

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

Clapton,  
London  
E5



FOR

Mr D

Prepared by:

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

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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 ground floor flat, set within a converted public house. It has a shared entrance door giving access to a ground floor corridor and associated stairway.

The property sits to the rear right hand corner of the public house and adjoins the adjacent church and associated gardens. There is one floor (we assume one flat) directly above your property.

We believe there may be a cellar underneath the pub area based upon the cellar flaps to the front and traditional pub construction.

We have not seen copies of the lease, but we would be happy to comment if the details are duly forwarded to us. As the property is Leasehold you will no doubt have a shared responsibility for common areas/common components (from memory you advised ten percent but were unsure about a service charge).

Common areas/common components include not only the access stairways and corridors but also other areas of shared use such as the roof structure and external walls and the drainage for example.

We believe the pub was built in the Georgian / Victorian Era, dated around 1830 to 1860 and is Listed (please see Appendices for Listing Information). The corner plot was originally the Duke of Clarence Pub, we believe, although we have not been able to find any information to confirm this. Your legal adviser needs to check and confirm with regard to the Listing of the building.

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

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

1833	Start of Government funded schooling (1881 – it became compulsory to the age of 11)
1837	Victoria becomes Queen of Great Britain.
1840	The First Postage Stamp
1854	Florence Nightingale pioneers modern nursing in the Crimea
1859	Charles Darwin proposes the Theory of Evolution
1863	The Opening of London Underground

## EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front elevation



Front elevation / entrance to property (through middle door)



Pub to left hand side



Right hand view



View into rear garden

## **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

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

### **Basement**

There is possibly a basement / cellar which may go beneath this property. Your legal adviser needs to check and confirm this.

### **Ground Floor Communal Areas**

The ground floor communal areas consist of:

- 1) Access corridor
- 2) Stairway

### **Ground Floor**

The ground floor bedsit accommodation consists of:

- 1) Bedroom and lounge, incorporating a kitchenette area
- 2) Shower and WC, with airing cupboard/hot water cylinder

### **Outside Areas**

There are no outside areas, your legal advisor needs to check and confirm this. Please note our comments with regards to whether there is a basement under the property.

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

## **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.



General view towards windows



General view towards kitchen



Shower/WC room

## **Communal Areas**



Entrance corridor



Looking down into stairwell from top floor

## **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

### **External of Whole Property (as you will have a responsibility for this)**

Chimneys:	Brick chimneys
Main Roof:	Variety of pitched roofs and flat roofs with parapet walls
	Mansard roof, rooms formed within the roof
Main Roof Structure:	
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Flemish Bond brickwork (assumed)
Windows and Doors:	Mixture of sliding sash, casement windows and modern equivalents

### **External of your specific part of property (as this may affect you)**

Roof:	Hipped roof with parapet wall around and box gutter.
Box Gutter, Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Flemish Bond brickwork (assumed) and render to the front (which is not strictly speaking part of this property). We have not viewed walls to the side and rear but there looks to be a conservatory to one section.
Windows and Doors:	Timber frame with Georgian wire polish plate main window with three high level fanlights to each window.

## Internal

Ceilings:	Finished with a skim coat of modern plaster (assumed)
Walls:	Predominantly dry lined/false walls with a coat of modern plaster (assumed)
Floors:	Laminate flooring, assumed concrete underneath, although there is cellar flaps to the front indicating there may be a cellar underneath this property - your legal adviser needs to check and confirm.

## Services

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage and electricity (all assumed). The heating is electric and the water is from a hot water cylinder. The fuseboard was not located. As a new development we would assume Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) tests and certificates are available on the electrics.

The property is Listed, as found in BritishListedBuildings.co.uk; your legal adviser needs to check and confirm this. Please see Appendices.

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.

## LOCATION PLANS



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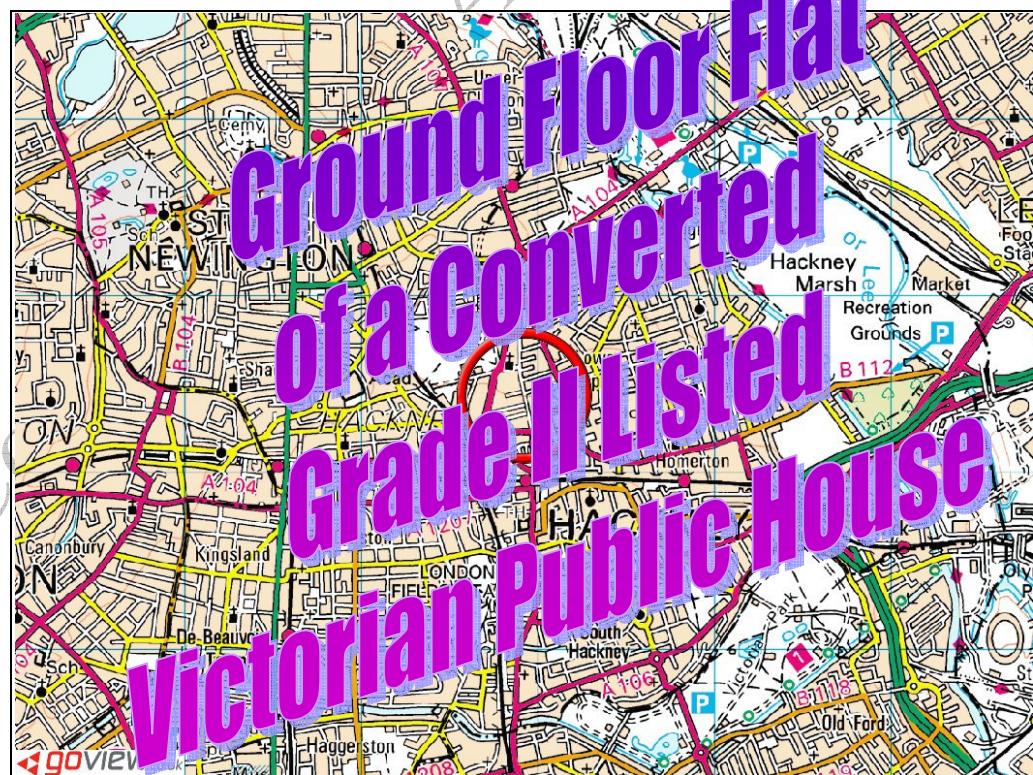
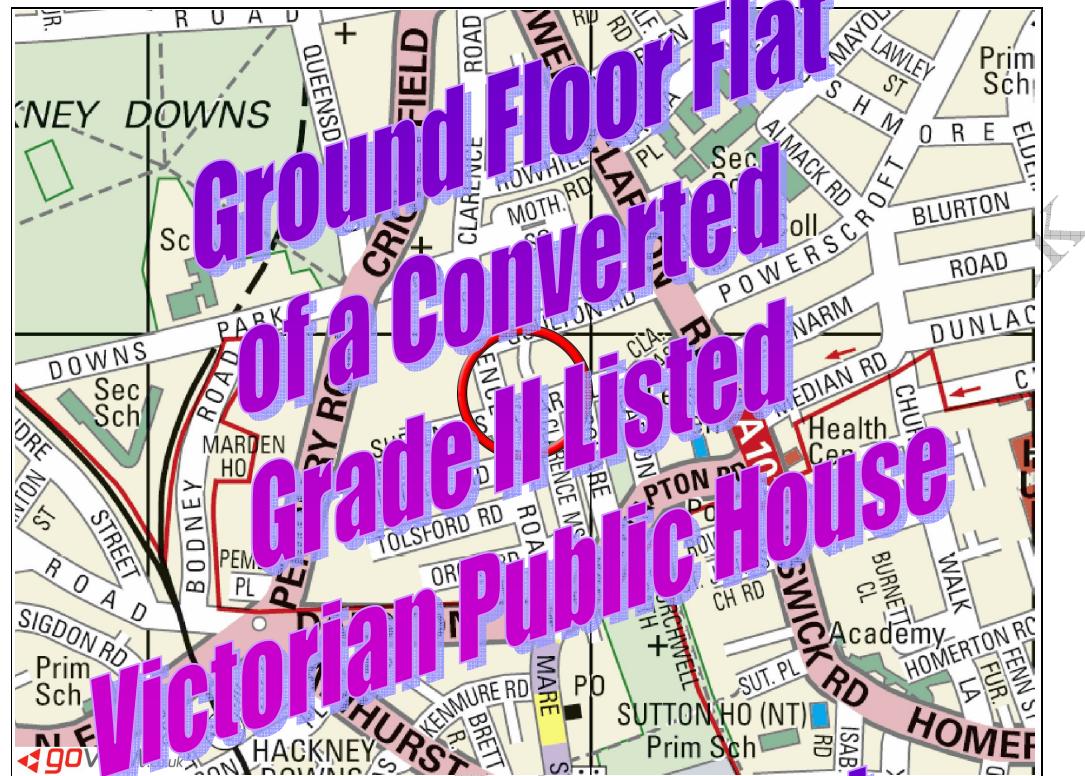
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 100 photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if an issue has not been discussed that you are interested in or concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it; if we have not we will happily go back.

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

### **The Good**

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

- 1.0) The property is below the stamp duty level of £120,000.
- 2.0) The flat/bedsit is on the ground floor which gives easier access.
- 3.0) Subject to various discussions and agreements the property may have potential for alterations / improvements, for example the basement and external areas. However this is what is known as 'hope value' until you have various discussions and agreements are in place. We certainly would not recommend buying a property on 'hope value'.

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

## **The Bad**

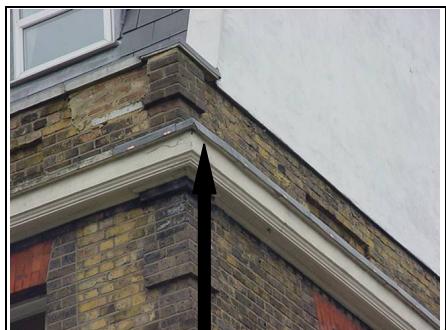
*Problems / issues raised in the ‘bad’ section are usually solvable, but often need negotiation upon. However, a large number of them may sometimes put us off the property.*

### **1.0) Roof problems, roof leaks, shared liability and cost**

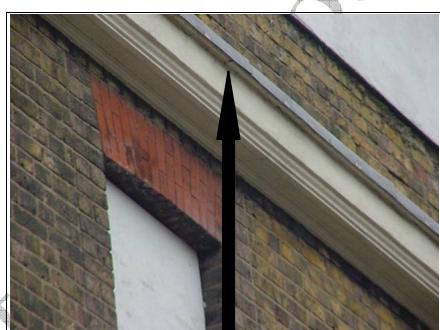
As we showed you, there have been problems with the main roof/plinth (see photos below) which are likely to have a shared liability.



Leak upstairs



Parapet wall detail



Close up of lead detail



Side without lead detail and with a plant growing out of it which will mean future problems. It is disappointing that only the absolute minimum has been carried out.

From our discussions we understand ten per cent of it will be your responsibility. If repair work is carried out the freehold owner may have the right to make you pay this without your agreement.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal advisor needs to advise you on this and advise you if there are any other likely costs and work that the Landlord is planning to do.

It is normal under a lease (remember we have not actually seen the lease) to have such clauses for one off payments, sometimes these larger sums of money are built up by what is known as a sinking fund which is a regular monthly payment and will include carrying out major works to such areas as roofs, walls, foundations and drains and can also include almost anything that is written into the lease. It is important that the lease is looked at carefully.

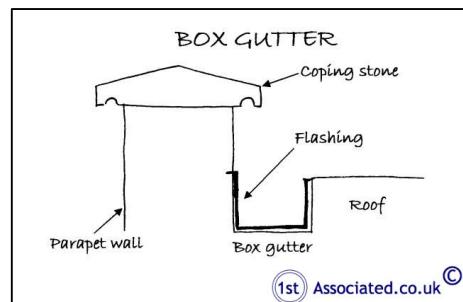
## 1.1 Roofs

We see the largest liability in this property being in relation to all the different roofs which do not look to have been altered or improved much for many years. As this property was once a pub, in our experience pub companies do not tend to do any proper maintenance, patch repairing at best, which could mean there are costly roof repairs and replacement in store.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal advisor needs to explain fully the implications of the condition of the rest of the property have to you under your lease terms.

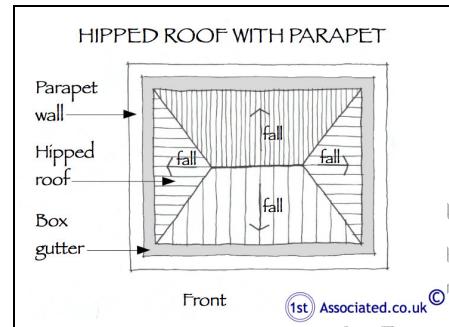
## 1.2 Roof above your property

The roof you have directly over your property has what is known as a box gutter. These are renowned for leaking. Unfortunately we couldn't get onto the roof of the property but we could see the front of it (see photo overleaf).





Our only view of the roof over your property



Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

## 2.0) Planned maintenance schedule

On a property such as this we would expect the management company (XXX Management Ltd) to have looked at the property overall and have some form of planned maintenance schedule with regard to work required.

We have carried out a Google search on this xxx management.co.uk appears to be their website. Within their website it does say

(other than why choose XXX) that they have Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) who can help prepare 10 and 20 years spreadsheets detailing all the capital costs required in future, so a planned maintenance may have been carried out upon this property.



Management company

As you are aware, the roof leak that we spoke to the top floor neighbours about with you took over a year to get repaired and required, from what they said, regular emailing of the landlord.

For example there should be reports on:

1. Electricity – Institute of Electrical Engineers test
2. Gas (if available in the property) - a Gas Safe test
3. Asbestos - to show it has been removed
4. Security of the property
5. Fire alarm system throughout the property (you don't want the flat above to be burning down while you are in bed below).

## **2.1 A good indication of the management company is to look at past work**

As you saw, the leak at third floor level seemed to be via the plinth which has now had a lead capping added to it in parts, although interestingly they only carried it out on the side where the leak was and not the front which had exactly the same detail with a plant growing out of it (meaning that it must be damp and has the potential to cause problems). It does look like there will be interesting times ahead with the management company who will need a lot of persuasion to carry out any repair work.

## **2.2 Tenants Association**

A good way forward, as we discussed, is to have a tenants association that looks at all the problems and motivates everyone to work towards getting them solved. Also another good way is to start to build up what is known as a sinking fund. This is where everyone pays an extra over cost which is put into a pot of money for major works.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Someone needs to set up a tenants association to put forward the voices of the people in the property.

Please see the Others Matters Section of this Report.

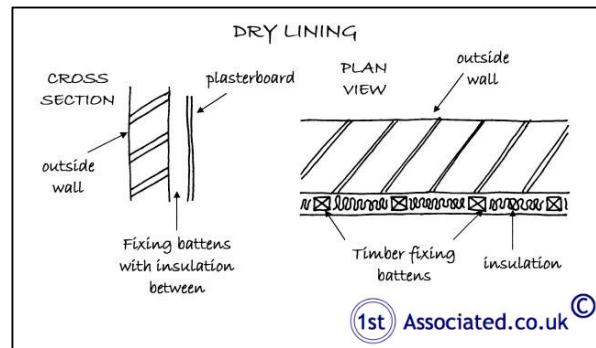
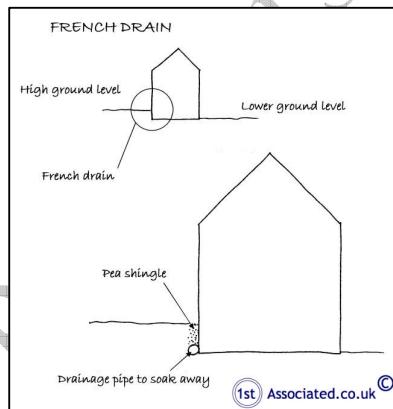
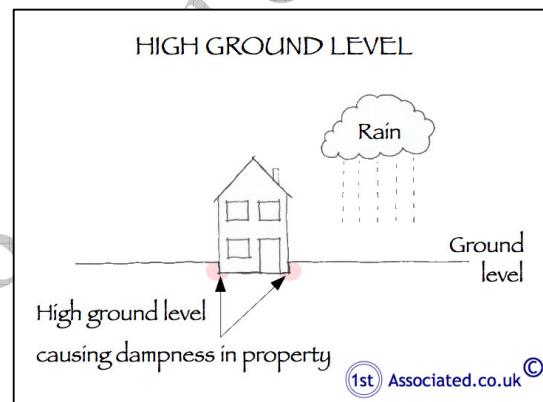
### 3.0) Dampness in your property

The flat/bedsit is very damp. It has been hidden with false walls, also known as a dry lining, with the exception of the far right hand corner where dampness is coming through. You can see in the photo that the damp meter reading is 96; typically we would expect readings of 40 to 60, so it is double of what we typically see.



Dampness

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We believe the dampness should be resolved. It could be argued it is a shared cost under the lease agreement. We believe that the ground level is too high to the adjacent land and as such a French drain should be added to reduce dampness. See article at end of report.



Dry lining hiding dampness

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £500 - £2,000 depending upon how much DIY you do as part of this. We have now seen the photographs taken of the garden area and as there is a conservatory on one side you will need consent of the adjoining owners. In our experience most owners are quite reasonable as long as you explain the problems to them properly. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

#### 4.0) Services

#### 4.1 Electrics

We did not find an electric fuse board in the property, it may be shared fuse board, although an individual fuse unit, in the corridor area.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Check with the estate agent where the fuseboard is.



Earth test

We also noted there are not very many socket points to the kitchen and would suggest adding extra socket points.

We would also expect in a new property such as things to have an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test and report carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

#### 4.2 Drainage

Although we ran the taps in the property for approximately fifteen minutes we were not able to view any manholes as we would normally check that the water is draining. We would add that in properties such as these which have been originally one property and then amended to many properties there can be problems with drainage.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally the property management company should have a closed circuit TV camera report of the drains.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

### 5.0) Thermal Efficiency

We spoke about replacing the single glazed timber windows with double glazed windows. We would recommend this and also recommend trickle vents to ensure that you have a throughput of air and the property is well ventilated, particularly as it is so damp at present.



#### Trickle Vents Defined

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

Windows – with vents underneath

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Replace single glazed timber windows with double glazed windows with trickle vents.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Double glazing costs range considerably. Remember, as this is a listed building, you may have to obtain Local Authority approval. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

### 6.0) Noise Transference

You are on the ground floor and there is an apartment above you which you may get noise transfer from. Noise transfer is where noise is passed through the structure. Although in theory the Building Regulations require insulation to be added between floors, in the conversions that we have seen particularly where a hard wood floor is used/laminate floor, as in your property, there can be a lot of noise transfer.

Please see the Floors Section of this Report.

## **7.0) Possible basement**

As mentioned earlier, we believe there may be a cellar underneath the pub area based upon the cellar flaps to the front.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Confirm whether basement exists.

May be a cellar underneath, as was common in many pubs

## **The Ugly**

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

We do feel this is a fairly high risk purchase for several reasons:

1. There is dampness in the only habitable room which is at a high level and this needs to be resolved. The difficulty with this is that the dampness is coming from areas which are on adjoining properties which could prove difficult to resolve.
2. We noted the problems with the roof and the amount of time it took the management company to resolve the roof problems (there may be other issues relating to this but we were not made aware of these),
3. The cellar flaps indicate there may be a cellar underneath the property so you need to understand if there is or is not.

All these issues make this a relatively high risk purchase.

## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

### **Bedsits**

We do want to advise that bedsits tend to be limited to a single person market and at the most a couple where there is nothing else available. They were very popular during the booms years particularly when next to nothing else is available but in recent years they have not been that popular. In fact, where the market prices allow, generally even single first time buyers will bypass the bedsit market.

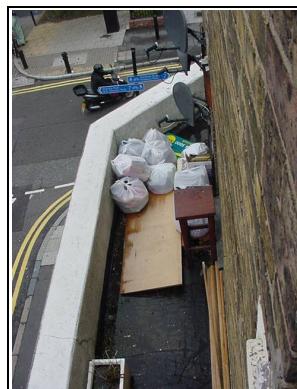
### **Property Development**

From what we can see with regard to this property and how it has been developed, the pub looks to have had minimal work carried out to it externally except where it creates extra sellable space and the main work has been on re-arranging the internal of the property to add the various flats.

Unfortunately, this now means that there is likely to be such things as roof problems, and even replacements that will need carrying out by yourself and other owner occupiers as part of your maintenance costs.



Roof starting to degrade. It doesn't look to have had any work done to it



Looks like owners/tenants storing items on the roof

## **Leasehold Enfranchisement Act**

As discussed, we believe as the leaseholders you have a right, assuming a certain number of you wish to buy it, to obtain the actual freehold (we feel this is well worth pursuing).

### **Meeting the upstairs neighbours**

We would always recommend that you meet the upstairs neighbours before you commit to purchase the property (and before you have any disagreements!). Ideally have a view of their flat to see if they have got a wooden floor or anything like that that would encourage noise transfer, as we have come across considerable problems and complaints with noise transfer from wooden floors from the first floor down.

### **Living in Multi-Occupied Leasehold Properties**

This is more a statement of information. There can be problems living in multi occupied properties with anything from noisy neighbours to non-contribution to the 'sinking fund'. The property is Leasehold, which is very different to having a Freehold property, where you can almost literally do as you like (within the scope of the Law!).

Please see the attachment in the Appendices at the end of this Report.

### **Communal Areas**

These are such areas as the corridors which will need repair and will generally be forgotten unless you have a well maintained property. We, and many other chartered surveyors, generally tend to judge a property partly by the communal areas.

### **Reactive / Day-to-Day Maintenance and Cyclical Maintenance**

By reactive / day-to-day maintenance we mean work of a more immediate nature, such as repairs to leaking showers or blocked drains or entry door systems. By cyclical maintenance we mean maintenance carried out on a regular basis such as to the fire alarm system and the lifts and the garden maintenance.

Dependent upon the terms of your lease agreement some of this may come under your responsibility but be managed for you and re-charged back to you by the Management Company.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Typically there is a Service Charge for day-to-day maintenance / reactive maintenance and also cyclical maintenance. Your Legal Advisor to confirm costs.

### **Services**

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

#### **Heating**

Heating is electric only. We would recommend that you see a copy of the developers Institute of Electrical Engineers test certificate which should have been carried out.

#### **Drainage**

Whilst we ran the tap for fifteen minutes without any build up or blockages the only way to be 100% certain of the condition of the drains is to have a closed circuit TV camera report. This is the sort of thing that we would expect a good management company to carry out.

#### **Water Supply**

There is danger in older properties of having a lead water supply; we would recommend that you speak to the water company to ask them if they have carried out such replacement, as you will be re-piping much of the water used in the building it gives an ideal opportunity to also check for any remaining lead pipes.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You should speak to the management company or speak to the Local Water Board.

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

## **DIY/Handyman Type Work**

In this section we would normally comment upon smaller/less skilled jobs. As the property is new, subject to the items that we have mentioned, there shouldn't be that much to do.

## **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 Building Costs**

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

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

## **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:

### **Dampness**

We would say as it your only habitable room it is important that it is ventilated appropriately and that the dampness is solved.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that you negotiate on the price based upon you having to resolve the dampness. We would recommend a large humidity controlled extract fan is fitted in the walls. The main cost will be with regards to getting an electric supply to it. The great thing about a humidity controlled extract fan is that it switches itself on and off as the humidity requires.

### **Negotiations for an outside area**

As discussed, we feel that an outside area would benefit both the future saleability of the property and the capital value but possibly not the market rent if you did manage to secure some land from the adjoining church/chapel.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend you speak to the church before committing to purchase the property as you can then judge for yourself if there is a possibility of the purchase of some land from them occurring.

We would comment that the developer may well have already have asked them about this when they were originally developing the public house.

## **Negotiations to ascertain whether there is a basement**

Equally we would say if there is a basement this also gives you a great opportunity to extend downstairs.

As a general comment, although we have mentioned that you should get quotes much of the work we are commenting on will be the overall responsibility of the Landlord/Managing Agent, albeit that they would recharge it to the Leaseholders. The idea of obtaining quotations is to allow you to negotiate with regard to the price of the property. We would always recommend you obtain at least three quotations for any work from a qualified, time served tradesperson or a competent registered building contractor prior to legal completion.

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

## **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 – LEASHOLD**

We have not seen a copy of the lease agreement and have assumed for the purposes of this report that it is a full repairing and insuring lease agreement and that there are no onerous or unusual clauses, if there are your Legal Advisor/Solicitor should bring these to our attention.

### **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 Building Surveys, as agreed to and signed by yourselves. If you have not seen or are not happy with the terms of engagement please phone immediately 0800 298 5424 or email the secretary from which this survey came from.

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

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

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

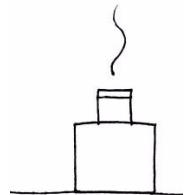
From our investigations the property is Grade II Listed  
(your Legal Advisor should confirm this and make their own enquiries)

and as such it will require various permissions  
to be obtained before work is carried out, over and above that  
normally required and possibly the use of appropriate materials  
for the age, type and style of property.



## EXTERNAL

### CHIMNEY STACKS AND FLUES AND PARAPET WALLS



#### Chimney Stacks

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

There are two chimneys over the property as far as we can see, although we assume you will have a shared cost with regard to all chimneys on the whole property.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal adviser to check and confirm.

#### Chimney One – front left hand side

This chimney is brick finished. There was very little of it that we could see and it does not look to have had any work carried out to it for some time. As you are aware, we have not gained access to the top floor flat as there was no-one in at the time of our inspection.



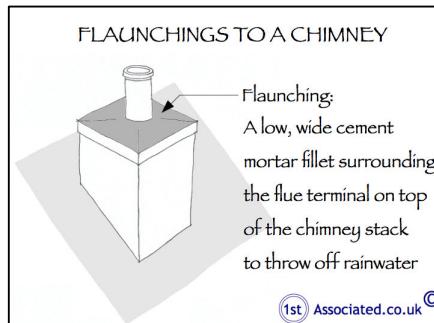
Front left hand chimney



Close up of chimney

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Periodically inspect the chimney.



### **Chimney Two – rear right hand side**

We could see next to nothing of this second chimney. Interestingly, it looks like it is directly over your property yet there is no sign of a chimney breast within your property.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal adviser to check and confirm that permission has been obtained to remove a chimney within this section of the property.



Rear chimney

#### Flashings Defined

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

#### Flaunchings Defined

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

## Parapet Walls

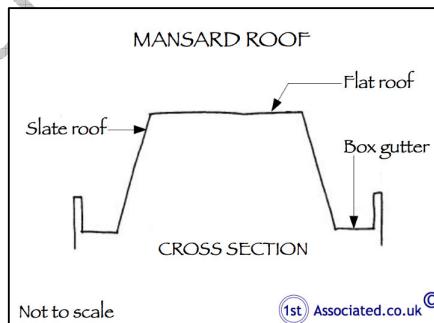
*Parapet walls are usually walls that are above roof level and often sit on the boundary of the property.*

It is very difficult to know how to comment on the parapet walls. There is a parapet wall directly above your property with a box gutter and these are renowned for getting blocked. There is also the parapet wall to the main property where the mansard roof is. As you are aware from the Executive Summary and us viewing it on the day, there is a leak coming in through this section and it took ages to get a response from the management company from what we understand from the occupier that we spoke to.

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



Parapet wall



## **Party Wall**

The party wall relates to shared items, such as the fire walls, dividing walls and in this case the dividing floors. If you do any work on these you will need to deal with the Party Wall Act. Here is a brief explanation of it.

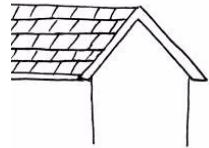
### Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

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

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

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

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



## **ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS**

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

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

### **Main Roof**

The main roof is pitched and clad with what looks to be a slate covering. This could be natural or manmade; it is difficult to tell from the very limited view we have had.

With this age of roof there will usually be a few missing or displaced tiles, this is nothing unusual.



Small view of roof over the property

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal adviser to check with the developer whether a new roof has been put on this property. Alternatively, if you can gain access to the top floor flat to speak to the occupier there to see if there are any leak problems. Remember your main risk here is the cost of repairing high level elements such as chimneys and roofs.

## **Flat Roofs**

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

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

Flat roofs are renowned for problems. In this case there are a number of flat roofs which you are likely to have a shared liability for. The one that we can see was from the top floor flat looking down. As you can see it is being used for storage which is not ideal for drainage. Again, the risk you have is the responsibility and shared cost of the adjoining roofs.



Other side of the flat roof



Flat roof that's being used as a storage could mean future problems – you will have shared liability for this



Flat roof area between the church and your property

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

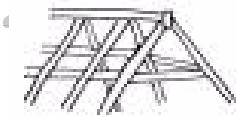
Also it could not be established if there is insulation within the roof or a vapour barrier, without the vapour barrier and combined with inadequate ventilation there will be an increase in the risk of wet or dry rot.

All the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. Flat roofs have been inspected from upper floor windows.

Finally, we were only able to see approximately one percent of the main roof from the top floor window and ten per cent of the flat roofs, again from the top floor window. 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**

We had not access to the roof space as we did not gain access to the flat. The only loft hatch that we did see was at the top of the stairs within the pub section of the property development, which simply showed us the under side of the floor above.



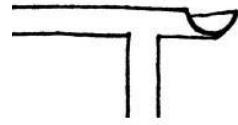
Roof access

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally get into the roof of the flat above to see the condition of the roof.

### **Roof Structure**

We have not had access within the roof so cannot comment.

# GUTTERS AND DOWNPPIPES



*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

These are predominantly box gutters which does mean the water sits above the walls of the roof and any leaks do go into the walls as well as through the ceilings as you could see with the top floor flat.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal adviser will need to contact the management company and ask them if they have a planned maintenance schedule for the work recommended on the property and if they had full roof surveys carried out.

## Soil and Vent Pipe

The soil and vent pipes look to be to the rear of the property, although as you are aware you actually took the photos (I did not climb up the wall).



Soil and vent pipes to rear

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

# WALLS



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

The property is built in a brick originally in a lime mortar in what is known as Flemish bond brickwork, repointed in cement mortar. We are unable to see any of the brickwork that is forming your actual property.

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.

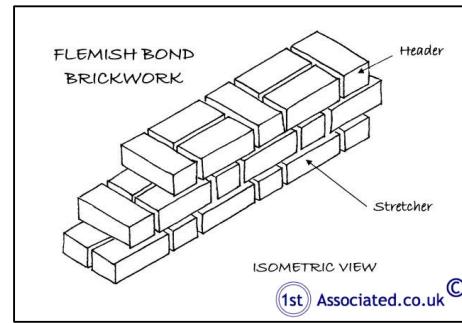
The solid external walls may be liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon their condition and their exposure to the weather. External faces should be kept in good condition.

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.



Flemish Bond brickwork



## **Render and Tiles**

There is a render section to the front of the property where you access the building and there is also a tiled section, all of which you will have a shared liability for.

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



## **FOUNDATIONS**

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

### **Foundations**

Given the age of the property you may find different depths of foundations. We would expect to find a stepped brick foundation possibly with a bedding of lime mortar.

### **London Clay**

As with most properties in the London area, this property stands on London Clay. It is therefore more susceptible than most should drains leak or trees be allowed to overgrow etc. It is not unusual to have some settlement in London properties. However, from our inspection of the walls we have found nothing unusual.

### **Building Insurance Policy**

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

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

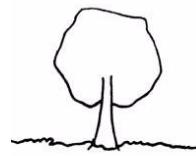
We would always recommend that you remain with the existing insurance company of the property.

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

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

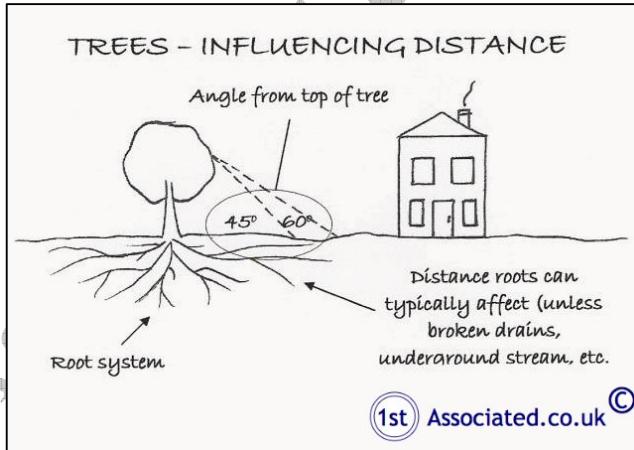
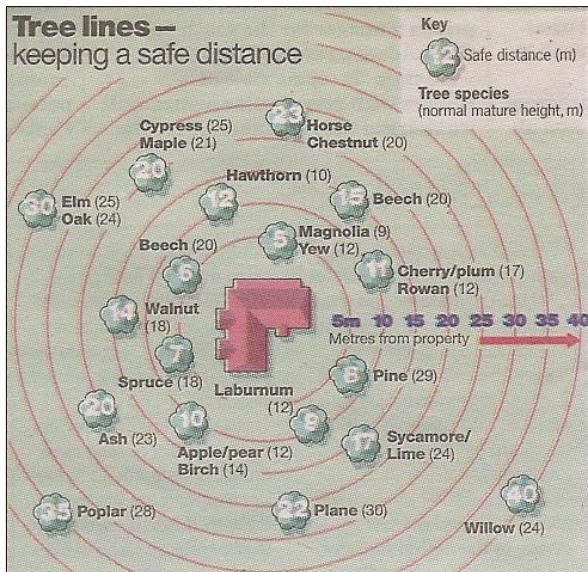
As no excavation has been carried out we cannot be 100 percent certain as to how the foundation has been constructed and we can only offer our best assumptions and an educated guess, which we have duly done.

# TREES



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

There are no trees within what insurance companies define as influencing distance of the property, although we were unable to see in the church garden properly.



### Influencing Distance Defined

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

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

## **DAMP PROOF COURSE**



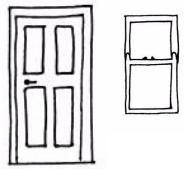
*The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required various other basic standards. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout London and then the country as a whole,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

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case we cannot see a DPC, but then we were unable to see the walls.

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

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

# WINDOWS AND DOORS



*This section covers windows and doors, and any detailing such as brick corbeling etc.*

*Windows primary functions are to admit light and air, but they also have thermal and sound properties. The doors allow access and egress within the property.*

## Windows and Doors

The property as a whole has a mixture of single glazed timber sliding sash windows, casement and modern equivalents. We would specifically comment that your windows were single glazed and would recommend, subject to local authority approval, that they are replaced with a double glazed unit, but you need to ensure the room is still well vented with trickle vents. We strongly recommend the addition of an extract fan, and as there is a lot of dampness in the property double glazed windows may cause further problems.



Single glazed windows

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

### Trickle Vents Defined

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

Finally, we have carried out a general and random inspection of the external joinery. In the case of the fascias and soffits it is typically a visual inspection from ground level. With the windows and doors we have usually opened a random selection of these during the course of the survey. In this section we are aiming to give a general overview of the condition of the external joinery. Please also see the Internal Joinery section.

## **EXTERNAL DECORATIONS**



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

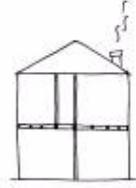
There is some painted render and there is obviously painted timber to the windows which you will have a shared cost of if you have a standard style lease.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal adviser to confirm.

Finally, ideally external redecoration is recommended every four to five years dependent upon the original age of the paint, its exposure to the elements and the materials properties. Where painting takes place outside this maintenance cycle repairs should be expected. Ideally redecoration should be carried out during the better weather between mid-April and mid-September.

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

# INTERNAL



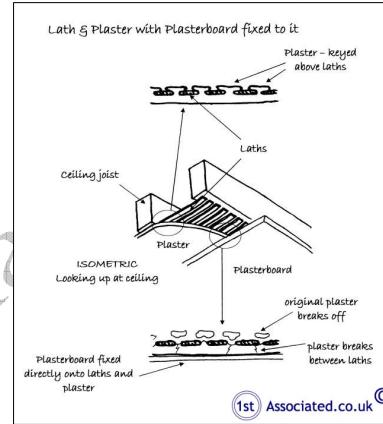
## CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

### Ceilings

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings could be the original lath and plaster but from the look of them they look like they have been replaced or plastered over using a gypsum plaster finish.

#### 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

The walls that there are are studwork. It is of course impossible to determine the construction without opening up the walls and we have therefore taken an educated guess.

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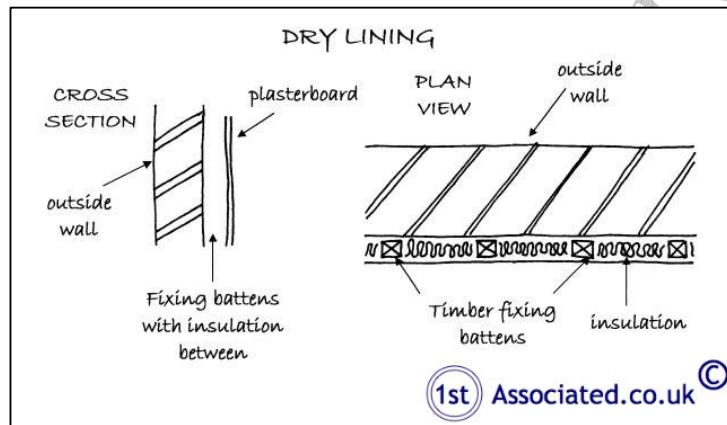
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## Perimeter Walls

As we explained, these are dry lined which means that there is a false wall in front of the rear wall. In the areas where we can actually find the actual wall (to the right hand side of the window) there was dampness coming through to this area. As you are aware, we are concerned about the amount of dampness in the property and the difficulty of resolving it, bearing in mind you have to make contact with next door, plus the conservatory which appears to be in the way on one wall. We would also ask why did the original builders not do it if it was an easy task?

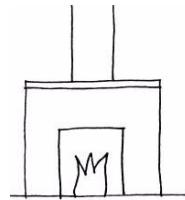


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Finally, ceilings, walls and partitions have been inspected from floor level and no opening up has been undertaken (unless permission has been obtained by yourselves). In some cases the materials employed cannot be ascertained without samples being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

We can see two chimneys to the property. The right hand one (all directions given as you face the front of the property) should have a chimney breast going into your property, which obviously is not present. To remove a chimney you need local authority approval.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal adviser to check and confirm with regard to local authority approval.

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

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

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

Please also see the Chimney Stacks section.

# 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

### Solid Floor

The floors were covered with laminate. They felt solid under foot so we have assumed that they are constructed in concrete. However, we have not opened up the floors or lifted the laminate.

There may be a chance there is a cellar underneath all or part of your flooring.



Laminate flooring

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

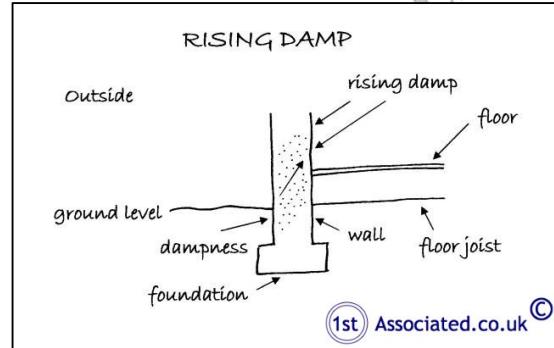


## DAMPNESS

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 a strong argument that true rising damp very rarely is found.



A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we have found rising damp (it could be argued that it is in fact lateral damp but either way it is damp).

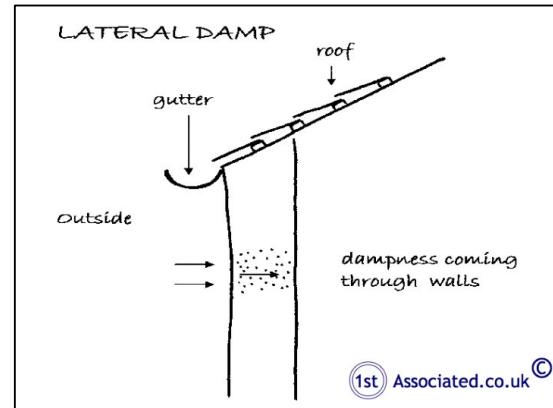


Testing for rising damp

## Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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

We used a damp meter on the external walls. Again, we have found dampness.



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



Testing for lateral dampness

## Condensation

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

At the time of the inspection there were no obvious signs of condensation but the property was not being used at the time of our inspection. In this type of bedsit type property we often find condensation can become a problem. It does depend upon how you utilise the flat. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating, cooling and ventilation of properties and opening windows to air the property regularly.

## **Extract fans in kitchens and bathrooms**

A way of helping to reduce condensation is to have good large extract fans within the kitchen area and shower room which are moisture generating areas.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a large extract fan is added in the shower area rather than the fairly small unit you presently have, and that it has a humidity controlled thermostat, meaning it turns itself on and off whenever the humidity reaches a certain level. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Shower room extract fan which we recommend you enlarge

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**



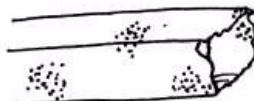
*This section looks at the doors, the stairway, the skirting boards and the kitchen to give a general overview of the internal joinery's condition.*

### **Kitchenette area**

We found the kitchenette area in as new condition. We did note it did not have many electric socket points. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

## **TIMBER DEFECTS**



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

### **Dry Rot**

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

We have not visually seen any dry rot during the course of our inspection. We would advise that we have not opened up the floors or seen in the roof.

## **Wet Rot**

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

Again, we have not visually seen any wet rot during the course of our inspection, however we had very limited view and have seen in the roof.

## **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. In this case we have not had access to the roof. 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, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to be 100 per cent certain that there is no woodworm the only way would be to access and check the roof.

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

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

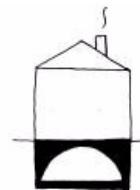
## INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

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

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



## CELLARS AND VAULTS

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

There may well be a cellar / basement underneath your property. It is important the cellar is accessed as these can flood. It would also be beneficial to be able to see the floor construction; although this did feel solid underfoot so it may be that the basement has been filled in, but it would be best to confirm this. Also if the basement does still exist it does offer the opportunity for you to purchase it and build into that room.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal adviser to check and confirm if there is a cellar.

Finally, we have not made a visual inspection of the cellar/vault and have no way of knowing what the construction is without opening up the structure.

# THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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

## HIPs

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

## Roofs

In this instance we have not had access to the roof.

## Walls

The walls to this property are solid in the sense that they do not have a cavity as a modern property would have. Also they are unlikely to have any substantial insulation, However, unfortunately it is generally very difficult to improve the insulation without affecting the external or the internal appearance of the property.

## Windows

The windows are single glazed and therefore will have poor thermal properties.

## Services

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

## Summary

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

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

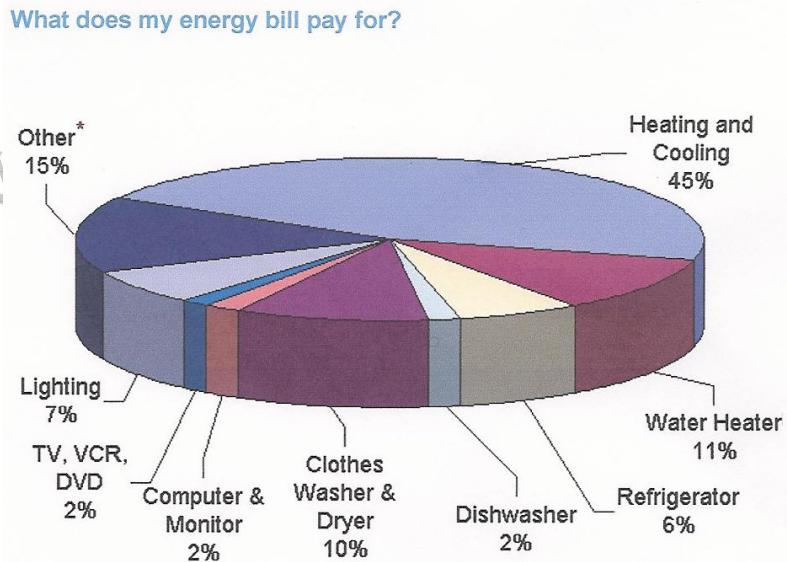
*HTTP://www.est.org.uk, which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.*

*or alternatively www.cat.org.uk*

*HTTP://www.withouthotair.com/Videos.html to download or buy like we did.*

*It is worth watching the video How Many Light Bulbs? by David J C MacKay HTTP://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UR8wRSp2IXs*

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



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

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## OTHER MATTERS

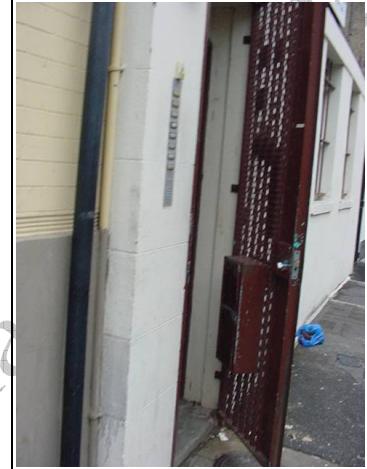


*In this section we put any other matters that do not fit under our usual headings.*

### Security

No security system was noted in the actual apartment. 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.

There is a door entry system and double front door; with the outer door being metal and the inner door being wood.



Security door

### Fire Systems and Smoke Alarms

#### Multi-occupied Property – Fire Alarms

We are a strong believer that where properties are multi occupied, i.e. there are more than one resident or tenancy, that the fire alarm system should be interconnected alerting any of the properties if there is a fire anywhere within the building.

In addition to this there should be regular fire alarm drills.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Advisor to confirm whether this is the case.

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

## **Insurance**

As this property is leasehold we assume you have to pay your building insurance via the Management Company or Building Owner. Typically they will arrange for insurance and recharge it to you at a percentage of the cost. You should ensure that they have suitably insured the property.

## **Asbestos**

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. In this case we have not noted asbestos.

This was commonly used post war until it was banned only in the last ten or so years, although it is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time. We are not asbestos surveyors.

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

## **SERVICES**

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

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

# ELECTRICITY



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

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

## Fuse Board

We did not locate the fuseboard, there may be a shared one in the entrance area.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ask the estate agent where the fuseboard is. We assume as the property is relatively newly converted the electrics will have been updated.

We recommend you obtain an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test and report should be carried out by a NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

## Earth Test

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



Earth Test

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary about adding extra socket points.

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

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

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ask the owners to show you where it is.

## Water Pressure

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

## Hot Water Cylinder

There is a factory insulated hot water cylinder located within the airing cupboard. This cylinder will therefore have a good thermal efficiency, although not as good as the more modern hot water cylinders. The hot water cylinder is to give you hot water for your taps and shower.



Hot water cylinder

## **Plumbing**

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

## **Heating**

The heating is electric which is not that unusual on this type of refurbishment, as sometimes it can be difficult compared with electrical installations to plumb in the normal radiators and boiler.

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

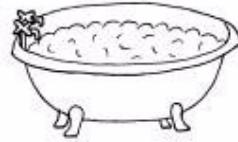
## **Ten Minute Heating Test**

There was no owner / occupier at the property and therefore we do not turn the heating on in case there is a problem with it.

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.

# **SHOWER ROOM**



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

## **Shower Room**

The property has a shower, wash hand basin and WC, which look in as new 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 foul drains from the property discharge into a public sewer; this should be confirmed by your Legal Advisor prior to exchange of contracts, who should also provide information in respect of any common or shared drains including liability for the maintenance and upkeep of the same.

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

### 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.*

#### No Manholes Found

In older properties often there were no manholes. Drainage was a relatively new invention that has been added at a later date.

Manholes are used where there is a change in direction of pipes or new pipes join the main run. It is therefore a good location for clearing any blockages. In this case we were unable to see any manholes.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a closed circuit TV camera report of the drains.

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

## **Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage**

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

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

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal. In this age of property it is likely to be into shared drains. These can be a problem during heavy rainfall and peak periods, such as the 9 o'clock rush to work.

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

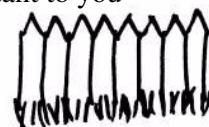
The main focus of this report has been on the main building. If you wish us to do a specific report on the other buildings then you need to instruct us for this separately. We are offering here a brief overview.

### PARKING

Parking is usually roadside parking on a first come first serve basis. At the time of the survey it was reasonably easy to park, although it was pay at the meter parking. If parking is important to you there looks to be a permit system in place.



Parking restrictions, if it is important to you



### EXTERNAL AREAS

**Boundaries:** These should be set out on your Deeds. We assume they are the perimeter of the building.

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.



Wall around rear garden area

### Upstairs Neighbours

Friendly and helpful and it is worth visiting them again before you purchase the property.

## **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) Replacement windows.
  - iv) Roof and similar renewals.
  - v) Central heating installation.
  - vi) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
  - vii) Removal of any walls in part or whole.
  - viii) Removal of any chimneys in part or whole.
  - ix) 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](http://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*

# **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 an overcast summer's day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

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

## **NOT LOCAL**

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

## **EMPTY PROPERTY**

The property was empty at the time of our survey, we were therefore not able to carry out our usual question and answer session or have our questionnaire filled out.

## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited

as we did not have access to the roof

as we were not able to open up the floors

as the property was empty we did not have the benefit of talking to the owners or them answering our usual question and answers

as we did not have access to the upstairs flat or the cellar (if there is one)

As you were with us you understand to some extent the limitations of the survey. It was good to meet you and have a chat with you about the property.

## **BUILDING INSURANCE**

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

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

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

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

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

# **APPENDICES**

1. General Information on Living in Leasehold/Shared Freehold Properties.
2. The Electrical Regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
3. Information on the Property Market
4. French Drain Article

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## **General Information on Living in Leased/Shared Freehold Properties**

### **Living in Multi Occupied Properties**

- As a leasehold/shared freehold flat owner, you usually own and are responsible for the maintenance of everything within its four walls, including floorboards and plasterwork, but not usually the external or structural walls.

The landlord, who can be a person, a company, a local authority or a housing association, owns the structure and common parts of the building and the land it stands on and is responsible for its maintenance.

According to independent advice agency the Leasehold Advisory Service (Lease), it's now becoming quite common for the leaseholders/shared freeholders to own the freehold of the building through a residents' management company, effectively becoming their own landlord.

- A lease/shared freeholder agreement is a contract between the leaseholder/shared freeholder and the landlord, giving conditional ownership for a fixed period of time. It is the key to all the responsibilities and obligations of both the leaseholder/shared freeholder and the landlord and should spell out what you can expect from the landlord in terms of services.

No two leases/shared freehold agreements are the same, so it is essential you read yours carefully to find out exactly what your rights and responsibilities are. Get advice if unsure about any legal language.

- Your contractual rights laid out in the lease/shared freehold agreement normally entitle you to expect the landlord to maintain and repair the building and manage the common parts such as grounds, staircases and hallways.

At the same time, you will be required to keep the inside of the flat in good order, to behave in a neighbourly manner, to pay a share of the costs of maintaining and running the building and not to do certain things, such as sub-let, without the land-lord's consent.

- Because leasehold/shared freehold is a tenancy, it is subject to the payment of a rent – which may be nominal. Ground rent is a specific requirement of the lease/shared freehold and must be paid on the due date.

- Service charges are payable by the leaseholder/shared freeholder to the landlord for all the services they provide, including maintenance and repairs, insurance of the building and, in some cases, provision of central heating, lifts, lighting and cleaning of common areas etc. Service charges usually also include the costs of management, either by the landlord or by a professional managing agent.

Details of what can and cannot be charged by the landlord and the proportion of the charge to be paid by the individual leaseholder/shared freeholder are all set out in the lease/shared freehold agreement. So do read it very carefully.

All maintenance costs are met by the leaseholders/shared freeholders and landlords normally make no financial contribution. Service charges can vary from year to year and can go up and down with no limit other than that they are “reasonable”.

Most modern leases/shared freehold agreements allow for the landlord to collect service charges in advance, repaying any surplus or collecting any shortfall at the end of the year.

- The lease/shared freehold agreement normally obliges the landlord to take out insurance for the building and common parts and gives them the right to recover the cost of the premium through service charges. The policy doesn't usually cover the possessions of individual leaseholders/shared freeholders.
- Many leases/shared freehold agreements provide for the landlord to collect sums in advance to create a reserve fund, ensuring that enough money is available for future scheduled major works such as external decoration. The lease/shared freehold agreement will set out the sums involved and when regular maintenance works are due.
- Leaseholders/shared freeholders have powerful rights to challenge service charges they feel are unreasonable at Leasehold Valuation Tribunals (LVTs), which provide a relatively informal way to resolve residential leasehold/shared freehold disputes.

Application to LVTs can be made under many different laws and on many subjects. LVTs can determine, among other things, the reasonableness of a service charge and whether it is payable and disputes relating to insurance.

Lease publishes useful leaflets, which are downloadable from its website, on LVTs.

- Some landlords carry out the management of the property themselves but many appoint a managing agent to manage and maintain the building on behalf of the landlord

in accordance with the terms of lease/shared freehold agreement, current relevant legislation and codes of practice.

The agent takes instruction from the landlord, not the leaseholders/shared freeholders, but should be constantly aware of the leaseholders'/shared freeholders' wishes and requirements. The agent will receive a fee which is usually paid by leaseholders/shared freeholders as part of the service charges.

- There is no statutory regulation of managing agents. Some are members of professional organisations such as ARMA, the Association of Residential Managing Agents, tel: 010-797-2607 or go to [arma.org.uk](http://arma.org.uk), and agree to abide by its own code of practice and that of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, tel: 0870-333-1600 or visit [rics.org.uk](http://rics.org.uk).
- If there is a problem with management services, the leaseholder's/shared freeholder's argument is not with the agent but with the landlord, who has ultimate responsibility for the full and proper management of the property.

Leaseholders/shared freeholders with such complaints are advised to discuss their situation with Lease before contacting their landlord. In extreme cases where the landlord will not meet his obligations to maintain the buildings and communal areas in accordance with the lease/shared freehold agreement, it may be necessary to take action through the county court. Lease can give in-depth advice on such a course of action.

- For disgruntled leaseholders/shared freeholders who have suffered long-term bad management from landlords or who believe they could do a better job at a lower cost, there is another option.

Since September 2003, flat owners in England and Wales have been able to exercise the Right to Manage (RTM) and take over the management of their building without having to prove any fault on the part of their landlord.

RTM, part of a package of reforms stemming from the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002, empowers leaseholders/shared freeholders to take control of the running of their building without having to stump up large sums of money to buy the freehold. They also gain better control over insurance costs and the level at which service charges are set.

Exercising this right is a relatively simple process. A formal notice is served on the landlord by an RTM company which has been set up by a sufficient number of qualifying

tenants – leaseholders/shared freeholders whose lease/shared freehold agreement was originally granted for a term of more than 21 years. For details, see the Lease website.

But don't think of RTM as easy DIY management and a way of getting rid of all managing costs. Managing a building involves running a complex business and complying with a raft of legislation and there will always be managing costs. Lease advises leaseholders/shared freeholders exercising this right to appoint a professional to manage their block.

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

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

### **Work You Cannot do Yourself**

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

## **INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is a very good website for information on Listed Buildings

## LISTING INFORMATION

### 1-7, Clapton/Hackney

Description: 1-7

Grade: II

Date Listed: 4 February 1951

English Heritage Building ID: 423693

OS Grid Reference: TQ3494085437

OS Grid Coordinates: 534940, 185437

Latitude/Longitude: 51.5517, -0.0551

Location: Clarence Place, Hackney, Greater London E5 8HN

Locality: [Hackney](#)

Local Authority:

County: [Greater London](#)

Country: [England](#)

Postcode: E5 8HN

*Incorrect location/postcode? [Submit a correction!](#)*

- [Listing Text](#)
- [Google Map/Street View](#)
- [OS Map](#)
- [Bing Map/Birds Eye View](#)
- [Comments](#)
- [Photos](#)

### **Listing Text**

1. CLARENCE PLACE E5

5013 (North Side)

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Nos 1 to 7 (consec)

TQ 3485 19/131

II GV

84

Independent Chartered Surveyors

—— Marketing by: ——

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2.

Early C19 terrace, each 3 storeys and basement, 2 windows. Stock brick with stone-coped parapet. The upper parts of Nos 3 and 4 have been rebuilt, presumably after war damage. Gauged flat brick arches to 2nd floor sash windows, some with glazing bars; and to long casements with transoms and small cast iron balconies on 1st floor. 1st floor sill band. Ground floor round-headed windows, in round-arched recesses of gauged brick, some boarded up, some with glazing bars. No 4 has interlaced bars and margin lights. 6-panel doors with fluted pilasters, cornice head and wide fanlight with interlaced glazing bars and margin lights. 5 steps with cast iron handrails. Nos 1 and 2 are empty and decaying. No 7 has 1st floor cast iron covered balcony.

Nos 1 to 8 (consec) form a group with Nos 20 to 25 (consec) Clapton Square.

Listing NGR: TQ3494485440

# French Drain

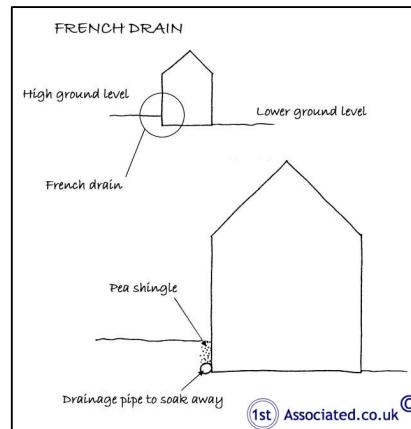
## Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

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 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 dino-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.