

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

Beckenham
BR3



FOR

Mrs S

Prepared by:

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Marketing by:

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0800 298 5424

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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REPORT FORMAT

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

GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

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

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



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

ORIENTATION

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

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is an end terrace property within a cul de sac of similar style properties in a residential area. There are gardens to the front and rear of the property. There is a garage in an adjacent block of garages (corner garage). There is a right of way to the rear of the property.

There was no owner present at the time of our inspection so we cannot confirm if there is any allocated parking; your legal advisor to check and confirm.

We believe the property was built in the 1970's. If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

1965	Winston Churchill died at the age of 90
1966	England beat Germany to win the 1966 World Cup at Wembley
1969	Man lands on the Moon
1971	Decimalisation
Early 1970s	British Property Boom
1973	Britain enters the European Economic Community
1975	Microsoft founded
1976	The first commercial Concorde flight took off
1978	First test tube baby born
1979-1991	The Thatcher Years

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EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Rear view



Street view



Front garden



Rear garden

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ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

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

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Entrance hallway
- 2) Cloakroom
- 3) Through lounge right
- 4) Kitchen rear
- 5) Study/Music room front left
- 6) Dining room rear left

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Master bedroom
- 2) Bedroom front left
- 3) Bedroom rear right
- 4) Bathroom rear left

Outside Areas

The property has gardens to the front and rear and a garage in an adjacent block of garages (corner garage). Typically you would have a shared responsibility and liability for this type of arrangement of garages.

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

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INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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

Ground Floor



Lounge front



Lounge rear



Kitchen



Dining room



Study/music room left



Hallway



Cloakroom

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First Floor



Master bedroom



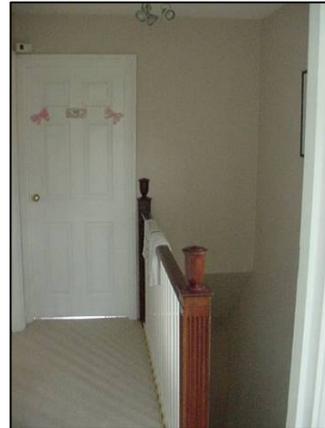
Bedroom front left



Bedroom rear right



Bathroom rear left



Landing

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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Chimneys:	Brick chimney
Main Roof:	Shallow pitched, clad with concrete
Main Roof Structure:	Pre-fabricated roof
Flat roofs:	Asphalt
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Internal
Walls:	Stretcher Bond Brickwork (assumed)
Fascias and Soffits:	Plastic with vents
Windows and Doors:	Plastic double glazed windows

Internal

Ceilings:	Plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Mixture of solid and studwork (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Suspended floor , construction not confirmed
First Floor:	Joist and floorboards with joist hangers (assumed)

Services

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (all assumed). The boiler is a Prime boiler located in the rear left hand dining room. The electrics are located under the stairs and are early 1970's.

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

Finally, your Legal Advisor needs to check and confirm the above and advise us of anything they require further clarification on before legal commitment to purchase the property.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Summaries are not ideal as they try to précis often quite complex subjects into a few paragraphs. This is particularly so in a summary about someone's future home when we are trying to second-guess what their priorities are, so it is important the Report is read in full.

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 300 photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if an issue has not been discussed that you are interested in or concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it; if we have not we will happily go back.

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

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

The Good

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

- 1.0) The property benefits from being relatively spacious given the era it was built in.
- 2.0) The property has a garage, which looks to be slightly on the small side.

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

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The Bad

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

1.0) **Flat roof**

The flat roof is asphalt covered which has been patch repaired and is in need of a proper asphalt repair and a check to the flashings and parapet walls.



General view of flat roof



Ponding to flat roof



Deterioration to asphalt

ACTION REQUIRED: Have a roofer for one to three days carry out proper asphalt repairs on the felt roof.

ANTICIPATED COST: Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section of this report.

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2.0) Textured paint – possible asbestos to rear left room

The ceiling looks to be painted in the older style textured paint often known as artex which can have an asbestos content. It is impossible to be 100% certain from a visual check, in fact we have heard it said by asbestos contractors that you have to test for asbestos.



Possible asbestos

Given the age of the building there may be some other areas of asbestos.

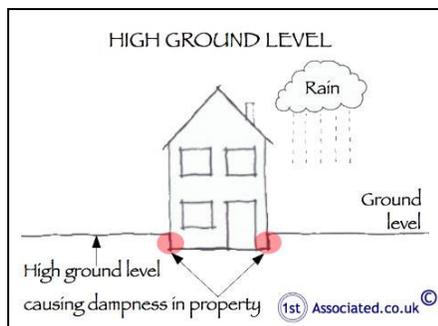
ACTION REQUIRED: The ceiling needs to be kept in good order and certainly not rubbed down. Please see our attached article on asbestos and also check with your legal advisor.

Our insurance company requires us to advise we are not asbestos surveyors.

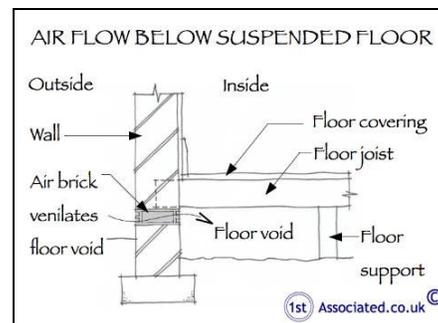
Please see the Ceilings and Walls Section of this Report.

3.0) Suspended floor, what is happening?

We can see that this property has a suspended floor by the air bricks to the front and rear. We can also see that earth has built up to the front and to the rear over the years and has partially blocked the airflow under the building.



High ground level



Airflow below suspended floor

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Airbrick to front nearly covered by earth



Another with soil partially covering it



Air brick to rear blocked

ACTION REQUIRED: Reduce the ground level around the property. Ideally an area of the flooring should be opened up to check the condition of the floors beneath.

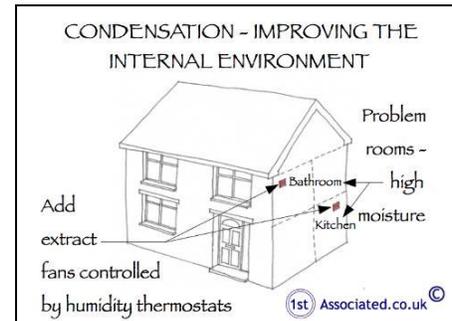
Please see the Airbricks and Floors Section of this Report.

4.0) Humid during inspection

During the course of the survey the property was relatively humid. This may just be due to the size of the family but we did not meet anyone because the property was empty. We did however note that there were no extract fans within the kitchen and the bathroom.



Drying of clothes on radiators causing humidity



Condensation

We also noted that the windows do not have any visible trickle vents. These help air circulation within a property.

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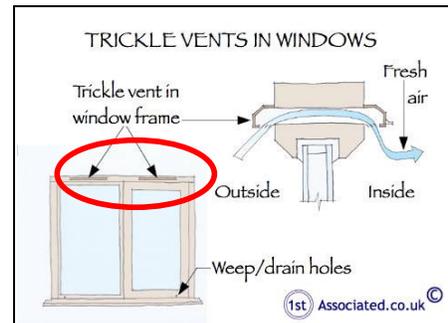
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Trickle Vents Defined

Small vents to the windows to allow air movement inside the property to stop a build up of fumes or humidity.



No trickle vents in windows



Trickle vents

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend large humidity controlled extracts fans are added to the kitchen and bathroom (by large we mean at least 150mm/6” extract fan).

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

5.0) No safety glass to glazed door

We do not believe that the glazed doors have safety glass as we did not note the British Standards safety kite mark.

ACTION REQUIRED: Unless the owners can produce evidence to show that safety glass has been used we would recommend replacing the doors if you have young children, informed or elderly, less able people, etc.



Glazed door has no kite mark

Please see the Internal Joinery Section of this Report.

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SERVICES

6.0) Electrics

There is an old electric fuseboard which we recommend is replaced.

ACTION REQUIRED: Replace fuseboard. We recommend an IEE (Institute of Electrical Engineers) test and report by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.



Old electric fuseboard

Another reason why we are recommending this is that we noted extension cables and overloaded socket points which normally indicate more electric points are required, as things can possibly start to become unsafe with overloaded points.



Need more electric points



More sockets needed

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £2,500 to £4,000 as we feel a complete re-wire will be necessary as we are uncertain how the building has been extended and altered over the years.

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7.0) Older style boiler

There is an older style boiler that is coming to the end of its life..

ACTION REQUIRED: We would budget for a new boiler. We consider that you are running on borrowed time with this boiler.



Prima boiler

8.0) Older style ceiling lights

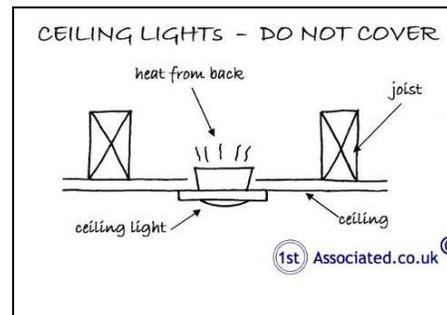
The property has old electric lights to the ceiling. In some instances these can cause problems as the heat given off has in some cases lead to outbreaks of fire; these tend to be in the older type of ceiling lights.



Older style ceiling light

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend replacing this with a low energy bulb.

Please see the Services Section of this Report



Ceiling lights

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9.0) Garages

There are areas of work around the garage block and often you have shared costs with regard to these. For example, regarding the crack in the wall adjacent to the garage block you would have a shared cost and shared liability should there be a problem.



Crack to wall

ACTION REQUIRED: Your solicitor to check and confirm your liability.

10.0) Garage roof

The garage roof is in poor condition and will need renewing within the next few years.



Garage roof in poor condition

ACTION REQUIRED: Clear roof and check condition. Most people patch repair garage roofs unless they have a very expensive car or something perishable they wish to keep in the garage, which obviously is not ideal as the garage is away from the house.

ANTICIPATED COST: Please obtain quotations for any works.

Please see the Outside Areas Section of this Report.

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The Ugly

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

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

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

Heating

We would recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

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Drainage

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

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

DIY/Handyman Type Work

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

Purchase Price

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

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

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Estimates of Building Costs

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

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

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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 feel the main areas of concern are the flat roof and the electrics, however we would also add that you should check to ensure that Local Authority Approval has been obtained for the alterations that have been carried out to the left side of the property where the study/music room is and the dining room as this looks to be a conversion.

With regard to asbestos, this was a material that was used in this era of property and there may be other areas where it has been used. Please see the article in the Appendices. If you want to be 100% certain and safe from asbestos you do need to have an asbestos report carried out by an asbestos specialist. Please note we are not asbestos surveyors.

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

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

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MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT

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

TENURE – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)

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

ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

It is important to remember that the estate agents are acting for the seller (usually known as the vendor) and not the purchaser and are therefore eager to sell the property (no sale – no fee!). We are employed as Independent Chartered Surveyors and offer an independent point of view.

SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR

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

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS

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

OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION

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

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



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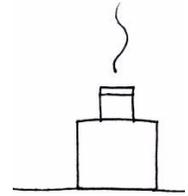
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EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS



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

There is one chimney to this property located to the front right hand side which sits on the party wall, which we had a limited view of (all directions given as you face the property).

Chimney One – located to the front right hand side

This chimney is brick finished with a lead flashing and one chimney pot. From what we could see from ground level it looked in average condition, but slightly weathered considering its age, type and style.



Chimney



Close up of chimney

Unfortunately we were unable to see the flaunching, we therefore cannot comment upon them.

ACTION REQUIRED: Periodically inspect the chimney.



Flaunchings

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Flashings Defined

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

Flaunchings Defined

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

Party Walls

The party wall relates to shared items, such as the chimney and firewall. If you do any work on these you will need to deal with the Party Wall Act. Here is a brief explanation of it.

Party Structures Defined – Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

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

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

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

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

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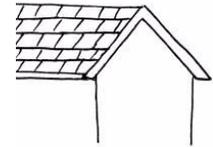
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ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

We will consider the roofs in four areas, the main roof and flat roofs to the left hand side, the front and the garage.

Main Roof

The main roof is shallow pitched and clad with interlocking concrete tiles, and, from ground level, this looks in average condition considering the roofs age type and style.

Where there is cement mortar to the end of the tiles we can sometimes see adverse effects and cracking, however again this is in average condition, particularly considering it looks to have been covered with ivy in the not too distant past.

ACTION REQUIRED: Carry out periodic inspections and maintenance of the roof, as required.



Roof tiles



End of roof tiles

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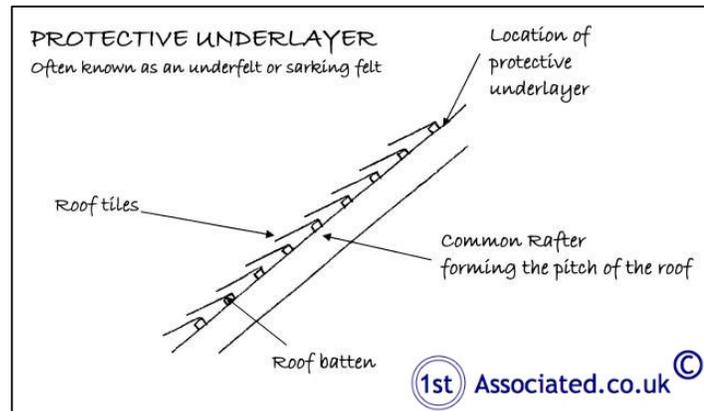
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Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)

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



Protective Underlayer

When we inspected the loft space we found a Hessian base Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s/1970s. We generally found it to be in average condition, with damage in some areas which is what we typically find.



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

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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.

Parapet Walls to Flat Roof

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

The property has flat roofs to the side. These are parapet walls build from brick with a coping stone of concrete which look in average condition with the exception of where the ivy has taken over in years gone by.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend the ivy is cut back further. We were pleased to see that there was an asphalt flashing on the parapet wall.



Parapet wall

Flat roof to left hand side

There is a semi-hidden flat roof to the left hand side of the property. We were pleased to see that it had an asphalt roof, which are generally considered to be the Rolls Royce of roofs. However this one is in a below average condition with ponding and has been patch repaired and is in need of a proper asphalt repair and a check to the flashings and parapet walls.



Left hand flat roof

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Ponding to flat roof



Ivy has damaged flat roof



Asphalt breaking up

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

Front flat roof

This is a small front roof without a gutter and looks in average condition for its age, type and style.



Flat roof to front

Further information on flat roofs

Ventilation

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.

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Insulation

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.

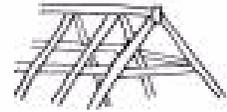
The insulation is particularly important if you are going to be using this area a lot.

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 ground floor level and/or upper floor windows.

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

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

ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

Main Roof

Roof Access

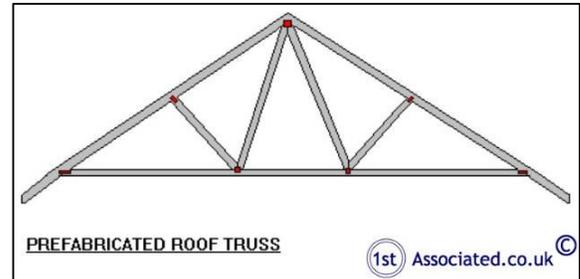
The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located landing. It has a loft ladder, electric light and is boarded.



Floorboards within roof space

Roof Structure

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



Pre-fabricated roof truss

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Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

1. Serious active woodworm
1. Structurally significant defects to the timbers
2. Structurally significant dry rot
3. Structurally significant wet rot

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



General view of inside of roof



Mass of stored items in roof

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

Fire Walls

The property has one blockwork firewall which is located to the right hand side (all directions given as you face the property). The firewalls are also party walls.

Fire Walls Defined

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



Blockwork firewall and plastic water tank

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Water Tanks

There is a plastic water tank. We would always recommend that water tanks be drained down and cleared of any debris etc. (we have seen dead birds and other unmentionable things in these tanks). As you are often cleaning your teeth with this water it is best that it is as clean as possible! The original idea behind water tanks was to give an emergency supply of water.

Ventilation

The roof is vented via the fascias and soffits.

Fascias and Soffits Defined

These finish off the edge of the roof and are usually in timber or plastic.



Fascia board

Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

Electrical Cables

We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of wiring found in the roof. In this case they were all hidden by the floorboards, however we have seen enough with regards to the fuseboard elsewhere to recommend an update on the wiring.

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

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

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GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

Gutters and Downpipes

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



There may be some minor leaks but most people would be happy to live with these providing repairs are carried out within the next six to twelve months.

Downpipe discharging directly into the ground

ACTION REQUIRED: We would always recommend you stand outside the property next time it rains heavily and see how well the drains cope with the rainwater particularly looking at the guttering and the joints.?

We also recommend that the gutters and downpipes are cleaned out, the joints are checked and the alignment checked to ensure that the gutters fall towards the downpipes.

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Soil and Vent Pipe

The soil and vent pipe is internal and plastic, where we could see it at roof height.



Soil and vent pipe

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.

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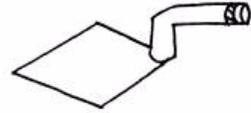
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WALLS



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

The walls are constructed of brickwork.

Brickwork

The property is built in a Stretcher Bond brickwork with a cement mortar. The property has a lot of ivy on it which does hide area.

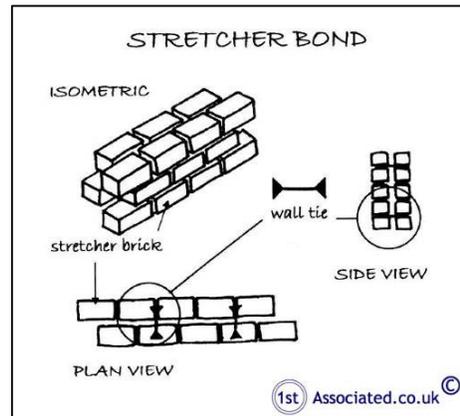
The term "Stretcher Bond" means that from the outside of the property, you can see a row of the sides of the bricks (known as "stretchers") followed by a course above of the same stretch of bricks set off so the joint is centrally above the "stretcher". This pattern would repeat throughout.

Cavity Walls

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



Pointing deteriorating



Stretcher bond brickwork

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Wall Ties

Walls of cavity construction should incorporate ties to hold together the inner and outer leaves of masonry. We would typically see horizontal cracking where there are problems. In this case we have not noted any cracking however wall tie failure is a progressive problem. We would add as there is no access to the cavity it has not been inspected and we cannot comment on the presence or condition of wall ties. As such we cannot be hundred per cent certain with regard to this problem unless we open up the structure.

From what we can see externally there does not appear to be any horizontal cracking, although of course it is hidden by the ivy to some extent.

Ivy

Please note our comments with regard to ideally putting a trellis work between the walls and the ivy to stop damage.

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



Ivy

Efflorescence

This we believe relates to the ivy holding water against the property when it rains as it does not allow it to dry, which over time causes the efflorescence salts.

Efflorescence Defined

This is where salts appear on the surface of the brickwork in a white dust or crystal formation



Efflorescence

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Finally, the external walls have been inspected visually from ground level and/or randomly via a ladder. Where the window and door lintels are concealed by brickwork / plasterwork 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 / plasterwork has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork / plasterwork would be if it were opened up for this age, style and type of construction. We are however aware that all is not always as it seems in the building industry and often short cuts are taken. Without opening up the structure we have no way of establishing this.

FOUNDATIONS



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

Foundations

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

Building Insurance Policy

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

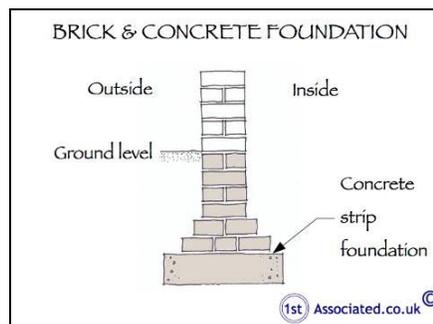
It is your responsibility to check out prior to commitment to purchase that insurance is available on the property on the basis of the things we have reported in the survey. Much as we would like to we are unable to keep up with the changing insurance market and give you advice with regard to this.

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

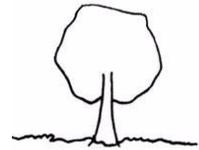
Finally, we have not excavated the foundations but we have drawn conclusions from our inspection and our general knowledge of this type, age and style of property.

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

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



TREES

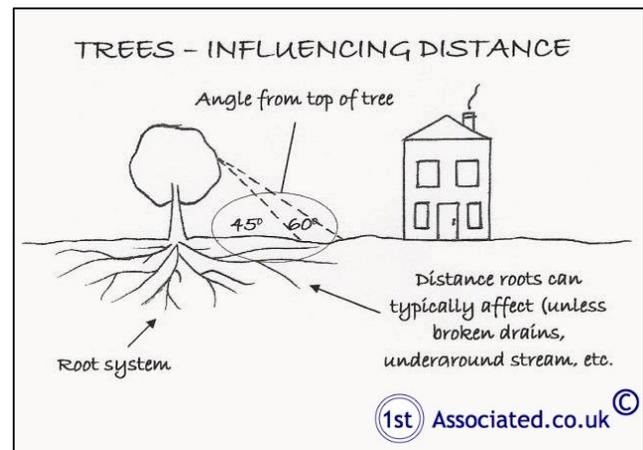
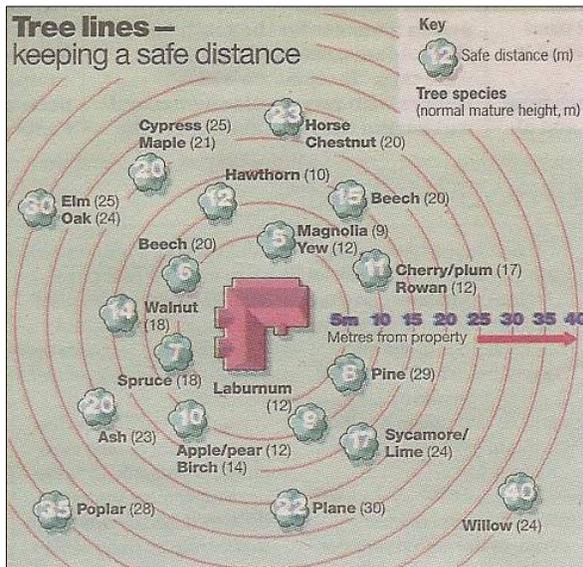


Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.

There are no trees within what insurance companies would term as influencing distance of the property. The garden did feel nice and secluded with the bushes and trees surrounding it.



Secluded rear garden



Influencing distance of trees to a 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.

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Ivy

The property is covered in ivy, for some this is a selling feature, for others it is not. From a surveying point of view it can cause damage, particularly to softer bricks.

We can see that the ivy looks has been cut back fairly drastically and you can still see where it has caused marks to the brickwork and the flat roof and also the plastic fascias and soffits.



Ivy



Ivy marks to flat roof



Markings to fascias and soffits

From a strict surveying point of view you should have a trellis between the ivy and the wall and any other building materials.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend the ivy is regularly maintained, as if left it can cause dampness within a property, so ideally place a trellis between the ivy and the building, but this is easily said than done.

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.

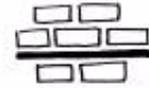
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DAMP PROOF COURSE



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

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this era of property it is likely that a DPC will have been built in as work proceeded but there was no obvious sign of one. Again the building up of the ground level outside could be bridging the DPC if not reduced; please see our comments on the air bricks.

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

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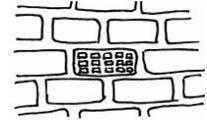
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AIRBRICKS

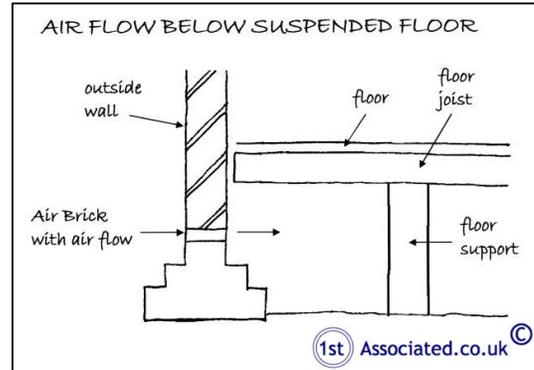


In properties with suspended floors you need to have an airflow beneath to stop deterioration. The air is allowed to pass under the property by the use of airbricks. Generally the rule of thumb is that airbricks are spaced every metre and a half approximately, but this depends upon the specific circumstances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

Low Level Air Bricks

The ground floor of the property is a suspended floor however we could not confirm the construction.

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



Suspended floor



Air brick to front covered by earth



Air brick to rear blocked

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

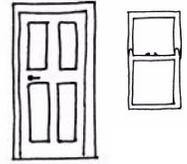
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FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS

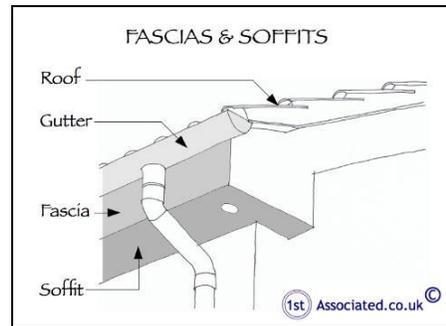


This section covers fascias, soffits and bargeboards and windows and doors, and any detailing such as brick corbelling etc.

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

Fascias and Soffits

The fascias and soffits are plastic with vents. We would comment they are in average condition for their age, type and style and have suffered damage from the ivy (please see our comments about ivy elsewhere within this report).



Fascias and soffits



Rafter feet; a feature on the soffit boards



Ivy damage to fascias and soffits

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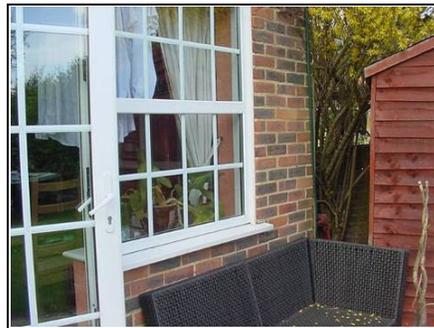
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Windows and Doors

The property has plastic double glazed windows without trickle vents, which generally look to be of an average quality. We would draw your attention to the fact that sealed double glazed units can fail, particularly as a result of poor workmanship during installation. Failure of the seal leads to condensation between the two panes of glass and simply replacing the affected units may not provide a satisfactory long-term solution.



Windows without trickle vents



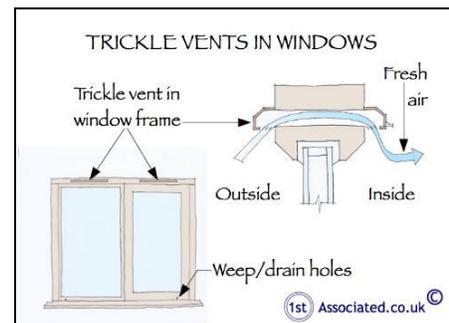
Double glazed windows and doors



Broken catch to front bay window

Trickle Vents Defined

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



Trickle vents

Transferable Guarantees

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

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Shutters

The property has timber shutters and are part of the original style of the property, which would benefit from redecoration.



Timber shutters



Rot to shutters

ACTION REQUIRED: Redecorate.

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.

As mentioned, the areas that need redecoration are the external shutters.

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.

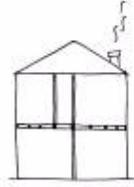
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INTERNAL



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 ceilings are likely to be plasterboard or there may be some proprietary material as this was fairly common in this era of property. We physically could not see the ceilings due to the boarding that was in the roof and of course the floor at first floor level.



Possible asbestos

As mentioned, the property has some older style textured paint, known as artex, which may contain asbestos.

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

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.

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Internal Walls and Partitions

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



Feature archway to dining room

Perimeter Walls

These appear to be plasterboard with a skim coat. Again we cannot be 100% certain of the wall construction without opening them up which goes beyond the scope of this report.

This comment has been based on the visual look of the wall which is relatively “smooth” and normally means a modern finish.

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

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

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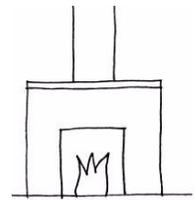
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CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

The chimney breasts are located to the right hand side (all directions given as you face the front of the property).

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.



Fireplace within lounge

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

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

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

Please also see the Chimney Stacks, Flues Section of this report.

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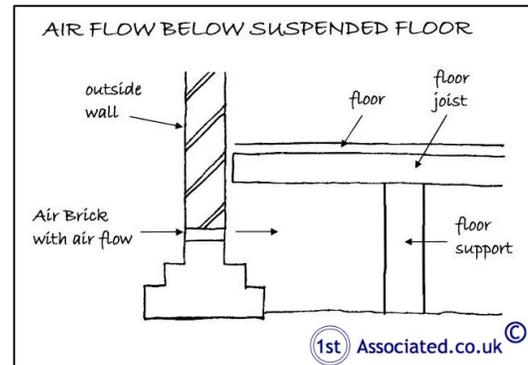
FLOORS



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

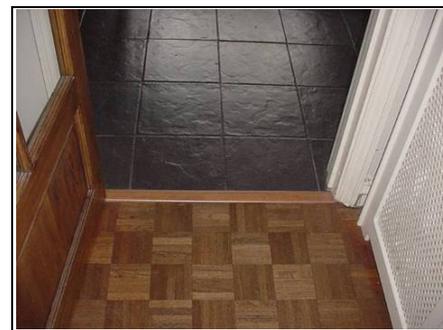
Ground Floor

The floors of the property are suspended floors although we cannot confirm their construction, however it does require air movement whether it is concrete or timber. Traditionally they were timber and on more modern properties such as they tend to be concrete.

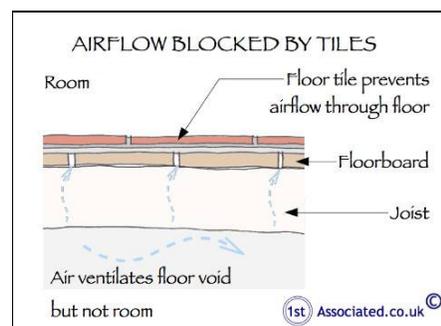


Suspended floor

There are a variety of floor finishes, from the older style parquet flooring to more modern tiling. Our concern is if the suspended floor is timber then tiles such as this need some movement otherwise you get cracking to the tiles and the joints.



Tiles to kitchen and parquet flooring to hall

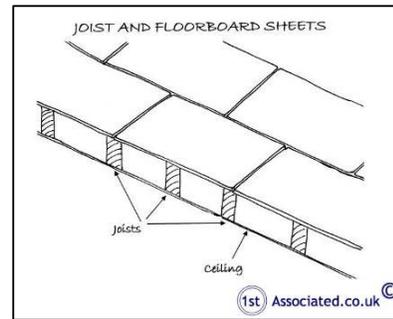


First Floor

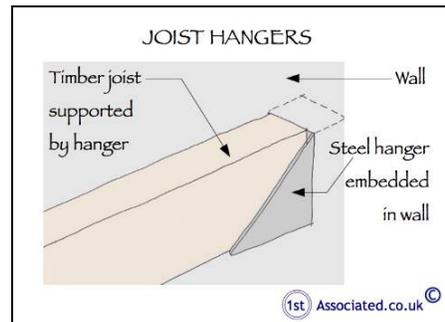
We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboard sheets with joist hangers, as this is typical in this age of property.

Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



Joist and floorboard sheets



Joist hangers

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

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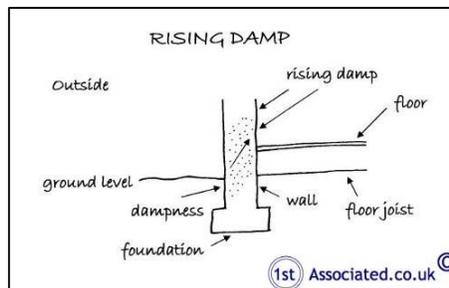
DAMPNESS

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

Rising Damp

Rising damp depends upon various components including the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation of the material, amongst other things. Rising damp can come from the ground, drawn by capillary action, to varying degrees of intensity and height into the materials above. Much evidence points towards there being true rising damp in only very rare cases.

A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we have found no rising damp.

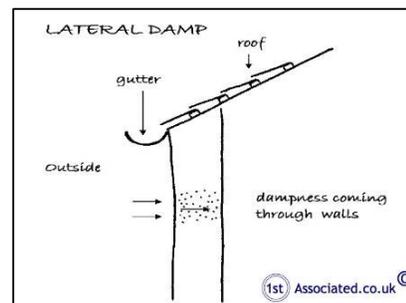


Testing for rising damp

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 have not found dampness.



Testing for lateral dampness

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Warning about dampness and ivy

We have mentioned this already but we just feel it is worth reiterating. If the ivy is allowed to overgrow the property then the bricks will not work in their usual manner and dampness may sit against the wall, which can in turn cause damage and deterioration, although it is unlikely on a cavity wall construction such as this but we cannot imagine it will do the surface of the brickwork any good.

Condensation

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

At the time of the inspection the property was very humid.

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

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

Extract fans in kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas

A way of helping to reduce condensation is to have good large extract fans with humidity controlled thermostats within the kitchens and bathrooms and also in any areas where you intend to dry clothes which are moisture generating areas.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend humidity controlled extract fans be added to kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas.

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

INTERNAL JOINERY



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

Doors

The property has a mixture of doors, from glazed doors to hollow core modern doors.

We noted that the glazed doors do not have the British Standards safety kite mark.



Glazed door has no kite mark

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

Staircase

We were unable to examine the underside of the stair timbers due to it being lined, which precluded our inspection, so we cannot comment further upon the stair structure. We can, however, say that the lining gives a resistance to the spread of fire if such circumstances were to occur.



Staircase

Kitchen

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

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

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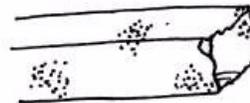
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TIMBER DEFECTS



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

Dry Rot

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

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

Wet Rot

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

We noted some minor wet rot to the shutters, although these of course are not structural. Our greater concern is the suspended floor. If this is timber then it may well have suffered.

ACTION REQUIRED: Open up the floor to check its condition and construction.



Rot to shutters

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Woodworm



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

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the roof we found no obvious visual signs of woodworm activity or indeed signs of past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage. In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active. However, our inspection was restricted by the mass of and general stored items in the roof, as was restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings.

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

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

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

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INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

Internal decorations are in average condition and was a family home. You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste. It is very difficult to advise on how frequently redecoration should take place. This very much depends upon the use and abuse the decoration gets, for example, within hallways this tends to be greater than for example within a spare bedroom.

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

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THERMAL EFFICIENCY



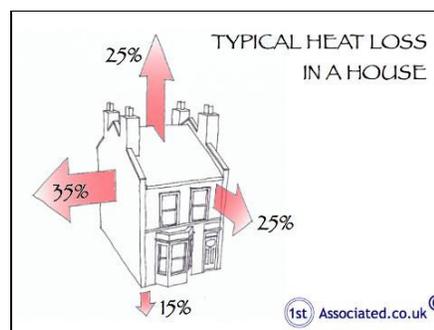
Up until the mid 1940s we did not really consider insulation in properties, for example it was only in the 1960s that we started putting insulation in the roof and then it was about 50mm, in the 1970s this was upgraded to 100mm. Then we started to think about double glazing and cavity wall insulation.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

HIPs

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

Roofs

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 300mm. In this instance there was about 200mm to 300mm; it was compressed by the boarding so we cannot be 100% certain.



Typical heat loss

Walls

The property has a stretcher bond construction. In this age of property there is usually insulation.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Adviser to check and confirm if there is insulation within the walls and whether it was installed originally or not.

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Windows

The windows are double glazed and therefore will have reasonable thermal properties. Unfortunately the windows did not have any trickle vents to aid air circulation.

Services

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

Summary

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

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

HTTP//www.est.org.uk, which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.

or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

*or Sustainable Energy Without the Hot Air by David J C MacKay
HTTP//www.withouthotair.com/Videos.html to download for free or buy a paper copy as we did.*

*It is worth watching the video How Many Light Bulbs? by David J C MacKay
HTTP//www.youtube.com/watch?v=UR8wRSp21Xs*

Finally, we would comment that energy we feel will become a major consideration in years to come, particularly with the greater focus in modern buildings on energy efficiency.

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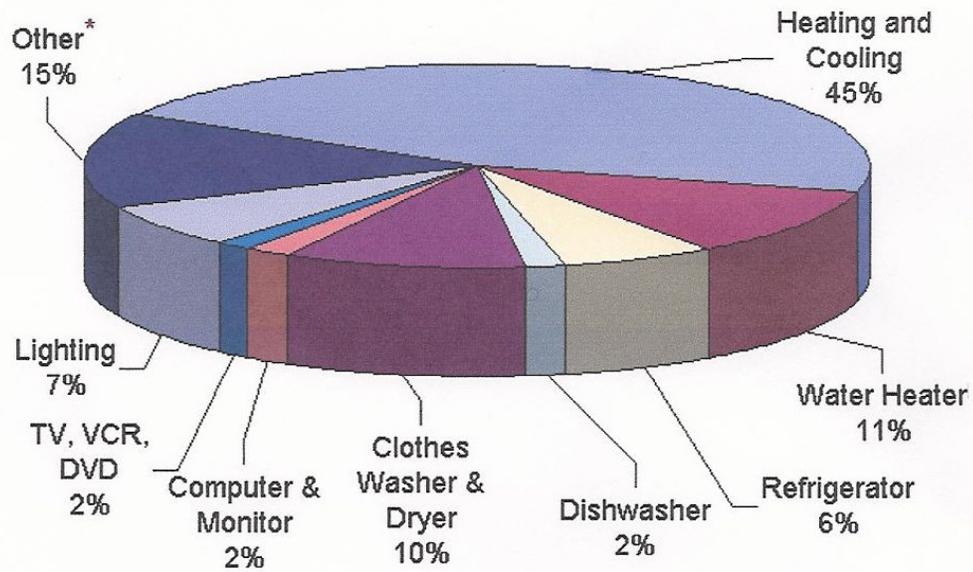
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What does my energy bill pay for?



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

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OTHER MATTERS



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

Security

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

ACTION REQUIRED: Further information should be obtained from the vendor and the installer.



Security alarm under stairs

Fire / Smoke Alarms

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

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

Insurance

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

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

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Asbestos

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. In this case we have noted asbestos.

Asbestos was commonly used post war until it was banned only in the UK in the last ten years or so. It is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time where products were imported from countries where it is not banned.

Our insurance company requires us to advise that we are not asbestos surveyors.

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

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SERVICES

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

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

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ELECTRICITY



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

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

Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located under the stairs. The fuse board looked dated and there are far better now available.

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Earth Test

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



Fuse Board



Earth Test

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ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary. Replace fuseboard. As the property is changing occupancy an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test and report should be carried out by a NICEIC registered, or equivalent, approved electrical contractor or similarly approved.

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

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

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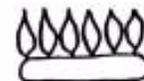
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GAS



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 Gas Safe registered plumber.

We are advised that the property has mains gas. The consumer unit is located under the stairs

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



Gas under stairs

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

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PLUMBING AND HEATING



In this section we do our best from a visual inspection to look at how the water is supplied to the property, how the supply is distributed around the property, how it is used to heat the property and how it is discharged from the property.

Water Supply

The controlling stopcock was not located. It is usually found under the sink.

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

ACTION REQUIRED: Ask the owners or Estate Agent to show you where it is, although we would not expect most Estate Agents to know where it is.

Water Pressure

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

Cold Water Cistern

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

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Hot Water Cylinder

There is a factory insulated hot water cylinder located within the airing cupboard on the first floor. This cylinder will therefore have a good thermal efficiency, although not as good as the more modern hot water cylinders.



Factory insulated cylinder

Plumbing

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

Heating

The boiler was located in the dining room, it is manufactured by Prima which is not very common and we consider it is getting towards the end of its working life.



Prima boiler



Boiler located within cupboard
in dining room

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

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

Ten Minute Heating Test

The heating was on during the course of the survey and it was pleasantly warm.



Radiators are boxed in which does limit the amount of heating coming out

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

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

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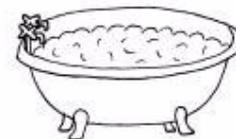
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BATHROOM



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

Bathroom

The property has a three piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin and WC, which looks in average condition.

We found it to be particularly humid in the bathroom.



Bathroom

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend a large humidity controlled extract fan is added.

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

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MAIN DRAINS



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

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

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

Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We have identified two inspection chambers / manholes.

Manholes Defined

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

Inspection Chamber / Manhole One located to the front garden

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

From what we could see it is concrete built.



Manhole one to front garden

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Inspection Chamber / Manhole Two, located on the road area towards the garages

We were unable to open this manhole. You may have a shared responsibility with this manhole due its location being towards the garage block.

ACTION REQUIRED: Check whether this manhole has shared responsibility.



Manhole cover not lifted

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

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

Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

Whilst very innocent looking rainwater downpipes can cause lots of problems. If they discharge directly onto the ground they can affect the foundations and even if they are taken away to soak-aways they can attract nearby tree roots or again affect foundations. Some rainwater drains are taken into the main drainage system, which is now illegal (as we simply do not have the capacity to cope with it), and can cause blockages to the main drains! Here we have done our best from a visual inspection to advise of any particular problems.

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal. Normally in a property of this age the rainwater drains discharge into a soak away.

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

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

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OUTSIDE AREAS

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

GARAGES/PARKING



Garage

The property has a garage in an adjacent block of garages (corner garage). The flat roof is not in the best of conditions and will need replacing over the next few years. The garage looks quite small and you need to check you can get your car inside it.



Garage



Inside garage – is there room for a car?



Garage roof in poor condition



Underside of roof

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

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Parking

There was no owner present at the time of our inspection so we cannot confirm if there is any allocated parking; your legal advisor to check and confirm. Parking in the area is restricted with a parking limitations notice directly outside the property.



Parking limitations directly outside the house

EXTERNAL AREAS

Front Garden

This is an open grassed front garden.



Front Garden

Rear Garden

The rear garden is laid to lawn with a patio area.



Patio



Rear Garden

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Right of way to rear

There is a right of way passageway to the rear which is accessed through a gate to the rear right hand side of the rear garden.



Right of way



Right of way to rear

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal adviser to check and confirm the right of way to the rear.

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

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

Neighbours

Left Hand Neighbours

No-one was in when we knocked during our survey.

Right Hand Neighbours

No-one was in when we knocked during our survey.



Your garden is overlooked by next doors balcony

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POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

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

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

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

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

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

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

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

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

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

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REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses
Published by Estates Gazette Limited

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

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

House Builders Bible
By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

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LIMITATIONS

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

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

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

ENGLISH LAW

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

SOLE USE

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

ONLY HUMAN!

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

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

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WEATHER

It was warm and dry 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 the surveyors may not be local 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:

- 1) Due to the amount of stored items in the roof.
- 2) We were not able to open up the ground floor or the first floor.



Stored items in the roof space
limited view

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- 3) The property was empty we did not have the benefit of talking to the owners or them answering our usual question and answers.
- 4) We didn't have the benefit of meeting you at the property to talk about your exact specific requirements and understand what your concerns were.

BUILDING INSURANCE

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

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

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

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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

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APPENDICES

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

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THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

Work You Cannot do Yourself

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

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INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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

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

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www.hometrack.co.uk

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

www.motleyfool.co.uk

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

www.rightmove.co.uk

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

www.zoopla.co.uk

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

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Asbestos

It's not what we know about asbestos, it's what we don't know about asbestos

Asbestos – what are the risks?

We need to start by saying that we are not asbestos surveyors, this has been written by a Chartered Building Surveyor who deals with structural surveys on all types of properties therefore we do come across asbestos from time to time whilst carrying out surveys. Whilst our basic advice is to have an asbestos survey carried out, we thought it was worth putting together some background information on asbestos.



Asbestos removal in progress



Asbestos removal

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Asbestos Survey and Asbestos Audit

We were at a house survey where an asbestos survey was being carried out and also being audited which was of interest. We thought we would pass on some of this information. We would reiterate that we are not asbestos surveyors, if there are any asbestos surveyors out there reading this and we have got anything wrong, please by all means contact us and we will amend it. If your house was built prior to 1999 when asbestos was legally banned in the UK then it could have asbestos in it.



Asbestos roof on non-traditional property

We are advised by the asbestos surveyor that the most commonly found problems were in the 1960's and 1970's properties but we have seen it in war year properties and post war year properties too. These tend to relate to houses that were built by Local Authorities, Housing Associations or some other similar type of organisation such as the Police Force or Army, etc, etc. However interestingly, today we were on a private estate of houses built in the 1970s.

Asbestos, asbestos everywhere

You will really be surprised where asbestos can be found and it was interesting chatting to the Asbestos Surveyor and the Asbestos Auditor so we thought we would explain some of the areas that they look at.

The 'A' Word for Asbestos

First of all, let's say something about the A word. If you mention asbestos many people run a mile and we know from our experience that asbestos in a property can affect the valuation whether it is in good condition, bad condition or average condition. Everyone's concerns relate to health hazards that can be caused by asbestos, it can also affect house value.

Let me repeat that sentence again, asbestos can also affect value. The A word really does affect the value of properties as many people simply won't consider buying a property where there is asbestos.

We have written another article on asbestos which you may find of interest:

http://www.1stassociated.co.uk/definitions_external_asbestos.asp

What sort of asbestos survey should I have?

We were advised by the asbestos surveyor that there are now two types of asbestos surveys, a management asbestos survey which looks at how to manage an existing property and a demolition or refurbishment survey which looks at properties that are going to be developed, altered or amended or knocked down in one way or another. The older Type 1 asbestos survey that used to be so common was stopped in 2010 and with the newer type surveys there is sampling carried out.

Where do you find asbestos

One area where asbestos is found is within a ceiling. This can be from a proprietary boarding that forms the ceiling which is fairly common in the post war and 1960's/1970's buildings, not in every house, the era of painting a textured paint known commonly as artex on ceilings. This is why it is important to have a proper asbestos survey. We are particularly interested in a recent case which relates to textured ceilings, often known by their trade name of artexed ceilings which are common in many properties today. We believe people don't give them enough thought; they are particularly important when they have an asbestos content.



1970's/1980's artex



Older style modern artex of circular pattern

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What do they do on an asbestos survey?

They take samples of asbestos

On the day that we were at the property where the asbestos surveyor was being audited they took samples of where they thought asbestos was, they were not 100% certain in some instances. However there were various instances where they were certain, such as:

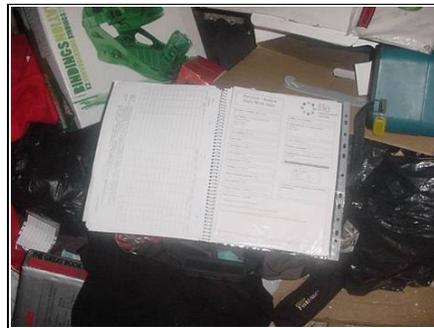


Asbestos sample within bag

Asbestos water tank within the roof – the asbestos surveyor used a spray to spray the water tank before chipping a small sample away, literally with a hammer and chisel and then putting it in a plastic bag as a sample for later testing. The company was UCAS approved and had its own lab to test for asbestos.



The asbestos surveyor's samples, drawing of property and ladder



Methodical way everything is recorded



Tool kit for taking samples of asbestos

Europe and Britain and asbestos

If you have property outside Great Britain then different rules apply and some say different standards apply as well. We would give an example with the asbestos survey of artex which is treated as a hazardous material in Europe but not in Britain. This is the older style artex which has a stippled look and then the smoother lines of modern 1970's



1970's/1980's artex

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artex. We advise that whenever we see this type of artex we always say to seal it using a plaster or similar but not to rub it down.

Where would you find asbestos in a typical 1960's/1970s property

Starting from the top down you could find it in:

1. Chimneys and flues (often these are black in colour)

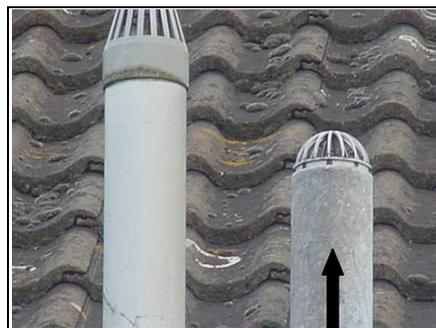
Here are some examples of chimneys and flues that are asbestos.



Asbestos flue?



Asbestos flue within roof space



Plastic flue to left, asbestos flue to right



Asbestos flue?
Can you tell whether this is an asbestos flue or not from ground level?

2. Gutters and downpipes, also known as rainwater goods (again these are sometimes black and sometimes white in colour)

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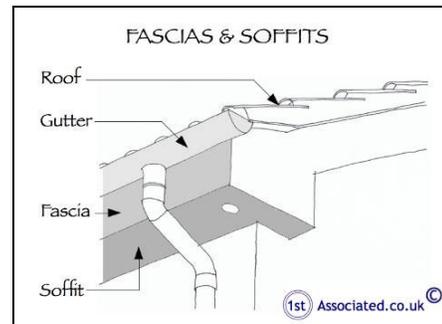
Asbestos gutter, is that an asbestos fascia board?



Asbestos downpipe to rear

3. **Fascias and soffits**

Fascias and soffits are common areas where you could find asbestos



4. **Roof tiles**

Often these are black and quite brittle and therefore can be hazardous



Asbestos slates

5. **Felt roof**

The asbestos surveyor took samples of the bitumen felt as this can sometimes have asbestos in



Felt roof – does this have asbestos? 93

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Internally you could find asbestos:

1. **Water tank**
In the roof space in such places as the water tank.



Asbestos water tank

2. **Fire resistance materials**
To cover doors to make them half hour fire resistant or to cover electric areas to make them fire resistant. It can also be used above doors where there is often a vision panel to finish the door detailing.
3. **Thermal plastic tiles**
The common area people know about is thermal plastic tiles. We were advised interestingly it could also be in the bitumen that seals them in place.
4. **Old boiler flue cupboards**

Areas we didn't know you could find asbestos:

1. Asbestos sound pad that is underneath the sink
2. Lining around services

As mentioned we have come across asbestos in roofing felts and in the bitumen that bonds the thermal plastic tiles to the concrete and also we were advised they were in some damp proof courses (how you get rid of this type of asbestos would be interesting).



Damp proof course – does this have asbestos?

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When was asbestos banned?

In 1985 asbestos was banned in insulation board and it was banned altogether in 1999, however this doesn't necessarily mean you won't find any asbestos as if it is imported from other countries such as China it can still be in their products and also if a builder has a builders yard he could have bought the materials many years ago and only now be using them. It has to be said that less and less builders have their own builder's yards.

Commercial Buildings

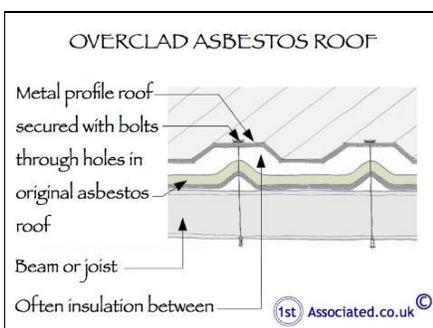
For those of you with commercial buildings, we would just add that the asbestos found in commercial buildings tends to be worse and more of it. Particular areas where it was used was the spray on foam to insulate and fire protect on structural frames of buildings, concrete and steel. It was also found in casing pipework as insulation and boiler rooms and electric cupboard areas as well as pretty much the areas we have mentioned already such as flues, roof tiles, gutters, fascias and soffit boards, water tanks and blocking in of services, etc, etc.



Asbestos roof



Asbestos overclad with profile metal sheeting



Overclad asbestos roof



Underside of asbestos. Darker areas indicate that dampness may be getting through or condensation occurring

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Court Case on asbestos cause of death

We have decided not to put the full details of this case in this article but there was a reported case in the Daily Telegraph that a death of someone who was creating textured ceilings during the period 1959 – 1980 and died from bronchial pneumonia brought about by asbestosis caused by exposure to asbestos dust.

The Health and Safety Executive warns that people need to be aware that asbestos in textured ceilings can still be found in their homes and buildings and that they should be careful when rubbing down or wanting to alter those ceilings, particularly if there is any doubt about when it was put up.

Condensation and Cold Bridging

What is Cold Bridging?

What is cold bridging and how does it work?

Cold bridging is a term and a problem we feel will become much more common in years to come. We are finding more and more examples of Cold Bridging. This happens in certain types of property and to some extent it could be argued that it is a characteristic of that type of property and quite a complex issue to resolve. Unfortunately it means condensation is more likely.



Post war / 1950's property that cold bridging can be a problem in.

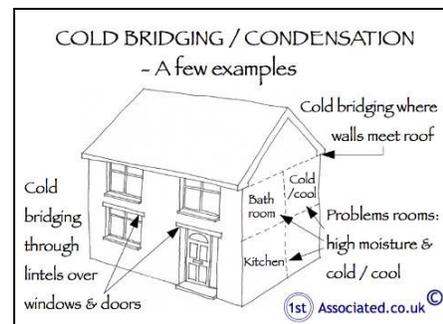
Cold Bridging

Cold bridging is caused by a colder element in the structure or fabric of the building allowing coldness to pass through. When warm moist air is present in the property and it passes through the colder elements of the structure we have what is known as Cold Bridging. This is often caused by a combination of issues. It can occur from things such as having a shower or a bath, cooking or clothes washing, particularly if you are drying washing on the radiators. It could, in commercial properties, be a large gathering of people breathing (this can cause a lot of humidity) in a building that has stood cold and empty for some time such as a church, village hall, sports centre or a crèche. These human atmospheres create a climate which can result in condensation on the cold elements of the structure and fabric if the room is not ventilated properly.

Certain types of buildings are more susceptible to Condensation and Cold Bridging

Here is our sketch on Cold Bridging

This is a good indication of the typical things that cause Cold Bridging in a house and how extraction from humidity generating areas such as the kitchen and the bathroom can reduce problems. You do need to look at how you live in the house.



Cold bridging/condensation 97

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Cold Bridging isn't just about condensation on mirrors

Cold Bridging isn't just about condensation on mirrors. Not only can it be an original characteristic of the building it can be encouraged by all types of extension and alterations.

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. If you buy a 1960's property for example, with concrete lintels that cause cold bridging, this is a characteristic of the property and it is very difficult to change. However not only could it be a characteristic of the building it could also be caused by alterations that you make to the building.



1960's properties built with concrete lintels that can cause Cold Bridging

To give you some examples of Cold Bridging

As mentioned above typically Cold Bridging can be caused by lintels and also by beams (which effectively are big lintels). These were very commonly used in 1960's and 1970's buildings and can lead to condensation over doors and windows. We mentioned a 1960's building but here are some examples of concrete lintels that were commonly used in the 1970's and which today have caused cold bridging over the door and which in turn has led to condensation and deterioration of the paintwork.



A rear door to a 1970's building.
Can you tell where the cold bridging would be in this photo?



A close up view showing there is a concrete lintel over the door and window. This is where the cold bridging occurs causing condensation inside

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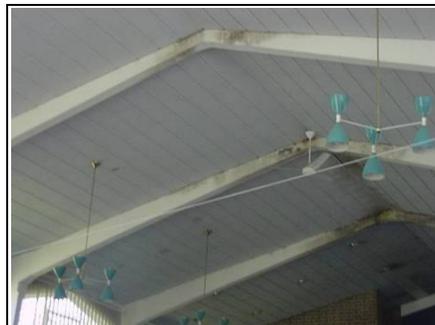
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Cold Bridging can also occur on metal lintels. We note that some modern metal lintels now have insulation in them which we assume is to reduce cold bridging.

Commercial properties suffer from Cold Bridging too

Commercial buildings are often built using structural frames. These frames are usually constructed of concrete or metal or sometimes both. The structural frame forms the skeleton of the building as you can see in the adjoining photo. Sometimes the structural frames, particularly, the concrete ones can suffer from Cold Bridging which causes blackening of the concrete frame. This can look like the roof has leaked and can lead to wrongly diagnosing a problem as being a roof leak. This can result in great time and expense being wasted repairing a roof that was not leaking and indeed in some cases has led to a new roof being fitted which has costs tens of thousands of pounds. This happened because it wasn't understood what the problem was.



Cold Bridging in a commercial property with a concrete frame.

When is Cold Bridging Likely?

In our experience we have seen cold bridging occurring in

1. Georgian and Regency properties
2. Victorian and Edwardian properties
3. Pre-war properties
4. War years construction properties
5. Post war construction properties up to the 1980's.
6. Commercial properties that use structural frames particularly concrete frames.



Georgian style properties can suffer from cold bridging and condensation. However in our experience it is more likely to be the new extensions or alterations that are added to them



1960's properties with plastic double glazing and no trickle vents can suffer from condensation.

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We find that cold bridging and condensation occur most commonly where a property has a relatively high heating level, a good level of insulation and where it has many occupants.

Problems with 1970/1980 era properties relating to Cold Bridging

Let us take a look at the 1970's/1980's era of property to give an example of the problems we have come across with this era.

The 1970's is an era where we had just begun to think about insulating due to the oil crisis and where we added insulation into our structures

For example with:

1. cavity wall insulation or
2. double glazed windows.

This meant they were warmer which 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.

How to solve Cold Bridging

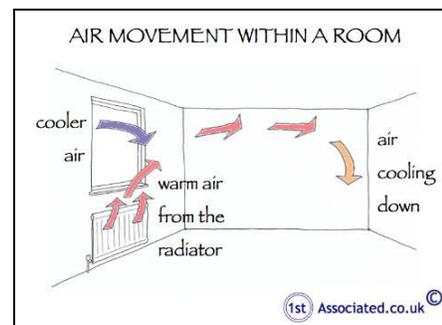
The difficulty is resolving cold bridging. Normally, where condensation is involved, if you get the balance of warm and coolness of the air, ventilation and movement you can reduce considerably the chances of condensation. Airing the room by opening the windows, which seems to have gone out of fashion, can help considerably.



1970's property with cold bridging to the roof beams and the lintels



1980's property, cold bridging was found in the lintels



Air movement within a room

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Where do we most commonly find Cold Bridging?

Our thoughts on this have very much changed as we used to say that cold bridging was typically found in properties from the 1960's/1970's. However we are increasingly finding it in a broader range of properties, particularly Victorian properties, where people are trying to live to modern standards of heating and insulation without understanding that the properties need to breathe as well. We have also found cold bridging in properties where extensions have been carried out and where the extension has been built to a different standard to the original property.



Victorian properties that have been extended and altered over the years with new thermal properties can have cold bridging because of the mix of old and new standards

Is your life style a factor in Cold Bridging?

This is often a contentious and difficult question, particularly where the occupier is a tenant and there is a disagreement between the landlord and the occupier as to why there is mould in the property. In our experience the major factor is the size of the family living in a property. This is especially the case with large families with young children and where in turn there is a lot of washing of clothes being done. This is particularly the case in the winter months, with the wet washed clothes being dried on radiators. Also general hygiene washing and not to mention cooking to feed everyone all lead toward a more humid atmosphere.

This is generally known as the lifestyle of occupants and can be a major factor particularly where there are legal cases as to the problems within a property.

Expert witness case, what is an expert witness?

This is where you employ someone who is a specialist within a field, such as us as Chartered Building Surveyors, who comment on problems of condensation within the property. We have been involved in several court cases as expert witnesses where landlords are being taken to court over the condensation that is occurring in their property. The



Older style London converted flats with property problems ~~101~~ as condensation and cold bridging

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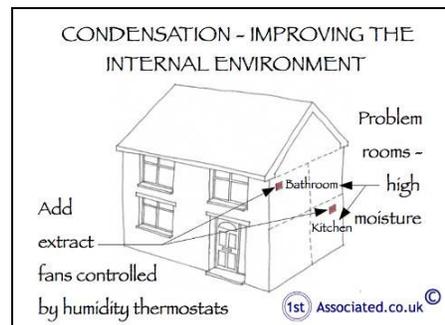
expert witness case looks at how this condensation is occurring and if it relates, for example, to the occupiers' lifestyle or whether it relates to the way the building was constructed and where there are, for example, cold bridging elements. When discussions of this nature take place in court they can be very expensive.

Is Cold Bridging and Condensation a design problem or a lifestyle problem?

This really is a difficult question to answer. We have been involved in a number of cases as expert witnesses or advocates and the answer can vary. We would comment that there are factors that can be changed and factors that can't be changed. For example, the occupiers lifestyle can in most cases be amended. This may involve the occupier having an understanding of the problems they are causing. For example, drying lots of washing on a radiator inside may be causing excessive moisture in the atmosphere. Equally not opening the windows and closing or sealing up vents can be a problem.

Design of the Building

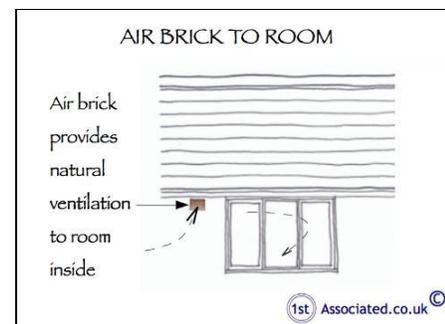
Sometimes it really is down to the design of the property. Where there are cold elements in it, such as a concrete structural frame or concrete lintels, when these are in contact with moist air condensation occurs. Sometimes this is impossible to stop but often it is possible to reduce it by having a better circulation of air with a better heat and coolness balance and the removal of any moist air.



Condensation

Things to remember about an air brick

If you are thinking about adding an air brick then you need to be aware that airbricks don't actually allow that much air through. Although externally a nine by three air brick has a lot of gaps, as these gaps taper, it is generally considered that only about one inch square of air regularly passes through the grills.



Air brick may not ventilate room enough

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What's happening in brand new housing?

It could be argued that we still do not know what is happening in brand new houses that are highly insulated. We have been involved in one legal case where a modern heat exchange system was being used where it was simply not possible to have a shower in the property without causing condensation, even with the windows open and taking other measures. Our concern is what is happening to this condensation? It was not visible on the surface so is it visible as interstitial condensation? We still think there will be problems to be found in modern properties. As Chartered Surveyors we like to see things that have been in use for some time work before we would recommend them.

In the winter we have condensation problems but in the summer we don't

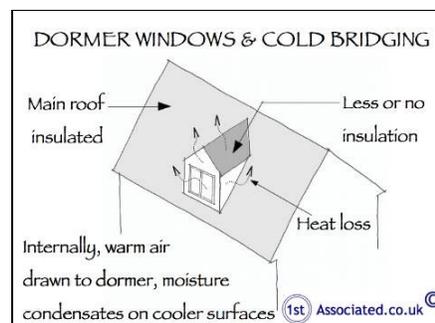
The different seasons mean that the building reacts differently. Anyone who has lived in an old property will know that windows and doors particularly sliding sash windows will swell during the winter months.

There can be similar issues with a property where, regardless of your lifestyle, during some of the different seasons, for example the winter or a wet spring, taking a shower can relate in condensation even with extract fans running (although this is far less likely).

It also depends on what the humidity level is outside as this can be greater than inside. The moisture/humidity will then seek out colder rooms such as spare bedrooms and the corners of cupboards. When you open these at a later date you will be surprised to find black mould.

Extensions and Cold Bridging

Increasingly we are coming across problems where properties have been extended and it has not been planned or thought through properly. We have come across dormer roofs that simply have no insulation so any heat in the property is going straight out of the dormer roof. We have also come across property problems where an extension has resulted in colder areas within the property and which although not problem areas, as such, our clients have found them unpleasant areas to be in. It is not a great outcome if you have just spent tens of thousands of pounds on a new extension that you are not happy with.



Cold bridging and dormer windows

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