

JOB REFERENCE: xxxxxxxxxxxx

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

**Esher,  
KT10**



FOR

**XXXXXXXXXXXXXX**

Prepared by:

**INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS**

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## **CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION  
REPORT FORMAT  
SYNOPSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

### **EXTERNAL**

CHIMNEY STACKS, FLUES, DORMER WINDOWS AND ROOF WINDOWS  
ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS  
ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT SPACE  
GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES AND SOIL AND VENT PIPES  
EXTERNAL WALLS  
FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS  
EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

### **INTERNAL**

CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES  
CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES  
FLOORS  
DAMPNESS  
INTERNAL JOINERY  
TIMBER DEFECTS  
INTERNAL DECORATIONS  
THERMAL EFFICIENCY  
OTHER MATTERS

### **SERVICES**

ELECTRICITY  
GAS  
PLUMBING AND HEATING  
BATHROOMS  
MAIN DRAINS

### **OUTSIDE AREAS**

GARAGE /OUTBUILDINGS / PARKING  
EXTERNAL AREAS

POINTS FOR LEGAL ADVISOR

### **APPENDICES**

LIMITATIONS  
ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS  
GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Firstly, may we thank you for your instructions of xxxxxxxxx; we have now undertaken a Building Survey (formerly known as a Structural Survey) of the aforementioned property. This Survey was carried out on xxxxxxxxxx.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# **REPORT FORMAT**

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

## **GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

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

## **TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED**

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

## **A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS**



We utilise photographs and sketches to illustrate issues or features. In some photographs a pencil, pen 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 detached property. There have been some alterations and improvements to the property albeit some time ago. The property sits on a sloping site.

The property has substantial mature gardens with a double length detached garage to the left hand side. There is also a greenhouse and shed to the rear of the garden.

We believe that the property was built in the 1930's (Xxxx, the gardener / handyman thought it was 1932). During the War Years period there was a rationing of materials and limited skilled labour available which can mean that sometimes there are unusual constructions hidden beneath what appears to be a typical construction. If the exact age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

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

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

1924	First Olympic Winter Games
1926	The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-Upon-Avon was destxxxxed by fire.
1929	Car radio invented
1931	The Highway Code issued
1935	The driving test became compulsory
1937	The emergency (999) telephone number introduced
1939-1945	World War II (6 June 1944 D-Day)
1941	The National Fire Service established
1944	D-Day

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# EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



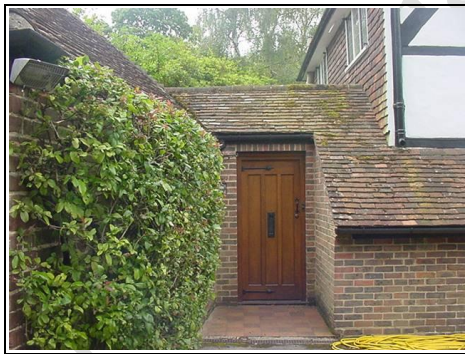
Front Elevation



Rear View



Left hand view



Left hand side entrance



Right hand view



Front garden



Rear garden



Rear garden

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# **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

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

## **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Entrance Hallway and Stairs
- 2) Study (front right)
- 3) Through Lounge (rear)
- 4) Kitchen with breakfast area (front left).
- 5) Utility Room (rear left)
- 6) Cloakroom (front middle)
- 7) Walkthrough to garage

## **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Central landing and stairs
- 2) Master Bedroom (rear right)
- 3) En-suite Bathroom Room (front right)
- 4) Bedroom (front left)
- 5) Bedroom (rear left)
- 6) Bedroom (rear right)
- 7) Family Bathroom (front middle)

## **Top Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Bedroom (left)
- 2) En-suite shower room(front)
- 3) Small kitchen area
- 4) Large open area

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## Outside Areas

There are extensive established gardens to the front and rear of the property with a double length garage to the left hand side. To the rear of the property is a greenhouse and shed and a large mature tree. The property is on a gated road.

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

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8



# 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



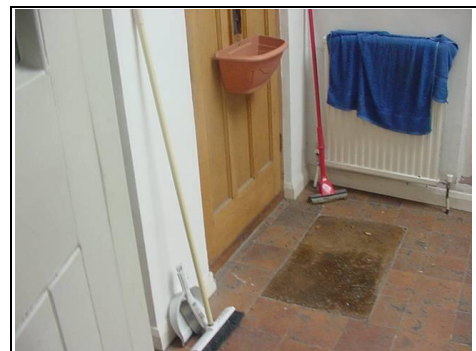
Lounge (rear middle)



Lounge (rear right)



Study (front right)



Left entrance area leads to kitchen



Kitchen (left front)



Kitchen (left middle)



Utility Room (rear left)

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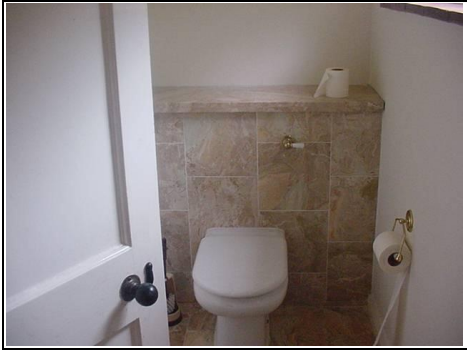
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Cloakroom



Looking towards the staircase

## First Floor



Master Bedroom (rear right)



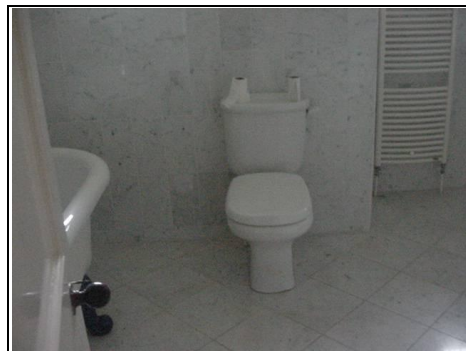
En-suite to Master Bedroom



En-suite to Master Bedroom



Bedroom (rear middle)



Family Bathroom (front middle)



Bedroom (rear left)

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## Top Floor



Open area



Open area



Kitchen area



Bedroom dressing area  
(front left)



En-suite shower room

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# **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

## **External**

Chimneys:	One brick chimney
Main Roof:	Hipped, pitched, clad with a nibbed clay tile
Main Roof Structure:	Cut timber roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	Predominantly cast iron with some plastic.
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Combination of cast iron and plastic.
Walls:	Stretcher Bond brickwork (assumed)/ vertical tiles/render/ pseudo feature timbers
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Casement windows, metal in a timber frame with single glazing and lead lights.

## **Internal**

Ceilings:	Lath and plaster (assumed) and plasterboard.
Walls:	Mixture of solid and hollow (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Part suspended floor and part solid floor.
First Floor:	Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed).
Top Floor:	Joist and floorboard sheets

## **Services**

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (all assumed). There is a wall mounted Worcester boiler in the utility room. The electrics are circa 1960's and are located in the cupboard in the walkway between the main building and the garage.

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 300 photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if an issue has not been discussed that you are interested in or concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it; if we have not we will happily go back.

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

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

## **The Good**

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

- 1.0) The area and the gated road.
- 2.0) The mature garden and trees albeit that they are on a slope (from left to right).
- 3.0) The size of the property which has the potential to make a great project.

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

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## The Bad

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

Before we start this section we just want to confirm that it has been written bearing in mind that you are likely to carry out extensions to the property.

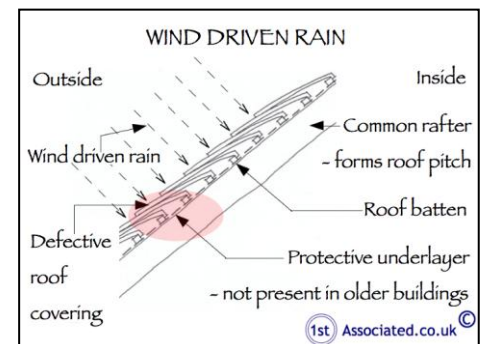
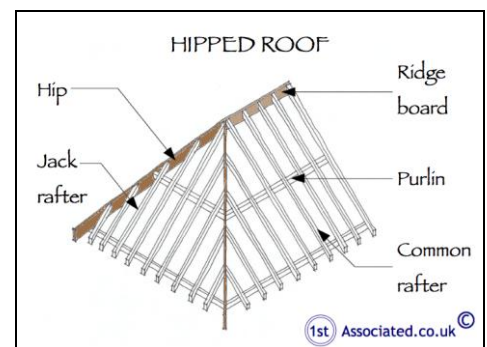
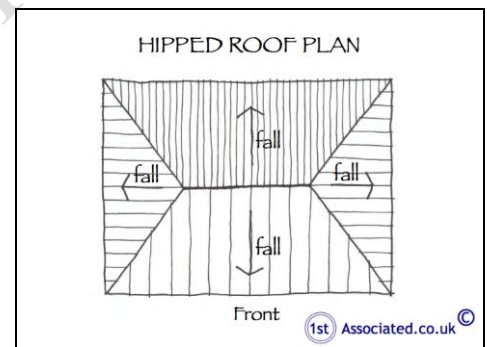
1. To the right hand side of the property forming a kitchen and a new build extension.
2. To the front of the property forming a new entrance area projecting forward from the main building with an internal re-fit.
3. A general refurbishment throughout particularly to the top floor.

### 1.0) The Main Roof

The main roof is original and hipped and is an older style roof. The tiles are held in place by nibs with what is known as a builders felt underneath.

We believe that the roof (assuming it will be maintained) has many years of life left in it. However, if you are carrying out work to the top floor we would recommend a new roof or, to be more exact, re-roof re-using the tiles and adding a modern breathable protective underlayer.

The reason for this is, the type of roof that you have is susceptible to wind driven rain and snow in the extremes of weather and repairing any slipped and damaged tiles is likely to become more onerous. This is particularly as you have quite a high roof and there are a limited number of roofers that can do the work easily i.e. having the right size ladders or tower scaffolding.



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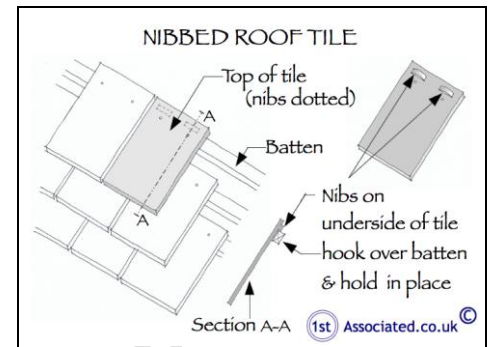
We would add from what we have seen this was originally an above average roof construction for its age, type and style and it has been reasonably well maintained over the years.



Main roof



Missing tile

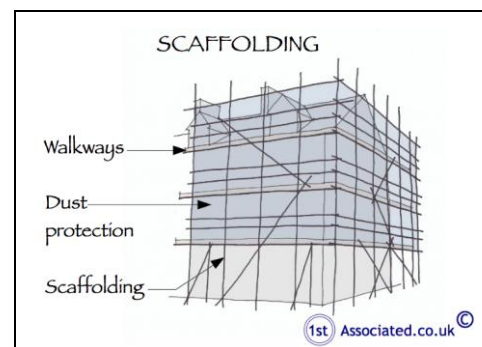


Broken tiles that have been replaced before



Builders felt

**ACTION REQUIRED:** It is a very close call on whether to replace the roof or not. If you were not carrying out extensive work such as extensions and other roof work then we would recommend that you keep the existing roof. However with the combination of extensions and alterations to the building we feel it will be worthwhile re-roofing and adding the benefit of a modern breathable protective underlayer.



Scaffolding around a property awaiting a protective roof on the top

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**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £50,000 - £75,000 (fifty thousand pounds to seventy five thousand pounds). The reason for the variation in the cost is because the roof is likely to require scaffolding and probably a scaffold tin roof over the top to protect the interior from water damage; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

## 2.0) Asbestos

There is an asbestos flue to the left hand side of the property. This we believe was for the original boiler. We recommend that this is removed. We would also recommend an asbestos report is carried out particularly if you are carrying out major re-building work. Areas it is likely to be found in are areas of cladding of duct work and also soffit boards and possibly fascia boards.



Asbestos flue

If you Google asbestos you will see all the problems it can cause and the dangers associated with it.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Consult a specialist asbestos contractor to remove the asbestos. We suggest you contact the Local Authority who can usually provide a list of these.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** The cost of testing will be a few hundred pounds. This will then have recommendations that will have additional costs. Due to the specialist nature of asbestos removal our approximations of costs are just that. Approximately £500 - £1,000 (five hundred to one thousand pounds); please obtain quotations.

Please note we are not asbestos Surveyors. Our insurance requires us to recommend that you have a separate asbestos survey.

Please see the Chimneys and Flues Section of this Report.

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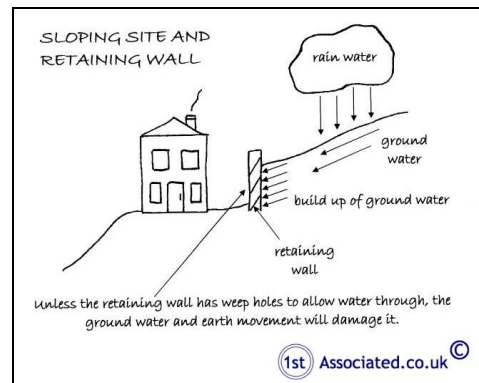
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### 3.0) Sloping Site, where does the rainwater go?

The property sits on a sloping site. The rainwater on this property travels from the left to the right so you need to ensure that there is a good route for the rainwater to travel otherwise it will travel underneath the house which is not an ideal situation.

There is a retaining wall to the left hand side of the property and there are several things that should be carried out to improve the drainage and thereby improve the effects that it has.



### 3.1 Weep Holes

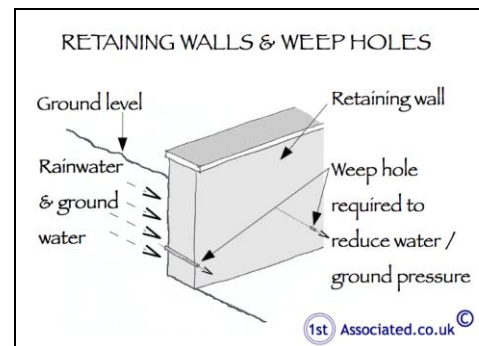
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add weep holes to the retaining wall on the left hand side of the property.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds.

You should also have a 'cup of tea' meeting with your neighbour in case it affects their property/grounds in any way. Also make sure you have experienced the property when it is raining heavily by standing outside and watching how the rainwater travels around the property before you carry this work out.



The wall needs weep holes adding to it

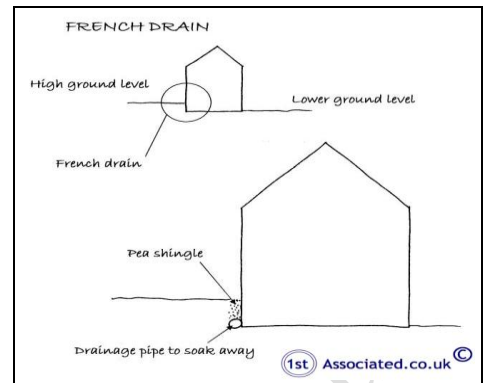


### 3.2 French Drain

To help the rainwater travel around the property and to keep it away from the walls then you may have to add a French Drain to divert the rainwater around the property.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add a French drain around the property. Ideally the water needs to be managed around the property rather than through it as it is at present.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £5,000 - £10,000 for a proper French Drain. This should ideally feed into the main drainage system. Please see the article about French Drains in the appendices.

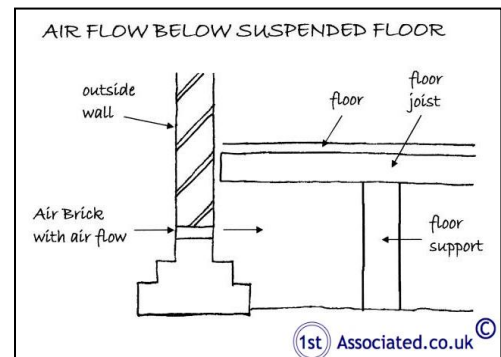


This is where the water runs to and sits.

### 4.0) The Suspended timber floor

You have suspended timber floors to the property similar to the one in the adjoining sketch. A suspended timber floor needs air circulation underneath it which occurs via the airbricks.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** To be on the safe side we recommend you open up sections of the timber floors to check the condition of the timbers beneath them as a damp environment is ideal for wet rot, dry rot and wood worm. We could not physically see any signs of this externally but we did note that the air bricks did not look to be clear and were close to the ground. This concerned us slightly as they may be acting as gutters.



Air brick needs clearing

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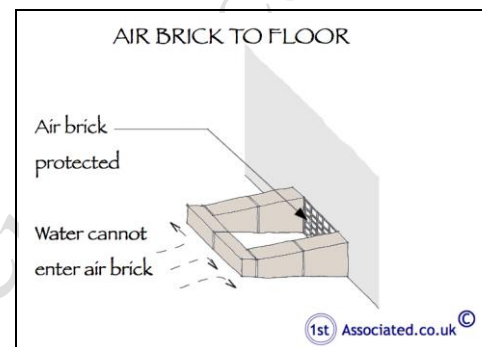
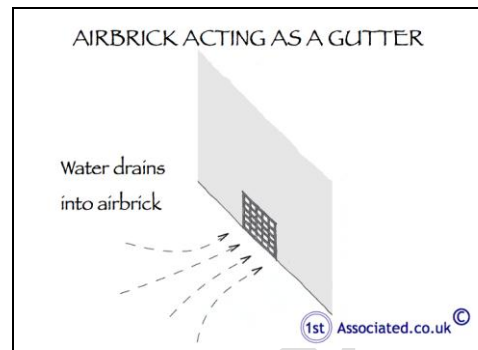
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#### 4.1 Air bricks acting as gutters

We believe that due to the low positioning of some of these airbricks that they are acting as gutters and allowing water to get in.

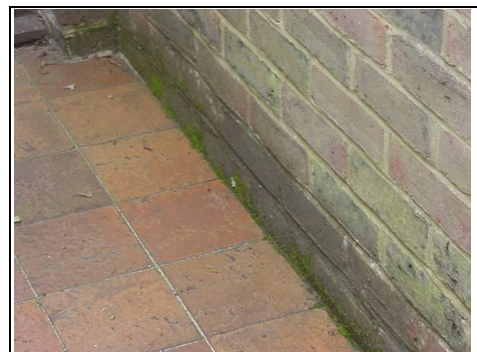
**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that they are protected as shown in the sketch below and that sections of the floor, as mentioned earlier, are opened up to check the condition of the timbers beneath.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £1,000 to £3,000 (one thousand to three thousand pounds). You need to ensure that the airbricks are clear and that the correct airflow is taking place under the building; please obtain quotations.



With reference to the previous section, number three the sloping site.

To the front of the property to the left hand door we can see moss on the brick work where rainwater has run against it over the years and sat against it. This in turn could have led to deterioration within the floor around this area. Whilst we believe the floor around this area is concrete there may be other similar problems elsewhere.



Moss on the brick wall

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## 5.0) Movement to the left hand walls

At first floor level we can see cracking to the left hand central wall. We can also see this to the stairway area. This is likely to relate to the alterations that have been carried out in the kitchen area where we believe the wall has been removed.

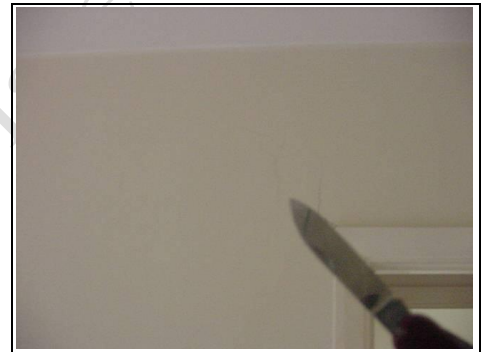
We would add as a general comment to please see our note at the start of the report about War era buildings where there has been a rationing of materials.



Where the wall has been removed in the kitchen



Cracking in first floor front left bedroom



Cracking above the door



Cracking in the corner, front left hand bedroom



Cracking near the stairs to the top floor

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## 6.0) The leak in the top floor bathroom

This is typical of the sort of leak you will get via wind driven rain. Please see our earlier comments about the roof and the ever increasing maintenance costs.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that you have a roofing company spend two days plus on the roof replacing any damaged, broken or slipped tiles. Please watch the roofers carefully as they can often cause more damage than they solve. The term fiddler on the roof is very true.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £1,000 - £2,000 (one thousand to two thousand pounds; please obtain quotations.



Leak in the top floor bathroom

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

## 7.0) DIY quality flooring in some areas

As discussed some of the laminate flooring is of a DIY standard. We showed you the quadrant bead which generally means that the work is not to a top end standard.



DIY laminate flooring



Spongy area of the floor marked by the pen

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** You may wish to take the floor up and re-secure it or replace it.

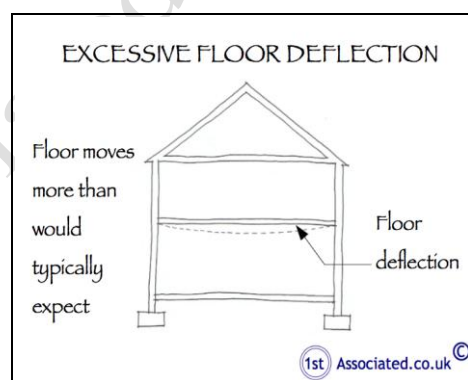
**ANTICIPATED COST:** This is dependent upon the quality of the flooring used; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Floors Section of this Report.

### 8.0) Deflection to the top floor

We did notice that the deflection on the top floor was above what we would expect to find. This may be due to old ceiling joists being used instead of floor joists.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that your Legal Advisor check that planning permission and building regulations have been approved for the legal conversion of the roof space.



#### Planning Permission Defined

Planning Permission looks at the aesthetics and how this is appropriate for the area with such things as additional windows at the gable end.

#### Building Regulations Approval Defined

Building Regulations looks at the safety and the standard of building such as the adding in of the structural steels and the windows.

Please see the Floor Section of this Report.

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## 9.0) Drains

We have lifted the drain covers and we noted that bits of the drainage pipe were in one of the manholes indicating to us that there may be problems with the drains.

In addition during our question and answer session with Xxxx (the handyman) he advised us that the rear left hand gully was not draining away particularly well.



Manhole

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend a closed circuit TV camera report is carried out. At the same time this can establish the exact route of the drains and will help you when you look at future developments of the property.



Pieces of pipe visible in the manhole

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £250 -£1,000 (two hundred and fifty pounds to one thousand pounds).

## 10.0) Services

### 10.1 The combination of copper and plastic pipes.

We are not keen on plastic pipework no matter how much we read the literature relating to it! We still seem to come across problems with it. For example, on a new build house just over a year old we found problems with the plastic connectors on warm water pipes.



Plastic and copper pipes

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** When you are carrying out your refurbishments we would personally take the opportunity to remove all plastic piping and replace it with copper.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** This could cost hundreds of pounds. However if you are re-running the services then effectively there is no cost.



Leaks in the plumbing

## 10.2 Dated electrics

The electrics are circa 1960 and dated and need replacing. Better are now available and they need tidying up.



Dated electrics



Old electric points



Fuse board

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Have an Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE) test and report carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent. Upgrade the fuse board and any other upgrades that the IEE test certificate requires.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £500 - £2,000 (five hundred pounds to two thousand pounds); please obtain quotations.

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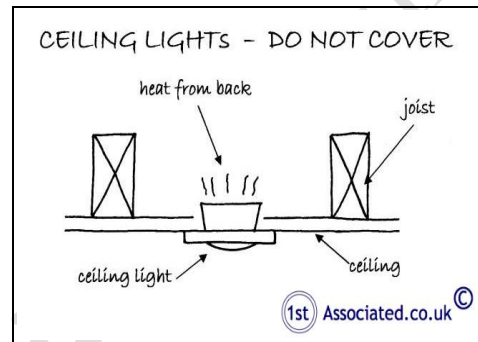


### 10.3 Ceiling lights

The property has older style electric ceiling lights. In some instances these can cause problems as the heat given off has in some cases lead to outbreaks of fire; these tend to be in the older type of ceiling lights and we recommend that where ceiling lights are used that the rear of the light is not covered.



Old style ceiling light in kitchen



**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend the replacement of these lights.

### 10.4 Single panel radiators

This property has single panel radiators. These may not warm the property as most people would wish.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You may wish to add double panel convection radiators. It is best to live in the property for a while and establish if it is warm enough for you before you carry out any work. We have replaced the odd radiator but generally find it is better to replace all of them.



Single panel radiator

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

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## **The Ugly**

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

Whilst there is no one specific thing that we feel falls within this section there are a sufficient number of bad things that would put many people off purchasing the property. You do have to be quite a robust purchaser to be happy to deal with the amount of problems we have identified throughout the report.

Alternatively, if you are looking to carry out works to the property, many of these things become almost irrelevant as you will be replacing them and in which case we would view this as being a good purchase for yourselves.

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26

## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

### **Design**

#### **Relocation of the kitchen**

The view from the kitchen at present to the left hand side is of the garage. The relocation of the kitchen to the right hand side of the property does have to be thought through carefully as some new drainage is needed and electrics need changing.



Present view from kitchen window

#### **Upgrading the bathrooms**

We would normally mention things such as the pump within the master bedroom en-suite bathroom and tiles laid on a timber floor but as you are looking to upgrade these areas we assume they are of minimal interest to you.

#### **Entrance Area**

Care should be taken with regards to the size of the new entrance area as it could take over the entire building. We would also comment that the drains do run in front of the property so these will need to be taken into consideration



The entrance area fades away and does not stand out

#### **Maintenance**

We would comment that we feel the building has been fairly well maintained over the years particularly with regards to such things as the cast iron pipe work that is still in place and the metal windows.

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.

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With this property the main and most expensive maintenance tends to relate to high level areas such as the chimneys, roof and the gutters. We have duly commented on these areas throughout the report.

### **Services**

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

### **Electrics**

The electrics are slightly dated. We would recommend an Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE) test and report be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent, which is recommended whenever a property changes occupancy.

### **Heating**

We noted possible problems with the heating system particularly the single panel radiators. We would recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract is placed with an approved heating engineer.

### **Drainage**

Whilst we have lifted the manhole covers to the front of the property and the one to the rear right hand side the only true way to find out the condition of the drains is to have a closed circuit TV camera report to establish the condition of the drains. In this age of property there have often been leaks over the years.

We would also be intrigued to find out where the drains lead as they head of to the rear right of the property.

### **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.

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## **ACTION REQUIRED - SERVICES:**

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

### **DIY/Handyman Type Work**

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

### **Purchase Price**

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

### **Every Business Transaction has a Risk**

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

### **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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29

## **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:

The roof conversion needs to be checked to ensure it is legal. We would also add that we would have tentative off the record discussions with the planners if the extensions and alterations are an essential part of your plans and if you could simply not live with the existing configuration of the property.

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

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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30

# **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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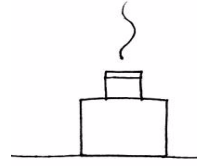
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32



## EXTERNAL

# CHIMNEY STACKS, FLUES 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 chimney to this property that is located to the right hand side of the property. (All directions given as you face the property).

### Chimney One - right

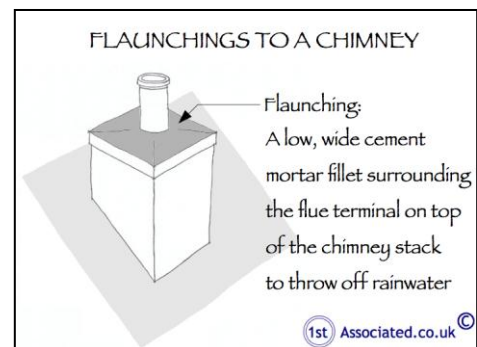
This is a substantial brick chimney with a tile on edge flashing and we could not see any chimney pots. The chimney needs re-pointing and there is some spalling as well. We would also check the flashings as tiles on edge can let water in quite easily. From what we could see from ground level it looked in below average condition considering its age, type and style.



Chimney – right hand side

Unfortunately we were unable to see the top of the chimney known as the flaunching, we therefore cannot comment upon them.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Re-point the chimney and check the flashings.



### 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.

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### Tile on Edge Defined

A tile sitting sideways, bedded in cement mortar which has been utilised as a flashing. Due to the cement mortar it is bedded in being brittle and prone to cracking, this is not an ideal material. We would always recommend the use of lead flashings.

### Flaunchings Defined

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

### Spalling Defined

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

## **Flues**

*Flues offer ventilation to things like boilers and soil and vent pipes and usually come through the roof covering, which can often also be a weak area.*

The property has an asbestos flue visible at roof level. Where it is through the roof there is a lead flashing.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments within the Executive Summary about removing the asbestos. You will also need to repair the roof.



Asbestos Flue



Flue in front roof (left)



Flue in front roof (right)

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## **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 property has two dormer windows to the rear of the property. The dormers have a hipped tiled roof (a design that we like) and hipped cheeks/sides to the window front. Generally we could comment for their age, type and style they are in average condition.



Dormer windows

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



Dormer window left hand side

## **Roof Windows (Known as roof lights or Velux windows which is the trade or generic name)**

The property has three roof lights, two to the main roof and one to the left entrance roof.

The two to the main roof are purpose made which looked in average condition as viewed from ground level. There were no obvious visual signs internally of dampness getting in.



Two roof lights on main roof

There is a roof window to the left hand side entrance that is purpose made. We think this is a great feature giving light to that area (we assume

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this is part of the area you will be knocking down).



Roof window (left)



Roof window (right)



Roof window left entrance

It seems inevitable with roof windows that they will sooner or later leak. If this doesn't occur then they seem prone to condensation. Keep a cloth handy!

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

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

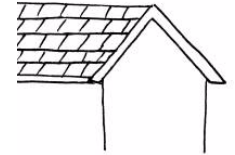
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# ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



*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 garage roof.

## Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad with nibbed concrete tiles and, from ground level, this looks in slightly below average condition considering the roofs age type and style. With this age of roof there will usually be a few missing or displaced tiles, this is nothing unusual.



Main roof

As we have mentioned in the Executive Summary this roof is very difficult to make a decision on. If we have understood your ideas about carrying out major projects correctly then we would re-roof. If not please call us as soon as possible.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments within the Executive Summary. Until such time as you replace the roof you will have to carry out good regular maintenance of the roof, as required.



Roof tiles

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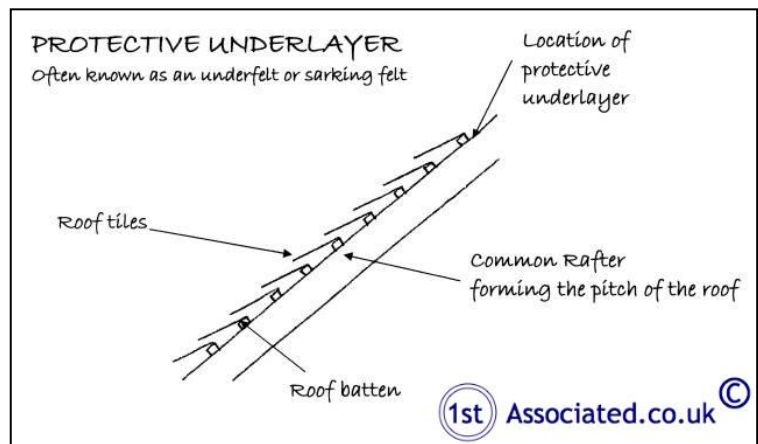
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## Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)

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



The tiles are nibbed with a builders felt underneath. This is deteriorating in some areas. It is generally in average condition but not as good as a modern protective underlayer.



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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally we would remove the insulation between the common rafters but if you intending a major re-roof then it is not worth it. Please see our comments within the Executive Summary.



Deteriorating builders felt



Insulation added in between the common rafters

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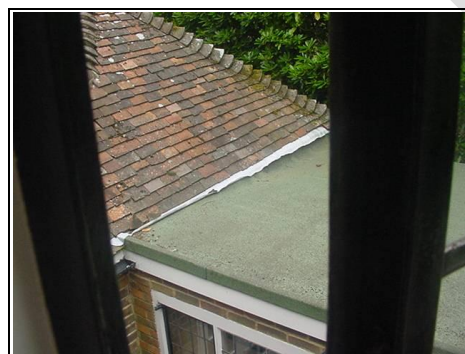
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## Garage Roof

From our discussions you will be demolishing the garage to the left hand side of the property. We have inspected the garage and would comment that the flat roof is in reasonable condition whilst the pitched roof is in poor condition. The demolition of this building, as discussed, would mean that you could re-use these tiles on the main roof.



Flat roof on the Garage



Where the flat roof joins the pitch roof



Roof structure over garage



Pitched roof where it meets the walkthrough roof

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

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

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

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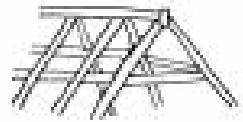
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39

# 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 access into the roof was via cupboards to the perimeter of the space in the top floor and also two openings within the very top section of the roof space.

In both cases there is no loft ladder or secured floorboards (the areas were very small) but there was an electric light to the roof on the right hand side which gave a good view of the area.

Both the loft spaces (perimeter) have been viewed by torch light from the top of a ladder.



Rooms formed in the roof

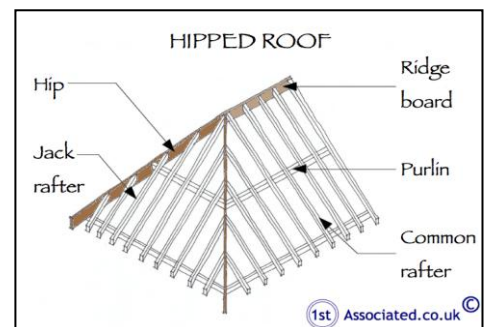


One of the double access doors to enter the roof space

### Roof Structure

The original hipped roof has been lined and we assume it has been upgraded to make it a legally habitable room.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Advisor needs to check and confirm that building regulations and planning permission have been obtained.



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## 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



Testing the timber to the front of the property

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 slightly below average condition for its age, type and style due to the dampness getting in. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.

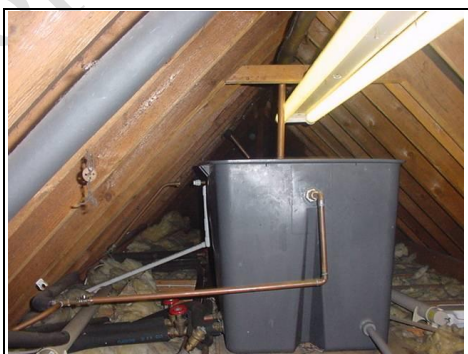


Mass of insulation may cause condensation

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

## Water Tanks

The water tank in the roof does not have lid. We would recommend that the water tank is cleaned out, lidded and refilled. As discussed a modern system would not normally have a water tank. Water tank installations are from the days when we had twenty four hours of reserve water within each property.



Water tank needs a lid



Inside the tank - you clean your teeth with this water!

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We have seen dead birds and other unmentionable things in these tanks. As you are often cleaning your teeth with this water it is best that it is as clean as possible!

### **Ventilation**

Interestingly this early form of builders felt in the roof does have breathable properties. We say this is ironic as over the years we have had a variety of non-breathable underlayers and we have now come back to a waterproof one that is breathable and, as far as we know, it is better than this builders felt.

### **Insulation**

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

### **Electrical Cables**

We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of wiring found in the roof. In this case the electrics looked to need tidying up from what we could see in the roof space.

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 predominantly older cast iron gutters and downpipes with some plastic gutters and downpipes.

Cast iron is one of the best long term materials and is considered one of the top end forms of gutters and downpipes providing it is maintained properly. We can see this has been maintained over the years and it is only in more recent times that it does not seem to have had work carried out on it.

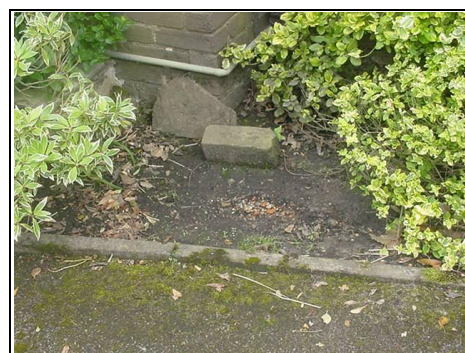
There are some areas where the gutters leak particularly badly which Xxxx (the handyman) explained during our question and answer session.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The cast iron needs to be maintained and needs to be decorated using a 'rust stop' paint in the deteriorating areas.

We would 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.



Leaking gutter (front)



Water from leaking gutter is washing away the soil

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.



Waste pipes

### **Soil and Vent Pipe**

The property has cast iron and plastic soil and vent pipes. Cast iron of this age can crack and rust and needs regular maintenance.



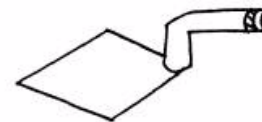
Plastic soil and vent pipe



Plastic 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.

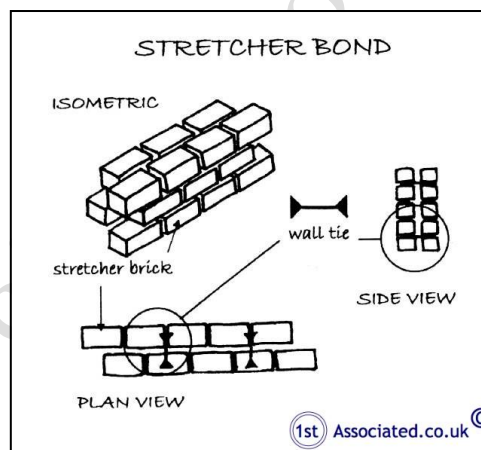
# WALLS



*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 Stretcher Bond brickwork, vertical tiling, render and pseudo timber features.

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



## Cavity Walls

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



Brickwork

## Wall Ties

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

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## Re-pointing

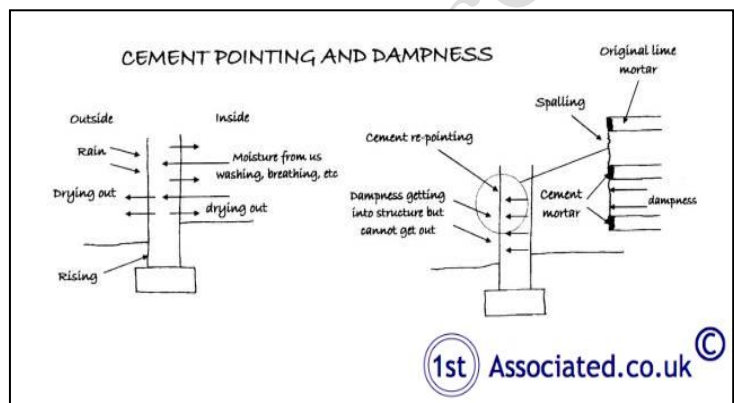
The pointing is weathered and would benefit from re-pointing. This should be re-pointed in a lime mortar to allow the building to breathe.



Re-pointing is necessary

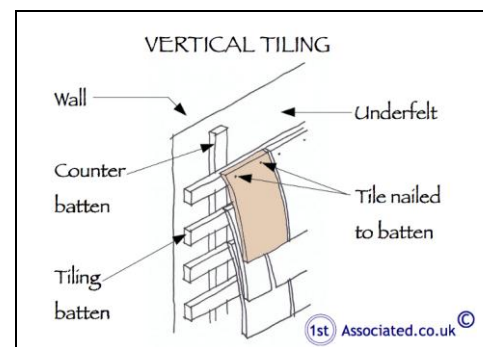
## Lime Every Time – a bit more information.

Unfortunately the cement re-pointing, whilst well meaning, is not appropriate for this type of construction. A cement mortar has been used rather than a lime based mortar. We recommend you use lime mortar in any future repairs regardless of what the builders say! Using lime mortar will limit further damage to the brickwork, which is almost impossible to repair successfully. However, we would add that many, if not most, of the properties that are re-pointed are re-pointed wrongly; it is only in recent years that we have discovered the problems that can occur from it.



## Vertical Tiling

There is vertical tiling to the property that needs some repair work. By this we mean one day or possibly a few days work is needed to re-secure any slipped or broken tiles. Most importantly you need to ensure you have a matching correctly sized tile. We suggest you keep a supply of these at the property for future use.



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Vertical tiling



Slipped tiles and mismatched tiles

## **Render**

Some parts of the walls at the front of the property have painted render with timber beams.

In this particular case we believe it has been carried out purely as a feature. This is typical of this type of house with a mixture of styles being used.

We found from ground level that it appears to be in average condition for its age, type and style.



Pseudo Tudor style frontage

## **Feature Timbers**

We have viewed the timbers within the render and again from ground level and they look in average condition but closer inspection may reveal wet rot.



Feature mock timbers

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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.

Finally, the external walls have been inspected visually from ground level and/or randomly via a ladder. Where the window and door lintels are concealed by brickwork / render / vertical tiling / 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 brickwork /render /vertical tiling / plasterwork has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork /render / vertical tiling / 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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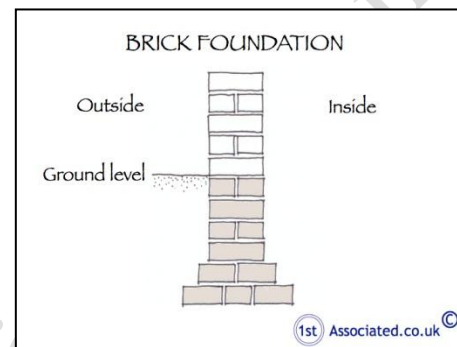
# FOUNDATIONS



*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 possibly with a bedding of lime mortar.



## 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 recommends 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.

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

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

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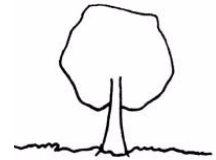
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# TREES

FOUNDATIONS



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

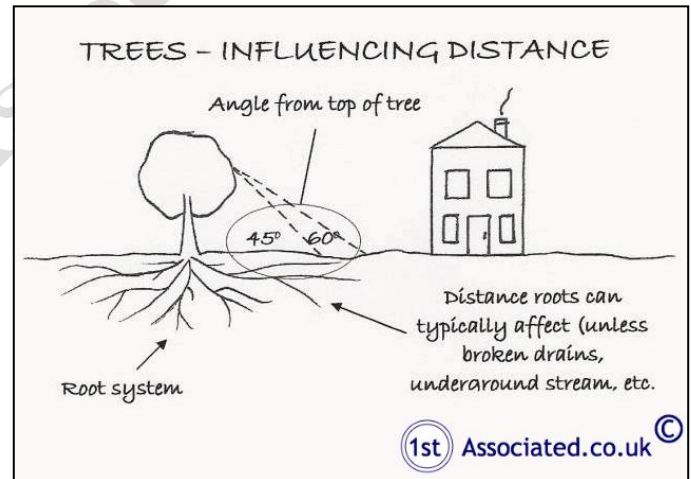
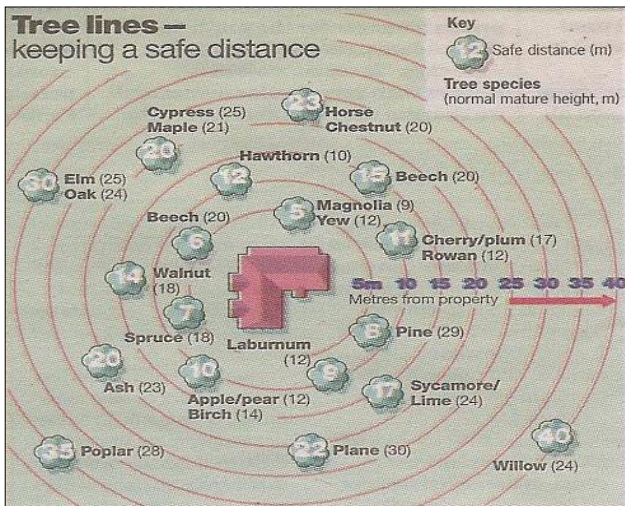
There are trees within what insurance companies would term as influencing distance of the property

There is a very established mature tree to the rear garden. We would recommend you obtain advice from an Arboriculturalist (not a tree surgeon) before you remove the tree. We feel that the roots are likely to be under the house and could have an effect on the property.



Tree in the rear garden

Your Legal Advisor needs to check if it has a tree preservation order on it.



## Influencing Distance Defined

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

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

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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 could see a thickening of the DPC in some areas. We could also see it was too low in some areas and there was moss at the base of the brickwork. We believe this is due to the property sitting on a sloping site and a combination of high ground levels.



Damp proof course

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments within the Executive Summary. Ideally you should lower the level of the flower beds around the property.



DPC is too low in some areas

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

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

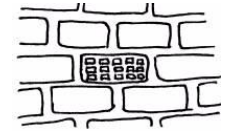
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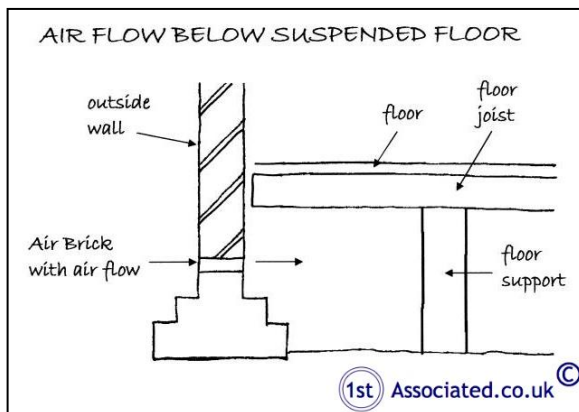
# AIRBRICKS



*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

There are air bricks at low 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.



Air brick with grill over it



Plastic air brick rear left hand side

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

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

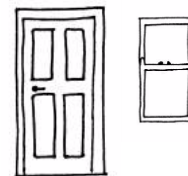
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# FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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

## Fascias and Soffits

The fascias boards are partly hidden by the guttering but where they can be seen look to be in average condition for their age, type and style. The soffits are in average condition also. Our concern is that they may be asbestos from the dull appearance of them.



Fascias and soffits

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments within the Executive Summary with regard to the asbestos flue and have an asbestos test carried out when the asbestos flue is removed.

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

Please note we are not asbestos Surveyors. Our insurance requires us to recommend that you have a separate asbestos survey.

## Windows and Doors

The property has metal, timber framed, single glazed, leaded light, casement windows. We would specifically comment that they are generally in above average condition for their age, type and style.

We have only opened a few of the windows and these worked reasonably well considering they are metal windows which do buckle and rust over time. On the windows we opened there were no signs of rusting and on the frames that we knife tested there were no signs of wet rot.

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We discussed about the replacement and alteration of these windows. We would remind you that you can get wood glazed units that you could seal the original windows within. You would have to look at the strength of the casements and the fitting of the glass into the casements to check this was all satisfactory. We suspect that it may not be as three layers of combined glass may be too much. You may wish to investigate this further. It is amazing the impact changing the windows has on a property.



Knife testing window to the rear right of the property



Casement Window

#### **Knife Test Defined**

This is where we push the knife into the window. It is not rocket science!

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.

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## **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.*

You have some decorations to the fascias and soffits (remember you need to check to see if they are asbestos). There is also some painting to the render, timber detailing and the windows. It is all in average condition and we were advised that the property was painted about a year or so ago as best as Xxxx (gardener/handyman) could remember.

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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56



# INTERNAL



## CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

### Ceilings

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are plasterboard where seen although there were limited areas where we could see them. We suspect that some of the original ceilings are lath and plaster.

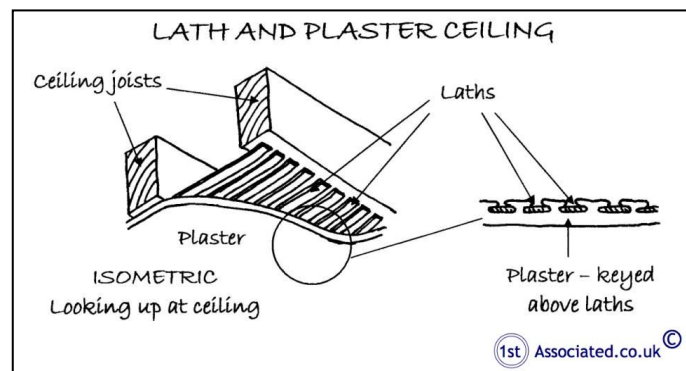


The only query we would have on this is the smoothness of the ceilings indicates a proprietary ceiling board as quite a few different ones were used in this era of construction.

A straight crack such as this indicates plasterboard or board of some type. We assume the roof conversion was done after the original build.

#### 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.

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Old leak visible on ceiling. This has now been resolved



Mock beams

## **Internal Walls and Partitions**

These are, we believe are predominantly solid walls. 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.

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

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

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

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

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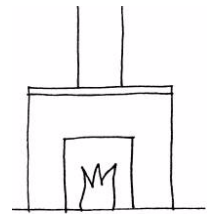
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59

# CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

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

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



Fireplace

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 and Flues.

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# FLOORS

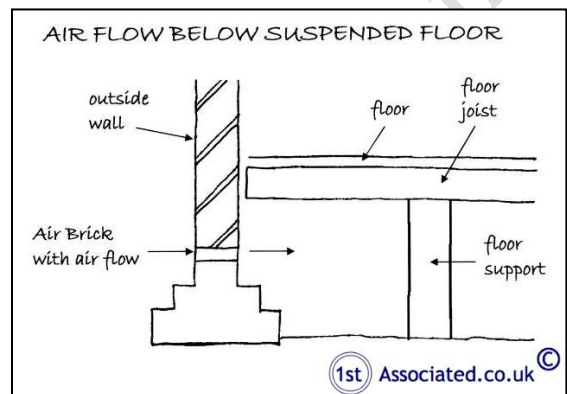


*Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.*

## Ground Floor

The ground floor has a part suspended timber floor and a partly solid floor, assumed concrete. For example in the kitchen area the concrete floor goes meets the suspended timber floor in the utility area (as noted by the black damp meter in the photo).

Suspended timber floors require air movement underneath to minimise wet rot, dry rot and woodworm.

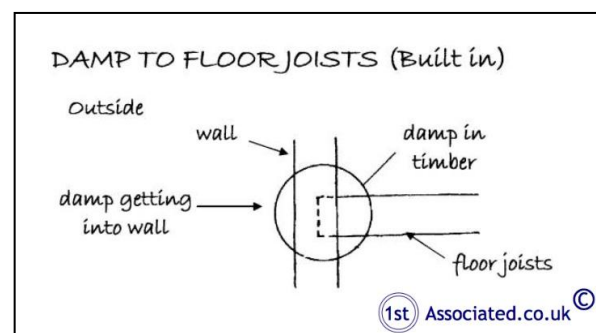


Start of suspended floor to the rear with concrete floor at the front

However, we have not opened up the floors or lifted the carpets / floor coverings/laminate flooring.

## 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.



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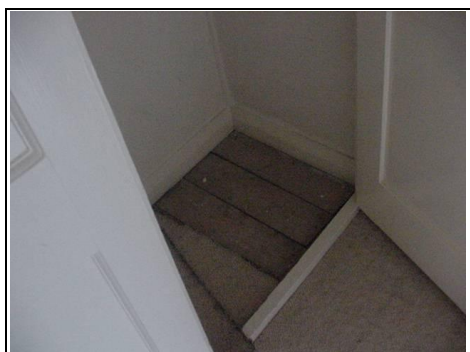
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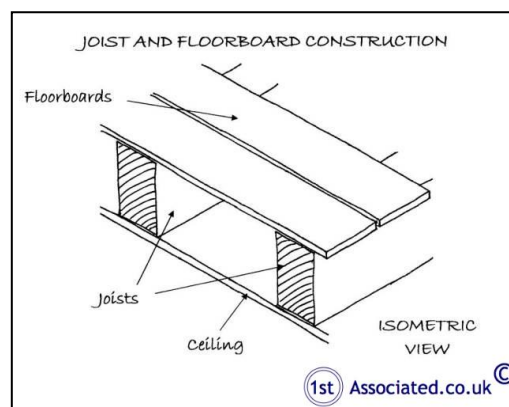
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## Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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.

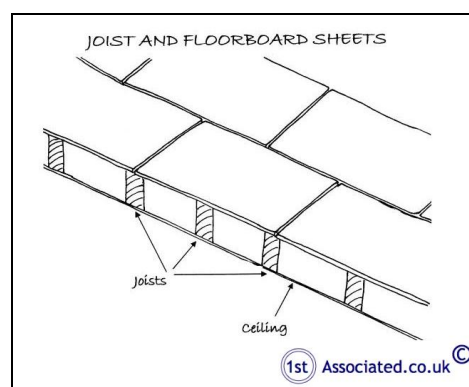


Joists run from the front to the rear of the property



## Top Floor

We have assumed that the top floor construction has been built with suitable floor joists rather than the conversion of the original ceiling joists. If they are ceiling joists then the conversion is likely to have additional strengthening's such as steel beams or back to backing of timber (basically the addition of extra timber).



**ACTION REQUIRED:** It is so important that your legal advisor checks and confirms whether this is a legal roof extension or not. Whilst this does not make it uninhabitable it does mean it affects the value of the property.

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

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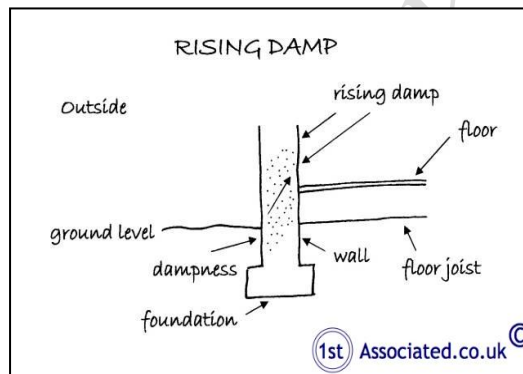


## DAMPNESS

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

### Rising Damp

*Rising damp depends upon various components including the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation of the material, amongst other things. Rising damp can come from the ground, drawn by capillary action, to varying degrees of intensity and height into the materials above. There is a strong argument that true rising damp very rarely is found.*



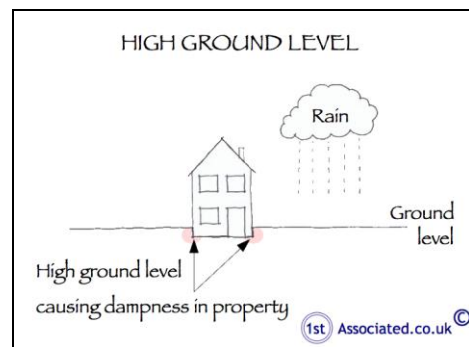
A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we have found minor rising damp probably due to a combination of the property being empty and the sloping site with high ground levels we mentioned at some areas.

Much evidence points towards there being true rising damp in only very rare cases.



Checking for dampness

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see the Executive Summary.



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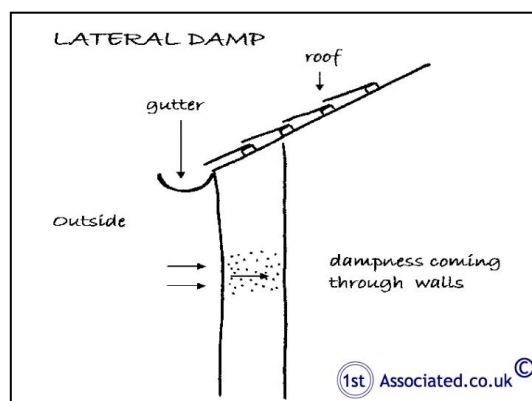
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## Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

*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 readings because the property has been empty.



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

## Condensation

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

At the time of the inspection there were no obvious signs of condensation.

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. Normally opening windows first thing in the morning resolves most 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 with humidity controlled thermostats 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.

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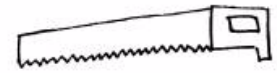
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# INTERNAL JOINERY



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

## Doors

The property has good quality doors throughout. Whether you do or don't like the style is very much a personal taste. This also asks the question of whether you want to keep the original style or add your own style to the property.



Door

## Staircases

There are two staircases to the property.

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



Main staircase ground floor



Lined underside of the stairs-  
middle rear bedroom – first floor

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## Kitchen

We found the kitchen in average condition, subject of course to some wear and tear as you would expect. As mentioned it is likely that a wall has been removed on the ground floor to make more of an open plan kitchen. This has affected the property and has caused movement in the front left hand corner of the property.

As we discussed the kitchen position at present is not ideal including the view from the kitchen window being of the garage. This is a shame when you have nice gardens to the front and the rear .

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

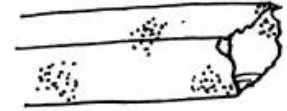
Please see our comments regarding the kitchen design in the Executive Summary.

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.



View from the kitchen window is of the garage

# **TIMBER DEFECTS**



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

## **Dry Rot**

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

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

## **Wet Rot**

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

Again, we have not visually seen any wet rot during the course of our inspection. We checked the windows albeit only at ground floor level with a knife test. A visual inspection only was carried out to the timbers within the pseudo timber section of the front walls.

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 is the main area that we look for woodworm.

We could see some minor woodworm in the roof but it was minor and we certainly wouldn't classify it as structurally significant. We would however be happy to look at the guarantee / warranty you have in relation to this and comment further. Please scan a copy and email it to our office.

In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active (in our experience it is far more likely to find woodworm that is not active). Our inspection is 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. In this particular case it is also restricted by the rooms formed in the roof.

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

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

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

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68

## INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

Internal decorations are in average condition but may not be to your personal taste.

You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste.

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

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# THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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

## HIPs

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

## Roofs

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 300mm. In this instance there is 200mm. It is the walls of the room in the roof that need insulating as at present they will suffer from thermal loss in the winter and heat gain in the summer if they are not insulated to modern standards. This is part of our thinking regarding re-roofing the property as you will be adding insulation to modern standards.

## Walls

The property has an early stretcher bond construction. In this age of property they were often built without insulation which has been added at a later date.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Adviser to check and confirm if there is insulation within the walls and advise us by return before the legal completion of the purchase to comment further, as often where insulation has been added at a later date it can cause damage to the wall ties.

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## Windows

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

## Services

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

## Summary

Assuming the above is correct, this property is in average to slightly below average condition compared with what we typically see. This is primarily due to the way the room in the roof is insulated.

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

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

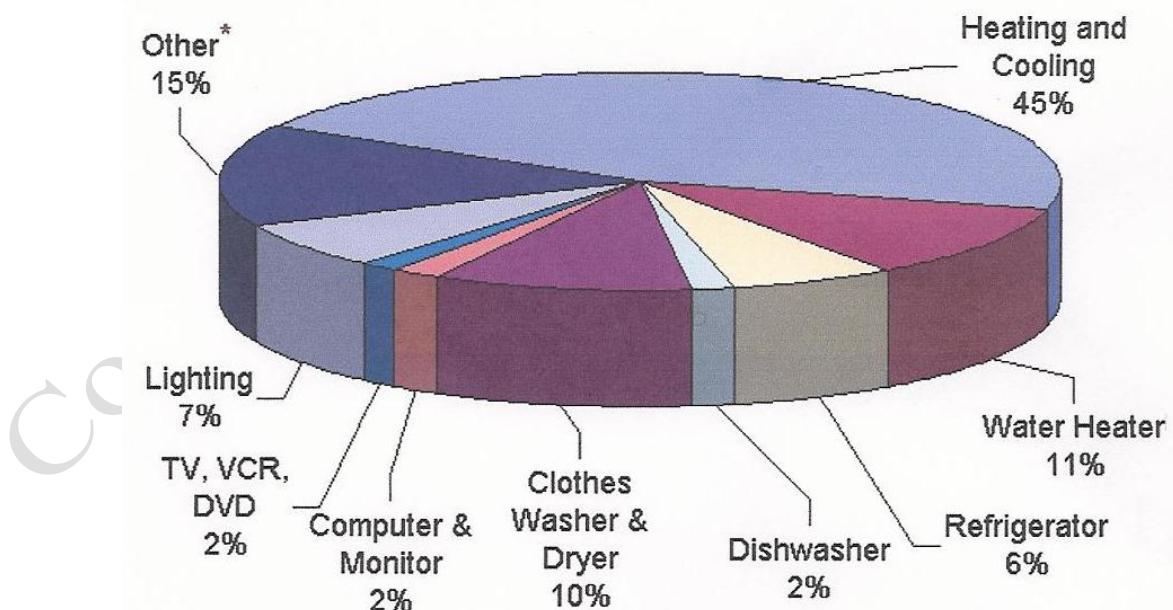
*or alternatively www.cat.org.uk*

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

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

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

#### What does my energy bill pay for?



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

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# OTHER MATTERS



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

## Security

A security system has been installed. Xxxx (gardener /handyman ) not aware if this was working or not. A good alarm system should not only help reduce break-ins but also your insurance. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further.

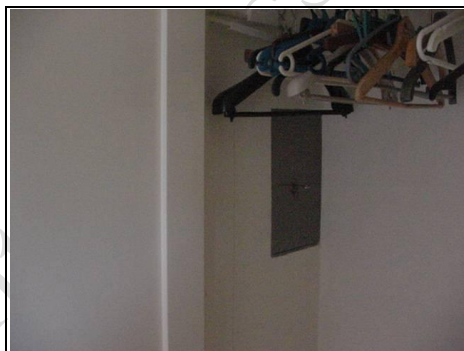
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Further information should be obtained from the vendor or the installer at a later date.



Security box



Glazed doors may be a security risk



Safe in the cupboard



Alarm panel

## 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:** As you are redeveloping the property we would recommend, for your own safety, that you take the opportunity to

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hard wire in a fire alarm system and to also be 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 an asbestos flue.

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.

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

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

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## **SERVICES**

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

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

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75

# ELECTRICITY



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

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

## Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the cupboard in the walkway between the garage and the house. The fuse board looked dated, circa 1960's and better are now available.



Fuse Board

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The fuse board should be replaced. If you keep the kitchen then we would recommend additional electric points are added. Please see our comments within the Executive Summary.

## 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

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

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 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005. Any comments made within this report or verbally do not change this requirement.

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

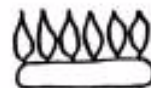
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*There is very little we can check for in a gas installation, we do inspect to make sure there is one and that it has a consumer unit and that the boilers are vented. Ideally you should have a service inspection carried out by an independent Gas Safe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

We are advised that the property has mains gas. The consumer unit is located in the service cupboard near the left entrance to the property.

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



Gas

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

## PLUMBING AND HEATING



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

### Water Supply

We were advised by Xxxx (gardener/handyman) that the controlling stopcock is located in the kitchen. He said he will be happy to show you where all the various on and off stopcocks are within the property.

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ask the owners or Xxxx 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

This is located in the roof. Please see our comments in the Roof Section and the Executive Summary.

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79

## Hot Water Cylinder

There is an older style hot water cylinder located within the services cupboard. This type of water cylinder can leak at any time and we feel it's best to replace it with a modern factory insulated cylinder.

In this case there were some leaks visible to the floor of the cupboard.



Hot water cylinder

## Plumbing

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

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



Plumbing

## Heating

The boiler was located in the utility room, it is manufactured by Worcester.



Worcester boiler



## **Possible problems with the heating**

### **Copper pipe visible**

There was rusting to the joint and we assumed there had been problems with it in the past. However, Xxxx (gardener/ handyman) advised us there had not been any problems during his time working at the property.



Copper pipe visible and rusting to the joint

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 is placed with an approved heating engineer.

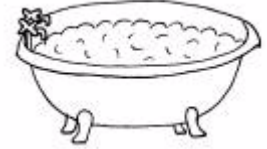
### **Ten Minute Heating Test**

The heating has been kept on at a low level by Xxxx (gardener/handyman). It was on at the time of our inspection. The problem with a property such as this is keeping it warm as it does get affected badly if it is left empty and cold.

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

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

# **BATHROOM**



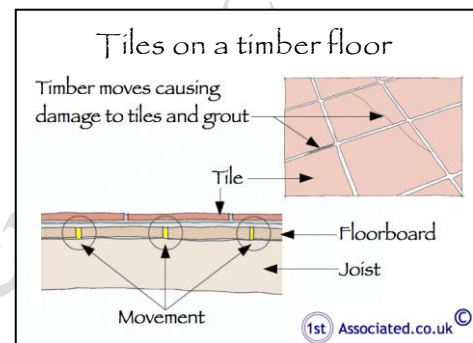
*In this section we consider the overall condition of the sanitary fittings such as the bathroom, the kitchen, the utility room and the cloakroom.*

## **Family Bathroom – first floor**

The property has a three piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin and WC and a shower cubicle which look in average condition. The bathroom has tiled floor.

### **Tiles on a timber floor**

With a wooden floor you will always get some deflection, however minor. This deflection in the floor will ultimately mean that the tiles will need re-grouting.



## **En-Suite Bathroom to the master bedroom- first floor**

There is a large en-suite to the master bedroom that includes a shower. It is slightly encroached upon by the cupboard from the master bedroom which has been made into a mirrored wall.

## **En-suite Shower room to bedroom – Top Floor**

This is a reasonable standard but we would term it as dated. The tiles are laid directly onto the timber floor, please see the sketch above.

## **Cloakroom – ground floor**

The cloakroom on the ground floor is a good size.

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.*

We have identified five inspection chambers / manholes. Four manholes are located to the front of the property and one to the rear right.

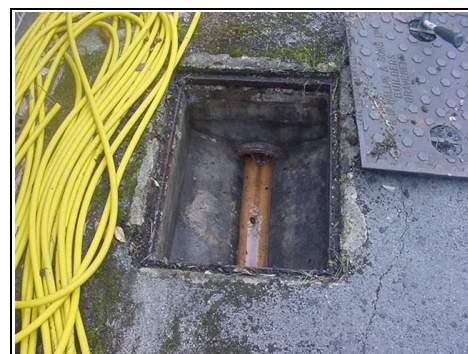
#### Manholes Defined

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

#### Inspection Chamber / Manhole One (front left)

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

From what we could see it is brick built.



Front left hand side

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### Inspection Chamber / Manhole Two (front)

We duly lifted the cover and found it to be free flowing at the time of our inspection. However it does have some debris from the drainpipe in it.

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



Manhole two

### Inspection Chamber / Manhole Three - right hand side

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

This manhole was in a terrible state and needs work carried out to it.



Manhole three

### Inspection Chamber / Manhole Four – far right hand corner

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

This is a precast concrete ring. This means the manhole is newer.



Manhole Four

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## Inspection Chamber / Manhole Five –rear

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



Manhole Five

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

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

## Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal.

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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.

### GARAGES/OUTBUILDINGS/ PARKING



There is a garage to the left hand side of the property with a pitched roof in poor condition. On the sloping site is a running gully where the rainwater runs to from the driveway and as you can see in the photo it has affected the brickwork.



Dampness in the garage



Garage

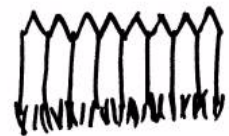


Running gully

## EXTERNAL AREAS

### Front Garden

There is a large mature garden with paved areas to the front of the property. Xxxx has advised us that York stone has been stolen from the garden so please be aware of this.



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Front garden



Front garden



Paved area

## Rear Garden

There is an extensive rear garden with a lawn area and many mature trees and shrubs. One tree in particular is extremely large. There is also a greenhouse and a shed to the rear of the garden.



Rear garden



Wisteria needs cutting back



Greenhouse



Shed



Gate at the rear of the property onto the bridleway

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Bridleway looking down the hill



View of the house to passers-by.

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

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

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## **Neighbours**

### **Left Hand Neighbours**

We have not spoken with this neighbour. As you mentioned and as we also saw this neighbour seems to have children.

### **Right Hand Neighbours**

We have not spoken with this neighbour

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90

## **POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

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

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

However, with regard to Envirosearch or similar general reports please see our article link on the [www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk) Home Page.

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

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

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

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

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92

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**.

For and on Behalf of

**This Report is dated: xxxxxxxx**

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93

## **REFERENCES**

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*Published by Estates Gazette Limited*

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

Surveying buildings  
*By Malcolm Hollis published by RICS 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 dated xxxxxxxxxxxx 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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95

## **WEATHER**

It was a warm and dry day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

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

## **NOT LOCAL**

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

## **EMPTY PROPERTY**

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

## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited as we did not have full access to the roof due to the way the rooms have been formed in the roof. We were not able to open up the ground floor or the first and top floors. Unfortunately we did not have the benefit of talking to the actual owner although Xxxx (gardener / handyman) was very helpful.

However we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for coming along and we have included a few articles in the appendices that may be of help to you.

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## **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 enquiries 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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97

# APPENDICES

1. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
2. Information on the Property Market
3. French Drain Article

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98

# **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.

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## INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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100

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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101

# French Drain

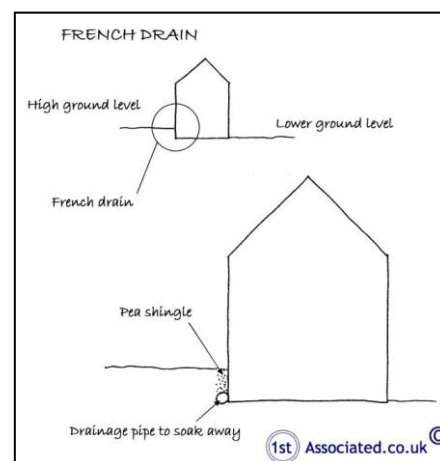
## Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

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

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

## What use is a French drain?

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



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

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## **French drains must be on a slope**

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

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

## **The French drain system that we would recommend**

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

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

## **The French pond!**

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

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103