

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

OF

Queens Park
Bedford, Bedfordshire MK40



FOR

Mr C

Prepared by:

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Marketing by:

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REPORT FORMAT

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

GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

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

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



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

ORIENTATION

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

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two bedroom terraced property, with a small garden to the front and an alley way to the right hand side (all directions given as you face the property), giving access to a paved garden to the rear.

Parking is on the roadside on a first come first serve basis.

We believe that the property was built in late Victorian era. If the exact age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

1863	The Opening of London Underground
1878	Electric Street Lights are installed in London
1896	First modern Olympic Games (Athens)
1899-1902	Boer War between Britain and Boers in Southern Africa
1901	Queen Victoria Died
1903	First flight by Wright Brothers

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Rear View



Street View



Front Garden



Right Hand Passageway



Rear Lean-to



Rear Garden

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ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Entrance corridor
- Through lounge
- Kitchen/Dining area

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Front bedroom
- Middle bedroom
- Middle bathroom
- Rear bedroom

Outside Areas

There are small gardens to the front and rear of the property. Parking is on the roadside. There is a school close by and, in our experience, the parking does tend to get congested during rush “hour” times.

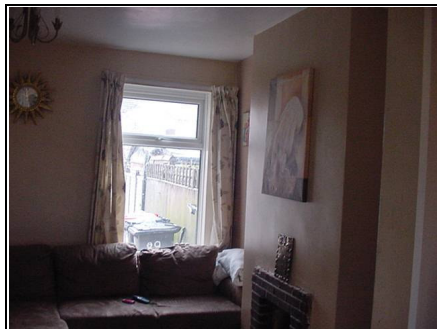
INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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



Through Lounge, to the front



Through Lounge, to the rear



Kitchen / Diner

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First Floor



Front Bedroom



Middle Bedroom



Bathroom



Rear Bedroom

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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Chimneys:	Two brick chimneys
Main Roof:	A pitched roof, clad with concrete tiles, with vents
Gutters and Downpipes:	Metal and plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Flemish Bond brickwork (assumed)
Fascias and Soffits:	Timber
Windows and Doors:	Plastic double glazed windows, without trickle vents

Internal

Ceilings:	A mixture of lath and plaster and plasterboard and some skimmed ceilings (assumed)
Walls:	A mixture of solid and studwork (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Partly suspended with concrete floor to rear (assumed)
First Floor:	Joist and floorboards; likely to be embedded (assumed)

Services

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (assumed). The electrics are underneath the stairs and the boiler is in the kitchen and is a wall mounted Worcester 24i.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Summaries are dangerous as they try to précis often quite complex subjects into a few paragraphs. This is particularly so in a summary about someone's future home when we are trying to second-guess what their priorities are, so it is important the Report is read in full.

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

Generally we found the property to be in average condition considering the property's age, type and style with a few exceptions. 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.

The Good

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

- The property also has some of the original features left, which add to the overall character of the property.
- Older properties typically have more space than newer properties, both in the actual size of the rooms and the height of the rooms.
- The property also has good natural light, particularly with the bay window to the front.

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

The Bad

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

1) Rear chimney being reduced

We can see that the rear chimney has been reduced and has had a flue cowl added. This is likely to be from the time when boilers used this sort of ventilation. In our experience this can be an area where damp gets in.

ACTION REQUIRED: If any high level work takes place the opportunity for a close inspection should be taken.



Rear chimney

Please see the Chimney Section of this Report.

2) Roof Insulation

The roof has been fully insulated. Whilst this roof has some ventilation we have found, in our experience, bearing in mind the other issues, such as the internal radiators and lack of trickle vents to the windows (which we discuss later in this section), these can all promote condensation.



Roof insulation, and stored items

ACTION REQUIRED: It may be necessary to add additional vents to the roof. Ideally there should be ventilation at low level and high level.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of a few hundred pounds if work is required, and assuming it can be carried out internally. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Structure Section of this Report.

3) Flat roof to bay window

Flat roofs to a bay window are always risk areas for future leaks.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to make sure this area is maintained and that the outlet gully on the right hand side (all directions given as you face the property) is kept unblocked.

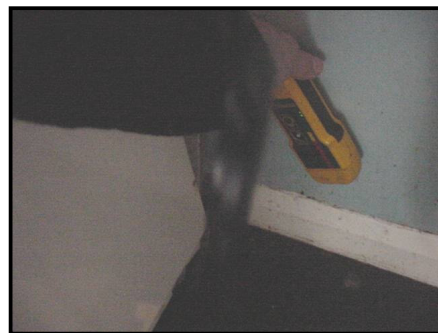


Please see the Roofs Section of this Report.

Flat roof to bay window

4) Rising Damp

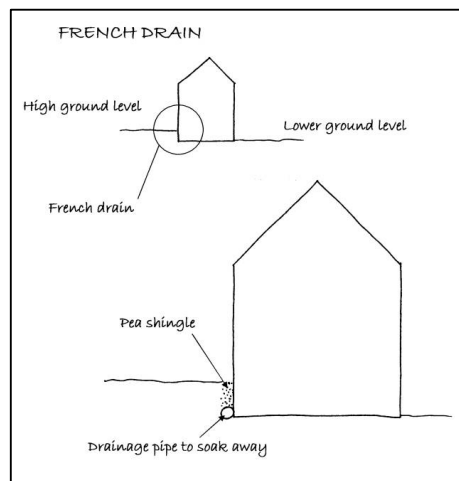
We found rising damp to the front of the property and also to areas at the rear. It is quite complex as to why there are problems: a combination of lack of ventilation under the floor and a cement pointing, together with gypsum plaster internally when previous “damp proofing” work has been carried out.



Finding rising damp –
front bay window

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend, in the first instance, that additional air bricks are added to the bay windows at the front of the property, and that a French gully is put around the property to the front and rear to lower the ground level, as well as moving the water away from the ground level.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £1,000 to £2,000. Please obtain quotations.



Please see the Air Bricks and Dampness Sections of this Report and the Appendices at the end of the Report.

5) Incorrectly pointed in cement mortar

The property has been re-pointed. As with most properties of this age it has been incorrectly re-pointed with a cement mortar. This in turn causes spalling to the brickwork, as can be seen in some isolated areas. This will increase over the years.



Spalling brickwork

Spalling Defined

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

ACTION REQUIRED: Any cement pointing that comes away should be re-pointed in a lime mortar. From the condition of the bricks that we have seen we would leave them and not repair them and we certainly would not repair them with cement mortar, as we often see.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of a few hundred pounds over a few years. Please obtain quotes.

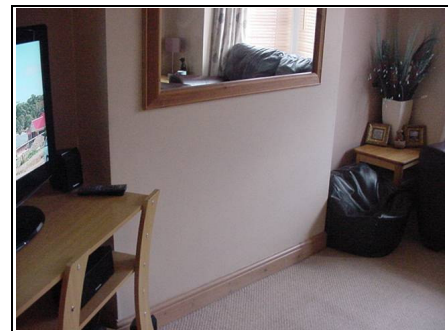
Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

6) Unvented Front Chimney

Chimneys need venting to stop sulphate attacks and dampness. We noted the front chimney was unvented.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add a vent.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of a few hundred pounds, plus. Please obtain quotations.



Front chimney breast – we recommend the adding of a vent

Please see the Chimneys Section of this Report.

7) Internal radiators increases the likelihood of condensation

The best place for radiators are underneath windows, as this allows, as the heat rises, air circulation as it hits the colder air from the window area. Internal radiators were noted in this property, which increases the chances of condensation. When we spoke to the owner about this they advised that they had had condensation problems.



Internal radiator

We would also add that the double glazing used has no trickle vents. This means that there is no ventilation in the property, which increases the chances of condensation occurring.

Trickle Vents Defined

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

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend that you improve air circulation, particularly in high, humid and moist areas, such as the kitchen and bathroom, by the addition of a mechanical extract fan.

We would also recommend the opening of windows to air the property on a regular basis and possibly the moving of the radiators.

ANTICIPATED COST: For adding extract fans costs in the region of £250 to £500. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness and Services Sections of this Report.

8) Run off of water

The rear garden is paved, which does mean during heavy down falls of rain you can get a large amount of water coming towards the property, which can cause some dampness.

ACTION REQUIRED: The best way to help this is to add a French gully, which we have mentioned earlier.

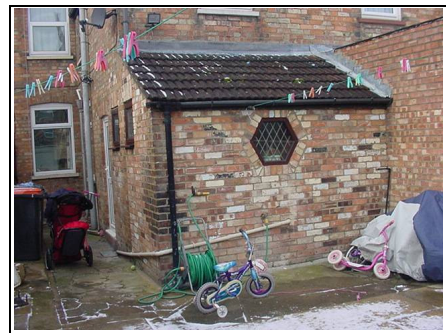


Paved rear garden

Please see the Damp Proof Course and Outside Areas Sections of this Report, together with the Appendices.

9) Dry lining to the rear of the kitchen single skin structure

We believe that the rear of the kitchen is a single skin structure; being a single skin of brickwork. We believe this used to be the coal shed area and, as such, is not officially a habitable area, albeit that it could be argued that a kitchen does not need to be. This does not strictly speaking meet the Building Regulations.



Kitchen to rear

ACTION REQUIRED: We suggest you phone us with regard to this item.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

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 category.

Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Electrics

Whilst we have carried out a visual inspection of the electrics (this is commented upon in the Electrics Section of the report) we also need to advise you of the following:

ACTION REQUIRED: As the property is changing occupancy the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) recommend an NICEIC (or equivalent) registered and approved electrical contractor carry out an inspection, test and report.

Maintenance

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

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

DIY/Handyman Type Work

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

Purchase Price

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

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Estimates of Costs

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

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

SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



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

From our question and answer session with the current owner, there is an issue with the kitchen units. You need to establish how this is being resolved when you complete the purchase. They also advise that they have had quotations for some of the work recommended, which we would suggest you have a look at, but also obtain your own quotes.

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

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

MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT

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

TENURE – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)

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

ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

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

SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR

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

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS

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

OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION

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

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



Independent Chartered Surveyors

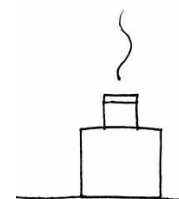
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EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS, FLUES, PARAPET WALLS, DORMER WINDOWS AND ROOF WINDOWS



Chimney Stacks

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

This property has two chimneys, which are located one to the front and one to the rear.

Chimney One, located to the front of the property

This chimney is brick finished with numerous chimney pots with lead flashings. From what we could see the chimney looks in average condition. Unfortunately we were unable to see the top of the chimney known as the flaunchings we therefore cannot comment upon them.



Close up of top of front chimney



Base of front chimney

Chimney Two, located to the rear of the property

This chimney has been what is known as "dropped" or lowered.

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



Chimney breast size reduced

Flaunchings Defined

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

Flashings Defined

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

Party Walls

Both chimneys sit on the party wall. Any works will require Party Wall legislation. Here is some information about it.

Party Structures Defined – Party Wall etc Act 1996

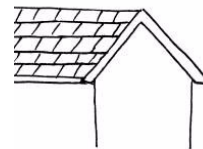
A structure that both parties enjoy the use of or benefit from. An example of this would be where both parties gain support from a wall or utilise a chimney or chimneys.

Any work to party structures, such as party walls or party chimneystacks, 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 stacks, parapet walls, flues, from the parts we could see. The inspection was made from ground level within the boundaries of the property (unless otherwise stated) using a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. A closer inspection may reveal latent defects.

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

ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad in a large interlocking concrete tile. From what we could see the concrete tiles are lying level and true and look in reasonable condition considering their age. Sometimes we find that deterioration occurs to the ridges and the perimeter, so you should periodically check these areas.



Close up of tiles

We believe originally the roof was slate. If this is the case and a heavy concrete has been added, then we would expect additional roof support in this case there are additional roof timbers, though they may not be to Building Regulation requirements.

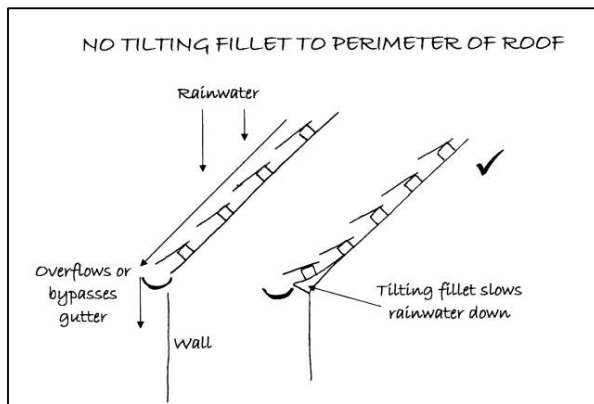


Extra supports in roof.
The lighter timbers on the right hand side are the additional supports

GENERAL INFORMATION ON CONCRETE TILES

Concrete tiles have been used since the 1950/60s, they are relatively cheap to produce and can be manufactured to a reasonably standard size and quality.

Lack of tilting fillet

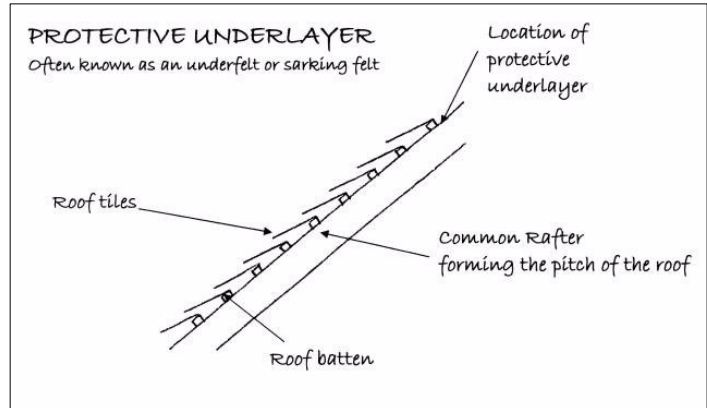


Lack of tilting fillet to main roof

There looks to be a lack of tilting fillet, which does mean the gutters can overflow sometimes, or the water goes behind them. It is a relatively hard job to sort out.

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

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



When we inspected the loft space we found a Hessian base Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s. We generally found it to be in average condition, its damaged in a few more places than we normally find.



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

Rear Low Level Roofs

Kitchen Roof

This roof is over the end part of the kitchen. This also had a concrete tile. We were pleased to see there has been a flashing which is, in our opinion, the best method of bringing any areas where the junction meets other buildings.



Lack of tilting fillet to main roof

Bay Window Roof

The bay window roof is flat. Flat roofs to a bay window are always risk areas for future leaks.

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



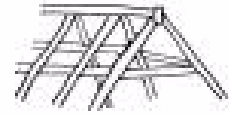
Flat roof to bay window

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

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

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

ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

Main Roof

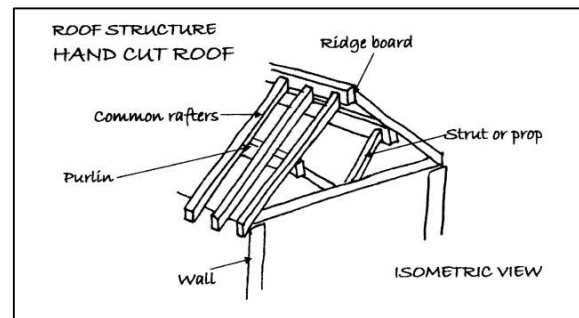
Roof Access

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing. There is no loft ladder, electric light or secured floorboards. We recommend that these be added, as it will make the loft space safer and easier to use. The roof was very full of stored items, please see our comments about the limitations of viewing this roof.

The loft (perimeter) has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly.

Roof Structure

This type of roof structure has what is known as a cut timber roof, with amendments for the new roof covering. In this instance additional supporting timbers have been added in the roof. This is a roof that is purpose made and hand built onsite. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects; however it is in line with what we typically see.



Roof Timbers

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

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

Our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof, the insulation and stored items. As mentioned what we could see was generally found to be in average condition considering its age. Due to the amount of stored items in the roof, including a mass of insulation, it is feasible there are problems in the roof that are hidden, typically woodworm.

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



Roof timbers



Dampness in purlin



Mass of stored items in roof

Fire Walls

There are firewalls either side of this property, which is good practice. To both the left and right hand sides there are brick firewalls; these look to be original.

Fire Wall Defined

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

Ventilation

We could see some ventilation in the roof. However, it could be argued, given the amount of insulation in the roof and the lack of ventilation throughout the property, that that is not sufficient.

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



The roof vent can be seen to the middle of the picture

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 the mass of stored items in the roof and the insulation meant we were unable to view any electric cabling.

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

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

GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



The function of the gutters and downpipes is to carry rainwater from the roof to the ground keeping the main structure as dry as possible. Defective gutters and downpipes are a common cause of dampness that can, in turn, lead to the development of rot in timbers. Regular inspection and adequate maintenance are therefore essential if serious problems are to be avoided.

Gutters and Downpipes

The property has a mixture of the original cast iron gutters and downpipes and the more modern replacement plastic gutters and downpipes. What we found were in typical condition for this mixture of materials. There are some leaks and there is some corrosion of the cast iron, however we feel that most people could live with this.

Specific examples are the leaking gutter to the front and the corroding hopper head to the rear as can be seen in the photos.

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



Leaking gutter to front



Old cast iron hopper head to rear



Rear gutter - this is a gutter that is likely to overflow. We noticed some grass growing from it - if you look closely

Soil and Vent Pipe

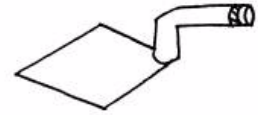
We could see a plastic soil and vent pipe. Generally the waste pipes and soil stack appear to be satisfactory where a surface inspection is possible, although for the most part they run in ducts and cannot be inspected.



Soil and vent pipe to side of window

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

WALLS



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

Brickwork

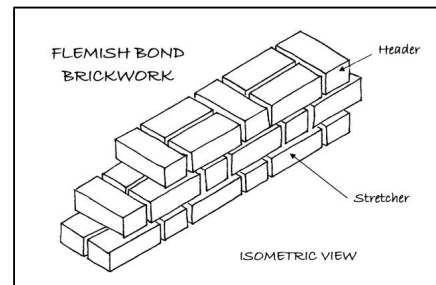
The property is brick built in a brick originally in a lime mortar in what is known as Flemish bond brickwork, which has been repointed in a cement mortar.

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

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



Spalling brickwork



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

Generally Flemish Bond brickwork is liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon the condition of the brickwork and the exposure to the weather. In this case it is essential that external faces be kept in good condition.

Single Skim Wall

Please see are comments in the Executive Summary about the single skin wall to the kitchen area.

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 timber lintels, rubbed brick lintels or metal lintels are common, which can be susceptible to deterioration that is unseen, particularly if in contact with dampness.

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

FOUNDATIONS



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

Foundations

Given that the property is brick built, we would expect to find a stepped brick foundation possibly with a bedding of lime mortar.

Bedford Clay

This property stands in the Bedford area and as such there is a higher than average possibility of it standing on Bedford Clay. If this is the case it is therefore more susceptible than most to movement should drains leak or trees be allowed to overgrow, etc and it is not unusual to have some settlement.

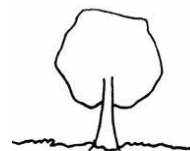
Building Insurance Policy

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

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

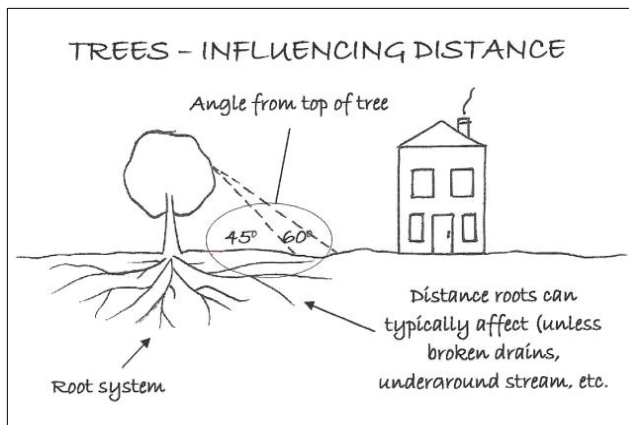
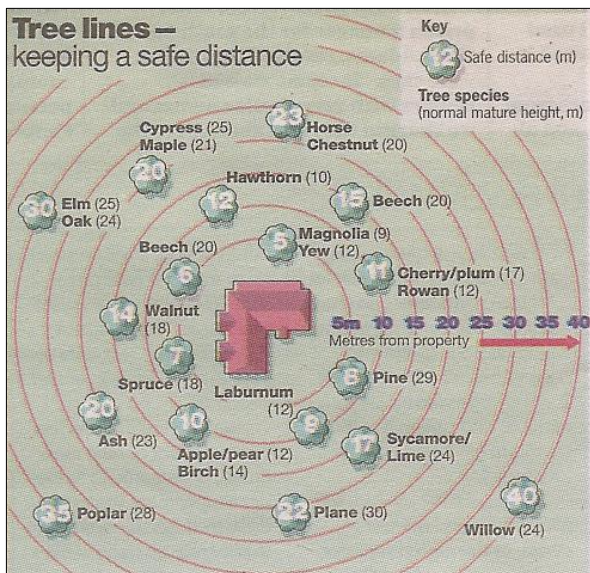
As no excavation has been carried out we cannot be 100 percent certain as to how the foundation has been constructed and we can only offer our best assumptions and an educated guess, which we have duly done.

TREES



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

There are no trees within your garden that are within influencing distance of the main house.



Influencing Distance Defined

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

DAMP PROOF COURSE



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

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, holes have been noted on the outside of the building, which have been drilled into the wall. This is a typical sign that a chemical injection DPC has been inserted.



Damp proof course

From our investigations we have found the DPC to work from not at all to reasonably well.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary, particularly about the run off of water from the rear garden.

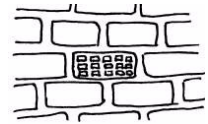


Vertical damp proof course

Please see the Dampness Section of this report.

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

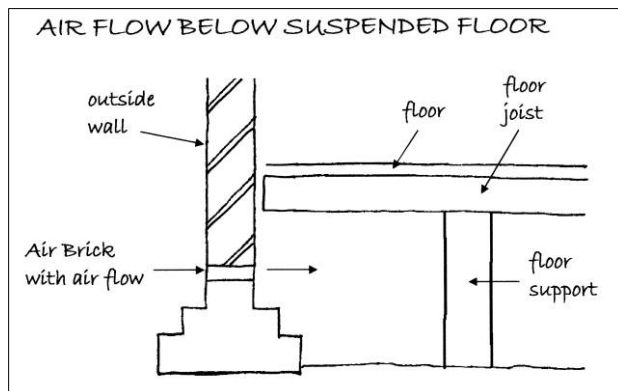
AIRBRICKS



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

We can see air bricks to the front of the property (but we believe you need to add air bricks to the rear and additional air bricks to the front), which indicates a suspended floor. From what we could see, providing the air bricks are kept clear, you have adequate ventilation.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add air bricks to the front and rear, but mainly note our comments with regard to the adding of a French gully. Please see the Executive Summary.



Open up air bricks to allow free flow of air

Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

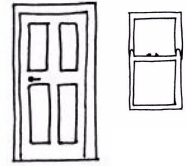
A suspended timber floor usually consists of timbers spanning the ground floor, supported on piers (usually brickwork), vented via air bricks within the walls.

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



Air brick

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 property has painted timber fascias and soffits and these are in average condition, (which means there is likely to be some rot) although much of the fascia is mainly hidden by the guttering, as you can see in the attached photo.



Fascias hidden by guttering

Windows and Doors

The property has plastic, double glazed windows, which generally look to be of a reasonable quality. We did not see any trickle vents.

Trickle Vents Defined

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



Double glazed window –
no trickle vent

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. In this case they are in average condition.

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

Finally, we have carried out a general and random inspection of the fascias and soffits and windows and doors. 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 fascias and soffits and windows and doors. Please also see the Internal Joinery section.

EXTERNAL DECORATIONS



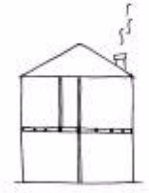
The external decorations act as a protective coat for the building from the elements. Where this protective covering has failed, such as with flaking paintwork, the elements will infiltrate the structure. This is of particular concern as water is one of the major factors in damage to any structure.

The external decoration required is minimal; soffits, bay windows and the lintels above and the fencing are the only items we can think of and that will be in a few years time.

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 Fascias and Soffits and Windows and Doors section.

INTERNAL



CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

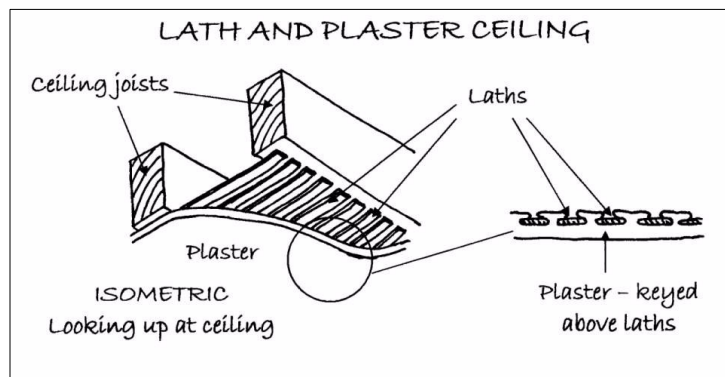
In this section we look at the finish applied to the structural elements such as the plasterwork applied to the ceiling joists, walls or partitions, together with the construction of the internal walls and partitions. The concept of internal finishes is relatively modern. Partitioning developed originally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

Ceilings

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

Lath and Plaster Defined

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



Plasterboard Defined

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

Internal Walls and Partitions

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

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

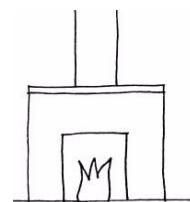
Perimeter Walls

Generally perimeter walls are finished with a modern plaster believed to be carlite / gypsum plaster and decorated. Without the removal of the decorative finish we cannot be 100 per cent certain, but this type of plaster is usual in older properties and means the walls have been replastered often because of dampness or old age.

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

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

CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

The chimney breasts are located on the right hand side and the rear left 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.

We noted that the chimneys did not have vents. Add vents and this will help reduce dampness in the chimneys.

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

Rear left hand chimney

This has been removed in part at the top and also at the bottom. Without opening up the structure unfortunately we cannot comment further, but there are no obvious tell tale signs, such as cracking in the associated area at the time of the survey to indicate any problems.



Rear chimney breast

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

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

FLOORS



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

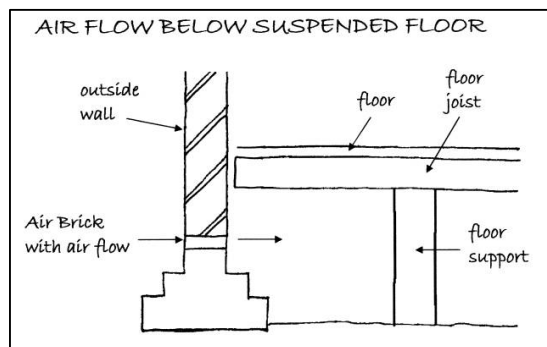
Ground Floor

Based on our knowledge of this age of construction we believe that the ground floor construction is predominantly a suspended timber floor. This type of floor needs air circulation under it to reduce deterioration from wet rot and dry rot; please see our comments in these sections.

The remainder of the floor, kitchen onwards, is solid under foot and assumed to be concrete.

Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

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



First Floor

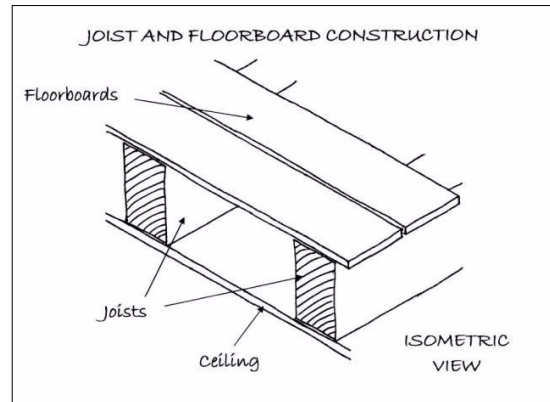
We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards as this is typical in this age of property.



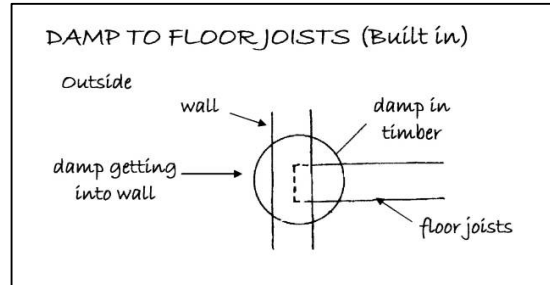
Wooden floor

Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



The timbers are embedded and deflect, possibly due to the embedded timbers rotting.



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

DAMPNESS



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

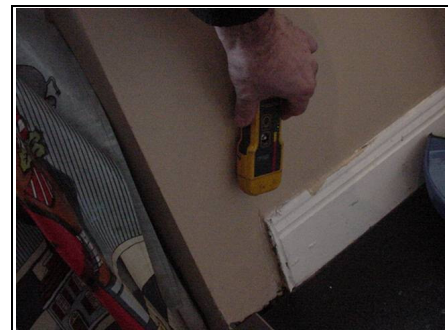
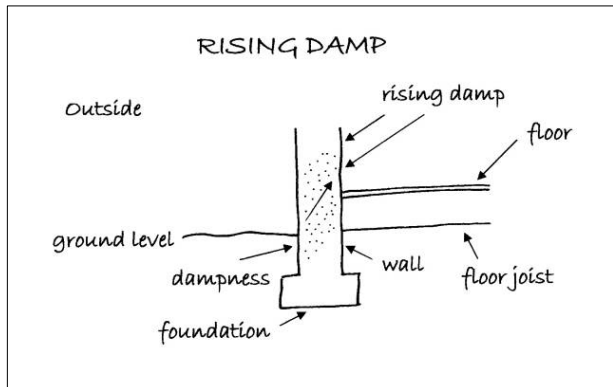
Rising Damp

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

There is now much debate over whether true rising damp does exist after research over a 10 year period.

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

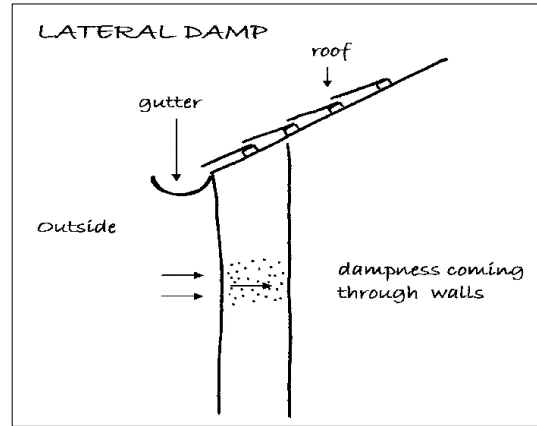
ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Checking 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.



Again, tests were taken with a damp meter. No significant penetrating/lateral dampness was found. We did note areas of blown plaster, usually due to age. This is probably why it has been re-plastered in part.



Checking for lateral dampness

Condensation

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

Condensation we believe in this property is more likely than typical. However, it depends upon how you utilise the building. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating and ventilation of properties. Normally opening windows first thing in the morning resolves most condensation issues.

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

CONDENSATION GENERAL INFORMATION

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

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.

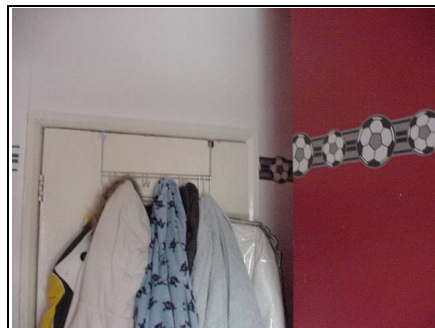
INTERNAL JOINERY



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 painted panel doors.



Painted panel door

Staircase

We were unable to examine the underside of the stair structure due to it being lined. We can advise that the lining gives a resistance to the spread of fire if such circumstances were to occur which is now typical construction and importantly allows you to escape from the first floor for longer.

Kitchen

This are from the cheaper end of the market, as the owner was aware when we discussed this. From our cursory visual inspection the kitchen looked to be in basic condition, with damage to the front underneath the sink, which we believe there is a claim about.



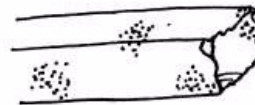
ACTION REQUIRED: Ensure the claim is resolved before you purchase the property.

Damage to "Weetabix" kitchen sink

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 Fascias and Soffits and Windows and Doors Section.

TIMBER DEFECTS



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

Dry Rot

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

In the areas visually inspected no evidence was found of any significant dry rot. Please remember we have not opened up the floors and the roof was full of stored items.

Wet Rot

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

In the areas visually inspected no significant evidence was found of wet rot. Again, please remember we have not opened up the floors and the roof access view was limited due to the stored items. However, please note our comments about the staining to the purlin timber.

ACTION REQUIRED: When the roof is empty you need to check the amount of dampness in this area. It may be necessary to have a roof repair. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Dampness in rear purlin

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 significant woodworm activity or, indeed, signs of past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage. Our view was very limited, please see the Limitations Section of this report.

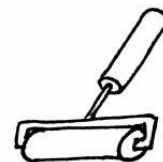
In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection is usually restricted by insulation covering some of the timbers and general stored items in the roof, and roof configuration, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings. If you wish to be 100 per cent certain that there is no woodworm the only way would be to check the property when it is empty of fixtures and fittings, etc.

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

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

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

INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

The decoration is average, with minor marks as you would expect in a home that has been lived in.

You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste. It is very difficult to advise on how frequently redecoration should take place, as it very much depends upon the use and abuse the decoration gets, for example, hallways will need tending to more often than 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.

THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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

HIPs (Home Information Packs) Report

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

Roof Insulation

Roof insulation is present and looks to be to the current building regulation standard of 200mm/300mm. With this level of insulation it is important to ensure the roof is suitably ventilated to minimise condensation.

We cannot see the ceiling joists properly, therefore it is more likely to be 300mm in these areas. However, the problem was there was a lot of stored items in the roof. Generally roofs need ventilation, particularly so with this amount of insulation.

Walls

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

Windows

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

Services

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

Summary

Overall, provided our assumptions correct and considering the properties age, type and style, it has average thermal properties for what we see but refer to your HIPs report.

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

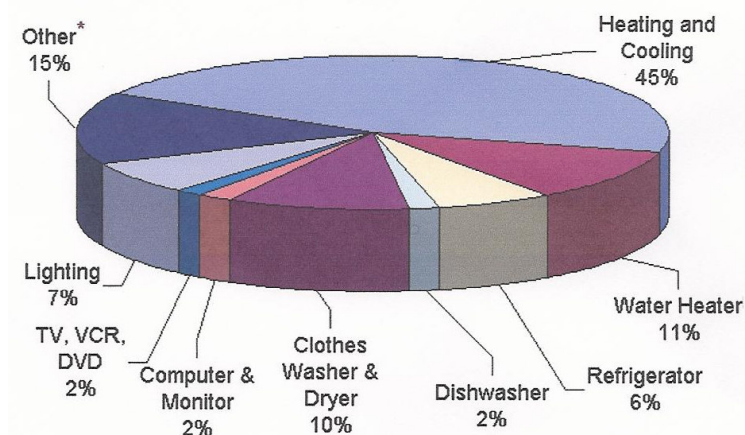
[HTTP//www.est.org.uk](http://www.est.org.uk), which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid

or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

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

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

What does my energy bill pay for?



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

Independent Chartered Surveyors

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OTHER MATTERS



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

Security

No security system was noted. It is a personal decision as to whether you feel one is necessary. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further. We suggest you contact a member of NACOSS (National Approval Council for Security Services), obtainable through directory enquiries, or your local Police Force for advice on a security system.

Smoke Alarms

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

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend, for your own safety, that smoke detectors be installed.

We have seen recently a smoke detector that fits within a light fitting (although we have not used these personally), which is charged when the light is switched on, providing it is switched on a certain number of times a year. We feel this is an excellent idea as it alleviates the problems of batteries running out. We would also advise that if you wish to have any general advice the local Fire Authority are usually happy to help.

Insurance

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

Asbestos

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

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

SERVICES

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

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

ELECTRICITY



It is strange to think that electricity only started to be used in domestic properties at the turn of the 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. We would date the fuseboard as being from the 1990s and, whilst not the best now available, it is reasonable.



Fuse board

Earth Test

We carried out an earth test in the kitchen area to the socket point that is normally used for the kettle and this did not caused the electrics to trip.

Neither of these indicators can give certainty as to the condition of the rest of the wiring.



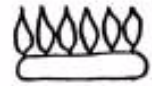
Earth Test

ACTION REQUIRED: If there is no record of an electrical test having been undertaken within the last five years, it is recommended that the installation be tested by a competent electrician (NICEIC registered) and all recommendations implemented. Thereafter, the installation should be re-tested every five years.

Also note that Building Regulations require certain electrical work to be certified by an approved contractor. Please see the appendices at the end of this survey for further details.

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

GAS



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

The gas metre cupboard is located to the front of the property. All gas appliances, pipework and flues should be the subject of an annual service by a Gas Safe registered heating engineer; works to any gas appliance by an unregistered person is illegal. Unless evidence can be provided to confirm that there has been annual servicing we would recommend that you commission such a service prior to use to ensure safe and efficient operation.

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

PLUMBING AND HEATING



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

Water Supply

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

ACTION REQUIRED: Ask the owners.

Water Pressure

When the taps were run to carry out the drainage tests we checked the pressure, literally by putting a finger over a tap, and the pressure seemed typical of what we find.

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!).

We have not used a listening stick to check for water leaks.

Cold Water Cistern

We have not found a water tank. We can only assume that the water is directly fed to the taps. The original idea behind a water tank was to help water pressure and to give an emergency supply of water.

Plumbing

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

Heating

The boiler was located in the kitchen and is a wall mounted Worcester 24i. Our limited inspection of the hot water and central heating system revealed no evidence to suggest any serious defects, however we would recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

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

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

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

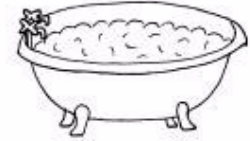
Ten Minute Heating Test

The heating was on when we viewed the property. We felt the radiators and found them to be warm.

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

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

BATHROOM



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

The family bathroom suite looks in slightly below average condition.

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

MAIN DRAINS



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

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

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

Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We have identified two inspection chambers / manholes.

Inspection Chamber / Manhole One (located to the front)

We duly lifted the man hole/ inspection chamber cover and found the drain to be free flowing; we noted it was finished in brick.



Front manhole

Inspection Chamber / Manhole Two (located to the rear)

We duly lifted the man hole/ inspection chamber cover and found the drain to be clear; we noted it was finished in brick.



Rear manhole

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. In this age of property it is likely to be a combined drain.

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

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

OUTSIDE AREAS

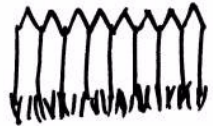
PARKING

Parking is on a first come first serve basis.



Street View

EXTERNAL AREAS



Front Garden

A small paved garden.



Front Garden

Rear Garden

The rear garden is paved. Please note our earlier comments regarding water run off in this garden.



Rear Garden

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

No-one was in when we knocked at the time of the survey.

We suggest that you re-visit and check that you are happy with the area.

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) Double glazing or replacement windows.
 - iv) Roof and similar renewals.
 - v) Central heating installation.
 - vi) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
 - vii) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
- d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- e) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.
- f) Liabilities in connection with shared services.
- g) Adjoining roads and services.
- h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- i) General development proposals in the locality.
- j) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.
- k) Confirm from enquiries that no underground tunnels, wells, sewers, gases,

mining, minerals, site reclamation/contamination etc., exist, have existed or are likely to exist beneath the curtilage of the site upon which the property stands and which could affect the quiet enjoyment, safety or stability of the property, outbuildings or surrounding areas.

- l) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.
- m) Any outstanding Party Wall Notice or the knowledge that any are about to be served.
- n) Most Legal advisors will recommend an Envirosearch or a similar product is used by you to establish whether the area falls within a flood plain, old landfill site, radon area etc. If your Legal Advisor is not aware of Envirosearch or similar please ensure that they contact us and we will advise them of it. Any general findings should be brought to their logical conclusion by using appropriate specialist advisers.

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

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

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

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

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

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

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

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

APPENDICES

Independent Chartered Surveyors

—— Marketing by: ——

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

LIMITATIONS

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

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

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

ENGLISH LAW

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

SOLE USE

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

ONLY HUMAN!

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

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

WEATHER

It was cold and there had been some minor snow in the days around the survey. The weather did not hamper the survey.

Our weather seems to be moving towards the extremities from relatively mid range. A few interesting facts in Britain over the years have been:

2000	Wettest year on record at the time
2003	Driest year on record at the time
2004	Wettest August on record at the time
2004	Boscastle was the worst flash flood on record at the time
2005	Third driest year on record at the time
2006	Warmest year recorded on record at the time
July 2006	Hottest July on record at the time
2006	Hottest autumn on record at the time
2007	Warmest spring on record at the time
2007	Wettest June on record at the time
April '06-April '07	Hottest 12 months on record at the time

This may have adverse effects on lots of buildings in years to come.

OCCUPIED PROPERTY

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

INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited due to not lifting any floors and the cupboards and the roof were full of stored items and insulation, which limited our view.



Cupboards full of stored items



Roof full of stored items

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.

THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

Work You Cannot do Yourself

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

INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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

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

www.hometrack.co.uk

Independent Chartered Surveyors

—— Marketing by: ——

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

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

Motleyfool.co.uk

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

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

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

www.globrix.com

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

French Drains

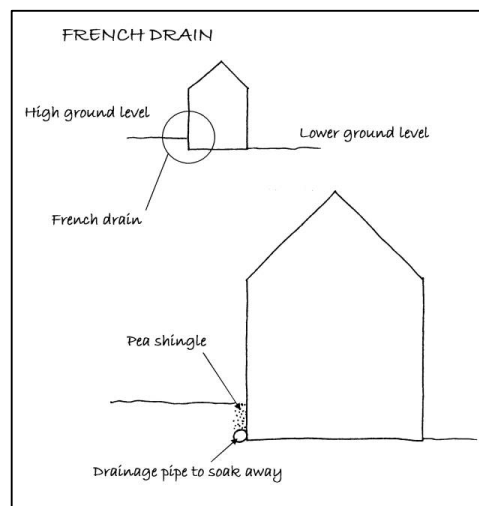
Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

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

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

What use is a French drain?

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



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

French drains must be on a slope

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

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

The French drain system that we would recommend

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

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

The French pond!

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