

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

Surrey



Semi-detached



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INTRODUCTION

Firstly, may we thank you for using our services once again and your kind instruction; we have now undertaken a Building Survey (formerly known as a Structural Survey) of the aforementioned property.

As you may recall 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.

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

As always we recommend that you set aside time to read the report in full, consider the comments, make notes of any areas that 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 house is yours but we will do our best to offer advice to make the decision as easy as possible.

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REPORT FORMAT

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

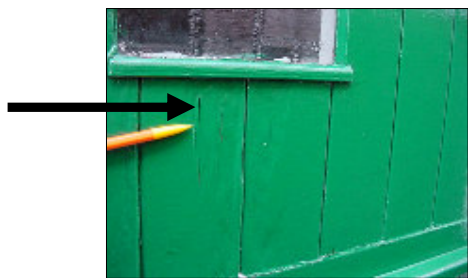
GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

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

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



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

ORIENTATION

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

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two storey semi-detached property with a garage to the right hand side, all sitting on a sloping site.

The property has a garden and driveway to the front. To the rear there is a mature garden and a patio area directly outside the property.

The area in general is residential of similar era of properties.

We believe that the property was built in the 1930's, possibly 1940's. If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

1927	Charles Lindbergh flies across the Atlantic
1928	Vote for Women aged over 21
1929	Car radio invented
1930	Ghandi's Salt March
1931	The Highway Code issued
1932	James Chadwick discovered the neutron
1933	Assassination attempt on FDR
1934	Mao Zedong began the Long March
1935	The driving test became compulsory
1936	The RMS Queen Mary left Southampton on her maiden voyage to New York
1937	The emergency (999) telephone number introduced
1938	The Empire Exhibition Opened in Glasgow
1939-1945	World War II (6 June 1944 D-Day)
1940	Food rationing introduced
1941	The National Fire Service established
1942	Anne Frank went into hiding
1943	William Morris established the Nuffield Foundation
1944	D-Day

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EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view



Rear view



Right hand view



Looking up street



Looking down street



Front garden



Rear garden

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ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

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

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Entrance hall
- 2) Lounge front
- 3) Lounge rear
- 4) Kitchen
- 5) Cloakroom and cupboards under stairs

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Bedroom front
- 2) Bedroom rear
- 3) Bedroom rear corner
- 4) Shower room to right hand side

Outside Areas

The property has a garden and driveway to the front. To the rear there is a mature garden and a patio area directly outside the property.

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

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INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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

Ground Floor



Lounge front



Lounge rear



Kitchen



Cloakroom



Under stairs cupboard

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First Floor



Bedroom front



Bedroom rear



Bedroom rear corner



Bathroom

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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Chimneys:	Two rendered chimneys, one lowered chimney
Main Roof:	Pitched hipped roof clad with clay tiles with nibs
Main Roof Structure:	Hipped cut roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	Cast iron and plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Painted Render with Tyrolean Coating
Fascias and Soffits/ Exposed Rafter Feet:	Timber
Windows and Doors:	Aluminium double glazed windows in timber frames

Internal

Ceilings:	Lath and plaster and Plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Mixture of solid and hollow (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Suspended timber floor (assumed)
First Floor:	Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)

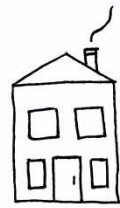
Services

We are advised that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (all assumed). There is a Glow Worm boiler located to the rear right hand side of the kitchen. The electrics are 1970's/1980's and are located under the stairs.

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.

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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 250 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 has potential provided you are prepared to work hard on the property.

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

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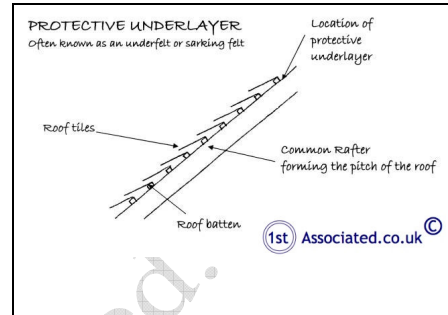
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The Bad

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

1.0)Roofs

With roofs of this sort we are always in a Catch 22 situation. A modern roof has a roof tile and then a protective underlayer. The two elements work together to make the roof watertight. In many older buildings, particularly those post the war years they will tend to have no protective underlayer.



In this case there is no protective underlayer and we can see the back of the tile.



Back of tiles exposed



Close up of back of tiles, lighter areas are where dampness is getting through

We could see in some areas that the tiles were slipping and in some areas the tiles were spalling. Although it is letting in some rain water as we can see by the staining to the rear of the tiles, we do not think it is excessive.



Distortion of tiles

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ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend ultimately that a complete replacement of the roof is necessary.

For the time being we would recommend you put a roof board down with insulation so you can use the roof more easily and can also identify exactly where dampness is coming in so you can get work carried out. There are some fairly obvious places, if you look in the roof without a torch light on you can literally see daylight coming through in some areas. We can also see, for example, to the front of the property that there is some distortion of the tiling (we noted this was also to the left hand property).

We would also recommend that the original wooden ladder into the loft hatch is eased and adjusted and maintained as these are excellent ladders in our experience when they are in working order.

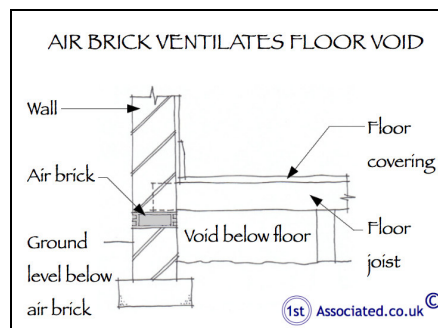
ANTICIPATED COST: For floor boarding, etc approximately £750 - £1,500. For a new roof we would expect costs to be in the region of £10,000 assuming there can be some re-use of the tiles on the roof; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section of this Report.

2.0) Possible deterioration under the floor

The airbricks to the perimeter walls allow air to pass under the suspended timber floor system which helps reduce the chances of dampness.

In this case the airbricks have been painted over in part, particularly to the rear of the property and therefore do not have a throughflow of air.



ACTION REQUIRED: You need to clear the existing airbricks and add new airbricks.

We recommend that you open up the floor as you may need to prop up part of the floor or add and replace timbers.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £250 - £750; please obtain quotations.

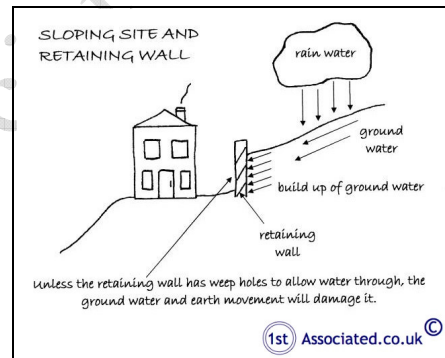


Airbrick to rear not adequate

Please see the Airbricks Section of this Report.

3.0) Sloping site

Any property on a sloping site is more susceptible than one on a flat site; it is simply the laws of gravity. Foundations normally allow for such occurrences, particularly in new properties. There can still be some minor movement.

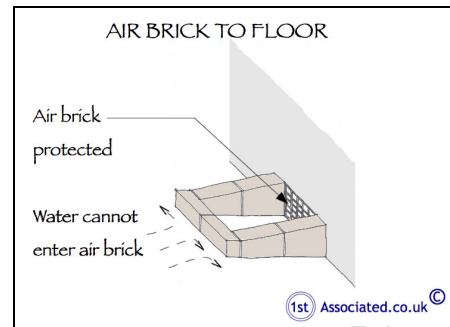
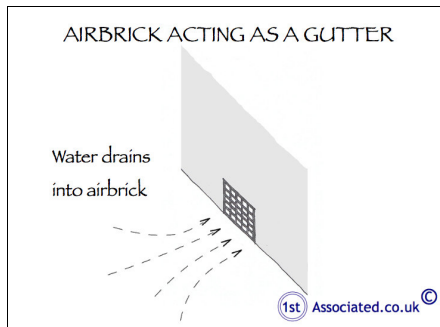


Sloping site



Small retaining wall to rear garden

ACTION REQUIRED: Next time it rains heavily you need to stand outside the property and see how the rainwater gets around the property. We are concerned that the airbricks to the rear of the property are acting as gutters.



4.0) Central wall concern

As I am sure you recall, we discussed the dip in the floor around the central wall.

After giving this due thought and consideration, we believe it is likely that part of the floor has been levelled using hardboard and the area around the door has not been levelled using hardboard as this would increase the height and stop the door from opening which has resulted in the apparent dip in the carpet. We would add this is all very unusual.

ACTION REQUIRED: This is why we would recommend that you open up the floor. We have in the past found woodworm in properties where there has been a lack of airflow under the floor.

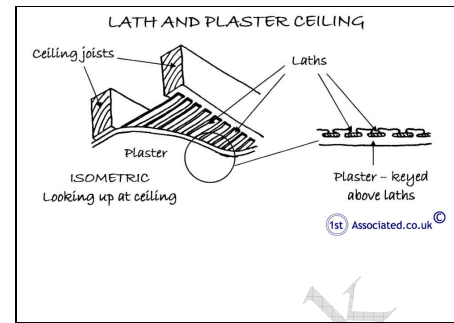


Please see the Floors Section of this Report.

5.0) Cracking to ceilings and walls

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There is hairline cracking within the property to the ceilings and walls. We believe on the first floor this relates to dampness getting in through the roof which is where the main cracking is and the original roof structure which is lath and plaster.



Hairline cracks to plaster

5.1) Artex ceilings with asbestos

The ceilings are old and of an era when the artex contained asbestos. Although we believe this to be minor, please be careful and do not rub down the ceilings.



Artex ceiling

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend that you apply a skim coat of plaster to the ceilings to seal in the asbestos or similar material, we are aware there are some materials specifically for going over asbestos artex.

ANTICIPATED COST: Per room we would expect costs in the region of £200 - £400; please obtain quotations.

Our insurance company requires us to advise we are not asbestos surveyors. Please see the Ceilings and Walls Section of this Report.

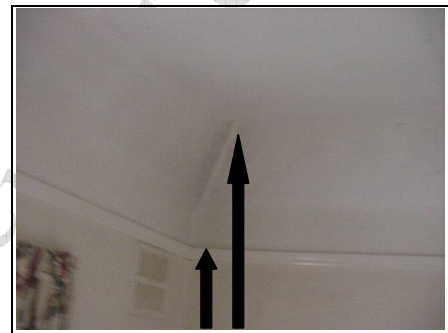
6.0) Smokers house

Please be aware that we believe the current occupiers of this house to be fairly heavy smokers which means that the nicotine staining that we showed you to the door will have coated all of the interior.

ACTION REQUIRED: You will need to wash it down with sugar soap before you apply any paint.

7.0) Cold bridging

In this style of property one of the characteristics is that you have a higher chance of cold bridging. We have explained this in an article to the rear of the report. We believe your last survey also commented on this.



Cold bridging

Cold Bridging Defined

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

ACTION REQUIRED: The only way to minimise it is to have good extract fans within the bathroom and kitchen with humidity controlled thermostats.

ANTICIPATED COST: A few hundred pounds. Also be careful about how much washing you dry internally; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Article in the Appendices of this Report.

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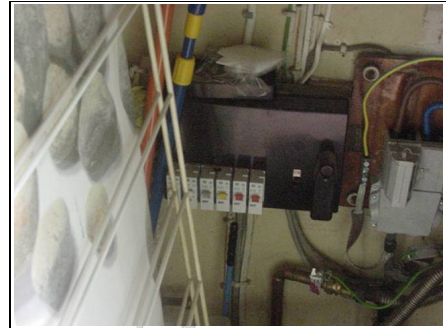
8.0) Services

8.1) Electrics

The electrics were slightly dated. Better are now available.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend replacement.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £200 - £400; please obtain quotations.



Dated electrics

8.2) Single panel radiators

There are some single panel radiators. This property may not warm as quickly as you wish.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend you live in the property and then if there are problems we suggest you replace the radiators with double panel radiators.



Single panel radiator

8.3) No manhole found

We did not find any manholes to the property.

We are always unhappy when we do not find a manhole as we cannot see if the drains are working other than by running the taps which is what we have done.

Manholes Defined

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

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.

Please see the Main Drains Section of this Report.

9.0) Possible alterations/extension

You mentioned that you would like to knock holes in walls, etc. This is perfectly possible but expensive as lintels are required.

You also spoke in the long, long term that you may wish to extend the property. We noticed the neighbours have a conservatory.



Next doors conservatory

The Ugly

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

There is nothing which we feel falls within this section however the roof is a specific risk and the floor is a specific risk. You can migrate the risk of the floor by opening it up before you legally commit to purchase the property which thinking about it, this may be an option in this particular case as it is a probate sale.

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Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Maintenance

It should be appreciated that defects which would normally be highlighted in a modern property, effectively form part of an older property's overall character and style. Such character defects are normally considered acceptable and may not have been specifically referred to as defects within the context of this Report. The Report is looking at structural issues which we consider may be a problem.

This type of property will require ongoing maintenance and repair and a budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in good condition. This will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration. In this case we believe the property is in below average condition.

Getting to know more about older properties

We would recommend that you go on a Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings weekend course on looking after and maintaining older properties. Even if you do not intend to carry out the work yourself it does give you a far better idea of what work should be carried out. The website for this is www.SPAB.org.

Services

Whilst we have carried out a visual inspection only of the services within the property and we would always recommend you have your own specific testing for each of the services.

Electrics

The electrics are 1970's/1980's, there are much better systems now available. We suspect there may have been some DIY work in the property as well so we would recommend an Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE) test and report carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent, which is recommended whenever a property changes occupancy.

Heating

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

Drainage

There were no manholes found for the drainage. We did run the tap for 15 minutes without any build up or blockages. This is not the same as finding the drains.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend that a closed circuit TV camera report is carried 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: We would reiterate that we recommend with regard to all services that you have an independent check by a specialist contractor.

DIY/Handyman Type Work

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as redecorating to turn the property into your home. Remember you will need to wash down with sugar soap; preparation is the key to the decoration lasting on this particular property. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

Purchase Price

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

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Estimates of 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.

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SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



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

We would refer you to our comments in the Executive Summary, 'Good', 'Bad' and 'Ugly' Section and ask that you re-read these.

If at all possible, we would recommend that you have the floor opened up although in many cases this is not possible. You need to assess how likely it is that someone else will purchase this property. We would also strongly recommend that you visit the neighbouring property on the left hand side as the lady seemed to have considerable knowledge of the property having been a good friend of the previous owner.

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

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

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MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT

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

TENURE – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)

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

ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

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

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

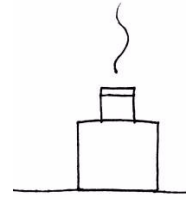


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EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS AND DORMER WINDOWS



Chimney Stacks

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

There is one central chimney and two rear chimneys to this property which sit on the Party Wall (all directions given as you face the property).

Chimney One – central located to the front left hand side

This chimney is render with approximately three chimney pots. From what we could see from ground level it looked in below average condition (this may be because the main building looks to have been fairly recently redecorated) considering its age, type and style.

We are unsure if it has a flashing at all. It possibly has a tile on edge flashing which is a type of flashing that we are not very keen on as dampness does ultimately get into the property.



Chimney one

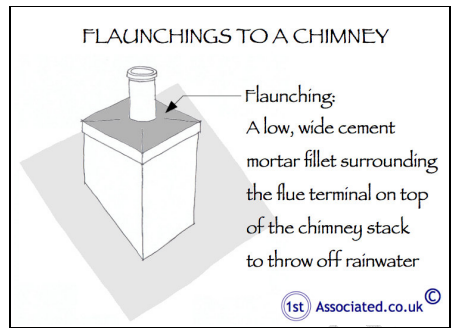
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Unfortunately we were unable to see the flashing, we therefore cannot comment.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend redecoration of the chimney and the flashing is checked by the summer of 2013. Periodically inspect the chimney.



Chimney Two – located to the rear

Again this chimney is rendered and looks in below average condition. It has a tile on edge flashing; we would make similar comments as per the front central chimney and would recommend work in the summer of 2013.

ACTION REQUIRED: Redecoration required in the summer of 2013. Periodically inspect the chimney.



Rear chimney



Tile on edge flashing

Chimney Three – located to the rear right hand side

There is a chimney to the rear right hand side of the property which has been lowered at some point in time.



Chimney Three

Flashings Defined

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

Flaunchings Defined

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

Render Defined

A sand and cement external coating applied in two or three coats or layers.

Dormer Windows

Dormer windows are often used where rooms are formed within the roof space and have the advantage of allowing light into the area and also giving the head space to allow them to be stood next to.

The dormer window roof is made from the same material and the cheeks of the dormer are clad in tiles. Generally we could comment for their age, type and style they are in average condition.

Finally, Dormer windows have been viewed from ground level and literally from the dormer windows themselves.



Dormer window

Party Wall

The party wall relates to shared items, such as the chimneys. If you do any work on these you will need to work within the Party Wall Act. Here is a brief explanation of it. We recommend you seek professional advice on party wall work.

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 and dormer windows from the parts we could see above roof level. The inspection was made from ground level within the boundaries of the property (unless otherwise stated) using a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. A closer inspection may reveal latent defects.

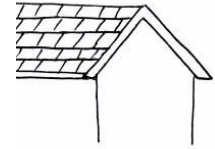
Please also see Chimney Breasts, Flues and Fireplaces Section of this Report.

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ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



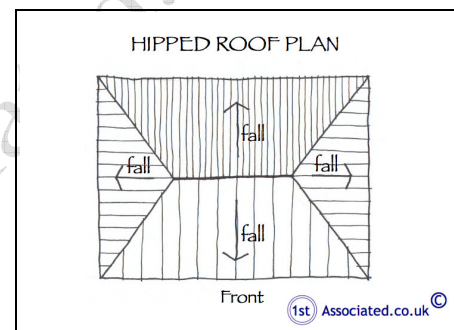
The Roof Coverings and Underlayers section considers the condition of the outer covering of the roof. Such coverings usually endure the extremes of climate and temperatures. They are susceptible to deterioration, which ultimately leads to water penetration.

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

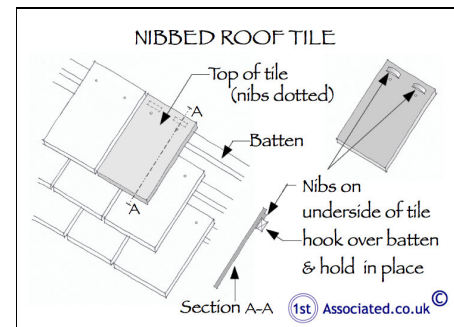
We will consider the roofs in two areas, the main roof and the flat roof to the garage.

Main Roof

The main roof is hipped and clad with clay tiles with nibs and, from ground level, this looks in below average condition with areas of opening up considering the roofs age type and style.



Due to the construction of hipped roofs, they are prone to slipping or to dropping which can, in extreme cases, push the walls out of vertical. In this case we saw no signs of significant wall movement.



Main roof



Distortion of tiles



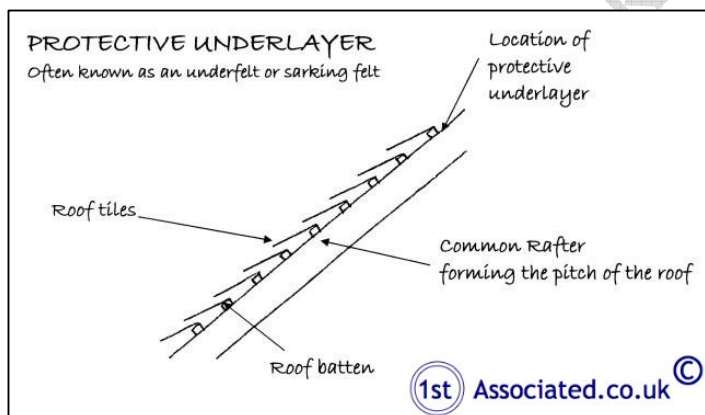
Tiles opened up

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ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend a roofer for one day repositions the tiles prior to the winter of 2012 and carry out periodic inspections and maintenance of the roof, as required. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

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



In this case there is no protective underlayer and we can see the back of the tile.



This photo shows the common rafters (the ones that form the pitch of the roof) and the back of the tiles

Flat Roof to garage

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.

We were pleased to see that the rear felt roof has a reasonable fall on it, albeit that moss is still sitting on it. Please note we did not access the garage; if you haven't accessed it, then we would recommend that you do view it internally.



Flat roof to garage



Flashing where garage meets
main building



Moss on flat roof

Up to date regulations for flat roofs

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

Also it could not be established if there is insulation within the roof or a vapour barrier, without the vapour barrier and combined with inadequate ventilation there will be an increase in the risk of wet or dry rot. As this is a non-habitable area this doesn't concern us too much. We are happy to return to view the garage if access is gained to it.

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 the rear of the property.

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

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

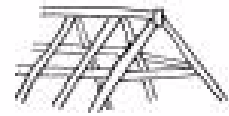
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ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

Main Roof

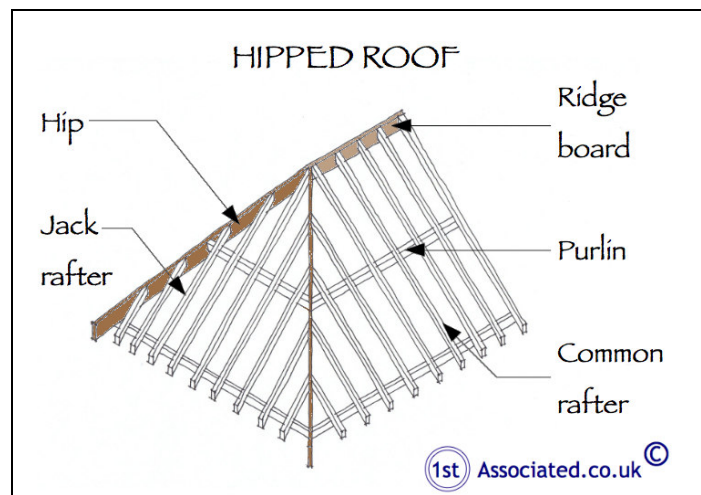
Roof Access

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing. There is a great wooden ladder into the loft hatch which we would recommend is eased and adjusted and maintained as these are excellent ladders in our experience when they are in working order.

The loft has been viewed from the loft hatch as it is heavily insulated which means that we were unable to see the joists properly, which has limited our viewing slightly.

Roof Structure

This type of roof structure has what is known as cut hipped roof. This is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects; however it is in line with what we typically see.



Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

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



Roof timbers

Our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof, the insulation and stored items. What we could see was generally found to be in below average condition for its age, type and style due it not having any sarking felt and we can see some dampness getting in. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.

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

Fire Walls

The property has one brick firewalls which is located to the left hand side (all directions given as you face the property).

Fire Walls Defined

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



Fire wall

Ventilation

There is natural ventilation in this roof as there is no sarking felt.

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Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.



Danger notice – mass of insulation

Electrical Cables

We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of wiring found in the roof. In this case we simply couldn't see any due to the mass of insulation.

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

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

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GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

Gutters and Downpipes

The property has a mixture of the original cast iron gutters and downpipes and the more modern replacement plastic gutters and downpipes. Cast iron of this age will need maintenance. If regularly maintained it last longer than plastic, in our experience

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



Plastic gutters and downpipes



Gutter to the garage looks like it is leaking and hasn't got a fall on it towards the downpipe



Cast iron gutter to rear of garage

ACTION REQUIRED: We would always recommend you stand outside the property next time it rains heavily and see how well the drains cope with the rainwater particularly looking at the guttering and the joints. We would also recommend that the gutters and downpipes are cleaned out, the joints are checked and the alignment checked to ensure that the gutters fall towards the downpipes.

Soil and Vent Pipe

The property has plastic soil and vent pipes.



Soil and vent pipe

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



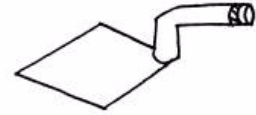
Rear soil and vent pipe

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WALLS



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

The walls are constructed of render with what looks like a Tyrolean Coating.

Render

The external walls are rendered with what looks like a Tyrolean Coating. This is a spray coat which is often advertised as not requiring further maintenance. From what we understand, it is a plastic based paint.

In this particular case we believe the property was originally rendered. The problem now is the plastic Tyrolean coat of paint stops the property from breathing.



Render

Tap test

We have carried out a tap test to the render at low level (literally hitting the render with the back of a hammer to try to establish if there are any hollow areas in it) and we feel in this instance that the render is in average condition for its age, type and style.



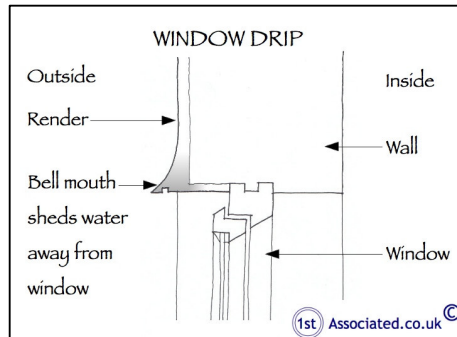
Render tap test

Render Detailing

You can normally tell whether the render is good or not by the drip detail over the window and the bell mouth to the base of the property.

Window drip detail

In this case we found a drip detail to the windows.



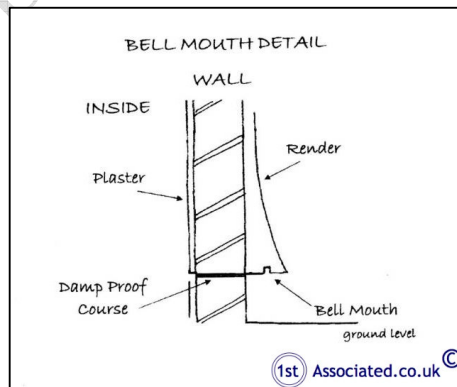
Window drip detail

Bell mouth to base of property

To the base of the render there was no bell mouth detail. Ideally there should be a bell mouth detail.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add a bell mouth to the base of the property.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £1,000 - £2,000; quotations required.



No bell mouth detail

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Painted render

Do not underestimate the amount of time/cost it will take to repaint the property particularly as there is high level work which is likely to need scaffolding which can be expensive.

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

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 painted render / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age timber lintels, concrete lintels or metal lintels are common, which can be susceptible to deterioration that is unseen, particularly if in contact with dampness.

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

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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.

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.

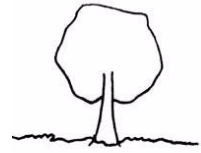
We would always recommend that you remain with the existing insurance company of the property.

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.

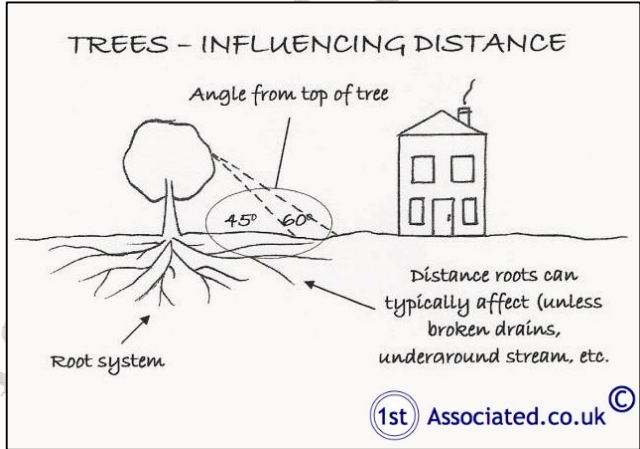
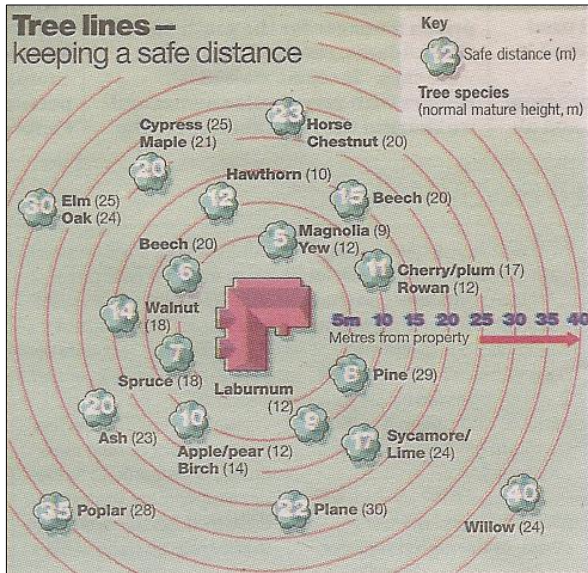
As no excavation has been carried out we cannot be 100 percent certain as to how the foundation has been constructed and we can only offer our best assumptions and an educated guess, which we have duly done.

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 would term as influencing distance.



Influencing Distance Defined

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

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DAMP PROOF COURSE



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

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



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

Unable to see DPC due to the render

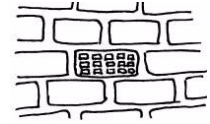
Finally, sometimes it is difficult for us to identify if there is a damp proof course in a property. We have made our best assumptions based upon our general knowledge of the age, type and style of this property.

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AIRBRICKS

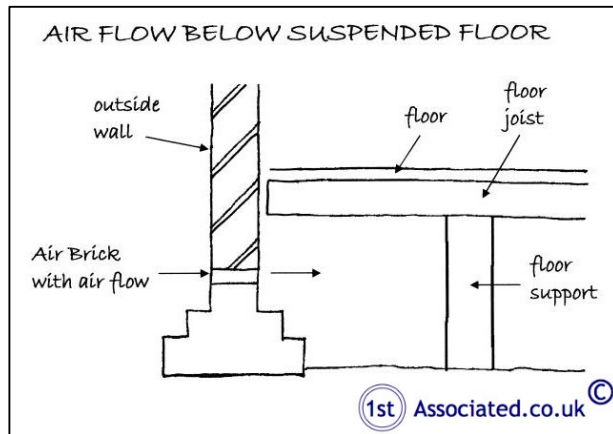


In properties with suspended floors you need to have an airflow beneath to stop deterioration. The air is allowed to pass under the property by the use of airbricks. Generally the rule of thumb is that airbricks are spaced every metre and a half approximately, but this depends upon the specific circumstances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

Low Level Air Bricks

Air bricks are essential to have a through flow of air as this helps to reduce the chances of wet rot, dry rot and woodworm. Our concern is the airbricks have been partially blocked.

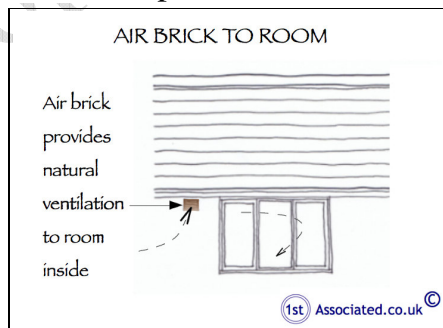
ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Front airbrick

High Level Air Bricks

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



High level airbrick

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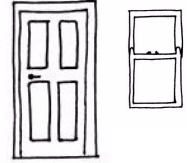
Finally, we have made our best assumptions based upon our visual inspection of the outside of the property and our general knowledge of this age, type and style of construction. We have not opened up the walls/floor, unless we have specifically stated so in this section.

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FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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

Fascias and Soffits and exposed rafter feet

The fascias, soffits and exposed rafter feet are timber. We would comment they are in average condition for their age, type and style. We generally find exposed rafter feet are never decorated properly and therefore rot can occur.



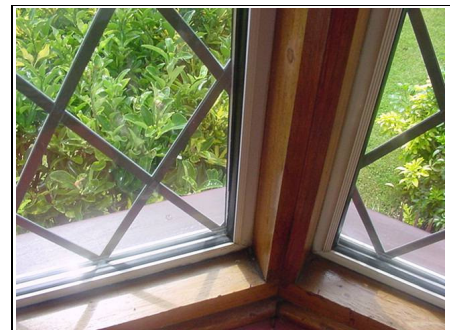
Exposed rafter feet

ACTION REQUIRED: Make sure gutters and downpipes are watertight before carrying out any work on fascias and soffits.

Windows and Doors

The property predominantly has aluminium windows, which are set within a timber frame. Double glazed aluminium units were common and popular in the 1960s and 1970s.

A characteristic with aluminium double glazing is you can get a lot of condensation. You may wish to in the long term replace them. The condensation really does depend upon how you live in the property.



Aluminium windows within timber frames

French Doors

These are the older style French doors. As they are also aluminium they could also get some dampness around them. We did check at the time and couldn't find any.



French doors

Painting aluminium windows

Aluminium windows are difficult to paint; they have a prefinished paint on them when you originally buy them. We have seen people trying to paint them; in fact recently we were at a hospital where they had been painting them which was not very satisfactory. Ideally they should be sprayed which isn't practical for most people so we would always recommend that you keep them as clean as possible. You may ultimately wish to change them.

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.

We would reiterate that you should not underestimate the amount of time/cost it will take to repaint the property particularly as there is high level work which is likely to need scaffolding which can be expensive. The chimneys require repainting as soon as possible.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

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INTERNAL



CEILING, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

Ceilings

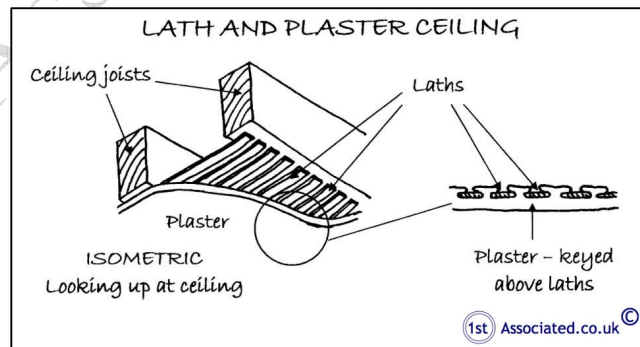
From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be lath and plaster, some of them may have had plasterboard tacked over them.



Artex ceilings

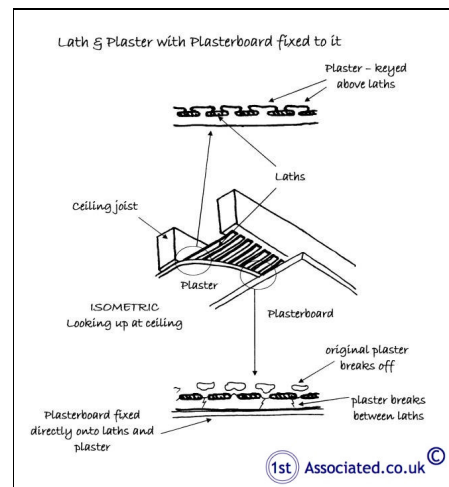
Lath and Plaster Defined

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.



Hairline cracking

There was a lot of hairline cracking, more than we would normally expect. We believe this is caused by the dampness coming in through the roof.

Internal Walls and Partitions

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

Perimeter Walls

Originally these would have been constructed with a wet plaster, possibly a lime plaster. Again, we cannot be 100% certain of the wall construction without opening them up which goes beyond the scope of this report.

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

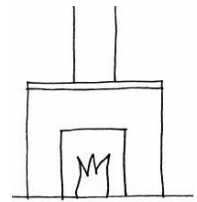
We cannot comment upon the condition of the structure hidden behind plaster, dry lining, other applied finishes, heavy furniture, fittings and kitchen units with fitted back panels.

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CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

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



Fireplace

At the time of the survey no chimneys were in use. Any chimneys that you do not propose to use should be capped and ventilated to prevent dampness.



Chimney within roof space



Patch repairs to rendered chimney

Venting

We were pleased to see that the chimneys were vented.



Vent on chimney breast

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Flue



Flue from boiler

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

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

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

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

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FLOORS

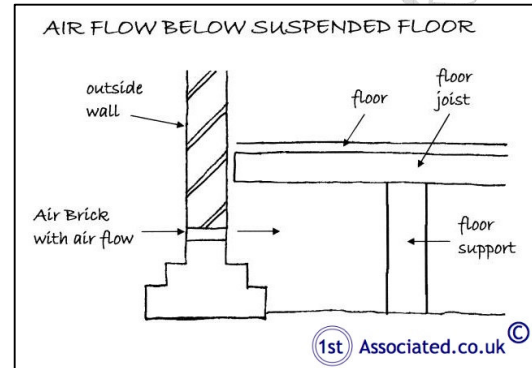


Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.

Ground Floor

The floors of the property are suspended timber floors which require air movement underneath to minimise wet rot, dry rot and woodworm.

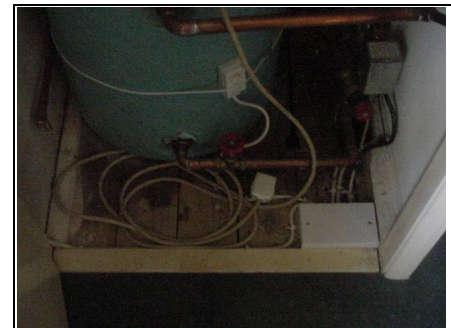
Our investigation has been restricted due to us not opening up the floor or lifted the carpets.



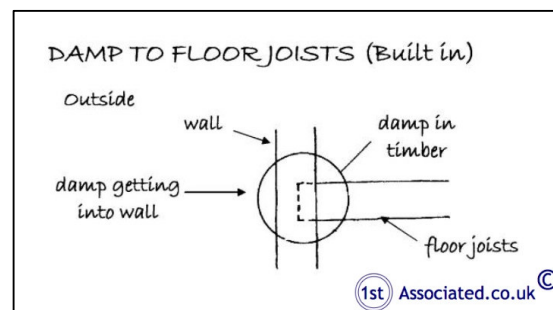
ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend that you open up the floor. Please see our comments within the Executive Summary with reference to the slope on the floors.

First Floor

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

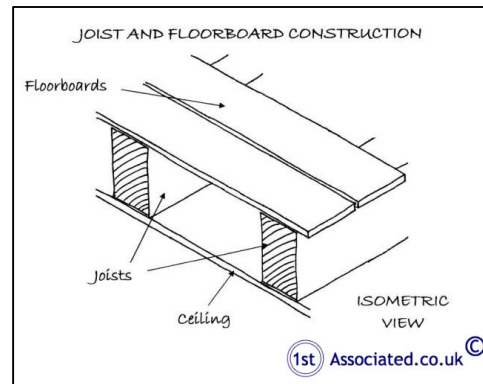


Floorboards indicate floor joists run from front to rear of property



Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with fitted carpets, etc. Please see our earlier comments about our theory that there is hardboard underneath them which could mean that the floorboards underneath that are damaged. 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.

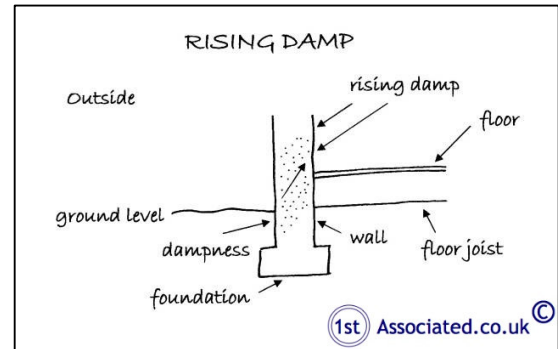


DAMPNESS

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

In this particular case we have found minor rising damp which is probably due to the property being empty.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our earlier comments about a drip detail being added to the render.

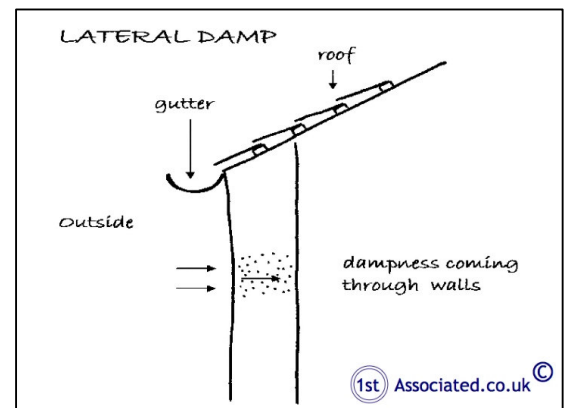


Testing for rising damp

Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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

We used a damp meter on the external walls. We have found minor dampness as we would expect in an empty property.



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 signs of condensation at the time of our inspection however as this property has aluminium windows there may well be some dampness problems.

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

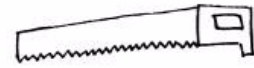
Extract fans in kitchens and bathrooms

A way of helping to reduce condensation is to have good large extract fans within the kitchens and bathrooms which are moisture generating areas.

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

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

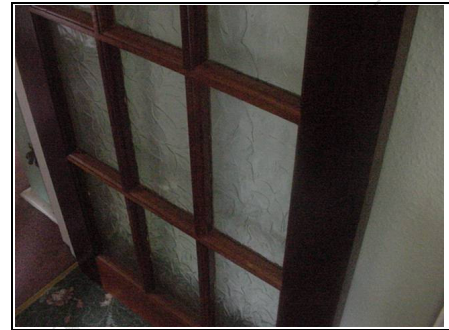
INTERNAL JOINERY



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

Doors

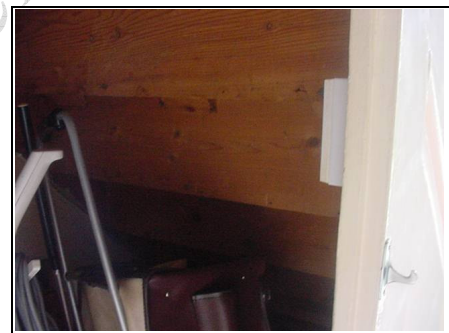
The doors are glazed; we couldn't see a kite mark on the glass indicating that it was safety glass. If you have young children or old people using the house it is recommended that you replace.



Door with no safety glass

Staircase

We noted that the underside of the staircase was exposed. It is more normal today to have a half hour fire barrier to stop fire spreading from the ground floor to the first floor in a worse case scenario. You may wish to take a view on whether you add this.



Stairs not lined

Handrail

The handrail openings on the stairs are wider than is now acceptable. 100mm is recommended.



Handrail openings on stairs are wider than is now acceptable.

Kitchen

We found the kitchen in a dated condition, for example as you can see in the photograph the sink is worn and ultimately needs replacing. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.



Deterioration to kitchen sink –
needs replacing

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

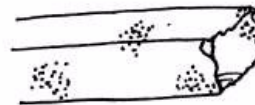
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TIMBER DEFECTS



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

Dry Rot

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

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

Wet Rot

*Wet rot, also known by its Latin name *Coniophora 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. We generally find exposed rafter feet are never decorated properly and rot can occur.

Again, we would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had a limited view of the roof.

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Woodworm



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

The roof / floor is the main area that we look for woodworm.

Within the roof we found no obvious visual signs of woodworm activity or indeed signs of past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage. In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active. 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.

We would comment in this instance that the reason we are recommending that you open up the floor is that there may well be some woodworm underneath the floor due to the lack of ventilation in the property. We would be more than happy to comment on any photos you take when you open up the floors.

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

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

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

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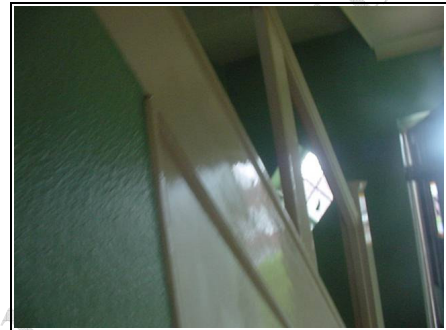
INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

The paintwork has suffered from nicotine stains.

ACTION REQUIRED: Nicotine stains need sugar soaking down and a lot of elbow grease and then repainting.



Nicotine stains

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

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

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THERMAL EFFICIENCY



Up until the mid 1940s we did not really consider insulation in properties. Post war insulation started to be introduced gradually. In the 1970s thermal efficiency started to be thought about following the fuel crisis and in more recent years there has been a drive towards thermal efficiency. However it should be noted 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

The roof has approximately of 300mm of insulation and has a Danger Notice.



Danger notice – mass of insulation

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 double glazed and therefore will have reasonable thermal properties.

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Services

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

Summary

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

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

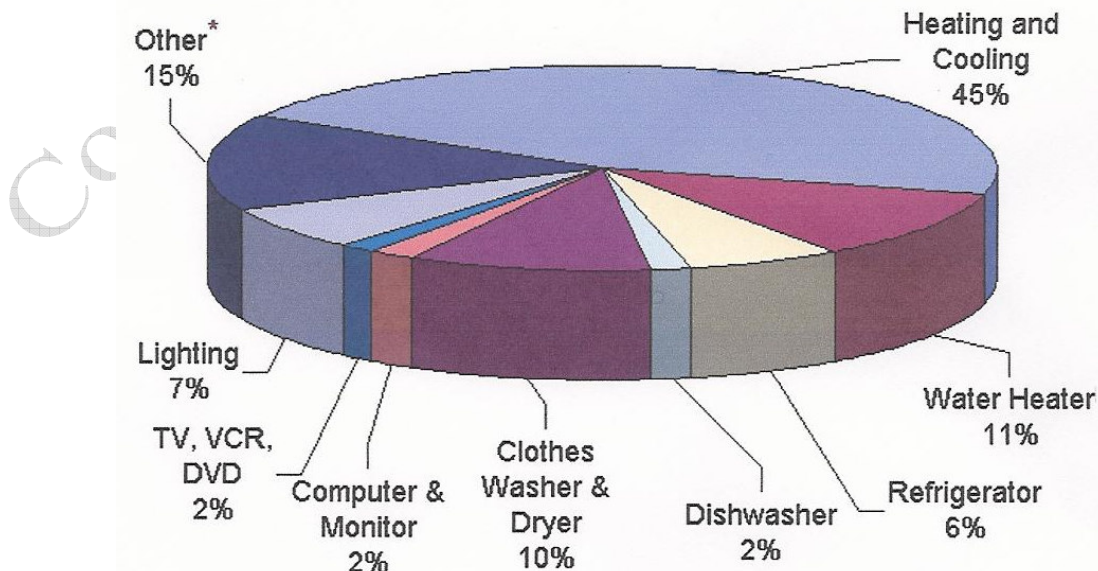
[HTTP//www.est.org.uk](http://www.est.org.uk), which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.

or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

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

What does my energy bill pay for?



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

OTHER MATTERS

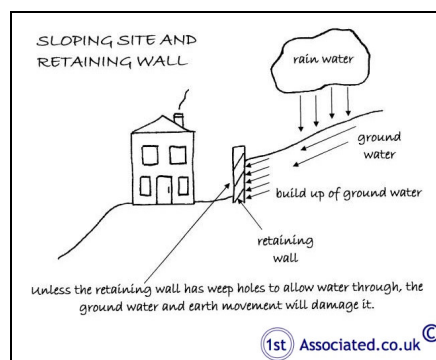


In this section we put any other matters that do not fit under our usual headings.

Sloping site

Any property on a sloping site is more susceptible than one on a flat site; it is simply the laws of gravity. Foundations normally allow for such occurrences, particularly in new properties. There can still be some minor movement.

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



Security

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

Fire / Smoke Alarms

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



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

Insurance

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

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

Asbestos

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

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.

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

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SERVICES

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

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

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ELECTRICITY



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

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

Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located under the stairs. The fuse board looked oldish, better are now available.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Fuse Board

Earth Test

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



Earth test

ACTION REQUIRED: As the property is changing occupancy an Institute of Electrical Engineers test and report (IEE) should be carried out by a NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

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

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

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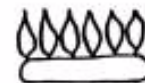
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GAS



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

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

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

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

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PLUMBING AND HEATING



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

Water Supply

The controlling stopcock was not located; it is possibly located under 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 pressured water (they would blow up if they didn't!).

Cold Water Cistern

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

Hot Water Cylinder

There is a factory insulated hot water cylinder. This cylinder will therefore have a good thermal efficiency, although not as good as the more modern hot water cylinders.



Hot water cylinder

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Plumbing

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

Heating

The boiler was located to the rear right hand side of the kitchen; it is manufactured by Glow Worm.

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.



Boiler

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.

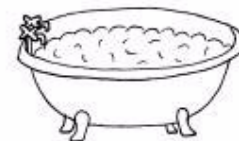
We cannot comment on the condition of the water service pipe to the building. It should be appreciated that leaks can occur for some time before signs are apparent on the surface.

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BATHROOM



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

Bathroom

The property has a three piece bathroom suite, consisting of a shower, wash hand basin and WC, which looks in average condition, subject to some day-to-day wear and tear, as one would expect. Unusually the bathroom does not have a bath.

Cloakroom

The cloakroom is situated under the stairs and comprises a WC with cat toilet seat and wash hand basin.



Downstairs WC

ACTION REQUIRED: The bathroom areas are dated. You may wish to in due course to replace.

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

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MAIN DRAINS



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

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

The cold taps have been run for approximately quarter of an hour in the bathroom 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.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Manholes Defined

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

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.

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OUTSIDE AREAS

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

GARAGE/ PARKING



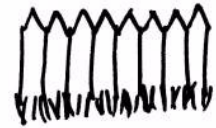
Please note we have not viewed the garage internally.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Roof Coverings section.



Garage

EXTERNAL AREAS

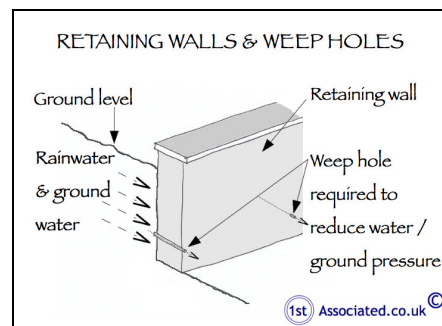


Front Garden

Please see our earlier comments with regards to the property being on a sloping site. The front garden has a small retaining wall; you need to ensure there are weep holes to this.



Front garden



Rear Garden

Remember when it rains the entirety of the garden will discharge towards your property as it is a sloping site.



Rear garden



Small retaining wall in sloping garden

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



Left hand boundary



Right hand boundary



Next door's wall on right hand side would benefit from being tidied up

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.

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Neighbours

Left Hand Neighbours

We spoke to the Irish lady who advised that the previous owner had been a great friend of hers and she would be more than happy to help with whatever she can.

Right Hand Neighbours

We had a fairly brief discussion; they advised they had no problems.

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POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:
 - i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
 - ii) Rising damp treatments.
 - iii) Double glazing or 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 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**.

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REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses
Published by Estates Gazette Limited

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

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

House Builders Bible
By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

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LIMITATIONS

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

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

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

ENGLISH LAW

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

SOLE USE

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

ONLY HUMAN!

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

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

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WEATHER

It was a mild summer's day at the time of the inspection.

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.

OCCUPIED PROPERTY

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

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INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited due to the amount of insulation in the roof which prohibited us from viewing the roof timbers properly and we have not opened 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. We were pleased to meet both yourself and your wife at 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.

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APPENDICES

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

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THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

Work You Cannot do Yourself

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

INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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

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

www.hometrack.co.uk

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

www.motleyfool.co.uk

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

www.rightmove.co.uk

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

www.zoopla.co.uk

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

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Condensation and Cold Bridging

What is Cold Bridging?

Independent Chartered Surveyors solve problems

If you need help or advice with regard to your property
Free phone 0800 298 5424

We are independent Chartered Surveyors who regularly carry out Building Surveys sometimes known as Structural Surveys. Over the years we have come across all sorts of problems. An interesting problem that we are coming across more frequently is Cold Bridging. We can only see this becoming a bigger problem as we insulate our properties more and expect to live in warm tropical climates (inside) and don't understand how our environments and properties work.

We are happy to talk about any property matter whatsoever. Please feel free to phone for a friendly chat. This is just a reminder about our Free phone 0800 298 5424 number. Here is some more information about cold bridging.

What is cold bridging and how does it work?

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



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

Cold Bridging

Cold bridging is caused by a colder element in the structure or fabric of the building allowing coldness to pass through. When warm moist air is present in the property and it passes through the colder elements of the structure we have what is known as

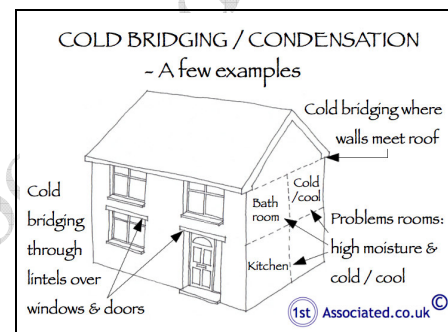
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Cold Bridging. This is often caused by a combination of issues. It can occur from things such as having a shower or a bath, cooking or clothes washing, particularly if you are drying washing on the radiators. It could, in commercial properties, be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

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

Here is our sketch on Cold Bridging

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



Cold Bridging isn't just about condensation on mirrors

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

Cold bridging is far worse than condensation as it is caused by an element in the structure which you can do very little to change without great expense. If you buy a 1960's property for example, with concrete lintels that cause cold bridging, this is a characteristic of the property and it is very difficult to change. However not only could it be a characteristic of the building it could also be caused by alterations that you make to the building.



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

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To give you some examples of Cold Bridging

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



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

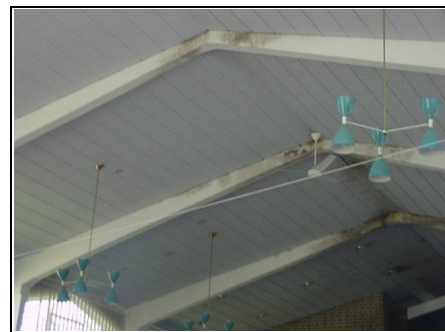


A close up view showing there is a concrete lintel over the door and window. This is where the cold bridging occurs causing condensation inside.

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

Commercial properties suffer from Cold Bridging too

Commercial buildings are often built using structural frames. These frames are usually constructed of concrete or metal or sometimes both. The structural frame forms the skeleton of the building as you can see in the adjoining photo. Sometimes the structural frames, particularly, the concrete ones can suffer from Cold Bridging which causes blackening of the concrete frame.



Cold Bridging in a commercial property with a concrete frame.

This can look like the roof has leaked and can lead to wrongly diagnosing a problem as being a roof leak. This can result in great time and expense being wasted repairing a roof that was not leaking and indeed in some cases has led to a

new roof being fitted which has costs tens of thousands of pounds. This happened because it wasn't understood what the problem was.

When is Cold Bridging Likely?

In our experience we have seen cold bridging occurring in

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

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



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



Post war 1960's properties with plastic double glazing without trickle vents that have been added can cause condensation.

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Problems with 1970/1980 era properties relating to Cold Bridging

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

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

where we added insulation into our structures

For example with;

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

This meant they were warmer which has meant the significance of a lintel, over a door or window, being colder and allowing the transfer of coldness becomes much more important. This results in condensation that we commonly see above windows in this age and era of property.



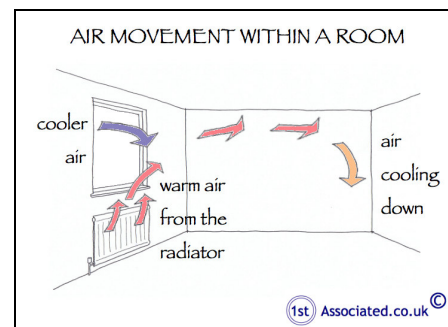
1970's property with cold bridging to the roof beams and the lintels



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

How to solve Cold Bridging

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



Where do we most commonly find Cold Bridging?

Our thoughts on this have very much changed as we used to say that cold bridging was typically found in properties from the 1960's/1970's. However we are increasingly finding it in a broader range of properties, particularly Victorian properties, where people are trying to live to modern standards of heating and insulation without understanding that the properties need to

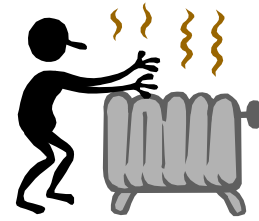
breathe as well. We have also found cold bridging in properties where extensions have been carried out and where the extension has been built to a different standard to the original property.



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

Is your life style a factor in Cold Bridging?

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



why

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

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Expert witness case, what is an expert witness?

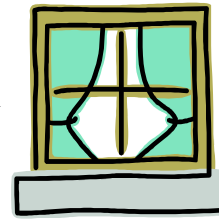
This is where you employ someone who is a specialist within a field, such as us as Chartered Building Surveyors, who comment on problems of condensation within the property. We have been involved in several court cases as expert witnesses where landlords are being taken to court over the condensation that is occurring in their property. The expert witness case looks at how this condensation is occurring and if it relates, for example, to the occupiers' lifestyle or whether it relates to the way the building was constructed and where there are, for example, cold bridging elements. When discussions of this nature take place in court they can be very expensive.



Older style London converted flats with property problems such as Condensation and Cold Bridging

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

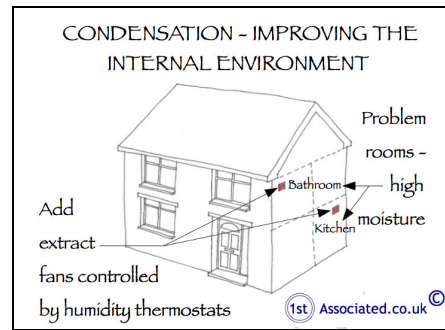
This really is a difficult question to answer. We have been involved in a number of cases as expert witnesses or advocates the answer can vary. We would comment that there are factors that can be changed and factors that can't be changed.



and For example, the occupiers lifestyle can in most cases be amended. This may involve the occupier having an understanding of the problems they are causing. For example, drying lots of washing on a radiator inside may be causing excessive moisture in the atmosphere. Equally not opening the windows and closing or sealing up vents can be a problem.

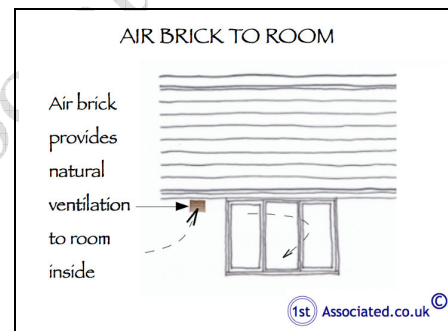
Design of the Building

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



Things to remember about an air brick

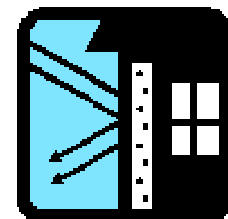
If you are thinking about adding an air brick then you need to be aware that airbricks don't actually allow that much air through. Although externally a nine by three air brick has a lot of gaps, as these gaps taper, it is generally considered that only about one inch square of air regularly passes through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



Air brick may not ventilate room enough

What's happening in brand new housing?

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



As Chartered Surveyors we like to see things that have been in use for some time work before we would recommend them.

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

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



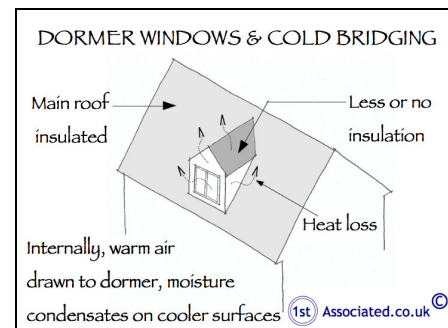
Sliding sash windows can swell in the winter months

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

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

Extensions and Cold Bridging.

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



A more technical answer

The above article has been written to stimulate debate and discussion. However we are aware from our experience of dealing with these problems, especially when they get into court, that it can be a very emotional subject. We have come across the terms Chronic Damp Conditions and Chronic Condensation Conditions. There is clearly a mismatch in these situations between the building and the lifestyle of the person within. We have come across buildings which have a relative humidity exceeding seventy per cent most of the time and where mould growth can become established. Whilst this is at the extreme end of what we see, it is of course a concern if you are the landlord or tenant with this issue.

Here are some references for you

Landlord and Tenant act 1985 - legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/70

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (known fondly as the HHSRS) - hhsrs.org

Independent Chartered Surveyors

If you truly do want an independent expert opinion from a Chartered Surveyor, and many of us are also Chartered Builders, with regard to valuations, mortgages, mortgage companies, surveys, building surveys, structural reports/engineers reports/specific defects report, structural surveys, home buyers reports or any other property matters please contact 0800 298 5424 for a chartered surveyor to give you a call back.

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Woodworm problems in the floor

Free phone us to have a free chat about woodworm and the problems it can cause and how to spot it

If you would like to have a friendly chat about problems you have in relation to woodworm and the things to look out for to identify if you have got woodworm please Freephone 0800 298 5424 .

We would add that we are not a woodworm treatment company in the sense of coming round and spraying the woodworm. We feel our investigations show that there are far better ways of dealing with woodworm in many cases. We will give you our honest answer to solve your woodworm problems, not try and sell you a chemical spray. We can also help you with Building Surveys, Structural Reports, Engineers Reports, Specific Defect Reports, Structural Surveys and Homebuyers Reports and we have a wealth of knowledge on most things property related.

Just a reminder please Freephone us on 0800 298 5424.

How does woodworm get into a property

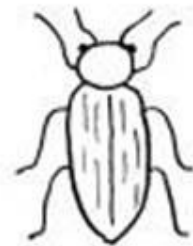
Woodworm can be transferred on old furniture however it does like to have a relatively damp area and sunlight to carry out its activities. We most commonly see it in roofs but it is also becoming more of a problem in floors. One particular problem that we are coming across more often is woodworm in floors which is very hard to spot unless you know what you are looking for.

What does woodworm look like?

You very rarely see the actual woodworm themselves, you more often see the frass that they leave behind.

Frass Defined

The chewed up sawdust that the beetle leaves behind. A light coloured dust and a light coloured hole indicates this is relatively recent. Obviously if it is a darker coloured frass, or darker coloured hole, it means it is older and the woodworm may have gone.



Woodworm in roofs

One of the things that we learnt when we were training as surveyors was that lots of woodworm came from the old packing boxes and tea chests that used to be used when moving house. Often this isn't the case today with cardboard or plastic boxes being used but it did lead to a lot of cases from what we understand of woodworm in roofs. As such as a Chartered Surveyor this is one of the areas we investigate. The million, or should it be billion, dollar question is, is the woodworm active?

The other thing that any trainee Chartered Surveyor learns is that most woodworm is not active and the real skill is to establish whether the woodworm is active or not. We can take that a step further and say the real skill is first of all to spot the places where woodworm is most likely to be as sometimes in roofs it can be in isolated areas. It's no good looking in one part of the roof if it is more likely to be in another part of the roof. So whilst woodworm is easy to spot you need to know where to look.

It was recently commented with regards to a survey that we carried out that we were at the property only a few hours where the previous surveyor had been there all day. We can only comment that the other building surveyor didn't know where to look in the property and was not very confident in his knowledge to spend all day at the property and it is this important thing of the knowledge a person has that can make such a difference.

Use a Chartered Building Surveyor to look for woodworm, not a woodworm treatment company

This is a problem we come across time and time again where a woodworm treatment company or a woodworm specialist, or a builders or a company caring for property and maintaining it has advised that there is woodworm in the property which of course is what they will do because they will have often given a free survey and remember that there is no such thing as a free meal. They will then of course be looking for work to be carried out. Be very aware of the invested interest anyone has when looking for woodworm. We as Chartered Surveyors are only looking to advise on what we actually see and we are not looking for any further work.

Enough talk about woodworm, let's have a look at some

Can you see any woodworm in this photo?



You may just about be able to see some minor signs of woodworm between the hammer and the screwdriver. The question is would you have been able to spot this woodworm with the carpet over the top of it?

Opening up the floor reveals the extent of the woodworm

Opening up a small section of the floor you can see the frass which indicates the active woodworm.



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This is still only one floorboard wide by approximately 300 mm. You can see the amount of deterioration to the timber and the dust is the frass which is the chewed up sawdust by the woodworm.

Frass from woodworm activity



Opening up a slightly larger section

How did we spot the woodworm?

Due to factors that we have seen outside the property and inside the property we suspected there would be woodworm in the floor. We lifted up the floor to the corner of a bay window in a Victorian property with a suspended timber floor. For any Chartered Building Surveyor these signs should ring a bell that there is possibly woodworm.



Exposing the floor

A damp meter is only as good as the person that uses it

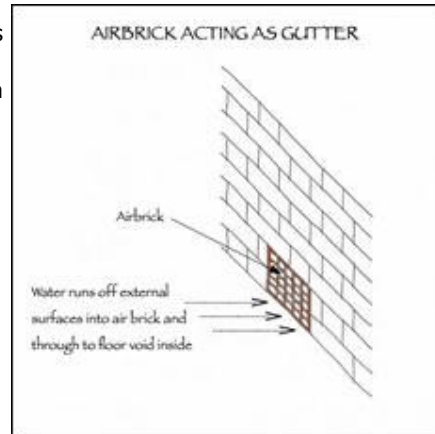
We use a damp meter reader to check the moisture level of the floor. Even though this had a hardboard over it we know and understand the readings that our damp meter gives and we believe there was dampness below and as you know from the pictures above when we opened up the floor there was woodworm in it.



Getting the damp meter reading

How did we spot this woodworm?

What we could see outside and what we see time and time again is an area of driveway that has been put in too high. In this case the brick pave driveway but often we see a tarmac driveway. This then causes the airbrick to act as a gutter.



Airbrick allowing water into the building

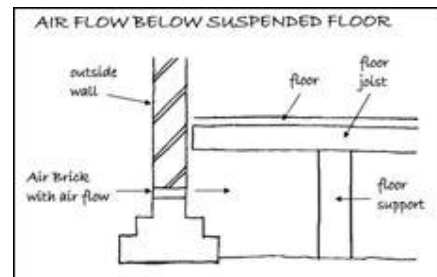


The brick pavers too high



Too high again

Where there is a suspended timber floor the floor needs an airflow underneath it to properly ventilate and stop dampness and woodworm. Without this and water pouring in as it is now acting as a gutter it's very likely there is woodworm.

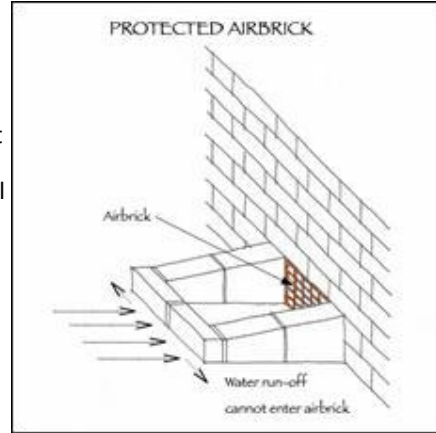


A suspended timber floor looks like this

So how do you solve this problem?

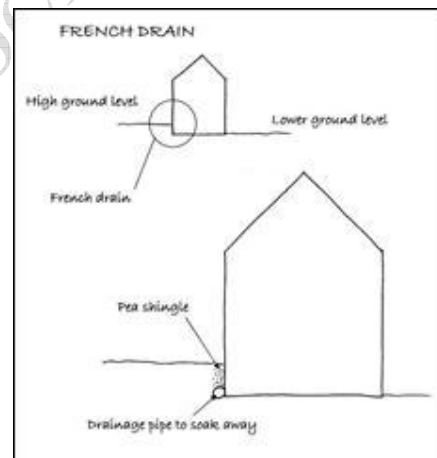
The great thing about being a Chartered Surveyor is that you don't have to solve the problem using the product you are selling, i.e. if we spot damp we don't have to recommend a damp proof chemical course (which we don't believe works in most cases anyhow) and as in this case where we spot woodworm we don't need to recommend a chemical treatment. We are able to select from a range of solutions.

One of them is to protect the airbricks and this then stops the water discharging into the airbrick and acting as a gutter. Another way could be to add a French drain.



What is a French drain?

This is an area dug out by the side of the property and a perforated pipe placed in the base and shingle on top of it. This then means that any dampness that does come towards the building transfers through the shingle and into the perforated pipe and then ideally into a drain. You do need to make sure that the French drain is a proper French drain and doesn't cause you more problems by just positioning all the rain in one area.



A French drain

We hope this helps you to see how Chartered Surveyors can be of use to you