

PROPERTY REPORT

A Shop Unit In Woking Surrey



FOR

Mr G

Prepared by:

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Marketing by:

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0800 298 5424

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INTRODUCTION

We have been instructed to inspect and prepare a Report and Schedule of Condition of XXX Woking, Surrey

This Report is to be read in conjunction with the Schedule of Condition.

The work has been carried out as per our standard Terms and Conditions of Contract which have been emailed to you as part of the confirmation of our instructions. If you would like further clarification please do not hesitate to contact us.

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a ground floor lock up unit, situated within a shopping parade with residential units above it (approximately five stories in height). We believe the property was originally built for Local Authority purposes.

The front of the property sits directly on to the pavement. The rear has a courtyard area and a driveway access and it has security cameras at either end.

The property is situated in what is known as a local shopping parade. In this case approximately one third of the shops were open at the time of our inspection. The remainder had security grills down. We would recommend that you find out how many of these are actively operating as a business and what your foot fall is, (i.e. potential customers).

There are also surrounding residential properties and a pub across the road and free parking and adjacent to the local shopping parade.

If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

Location Plans



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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Flat Roofs:	Asphalt finished
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	In service duct (assumed)
Walls and Wall Structure:	Stretcher Bond brick finished (assumed) Concrete frame property (assumed)
External Joinery:	Front elevation are single glazed windows within a wooden frame and a timber door Rear elevation are single glazed windows in a metal frame

Internal

Ceilings:	A mixture of suspended ceiling systems and directly applied plaster/textured paint
Walls:	A mixture of solid and studwork (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Solid, assumed concrete

Services

We assume that the property has a mains water supply, drainage and electricity. Heating is via a portable gas heater. The electrics are located in the staff room and are dated 1960's.

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

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

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Flats above property



Rear Elevation



Back yard



Rear area

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FACILITIES

(All directions given as you face the property)

We have included a list of the facilities that we have viewed; there may be other areas. The following gives a general overview.

Ground Floor – Trading Area

Front of House

- 1.0) Reception and waiting area
- 2.0) Salon

Back of House

- 3.0) Staff room
- 4.0) Kitchen
- 5.0) Toilet

Outside Areas

- 6.0) Outside toilet
- 7.0) Gated back yard area

Your Legal Advisor needs to check and confirm what your legal rights are with regard to access/egress, parking and permitted hours of work.

REPORT FORMAT AND INFORMATION

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

PHOTOGRAPHS



We utilise photographs and sketches to illustrate issues or features. In some photographs a pencil has been used to highlight a specific area.

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 Lease.

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.

MARKET VALUE

We have not been asked to comment upon the market value in this instance. We have not seen copies of the trading figures or the accounts.

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.

AGENT / BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER – FRIEND OR FOE?

It is important to remember that the agents are acting for their client and not the purchaser. We, as your employed Independent Chartered Surveyor, represent your interests only.

SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR

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

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS

This report is being carried out under our terms of engagement, as agreed to and signed by you. 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 - just phone us.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summaries are not ideal as they try to précis often quite complex subjects into a few paragraphs. This is particularly so in a summary about someone's future business when we are trying to second-guess what your 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 200 photographs (a CD copy of all photographs is enclosed) 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 lease (or indeed commit to purchasing the lease), 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. Having said all of that, here are our comments:

When purchasing the lease on a hairdresser's shop we believe there are three elements you need to consider, these are:

The Business

Only you can decide upon the true potential of the business and its value to you; although we do recommend taking independent advice on the value of the business and property.

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 immediately. We assume this is a standard full repairing and insuring Lease.

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).

You are currently reading the Property Report which is intended to advise you on the property element of the purchase. We will also provide you with a Schedule of Condition, which will enable you to agree with the Landlord the condition of the property when you start to lease it.

We have divided the Executive Summary into 'Plus Points', 'Medium Priority' and 'High Priority', to allow you to clarify and focus on exactly what the issues are.

Plus Points

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!

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

- 1.0) The shopping parade appears to still have actively run businesses, albeit that the majority of them had their shutters down at the time of our inspection.
- 2.0) Graffiti was minimal at the time of our survey
- 3.0) Free parking is available.

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

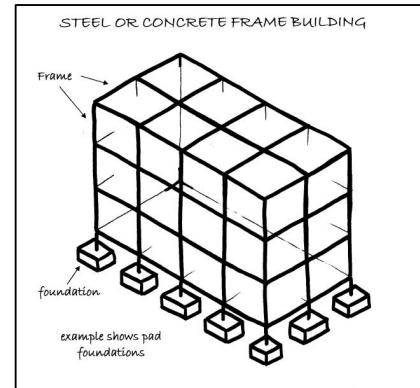
Medium Priority

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

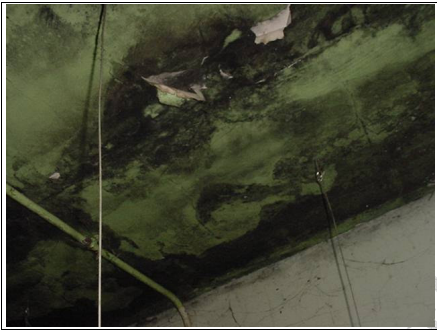
1.0) Characteristics of this property

The whole of this property is built on a concrete frame, with in fill brickwork walls and windows. These type of properties typically suffer from three main things in relation to dampness:

1. Cold bridging
2. Roof leaks, and
3. Multi-occupied properties/resident property problems above.



This has resulted in dampness/ condensation being visible behind the suspended ceiling tiles.



Dampness behind ceiling tiles



Dampness coming through ceiling tiles

Unfortunately to some extent you have to consider this as a characteristic of this type of property. The following sections go into the problems in relation to this in more detail.

2.0) Cold Bridging

Generally this type of building suffers from cold bridging; a problem that was never thought of when they were built. It has only become more prevalent as we have heated and insulated properties more.



Concrete lintel

Cold bridging specifically relates to condensation occurring on cold elements of the structure, such as the concrete frame, concrete lintels and concrete roofs. This is particularly problematic in businesses that create humidity, such as a hairdresser's. This is shown in the dampness throughout the property.

Please see our article in the appendices on cold bridging, specifically in humid conditions, such as you have in a hairdresser's, this is shown in dampness to the ceilings.

Cold Bridging Defined

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

ACTION REQUIRED: There is little you can do about this without major cost. This needs to be considered as a characteristic of the property.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

3.0) Roof leaks/roof detailing – gutter missing/asphalt damage

We can see signs that the roof is leaking and that there have been problems with it in the past, though we would add that generally asphalt is considered the Rolls Royce of roofing materials.

3.1 The roof is formed in asphalt. Some of the flashings are damaged and some of the asphalt is starting to deteriorate.



Damaged flashing

3.2 The gutters are missing to the majority of the rear wall. These need to be added as they are causing some dampness to get into the rear of the property.



Missing gutter

3.3 The concrete detailing is allowing water to discharge on to the roof. If you look at the adjacent photo you can see the concrete detailing, unfortunately there does not look to be sufficient grip so when it rains the water comes over the concrete detailing and then drips onto the wall itself. If anything this concentrates the water on the wall. If you look closely you can see salt to the wall caused by it being constantly damp.



Concrete detailing

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to discuss with the Landlord what the long term maintenance schedule is for repairs to the roof. You need to add gutters the Landlord needs to improve the detailing to the property. Although we would add that you need to consider these again as characteristics of this property and be happy to accept they are present if you wish to take on the lease of this property, as in our experience landlords generally do not resolve this type of problem.

Please see the Gutters and Downpipes Section of this Report.

4.0) Multi-occupied properties / resident property problems above

We usually find with residential properties that showers leak and other mishaps occur which can lead to problems in running your business.

During the course of our question and answer session with the owner we were advised that the resident above had suffered a leak which caused some damage and deterioration in the property.



Ceiling coming down due to dampness / a leak

We feel it should be considered an inevitable characteristic of being at the bottom of a multi-occupied property that sooner or later some leaks will occur into your property. We feel it is best you get on first name terms with everyone and would recommend a cup of tea meeting to say hello on a friendly basis before you have to deal with them on an emergency basis.

ACTION REQUIRED: Liaise with neighbours.

ANTICIPATED COST: It is likely to cost you in future business if you do not get on well your neighbours.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

5.0) Rising damp

There is some rising damp to the rear of the property caused by a slightly high ground level.

It may also be being contributed to by the gutters leaking and condensation occurring in the property. We feel in this type of construction there will always be an element of dampness.



Testing for rising damp

ACTION REQUIRED: Reduce ground level.

ANTICIPATED COST: A few hundred pounds to reduce ground level around the property. Please obtain quotations.

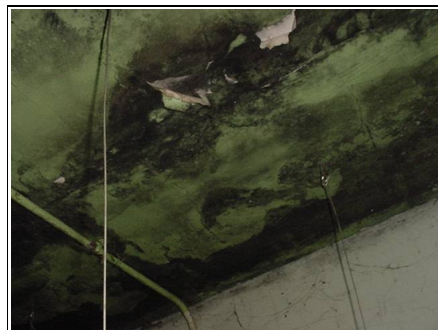
Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

6.0) Will the dampness problems ever be resolved

Unfortunately we can see that dampness and mould is present in the ceilings and it looks to have been a characteristic for a long term. We have already mentioned the elements that can cause dampness at the start of this Executive Summary, however often it is a combination of these. You therefore need to consider ways of running your business while these problems are present.



Leak staining visible in ceiling tiles



Dampness to ceiling



Salt coming through ceiling

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend that you visit adjoining properties to see how they have resolved the dampness and what sort of ceiling systems they have used.

We would also recommend extract fans are added in the windows that are humidity controlled.

ANTICIPATED COST: The humidity controlled extract fans are a few hundred pounds. Please obtain quotes for any works.

Please see the Ceilings Section of this Report.



Salt coming through ceiling



Broken extract fan

7.0) Condensation to windows

Condensation is occurring to the windows to the front and rear. To the front it is causing deterioration to the timber windows and to the rear it is causing rusting to the metal windows.

ACTION REQUIRED: General redecoration is required.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £250 to £500; quotations required.

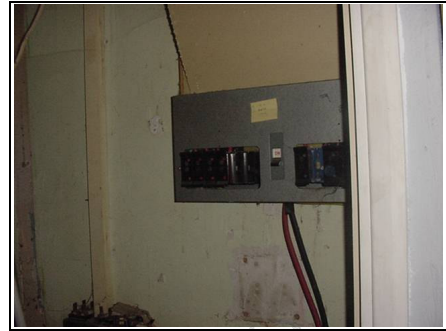


Pen indicates deterioration to timber window to front

8.0) Services

Electrics - old

The fuse board is dated and we would recommend it be replaced and the wiring is updated. We noticed surface mounted wires and Bakelite fixings, all of which have long since been superseded.



Dated fuse board

The electric test that we carried out showed there to be no earth on the system. The present owner advised that they would look at resolving the problem, however we would still have the electrical work carried out that we advise.



Earth test railing

ACTION REQUIRED: New fuseboard required. For the electrics we would recommend an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) standards test and report carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £500 to £1,000, depending upon how many additional socket points are needed, etc. Please obtain quotations.

Heating

Whilst this business will give off a certain amount of its own heat there was no heating as such to the property other than the background heaters, which the owner's silent partner who showed us round was not sure if they were working.



Background heater

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend that you install new heaters to the rear of the property to ensure there is an element of warmth in these areas.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £250 to £500; quotations required.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

9.0) Rubbish / fly tipping

As discussed, the rubbish in the garden is best being removed. As you are aware, we discussed about clearing up and that it could potentially be from the residents above or be fly tipping.



Rubbish from flats above

ACTION REQUIRED: Clear area (if you recall you took John's phone number).

ANTICIPATED COST: A few hundred pounds to keep regularly clean; quotations required.

10.0) Some areas difficult to view

Some areas were difficult to view due to the mass of stored items. For example, the outside toilet looks to have been used as a store for many years.

ACTION REQUIRED: Existing owners to clear.



Mass of stored items in outside toilet

High Priority

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

There is nothing which we feel falls within this category, providing you are happy with the characteristics of this property, i.e. the dampness and the condensation, as we have explained above.

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Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Maintenance

This type of property is relatively modern (i.e., less than one hundred years old) but nevertheless still requires ongoing maintenance and repair. A budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in a good condition. This will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration.

Services

Whilst we have carried out a visual inspection of the services within the property we also need to advise you of the following:

Lighting

Dependent upon how you utilise the building this will dictate the type of lighting you will need. If you recall, we looked in some of the nearby shops and other units and commented on their lights. You can get lights specifically for offices which do tend to give a good lighting level.

Drainage

You are likely to have shared responsibility for the drainage. Your legal adviser needs to check and confirm this.

ACTION REQUIRED - SERVICES: We would always recommend with regard to all services that you have an independent check by a specialist contractor.

Estimates of Costs

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

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

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SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

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

We would just refer to our comments with regard to the characteristics of this property. It is also likely to be due to the way the property is managed and you are likely to have a limited impact on how the residential properties above are maintained, which could impact on you and upon the shopping parade as a whole.

Things you can do with the ceiling

We discussed various ways around the problem with the ceiling.

1. We do think firstly you need to consider this as a characteristic of this type of property and there is always likely to be some problem in relation to the ceiling.
2. The majority of shops have used a suspended ceiling tile system to give a professional finish to the ceiling.
3. You could make the ceiling in to a design feature by having the extra height. However, you do need to have a system which if there are problems from dampness, leaks, etc, which there are bound to be, parts of the ceiling can be replaced without having to completely re-do all the ceilings.

We would suggest you try an area of ceiling in whatever way you propose to the rear of the property out of the way of clients as a trial area.

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 this Property Report and the Schedule of Condition and contact us on any issues that you require further clarification on.

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



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EXTERNAL

ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS

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

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

We will consider the roof in two areas: balcony flat roofs to the front and rear of the property and the asphalt flat roof to the rear of the property.

Balcony 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.

The main roofs over the shops are flat roofs and covered with asphalt. These are used in part as balconies to the front and a balcony/walkway to the rear. They look in average condition considering the roofs age type and style.

We do believe that water is getting in via the flat roof areas to the detailing that we have mentioned in the Executive Summary.



Walkway/balcony to rear of property

ACTION REQUIRED: Your solicitor should specifically write to the Landlords about these problems and ask for their comments on them and future proposals.

Rear flat roof over toilet areas

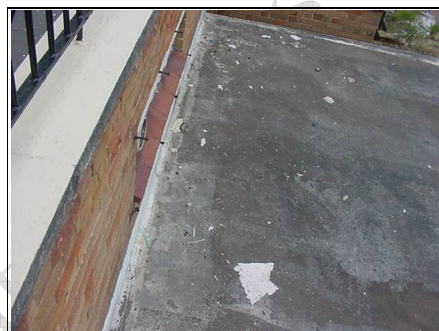
The rear flat roof over the toilet area is covered with asphalt and looks relatively flat and looks in average condition with the exception of the damage to some of the areas of flashing. We would also question the way it is detailed at the perimeter. We feel this discharges some rainwater down the face of the brickwork.



Dampness coming through the front balcony above shop



Rear flat roof over toilet area



Asphalt covered flat roof



Damaged flashing

The roofs were inspected from ground level and/or upper floor windows with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera.

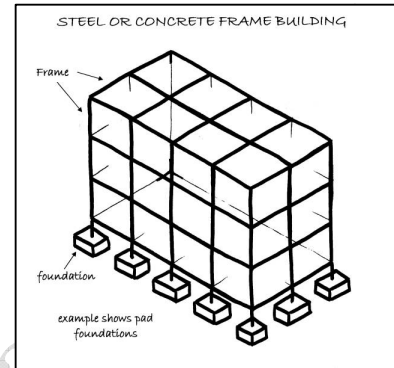
Finally, we were only able to see approximately ninety percent of the main roof from ground level via our ladder or via any other vantage point that we managed to gain. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see, however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

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

ROOF STRUCTURE

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 believe the roof structure is concrete and part of the concrete frame and part of the concrete structure.



Party Wall

Although they are called party walls you also have party floors and party ceilings, which is the case in multi-occupied properties such as this. Here is some general information on party walls.

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.

GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES

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

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

The property has plastic gutters and downpipes to the rear, where we could see them.

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



Missing gutter

Soil and Vent Pipe

The property has internal, in-cased soil and vent pipes.

Sink within staff room

Please note that there is no proper waste pipe connection to this sink you will not be able to use it.

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

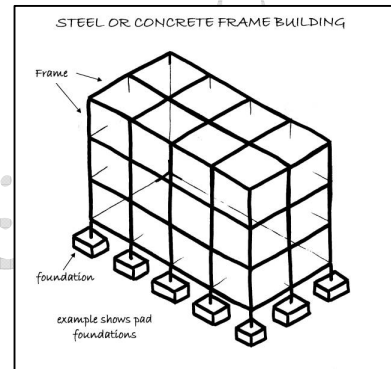
WALLS

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

The walls are finished in brickwork, we believe on an in fill structural frame.

Structural Frame

The property, we believe, has been built on a concrete structural frame, although we were not physically able to see this. We are able to see a brickwork finish which we believe in the majority of cases is non-structural, however there may be structural elements to the rear of the property.



Caveat

We would caveat this by saying that without seeing the original design drawings and understand the original design concept we cannot comment further.

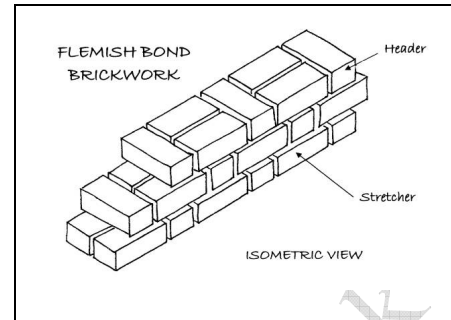
Brickwork

There is brickwork to the front and rear of the property. To the front there is a small area of Stretcher Bond brickwork, to the rear the majority looks to be a Flemish Bond brickwork, although given that this is on a structural frame it is not possible to confirm whether it is a true Flemish Bond brickwork pattern.



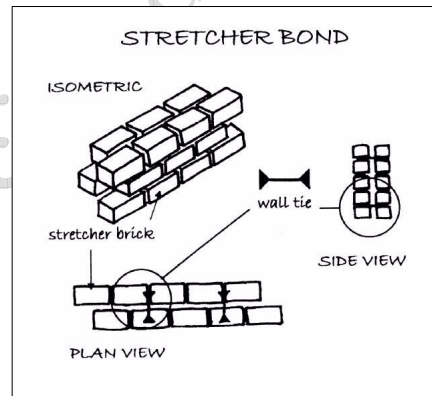
Weathering to brickwork

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



The solid external walls may be liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon their condition and their exposure to the weather. External faces should be kept in good condition.

The term "Stretcher Bond" means that from the outside of the property, you can see a row of the sides of the bricks (known as "stretchers") followed by a course above of the same stretch of bricks set off so the joint is centrally above the "stretcher". This pattern would repeat throughout.



Cavity walls were first used in Victorian times. It originates from solid walls not always being waterproof against driving rain and not providing a good degree of heat insulation. The design of cavity walls makes them relatively unstable and they depend upon the wall ties.

Walls of cavity construction should incorporate ties to hold together the inner and outer leaves of masonry. As there is no access to the cavity it has not been inspected and we cannot comment on the presence or condition of wall ties.

Ad hoc Repointing

We did note some ad hoc repointing to the base of the property, in particular some of the mortar was weathering.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ad hoc repointing.

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

Concrete Lintels

The property has concrete lintels. These may cause cold bridging.

Please see our article in the Appendices at the back of the report.

Cold Bridging Defined

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

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

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

FOUNDATIONS

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

Foundations

Given that this property is on a structural frame it is likely to have purpose designed foundations. We cannot comment on these other than to say that there are no obvious visual signs to the walls at ground floor level which show movement in the property, and we have not viewed the property as a whole.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal adviser to specifically ask the Landlords if there are any structural problems.

Clay

As with most properties in London the property stands on Clay. It is, therefore, more susceptible than most should drains leak or trees be allowed to overgrow, etc. It is not unusual to have some settlement in properties in this area.

Building Insurance Policy

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

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

We would always recommend that you remain with the existing insurance company of the property.

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

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

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

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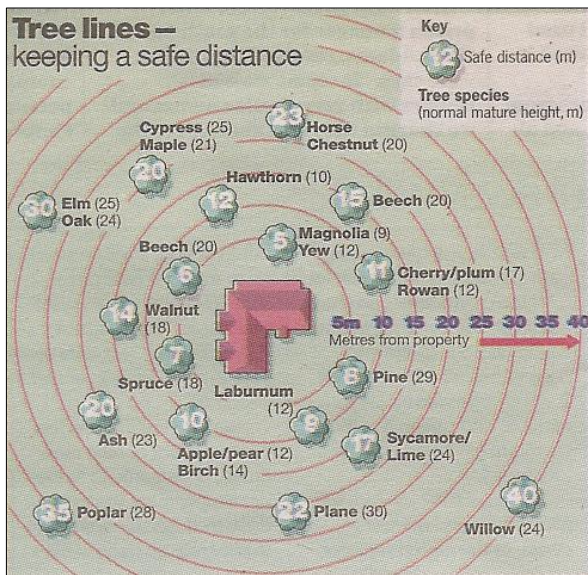
TREES

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

There are trees within what we term as influencing distance of the property, although they are relatively small.



Trees to the rear



Influencing Distance Defined

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

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

DAMP PROOF COURSE

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

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, we could not see a physical DPC, although we could see a change in the brickwork colour. The DPC in this case may be formed from an engineering brick that is resistant to dampness.



Brickwork to base of property

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

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

WINDOWS AND DOORS

This section cover windows and doors, and any detailing such as brick corbelling etc.

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.

Windows and Doors

To the front there are timber single glazed windows that are suffering from condensation and would benefit from redecoration and improved ventilation in the property.

To the rear there are metal windows, also suffering from condensation and which are rusting.

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.



Flaking paint to window cill



Rusting rear metal windows

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.

In this case the external decorations are minimal. Often they will be carried out the Landlord and re-charged to yourselves.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal adviser to check and confirm who carries out the redecoration 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.

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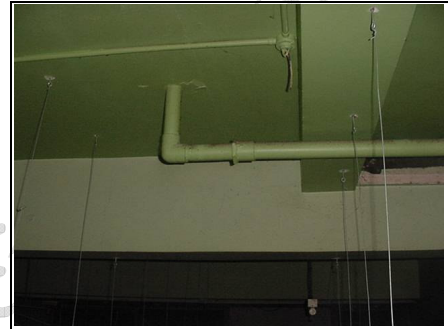
INTERNAL

CEILING, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

Ceilings

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the majority of the property has a suspended ceiling system. Behind this, and in other areas such as the toilets, we noted that there was a textured paint. Often this has been applied directly we believe to the concrete structure.



Painted ceiling

We noticed a mixture of conditions and some areas have clearly been affected by damp.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive summary. You will have to consider this as a characteristic of this property.



Damp ceiling

Internal Walls and Partitions

Solid. We assume, given the age of construction, that they are brickwork or blockwork.

Perimeter Walls

Finished in textured paint; we believe applied to brickwork or blockwork.

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

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

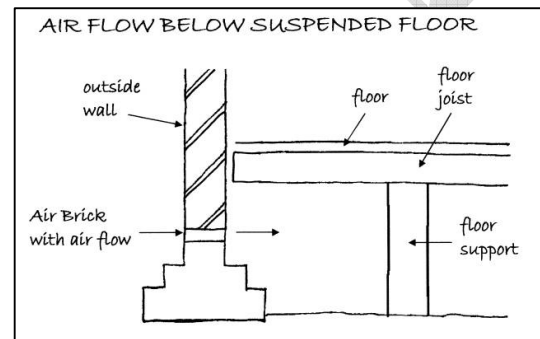
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FLOORS

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

Ground Floor

The floors felt solid underfoot so we have assumed they are formed in concrete, however, we have not opened up the floors or lifted the floor coverings.



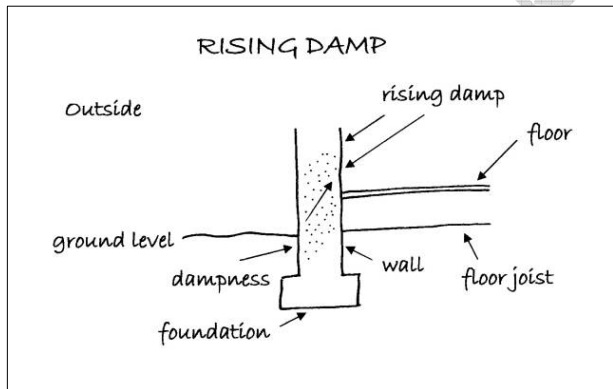
Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with floor coverings. The comments we have made are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction. We would emphasise that we have not opened up the floors in any way or lifted any floorboards.

DAMPNESS

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

Rising Damp

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



A visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls and some internal walls.

In this particular case we have found some areas of rising damp.

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

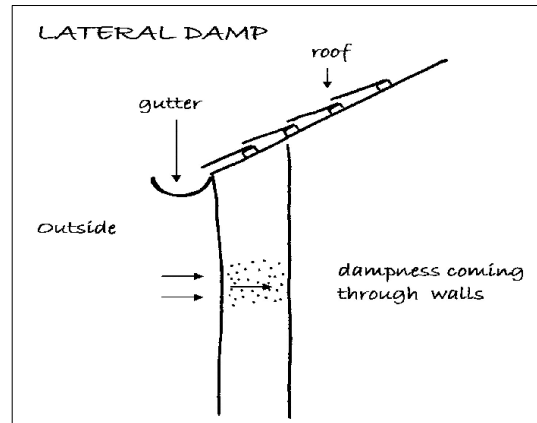


Testing for rising damp

Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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

We used a damp meter on the external walls. We did find minor areas of lateral dampness.



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

Condensation

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

We would refer you to our comments in the Executive Summary.

Finally, effective testing was prevented in areas concealed by heavy furniture, fixtures such as kitchen fittings with backboards, wall tiles and wall panelling. We have not carried out tests to BRE Digest 245, but only carried out a visual inspection.

TIMBER DEFECTS

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

Dry Rot

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

In this type of property construction which has a minimal timber content it is very unlikely that you will have dry rot. During the course of our visual inspection we did not see any dry rot.

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.*

We believe you have some minor wet rot to the timber windows.

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.

In this type of property you are very unlikely to have woodworm. In the small amount of timber that we could see, the windows etc, we did not note any woodworm.

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.

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OTHER MATTERS

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 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.

Electrics

The electrics are likely to require complete renewal however we would recommend in the first instance an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test carried out by an NICEIC approved electrician or equivalent.

Heating

The property has a background electric heating system. The tenant advised that he thought these were the only electric heaters working. He also commented that it was fairly warm in the property anyhow so it did not need anything further.

Lighting

You need to make the appropriate alterations to the lighting for both the ambience and working conditions.

Most Leases Require

Most leases require test certificates on all services. This is a requirement on taking on the lease and at the end of the lease. As such, we believe you should obtain this from the present tenant.

ACTION REQUIRED: All required from present tenant.

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.

ACTION REQUIRED: You should have a suitable Fire Safety Notice from the outgoing tenant/landlord.

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 case we could see that there is a toilet for the less able/disabled on the ground floor and we assume that there are associated areas that are thought through but this does need to be checked.

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

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. This was commonly used post war until it was banned only in the last ten or so years, although it is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time.

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: An Asbestos Register should be provided by the outgoing tenant/landlord.

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 asbestos surveyors.

Drains

We have not carried out a drainage test. The only way to be certain of their condition is to have a closed circuit TV camera report is carried out.

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POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

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

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

However, with regard to Envirosearch or similar general reports please see our article link on the www.1stAssociated.co.uk Home Page.

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

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

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

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

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

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APPENDICES

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LIMITATIONS

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 an mild autumn day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

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

NOT LOCAL

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

INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited due to not having the benefit of opening up the structure or meeting anyone who knew the structure as a whole.

BUILDING INSURANCE

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

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

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

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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

Condensation and Cold Bridging

What is Cold Bridging?

What is cold bridging and does it always cause condensation?

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



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

You often see condensation in properties, for example on a mirror in a bathroom when you have had a shower or a bath. Cold bridging is far worse than condensation as it is caused by an element in the structure which you can do very little to change without great expense.

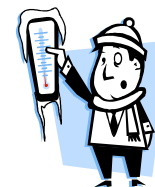
Typically this will be a lintel. Problems can occur with concrete lintels that were commonly used in the 1970's, and also in more modern, better insulated properties, cold bridging has been known to occur on metal lintels. The problem is what to do about it.



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



A close up view of the concrete lintel



When is Cold Bridging Most Likely?

In our experience cold bridging is most likely on properties built in the 1930's to 1980's, most commonly in the 1970's. This is the era when we were just starting to think about insulation and we added insulation into our structures for example with cavity wall insulation or double glazed windows. This meant they were warmer which in effect has meant the significance of a lintel over a door or window being colder and allowing the transfer of coldness becomes much more important. This results in condensation that we commonly see above windows in this age and era of property.



Typical 1970's house

So what can you do about Cold Bridging?



Typical 1970's houses

The difficulty is resolving cold bridging. Normally where condensation is involved if you get the balance of warm and coolness of the air, the air ventilation and movement you can reduce considerably the chances of condensation. Airing the room which seems to have gone out of fashion where you literally open the windows in the morning to air the room is a big step forward.



Where do we most commonly see cold bridging?



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

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

Expert witness cases

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

Is Cold Bridging a design problem?

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



1960's concrete frame



Concrete lintel visible externally
but they are not always visible



Dampness and condensation around
the concrete window lintel

Do lifestyle issues cause condensation?

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

