot beyond repair (we would term them as 'saveable' at present) and the render will start to allow dampness into the property.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your solicitor to establish what redecoration works will be carried out.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** If you have to carry out redecoration yourself as there is high level work, which may need scaffolding, it will make costs in the thousands of pounds. You should budget for £2,000 - £4,000.

Please see the External and Internal Decorations Sections of this Report.

## 7) Dilapidations Report

Normally at the sale of a Lease a Interim Dilapidations Notice would be served. We believe your solicitor should insist that one is served on the present owners as we do not feel that they have met their maintenance obligation under most 'standard' Leases.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your solicitor to ask the Freeholder to serve an Interim Dilapidations Notice.

## 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.*

## 8) High Level Areas (possibly requiring scaffolding)

You have a mixture of tiles on the main roof which is never ideal as they will have different characteristics and are different sizes; for example the tile that we pointed out to you that was sitting in the guttering.



Mixture of tiles



We would point out, again as we showed you, that the guttering is full of debris and literally has plants growing out from it, particularly to the rear right hand side (all directions given as you face the property from the front), and also to the rear left hand side.



We would also add that the mixture of cast iron and plastic gutters and downpipes is not ideal and often leaks can occur to these.

Vegetation growing out of the gutters, also note the water sitting on the roof.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Thoroughly clean and clear gutters, check alignment and repair as necessary. With regard to the roof we suggest a roofer spends one to two days checking the roof and also that you have a supply of tiles handy and also that you clear the debris that has amassed on the flat roofs.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £2,000 - £5,000.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section and the Gutters and Downpipes Section of this Report.

#### 9) **Roof Windows / Roof Lights Leaking**

From what we could see the roof windows / roof lights are leaking and need general repairs to the flashings and general repair to the unit.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repair roof windows / roof lights and repair the flashings.



Please see the Roof Windows / Roof Lights Section of this Report.



## 10) External Render

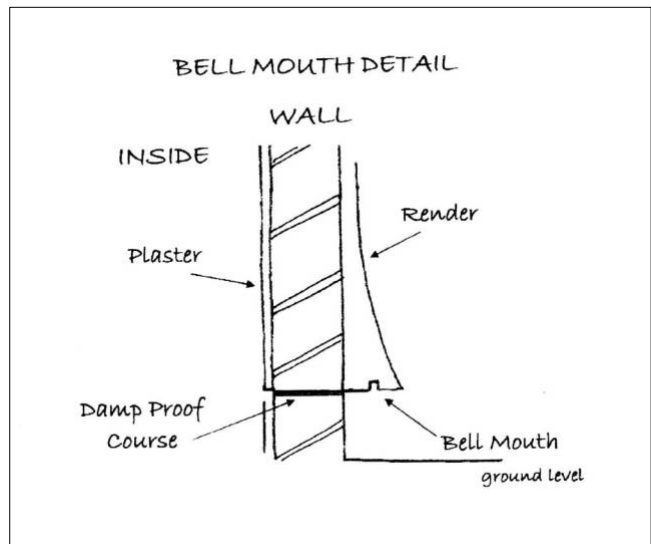
In some areas the external render on the property is not in the best condition. We feel there are weak areas, for example where the flat roof meets the main building, and we feel the render should be bell-mouthed, a lead flashing detail should be provided and generally a redecoration would be beneficial.

### Bell-Mouths Defined

A bell-mouth is a curve at the base of a wall which throws the water away from the structure therefore preventing dampness.

**ACTION REQUIRED:**  
Redecoration and repair needed to the render.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.



## 11) External Joinery

Please see our comments about the external redecoration above. We would like to reiterate that some windows are likely to need repair; the longer they are left the worse they will get.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repair and redecorate; the sooner the better. We would presently term the windows as 'saveable'.

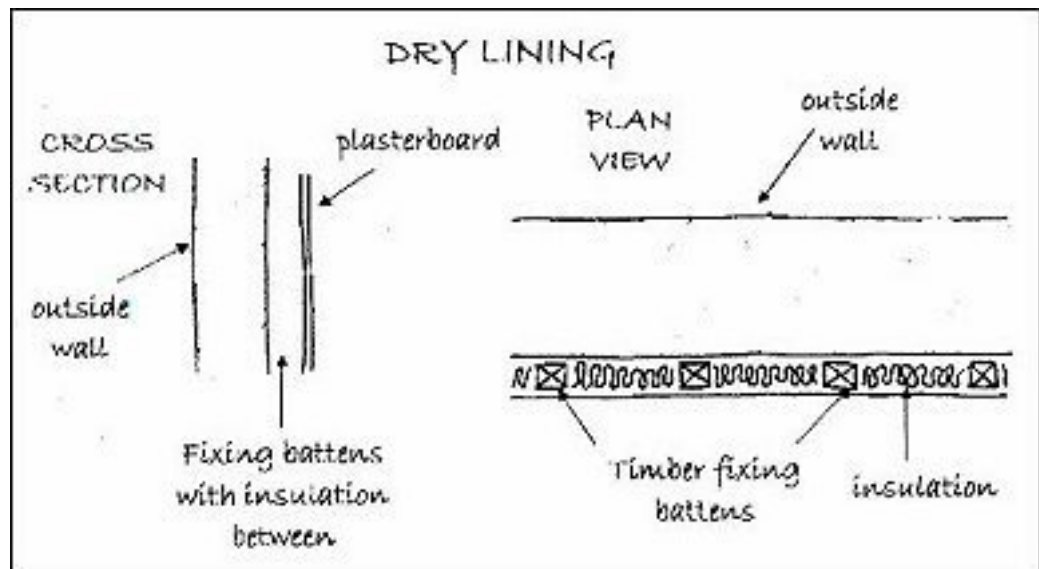
**ANTICIPATED COST:** Quotations required.

Please see the External Joinery Section of this Report.



## 12) False Walls

Generally throughout the property there are false walls or what is known as dry lining. This is often used where there is a dampness problem but obviously we cannot see behind this.



### Dry Lining Defined

This technique is usually used on solid walls particularly where dampness is occurring. In older properties, where the internal wall is not flush, battens would be added and then lath and plaster. In more modern properties, the walls may be lined with plasterboard on battens or plaster dabs.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Open up a section of the false wall to establish what is behind it and carry out work as necessary.

Please see the Internal Walls Section of this Report.

## 13) Services

### Boiler

The boiler that is located within the kitchen is dated and is coming to the end of its natural life. It is normally considered that a boiler of this type has a life of 30 years.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to budget to replace the boiler. We would also add that we believe the boiler should be vented to natural air and we are not certain if this is the case. We suggest that you have an inspection carried out by a CORGI registered gas engineer to confirm that this is correctly vented.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £2,000 - £4,000.

### Top Floor Central Heating System – Micro-bore Pipes and Internal Radiators

The top floor has its own system; as far as we can see the radiators are on micro-bore pipes that in our opinion are not the best form or way of carrying out central heating, as they can be blocked or ‘flat bent’ (this is where they are bent by and the bends flatten, therefore restricting the water flow).



There are also internal radiators, which are never ideal as they do not allow air circulation as well as radiators positioned under the windows.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** No work but anticipated future repairs.

### Electrics

Please see our earlier comments about requiring a test and report; this is throughout the entire property.

### In-set Ceiling Lights

The in-set ceiling lights you have are old style bulb lights.



Inset ceiling light

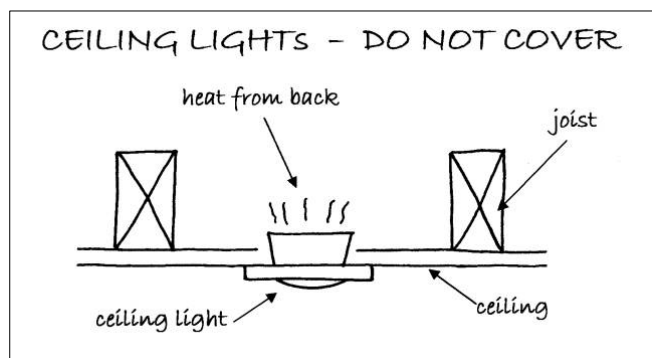


Back of ceiling light

**ACTION REQUIRED:**

These must be changed as soon as possible as they are a fire hazard.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.



**Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

**Maintenance**

It should be appreciated that defects which would normally be highlighted in a modern property, effectively form part of the property's overall character and style. Such defects are considered acceptable and may not have been specifically referred to as defects within the context of this Report.

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 and you told us that you have family members who are in the building industry and they therefore may feel able to carry out some of the work we have detailed above and also within the report..

## **Purchase Price**

We have not been asked to comment upon the purchase price in this instance, we have not seen trading accounts, internal records or a copy of the lease. We have made reference to some sources of general information, some of which have commercial information too, 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:

You need to re-read the items that we have identified in 'the Ugly' section; some of these items would be enough to put prospective purchasers off this property. You need to establish the exact situation and the cost associated with it.

We would also remind you of our comments with regard to Environmental Health Officers that the present arrangement is up to standard, particularly the collection of food from the external food storage area; we would recommend that you ask an Environmental Health Officer to visit the property and make specific comments.

There may also be asbestos in the property given that we were advised (by the present Leaseholder) that it was refurbished in the 1960s/1970s, depending upon which dates are correct.

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.

## **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.

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

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

## **TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS**

This report is being carried out under our terms of engagement for Commercial 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 business purchase. If you require any further information please telephone us.

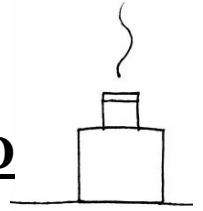
# **THE DETAILED PART OF THE REPORT FOLLOWS, WORKING FROM THE TOP OF THE PROPERTY DOWNWARDS**

From our investigations the property is Grade II Listed (your Legal Advisor should confirm this and make their own enquiries) and as such it will require various permissions to be obtained before work is carried out, over and above that normally required and possibly the use of appropriate materials for the age, type and style of property.



## EXTERNAL

# CHIMNEY STACKS, PARAPET WALLS AND ROOF WINDOWS



### Chimney Stacks

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

This property has three chimneys, which are located one at either end of the property and one in the centre.

### Chimney One – Left Hand Side Chimney

This chimney is built in brick with a metal flashing that we believe to be lead and what looked to be four small chimney pots, although it was very difficult to see them. Generally the chimney looks in reasonable condition although we believe it needs some repointing and the flashing needs checking. We were unable to see the very top of the chimney know as the flaunching, we therefore cannot comment upon them.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Check for repointing within the next three years and the lead flashing.

### Chimney Two – Middle Chimney

This chimney is stone finished with no chimney pots as far as we could see. The chimney has a cement flashing, which is never a good thing. Again, we were unable to see the top of the chimney known as the flaunchings and therefore cannot comment upon them.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Lead flashing required as soon as possible.

**ANTICIPATED COSTS:** As this is high level work you may need scaffolding, so we would recommend a quotation. We would expect the costs to be in the thousands of pounds.

### Chimney Three – Right Hand Side Chimney

This chimney is brick finished and needs a close inspection, as our view is limited, but what we can see indicates that some repointing may be required and the cement flashing needs to be replaced with a lead flashing.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Carry out minor repairs, ideally within the next two years and replace the flashing.

### Flaunchings Defined

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

### Flashings Defined

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

## **Party Wall Chimneys**

Two of these chimneys we would consider to be Party Wall chimneys and therefore the costs should be shared with the adjoining neighbour.

### Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

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

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

## **Parapet Walls**

*Parapet walls are usually walls that are above roof level and often sit on the boundary of the property.*

There is a small brick built parapet wall to the rear flat roof.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repointing needed.



Pointing required



## Roof Windows / Roof Lights

There are two types of roof light located on the rear flat roof. The box shaped flat roof was common after the war, and a flat smaller roof light that was common in the 1960s / 1970s.

Generally, overall, repair work is required to the flashings and also a number of panes of glass should be repaired as they are probably leaking.



Box shaped roof light



Flatter style roof light

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would repair the existing roof lights and would caution against replacing the larger units as they allow ventilation in the kitchen area.

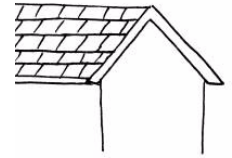
We would add that it seems inevitable with skylights that they will sooner or later leak. If this doesn't occur then they seem prone to condensation. Keep a cloth handy!

Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the chimney stacks, parapet walls and roof lights 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 Chimney Breasts, 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 this roof in two areas; the main roof and the rear flat roofs.

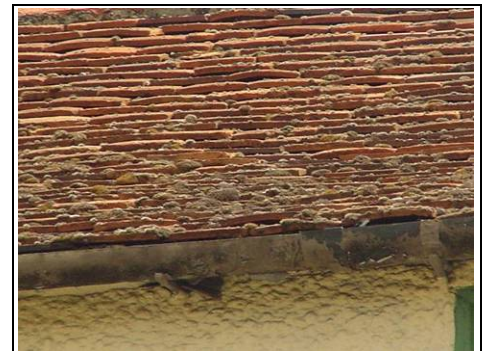
## Main Roof

The roof is pitched and clad with clay tiles and concrete tiles. Both the clay and concrete tiles are likely to be nibbed tiles. Overall we believe the roof to be in slightly below average condition, considering its age, type and style.



Sometimes we find that deterioration occurs to the ridges and the perimeter and so you should periodically check these areas.

We would comment we could see spalling, displaced tiles, wrongly sized tiles and moss; all need repair or replacement.



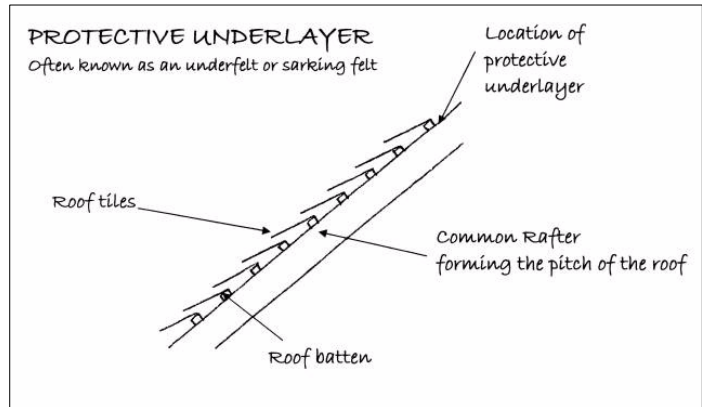
### Spalling Defined

Spalling occurs to brick or stone when water penetrates the surface and via freezing and thawing starts to cause deterioration to the surface. This in turn allows further water penetration and the surface breaks up further. This ultimately can lead to water damage or structural damage to the area.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We believe that a roofer should spend several days on the roof. 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.*



There are three roofs to this property (left, middle and right hand). When we inspected the loft spaces we found a Hessian base Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s. We generally found it to be in average condition, although it is damaged in a few places but this is not unusual considering its age.



Left Hand Roof

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

## **Flat Roofs**

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

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

## **Felt roof**

The felt flat roof is in a poor condition, the decking is giving way in several areas. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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 they last longer. However, in this case, the decking beneath the felt appears to be damp and giving way.



## **Plastic Roof**

You need to look at replacing this roof with a proper roof (you will need Local Authority approval); we suggest it is replaced with a pitched tile roof.



For your general information with regard to the felt roofs 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 80 percent of the main roof from ground level via our ladder or via any other vantage point that we managed to gain. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see; however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

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

# ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



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

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

We will consider the roof in three areas; the left hand roof, the middle roof and the right hand side roof.

### Left Hand Roof

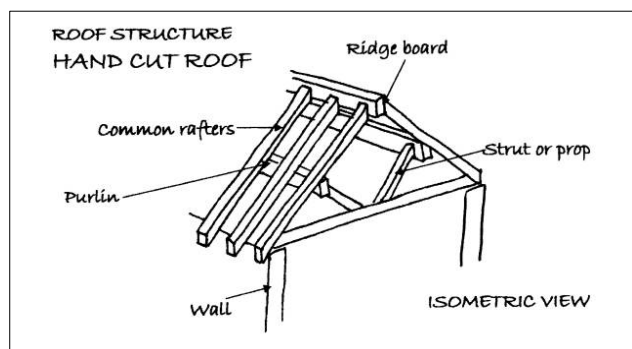
#### Access

The left hand roof is accessed via two loft hatches both located on the landing. There is no loft ladder, electric light or secured floorboards. We recommend that these be added, as it will make the loft space safer and easier to use. Due to the amount of stored items within the loft we have not accessed the roof space, but viewed it from a ladder. The loft has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing.



#### Roof Structure

We had next to no access to the roof structure. However, from our knowledge of this age and type of structure, we believe it will have what is known as a cut timber roof. This is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site.

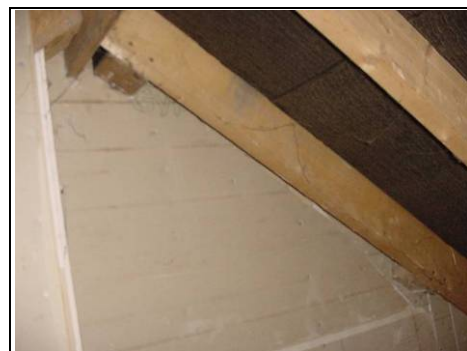




## Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

- Serious active woodworm
- Structurally significant defects to the timbers
- Dry rot
- Wet rot



Our examination was 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 average condition considering with some minor condensation and damp. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.

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

## Fire Break Walls

The roof is sub divided by fire break walls; in this case the walls are the original external walls that have been left in place as the property has been extended.

Fire walls help prevent the spread of fire through roofs and are now a requirement under the building regulations and generally considered good practice by us.

## Water Tanks

The water tanks are insulated and, from what we could see, they looked to be formed in plastic. We therefore assume they are relatively new (in surveying terms, in this instance, that is the last 30 years). Care has to be taken with roofs and water tanks to allow some warm air so that they don't freeze.





## Ventilation

We did not see any vents to the roof to help prevent condensation.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally add ventilation to reduce the chances of condensation occurring.

## Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

## Electrical Cables

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

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

## Middle Roof

We would make very similar comments to the previous roof. Again, we would reiterate that we did not gain access to the roof due to the amount of stored items.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You should ask the owners to clear the roof of all the items.



## Right Hand Side Roof

Again, we would make similar comments as above; however, in this case, you have an early pre-fabricated roof, probably from the 1960s, as we could see some bolts in some of the timbers. However, you also have some of the older timbers present and interestingly you can look through into next doors property, which should not be the case. Whilst we again inspected the roof from the loft hatch due to the amount of stored items in the roof space we would comment that we would expect some woodworm to the older timbers.



General View



Close up of the purlin

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to add fire break walls into this area. We would also recommend that the roof is boarded out and lit and checked for 'active' woodworm that is causing structurally significant damage. From what we could see from the roof hatch we believe the timbers to be in acceptable condition considering their age.

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

The property has a mixture of the original cast iron gutters and downpipes and the more modern replacement plastic gutters and downpipes. From what we saw of the gutters and downpipes they are in a poor condition and therefore they are causing deterioration to the property.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Remove the vegetation then repair and replace the gutters and downpipes as soon as possible. We would always recommend that the joints are checked and the alignment checked to ensure that the gutters fall towards the downpipes.

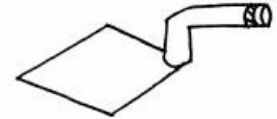
Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## Soil and Vent Pipe

The soil and vent pipes are a mixture of different materials and have also been added to over the years. We suggest that you look at repair and replacement when you carry out the work to the gutters and downpipes. In both cases we would strongly recommend that all work is carried out during the summer of 2007.

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.*

## Render

The walls to this property are finished in a painted pebbledash render. We have carried out a tap test to the render at low level (literally hitting the render with the back of a hammer) to try to establish if there are any hollow areas and found the render in average condition for its age, type and style; apart from the detailing and the requirement to redecorate. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



## Render Detailing

A way of telling the quality of the render we have found over the years is by the quality of detailing above the windows and to the base of the property.

### Render Detailing to Windows

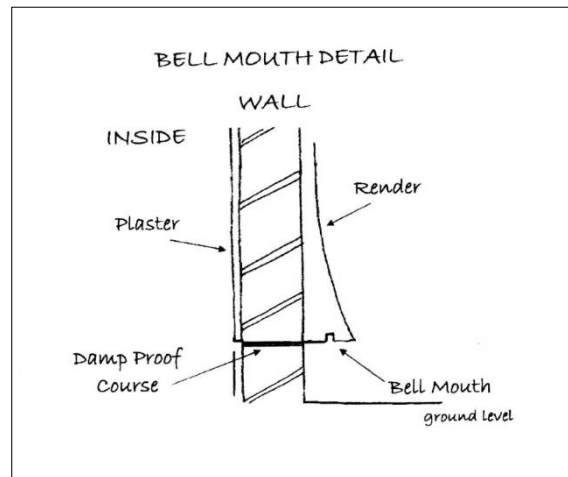
There were next to no drip details over the windows.

### Render Detailing to the Base of the Property

Whilst in theory there should be a bell-mouth detail, in this instance due to the level of the pavement against the property it is possibly best to have the plinth render detailing as you have. The problem of dampness is a difficult one, as not only are the ground levels different between the pathway and internally, you also have downpipes discharging into the area, as can be seen in this photo.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to come to an agreement with the Landlord as to the existing condition of the property and that they will not ask for any improvement. This is very important as improvements could be very costly as it will be difficult to get a satisfactory solution.



#### Bell-Mouths Defined

A bell-mouth is a curve at the base of a wall which throws the water away from the structure therefore preventing dampness.

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

# **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**

In a property such as this it is likely to have a mixture of foundations, due to the property being extended and / or altered over the years. We would expect this to include shallow foundations to the older part of the property and concrete foundations to newer parts, such as the rear extensions to the kitchen areas.

## **Building Insurance Policy**

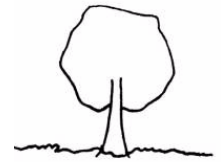
You should ensure that the Building Insurance Policy contains adequate provision against any possibility of damage arising through subsidence, landslip, heave etc.

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.

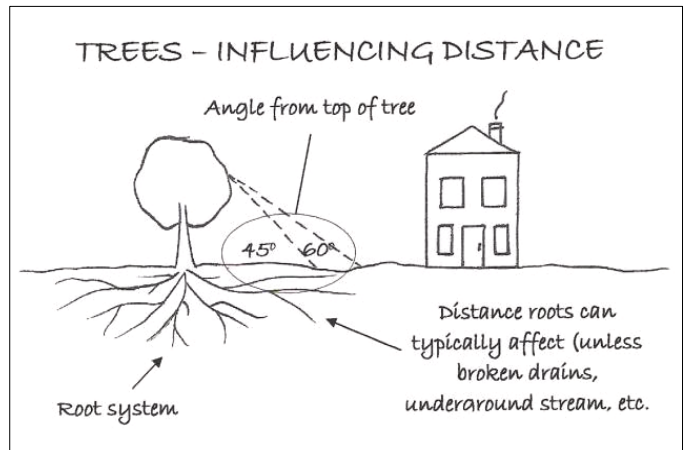
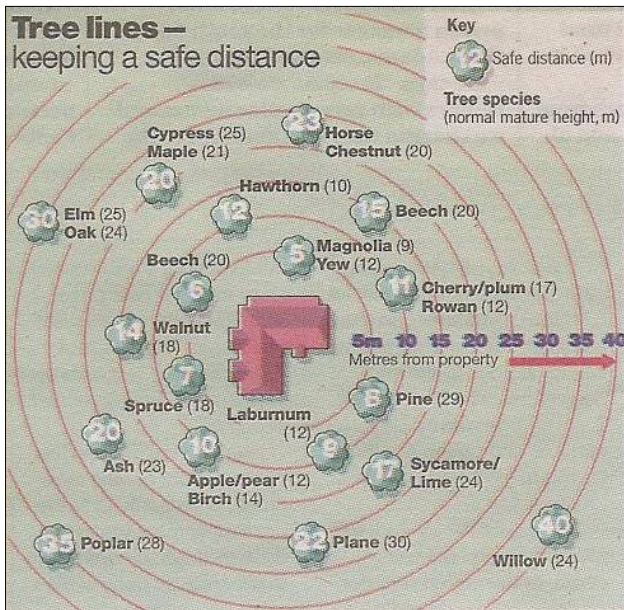


# TREES



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

There are no trees within 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.

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.*

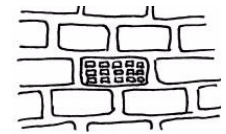
In properties of this age it is unlikely that a damp proof course would have been built in originally. However, often damp proof courses are added as with this property. We would comment that we found dampness internally so it is unlikely that a damp proof course has been added.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The main thing to establish here is that the Landlord is happy for the property to remain in this condition and any deterioration that will be caused by leaving it in this condition. Your solicitor needs to ensure that this is agreed.

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.

# AIRBRICKS



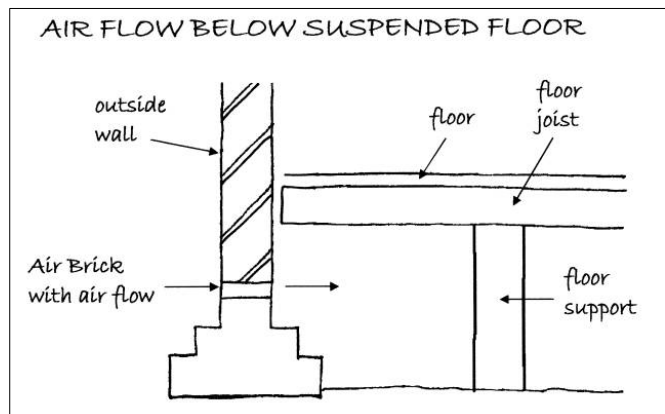
*In properties with suspended floors you need to have an airflow beneath to stop deterioration. The air is allowed to pass under the property by the use of airbricks. Generally the rule of thumb is that airbricks are spaced every metre and a half approximately, but this depends upon the specific circumstances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

The majority of the floors to the ground floor are a suspended timber floor; we would therefore expect some sort of airflow and air movement beneath, usually via airbricks; however, in this instance, we did not see any airbricks.

We can appreciate that it is difficult to add airbricks to the front of the property at low level as they would effectively form gutters for any rainwater, but you do need to get airflow into your cellar, as we could smell the dampness when we went into that area. We suggest some form of grills cut into the flooring to allow for airflow. We do appreciate that the damp smells that these may cause will not be good for business, so you need to think carefully as to where they are positioned.

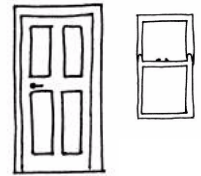
## Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

A suspended timber floor usually consists of timbers spanning the ground floor, supported on piers (usually brickwork), vented via air bricks within the walls.



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

# EXTERNAL JOINERY

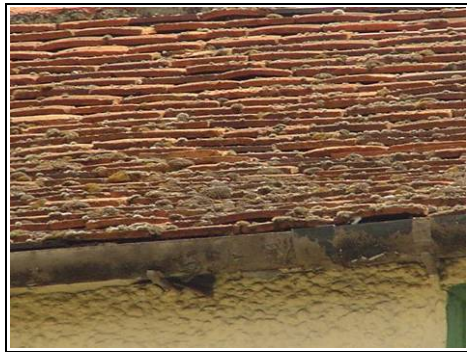


*The external joinery part of this section covers fascias, soffits and bargeboards, windows and doors, and any detailing such as brick corbelling etc.*

*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 and Soffits

The fascia boards were barely visible to the property due to the gutters hiding them. In some areas we are certain that there will be deterioration to the fascias and soffit boards due to the condition of the guttering.



The gutters obscured our view of the fascias and soffits.

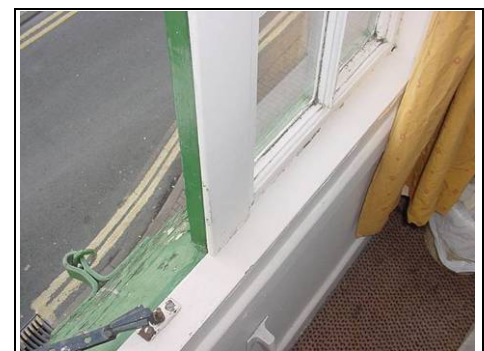


We would expect the fascias to be deteriorating where the gutters are blocked.

## Windows and Doors

The property predominantly has painted timber casement windows, which are single glazed. Generally we consider the windows in below average condition and they have had repairs over the years.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repair and redecorate as soon as possible. We would term the windows as ‘saveable’.



This is one of the better windows.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary

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.*

An external redecoration is required.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments about the present Leaseholder carrying out redecoration. At the very least your solicitor needs to establish the condition of the property that has been caused due to the lack of redecoration.

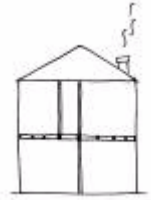
The sooner redecoration is carried out the better, as this will minimise repair work.

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

As should be expected with a building of this age the ceilings have been finished in a variety of ways, from the original lath and plaster to more modern plasterboard.

The property has lots of beams, some are old and some are newer decorative timbers, the central beam is known as the spine beam. Often the timbers are referred to as ships timbers, this is not because the timbers are reclaimed from ships (although we are sure some were and other buildings) it is because they are of a grade good enough for ship building.

We would like to bring your attention to the leaks that are present in the flat roof area, particularly around the roof lights.

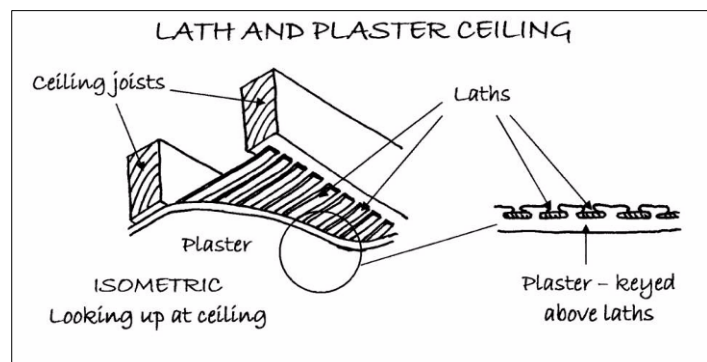
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repair roof before you redecorate. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Water leaking through the flat roof.

### 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 to the internal walls (this is not rocket science, it is literally tapping the walls and listening for the sound made) and found them to be a mixture of solid walls and hollow/studwork walls.

Generally it is a reasonable assumption that the solid walls are likely to be made from brickwork and will be the structural walls, with the studwork walls being purely to divide the rooms.

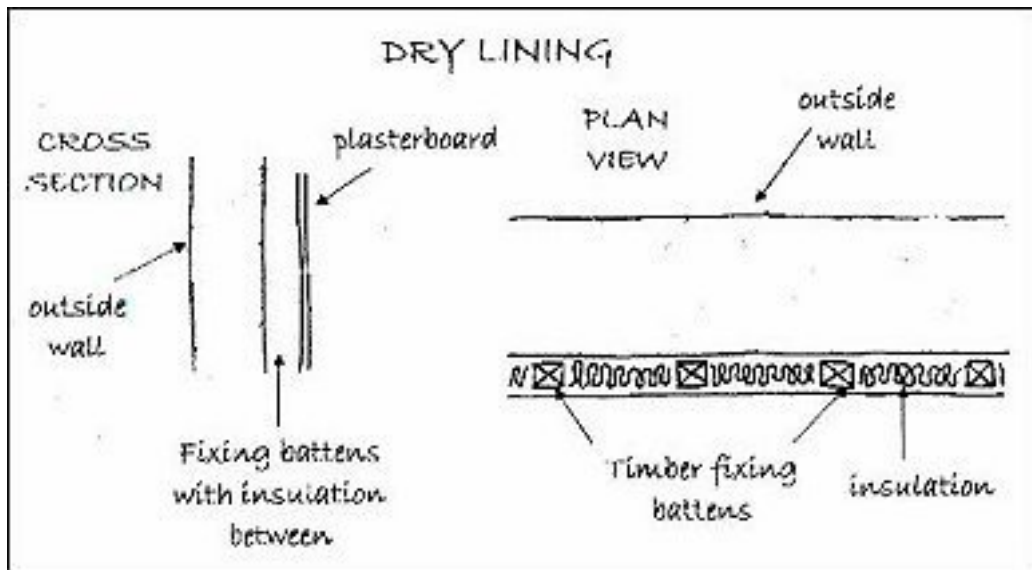
## **Perimeter Walls**

Generally internal walls are finished with a modern plaster believed to be carlite / gypsum plaster and decorated. Without the removal of the decorative finish we cannot be 100 per cent certain, this type of older property would originally have had lime plaster, and some may remain.

Often the mixture of old and new materials will result in hair line movement cracks.

Earlier we have commented upon the dry lining / false walls in the property and have recommended that a section is opened up to establish the condition of the walling behind it.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Open up a section of the dry lined / false walling.



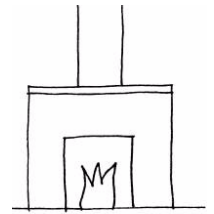
### Dry Lining Defined

This technique is usually used on solid walls particularly where dampness is occurring. In older properties, where the internal wall is not flush, battens would be added and then lath and plaster. In more modern properties, the walls may be lined with plasterboard on battens or plaster dabs.

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.

## 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 either end of the property and to the middle. We would term the central chimney as a feature chimney.

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.

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 Chimney Stacks, 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.*

## Basement Floor

The basement floor is dressed stone slabs.



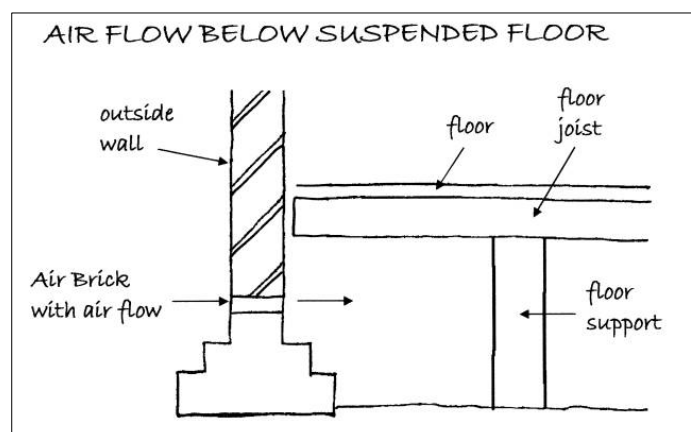
## Ground Floor

Based on our knowledge of this age of construction we believe that, predominately, the ground floor construction is a suspended timber floor. This type of floor needs air circulation under it to reduce deterioration from wet rot, and dampness. Please see our comments in the Airbricks Section and the Timber Defects Section.

The kitchen area is solid under foot and assumed to be concrete.

### Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

A suspended timber floor usually consists of timbers spanning the ground floor, supported on piers (usually brickwork), vented via air bricks within the walls.

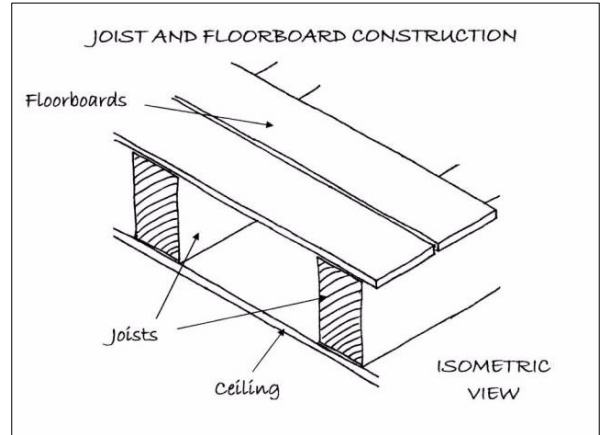


## First Floor and Second Floor

We have assumed that the first and second floor construction is joist and floorboards and joist and floorboard sheets, as this is typical in this age of property, however, we have not opened up the floor.

### Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



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

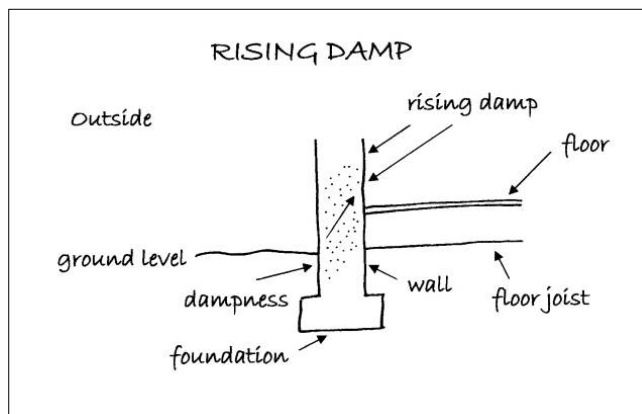
# DAMPNESS



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

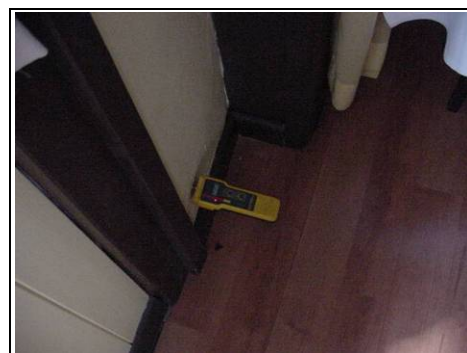
## Rising Damp

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



A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls and some internal walls. We found rising damp.

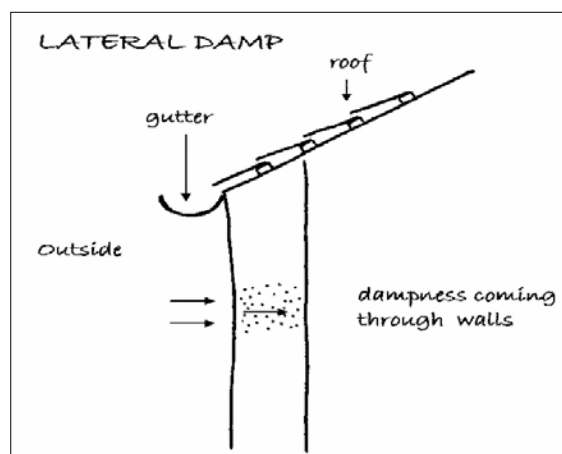
Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



## 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.*

We dampness in line with what we would expect in this age of property. In many areas we were unable to take readings due to the dry lining.





## **Condensation**

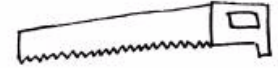
*This is where the humidity held within the air meets a cold surface causing condensation.*

You have a various en suite shower rooms to the bed and breakfast accommodation, which do tend to promote condensation. You need to ensure that the extract fans are kept in good working order.

At the time of the survey we could see no obvious signs of condensation, however, it depends upon how you utilise the building. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating and ventilation of properties. Normally opening windows 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 and Fire Doors

It is very difficult to give specific advice, without going through the plans in detail, as a general rule a fire door has a door closer and an intumescent strip to help reduce the spread of fire and smoke.



Top door closer



Perco door closer



Over the top of the door to the owner's accommodation the studwork needs to be finished to make it fire resistant.

## **Staircase**

Protection needs to be given to high risk areas, such as kitchen areas and staircase areas as these act as chimneys allowing a fire to spread from floor to floor.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The staircase needs to be checked to ensure it is suitably lined to resist fire damage.

## **Kitchen**

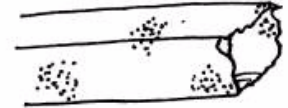
The property only has a commercial kitchen, and no domestic kitchen. This is not ideal and some argue that there will be a move towards a requirement for a commercial and domestic kitchen in years to come.

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to have a copy of the latest Environmental Officers report on the property and we would also recommend that the Environmental Officer is contacted and met before you complete the sale.

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.*

We have not seen any dry rot in the areas inspected.

## 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.*

It is likely that some wet rot is present particularly in the floor joists due to the dampness found in the walls.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** This is an ongoing repair issue.

## 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 and the cellar are the main areas 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. Our inspection is usually restricted by insulation covering some of the timbers and general stored items in the roof, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings. However, we have found signs of woodworm within the cellar. In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active. We would comment in this instance that the cellar is a damp area and an ideal breeding ground for woodworm; although we could not see any 'active' woodworm. We would nevertheless recommend treatment.



Woodworm not active.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The area to be treated by a BWPDA (British Wood Preserving and Damp Proofing Association) approved contractor offering an insurance backed guarantee.

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

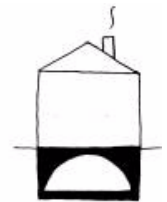


*With paints it should be remembered that up to 1992 lead could be used within paint and prior to this most textured paints (commonly known as Artex) contained an element of asbestos up to 1984, so care should be taken if the paintwork looks old and dated.*

The decoration is average, with minor marks as you would expect in a working business. The bed and breakfast accommodation rooms are in 'as new' condition.

You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste.

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



## CELLARS AND VAULTS

*Cellars and vaults tend to be found in older properties and offer a useful space, although usually they are damp, unless some treatment has taken place such as the tanking of the walls, which is a lining process, or an external damp proofing membrane of some type has been added, or if internally the walls have been lined, therefore hiding the damp. Cellars are often susceptible to flooding from excessive rain, rising water table levels or even blocked drains.*

You have the benefit of a cellar, albeit damp and requiring ventilation. We would add that we could not see a sump pump; this is required for when cellars flood (and they always do), you may wish to add one.

Please see our previous comments with regard to the woodworm.



Replaced timbers with central spine beam (white timber)

Finally, we have made a visual inspection of the cellar/vault only and have no way of knowing what the construction is without opening up the structure.



## WELLS



*In older properties it is very common to have a well, either within the bounds of the property or a shared well.*

The well is a nice feature of the property and is an interesting talking point.



The Well



Looking down the well

# **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.*

## **Roof Insulation**

Some roof insulation was present, although not to current Building Regulation requirements of 270mm. We would not be overly concerned about this as we typically find in roofs between 100mm – 150mm of insulation. In this instance you have approximately 150mm. If you do add insulation then you need to add ventilation too.

## **Walls**

The walls to this property are probably solid, but you cannot be certain in this age of property without opening them up. 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. Some walls are dry lined, if they are insulated then this will improve their thermal efficiency.

## **Windows**

The windows are single glazed and so the thermal properties will not be that good.

## **Services**

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

## Summary

Overall, provided our assumptions correct and considering the properties age, type and style, it has average thermal properties.

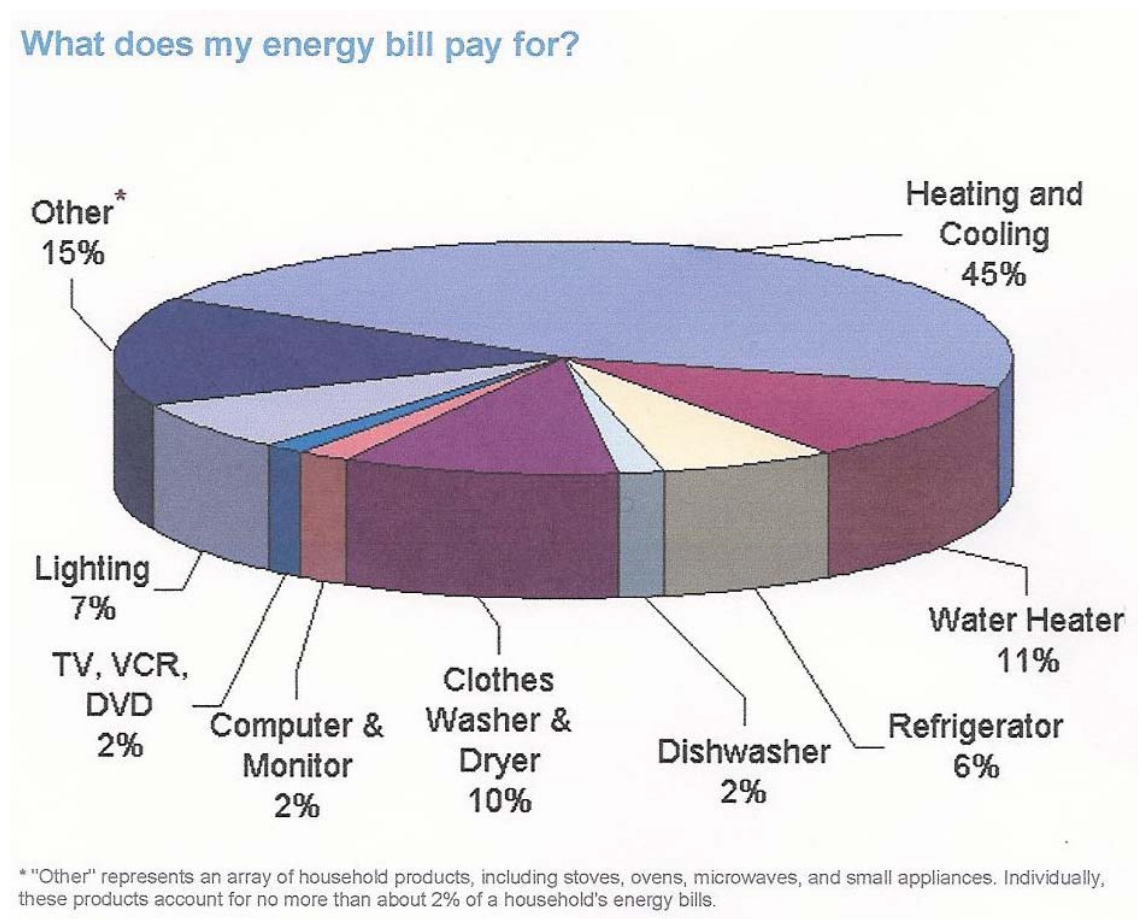
Further information can be obtained with regard to energy saving via the Internet on the following pages:

*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 www.ecocentre.org.uk for an alternative technological view.*

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



## OTHER MATTERS



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

### FIRE REGULATIONS

Normally it is a requirement of any Lease or Tenancy agreement that current fire regulations are adhered to and that a service contract is in place. This is how the property should be left.

Fire Regulations are now on a Self Assessment basis from the 1st October 2006, professional advice is recommended. As far as we can see you do not meet current Regulations.



Old style fire exit sign needs changing.



Fire extinguisher not identified.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You should have a suitable Fire Certificate for the property. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

### DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT

You should be aware that it is now a requirement to give reasonable access to the disabled and make reasonable amendments to the property as is necessary to accommodate them. It is a condition of all the leases that we have seen to meet this requirement. In this instance we have seen no provision for the disabled / less able.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You should ask to see if a report has been carried out in line with the Disabilities Act highlighting areas that can be improved or have been improved.

## **ASBESTOS REGISTER**

Given the age of this property you may have asbestos, as it was once used almost as generally as wood. We are finding that generally people are unhappy to purchase property with any defective asbestos. We have inspected for visible damaged / degrading asbestos (no tests have been taken) and not found any. See asbestos article:

[http://www.1stassociated.co.uk/definitions\\_external\\_asbestos.asp](http://www.1stassociated.co.uk/definitions_external_asbestos.asp)

It is now a requirement for any public building to have an asbestos register, indicating whether there is or is not asbestos and if so where it is.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** A Type Two Survey should be carried out under the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002.

You should note that work involving products containing asbestos is covered by Health and Safety legislation and you are recommended to seek the advice of the Local Authority Environmental Health Officer before proceeding with any such work.

We are not specialist asbestos surveyors. If you want to be 100% free of asbestos you need a specialist asbestos survey, where samples are taken.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

There are various areas that give us cause for concern; the easiest way to resolve this is to ask for the latest copies of the Environmental Health reports and to meet the Environmental Health Officer at the property. We are particularly concerned about the open area that exists between the kitchen and the store and its condition. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Tiles need a good clean



The area on the way to the food store

## **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.

It is a 'standard' Lease clause that all electrics are kept in a safe manner.

We do not carry out electrical tests. We can arrange for them to be carried out if you so require.

## Fuse Board

Unfortunately your property has more than one fuse board and circuit board. You have 1960s fuse boards to the ground floor near the stairs and to the top floor near the stairs and you have 1970s / 1980s fuse board to the right hand side.

1960s rewirable fuses are now superseded and far better fuse boards are now available, as they are with the 1970s/1980s units.



1960s ground floor 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 and this proved satisfactory. In this instance we are aware that this is a far from satisfactory test and we recommend a full IEE test.

## **Power Points**

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.

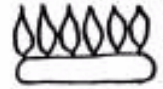
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Change the older electric units. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

As the property is changing occupancy an IEE full test and report should be carried out by a NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor. You will also be required to carry out a Portable Appliance Test (PAT) on all portable appliances.

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.*

We are advised by the owner (we have not actually seen it) that the gas meter cupboard is located on the ground floor near the middle door.

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As a matter of course it is recommended that the entire gas installation is inspected and made good, as necessary, by a CORGI registered contractor. 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**

We are advised that the stop cock is located to the front right hand side of the property; we have not actually seen it.

## **Water Pressure**

When the taps were run to check the pressure, literally by putting a finger over the tap. It is usual for the pressure to vary depending on what other taps and appliances are being used.

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**

The property has two hot water cylinders which are relatively new (in this case we mean in the past 30 years) they are located on the ground floor and the top floor.

## **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.

The top floor of the property has micro-bore pipes to the heating system. From our experience these tend to get blocked more easily than a traditional heating system that uses a 12/13mm pipe. However, micro-bore pipes are cheaper than a traditional system and easier to fit, which is why they are popular plumbers, as often the person putting in the heating system is not the one you call out to repair or solve any problems.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

### **Heating**

The property has two boilers one is located in the ground floor kitchen and is an old Potterton Netaheat unit; the second boiler is located on the top floor near the stairs and is an Ideal Sterling unit, which we are advised is relatively new.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If the Ideal boiler is relatively new then a guarantee should be available.

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.

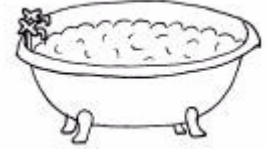
We noted that there are a fair number of internal radiators. The radiators would normally be positioned under the window, which helps circulation of the warm air. These radiators may not warm the property to the heat that you desire.

Internal radiators are generally used by plumbers to reduce costs (less pipe work) and save time (less pipe work). Sometimes dampness (what's known as cold bridging) occurs; we have personally had this problem and ended up moving the radiators to the traditional location under the window.

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.

## **BATHROOMS**



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

The property has the benefit of ‘as new’ en suite bathrooms.

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; from the manholes we have seen that the drainage run is to the rear of the property, although 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.

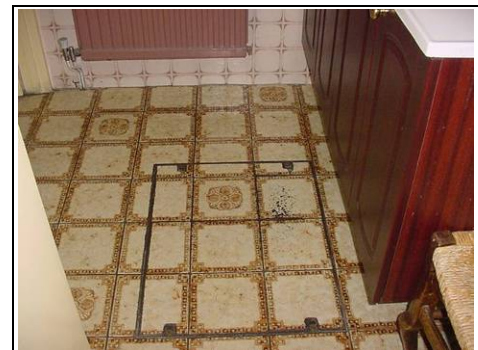
The cold taps have been run for approximately quarter of an hour in the bathroom and kitchen. No build up or back up was noted.

### 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 noted an air sealed internal man hole which we have not lifted. We are not keen on internal man holes in case they block!

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to establish what your responsibilities are within the terms of the Lease; if they are onerous we would recommend a Close Circuit TV camera report of the drains prior to you taking on the Lease.



### Grease Trap

In any food based business we would recommend a grease trap to minimise grease going into the main drains

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, although we did note that some discharge directly onto the ground, which is never ideal as it can cause dampness.

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



There is very limited parking on the property, enough probably for one small car. However, you do have the availability of parking to the rear of the property and of course you are near the town centre so public transport is available.

### EXTERNAL AREAS



The property sits directly onto the pavement to the front and to the rear there is a small yard area that is taken up by the car being parked in it.

**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.

## **POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR**

If you wish to proceed with your purchase of the Lease 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 read: [www.1stAssociated.co.uk/leaderboard.asp](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk/leaderboard.asp)

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

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

When you booked this survey we asked you if you required us to carry out a verbal check on the status of the property with the Local Authority regarding whether it is a Listed Building, in a Conservation area and any history that is available over the phone with regard to Planning Applications and Building Control. In this instance you have not requested that we carry out this work.

Finally, your Solicitor should carry out Local Authority enquiries 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

# **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 pleasant sunny 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 limited as we have not opened up any of the floors and have not inspected the drains and were unable to get inside the roofs to inspect them fully.

# **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.

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

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