

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

London Borough of Lewisham



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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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REPORT FORMAT

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

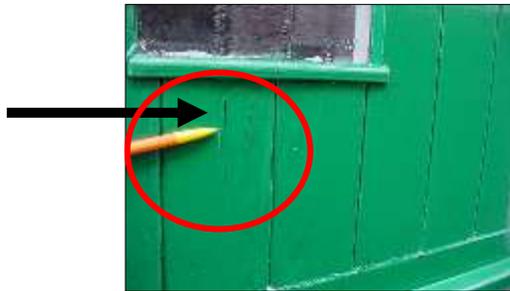
GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

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

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



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

ORIENTATION

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

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two storey end terrace house with a basement to the front of the property and a two storey height bay window. Alterations and repairs have been carried out to the property over the years.

There are gardens to the front and rear, all on a slight slope. Parking is on the roadside on a first come first served basis although we are advised by the current owners that they have the use of the adjacent garage.

Whilst the property is end terrace (of five houses) at present, we believe that it was originally mid terrace and there has possibly been war damage/clearance of the area.

We believe that the property was built in the early Victorian era. XXX Home Insurance advises the property is circa 1894, we assume this is taken from deeds or such documentation. If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds; this would also clarify if this was built as an end terrace property.

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

1833	Start of Government funded schooling (1881 – it became compulsory to the age of 11)
1840	The First Postage Stamp
1857	Victoria becomes Queen of Great Britain.
1859	Charles Darwin proposes the Theory of Evolution
1870	British Red Cross established, saving thousands of lives.
1872	The Ballot Act is passed, introducing secret ballots, empowering employees and tenants
1878	Electric Street Lights are installed in London
1896	First modern Olympic Games (Athens)
1899-1902	Boer War between Britain and Boers in Southern Africa
1901	First Nobel Prizes awarded
1901	Queen Victoria Died

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EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view



Rear view



Left view front and block of flats
next door



Left view rear



Street view left



Street view right

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Cracking to flats to left hand side (post war development)



Green circle shows flats to left side and red circle shows period property on right hand side



Flats to left side



Cracking to flats

Cracking to period properties to right hand side



Cracking to right hand neighbours property



Windows directly above cracking

Cracking to pebbledash property to right hand side



Cracks have been rendered over to base of bay window



Cracks to first floor level of bay window

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ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

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

Basement

The basement accommodation consists of:

- 1) Cellar

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Entrance hall
- 2) Lounge front
- 3) Kitchen with utility room (Cloakroom within utility room)
- 4) Dining room/second lounge rear

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 5) Master bedroom front
- 6) Middle bedroom
- 7) Small bathroom and W.C.
- 8) Study/bedroom rear
- 9) Bedroom rear

Outside Areas

Parking currently is in a garage which is rented to the left side of the property which we are advised includes the driveway; the owner is happy to transfer this to your use subject to appropriate agreement. Other than this, parking is on the road on a first come, first served basis.

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

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INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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

Ground Floor



Hallway



Front lounge



Kitchen



Utility room



Cloakroom within utility room



Dining room rear

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First Floor



Landing



Master bedroom to front



Middle bedroom full of stored items



Bathroom



Study/bedroom



Rear bedroom

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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Chimneys:	Two brick chimneys
Main Roof:	Pitched, clad with manmade slate with lead upstand Manmade slates may have asbestos content
Main Roof Structure:	Lightweight cut timber roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Flemish Bond brickwork wrongly repointed in cement mortar
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Single glazed timber sliding sash windows

Internal

Ceilings:	Mixture of lath and plaster and plasterboard
Walls:	Predominantly solid
Floors: Cellar:	Concrete
Ground Floor:	Suspended floor to the front (assumed)
First Floor:	Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)

Services

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (all assumed). The boiler is located in the cloakroom and is an Alpha CD32C. The electrics are located in the basement and are 1970's/1980's.

We have looked at the BritishListedBuildings.co.uk website and cannot see your property as listed. We have only made Internet enquiries on this website, there are however anomalies and admissions to this website. Your legal adviser needs to check and confirm this.

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

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 400 photograph 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) A period property with many of its original features and some replacement features that are in keeping.
- 2.0) Older properties typically have more space than newer properties, both in the actual size of the rooms and the height of the rooms.
- 3.0) The property has good natural light due to the bay windows.

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

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The Bad

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

1.0) **Roof defects**

1.1) **Roof covering**

The roof covering, we are advised, was carried out fairly recently. It is a manmade slate (please see our comments on manmade slates below). We do tend to find that they become lighter/grey/white over the years and they do gather more moss than traditional slates in our experience.



Moss around man made slate and slates becoming lighter

Manmade slates defined

These, depending upon their age, are reconstituted slate and other materials. They are known for containing asbestos although we would add when we have taken samples of manmade slates the content has been minimal - you need to take asbestos samples of the roof.

Our insurance company requires us to advise we are not asbestos surveyors; you need to seek specialist advice.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to take asbestos samples of the roof. You also need to be aware that there may be a weathering process as well as this type of slate being more prone to moss which in turn can block gutters and downpipes.

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1.2) Unusual lead upstand/lead flat roof

There is an unusual lead upstand/lead flat roof to this property. We are unable to see it properly however we believe it is a flat section on the main roof from what we can see within the roof. It may have been added to straighten the building up following the lie of the land or possibly added due to movement in the structure. Either way it is allowing rainwater into the roof structure.



Unusual lead upstand



Rainwater causing dampness via the lead upstand

ACTION REQUIRED: The main roof needs to be accessed and this entire lead detail needs to be checked along with the decking beneath it. With regard to access it is likely to need expensive scaffolding or access may be possible via a cherry picker.



Condition of timber under the lead from what we could see in the roof looks to be poor

ANTICIPATED COST: It really depends upon what you find at high level. We would estimate in the region of £2,500 - £5,000 depending upon how easy or difficult access is and how badly damaged the decking is. In the above photo you can see the dampness visible within the roof in the darker timbers.

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1.3) Valley gutters

Although the valley gutters appear to be in quite good condition externally we can see internally that they are allowing dampness into the property.



Valley gutter



Valley gutter



Rainwater getting into timber roof structure

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend that the lead to the valley gutter is checked, made watertight and possibly the replacement of the boarding beneath and possibly the cement fillet.

ANTICIPATED COST: Costs in the region of £1,500 - £3,000 (assuming this is carried out at the same time as the lead upstand/flat area mentioned previously so access can be shared.); please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Covering Section of this Report.

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1.4) **Dampness coming in via parapet wall to the rear of the property**

From our vantage point in the adjoining block of flats we were able to see that the lead flashing had slipped and we were also able to see the water damage beneath when we went into the rear part of the roof.



Lead flashing has slipped



Dampness coming into rear single pitched roof

ACTION REQUIRED: Leadwork needs replacing.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £1,000 - £2,000 depending upon access as this will be very difficult to the rear of the property; quotations required.

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2.0) Lightweight roof structure?

Our initial thoughts when we entered the roof space is that the timbers are smaller than we would typically expect to see on this age, type and style of property and as such are likely to be replacement timbers. They have obviously stood the test of time for however many years they have been in place but nevertheless this has not removed the factor that they are thinner than we would typically expect to see. This, when combined with the dampness getting into the roof structure is of concern.



Lightweight roof

2.1) Roof structure not tied into wall

We also noted that the roof was not tied into the end gable via the purlins which can lead to problems of movement on the end gable.



Timbers thinner than we expected and timbers propped and not tied into walls

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to read the report in full and then consider this in view of the other factors.

Please see the Roof Structure Section of this Report.

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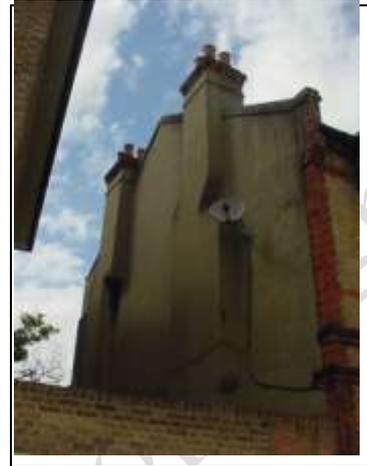
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3.0) Not originally an end terrace

We are not sure whether this was originally an end terrace property. There may have been bomb damage or clearance in the area and this became an end terrace property as it would be more usual to have a brick gable rather than a rendered end gable.



Gable end to left side

Unfortunately it would appear that the end gable is not tied in properly (we can only be certain of this if we opened up the floors). This and the adjoining building are moving. We think to some extent there is a stacking or leaning effect from the adjacent three to four properties. Please see our earlier photos.

ACTION REQUIRED: If you did buy the building, which we are not recommending, you would have to consider this to be a characteristic of the property or carry out major works to the gable end.

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4.0) Movement

The following section looks at how movement in a property affects value and then it considers the movement itself.

4.1) Movement and value

We will start by saying that any property that has had movement regardless of whether it has been repaired correctly or not, or is with or without a certificate from the insurance company will in our experience and opinion affect the value. The question is what percentage of down value will this cause?

For example two properties with exactly the same value, one has not had problems, the other has, even though they have been repaired most people would buy the property that hasn't had any problems. At what point does the discount to the defected property (although it has been repaired) worth considering? Is it when it's 5%, 10%, 15% or 20% reduced and equally in the open market when you come to sell the property, will the property just be more difficult to sell or will it be much more difficult to sell and have to be discounted considerably?

4.2) Movement – is it resolved?

From what we can see there still appears to be some movement in the property. The area we believe is a clay area and as such in our experience you will always find some movement to a greater or lesser extent. See our article at the end of the report on the Settlement, Subsidence and Heave.



Movement over arch to front bay

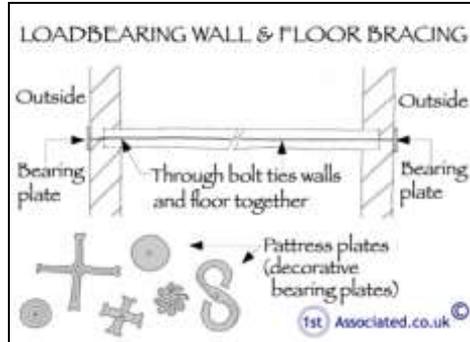


Repairs to brickwork to left side of box bay window

4.3) Cracks old and new

Tie bar

We noted a tie bar in the structure. These tended to be used post war when cracking was generally not considered as big a problem.



Tie bars



Tie bar

Cracks externally

There are very visible cracks externally which will always put off purchasers in our experience or result in them negotiating and getting a discount. You are currently in the position of being the purchaser and as such you need to negotiate hard discount wise.



Crack in arch over door

Cracks internally

In our experience of living in older properties even if you do seal up the cracks many of them tend to reappear.



Crack in rear bedroom

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4.4) Problems with selling an old property that has had movement and has visible signs of cracking

Although it may seem strange to talk about selling the property before you have bought it, we do believe from our discussions with this owner who has had two sales fall through to date and have been aware in the past of other older properties which even in a good market were difficult to sell due to the mixture of old age, movement and underpinning and visible cracking. In this case in addition to these is also the location as well as being overlooked.

You may find yourself in a position where you want to or have to move and there is simply not the right purchaser available. This will then result in you reducing the price to entice someone who doesn't normally purchase this type of property and who are only concerned about the numbers. We tend to find with this type of purchaser that they more readily pull out of a sale than someone who has fallen for the property based upon its period features, size of rooms, etc.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to accept that the movement and the repairs and peoples opinion of this type of property are part of the character of this property. There is little that you can do to change many of them. It may result in a lower than average price being obtained for this type of property and/or selling taking a long time.

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5.0) Past problem of tree roots in drains and insurance claim

The owner advised that there was once a tree to the front of the property and that the trees roots had found their way into the drains. The tree has now been removed. We believe the drains may have been repaired or replaced.

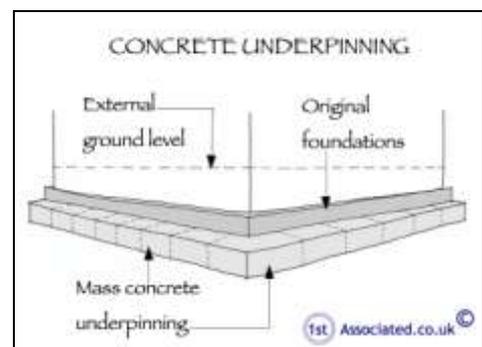
We have been provided with a report prepared for the insurance company XXX by XXX Associates who advised there was once an elder tree to the front of the property 3m away of 6m in height which is the tree that accessed the drainage system and confirmed the owner's comments.

We have only seen the investigation dated XXX, Client reference XXX and the Structural Satisfaction Certificate. We haven't seen the proposed or actual work specification and tender document. We cannot comment further other than to say that the liability with regard to the Structural Satisfaction has to be passed onto you by the existing owners.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal Advisor needs to check and confirm if the drains were repaired or replaced and ensure the Structural Satisfaction and record is transferred to you. The engineers/surveyors may require to come and revisit the property.

5.1) What work was carried out?

As mentioned we haven't seen specifications and details with regard to works carried out however typically insurance companies will carry out partial underpinning (as per sketch) and repairs to the brickwork which may include mechanical fixings but will depend upon the extent of the damage.



Underpinning

We are in a difficult position as we didn't see the work and we haven't seen a specification of the work carried out. However we would comment generally that insurance companies as are any business, are looking for the most economic solution and often the quickest solution which in our experience is not necessarily the best solution.

ACTION REQUIRED: Bearing in mind the problems the drains have caused in the past, we would recommend a close circuit TV camera report is carried out on the drains.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of a few hundred pounds; quotations required.

6.0) Lime Every Time (Inappropriate Cement Mortar Re-pointing - for the Age of this Property)

We would draw your attention to the cement mortar re-pointing that has been carried out on the exterior of the property that we feel is not appropriate to this building. Originally it will have been built with a lime-based mortar and this is what should be used for any re-pointing in the future.

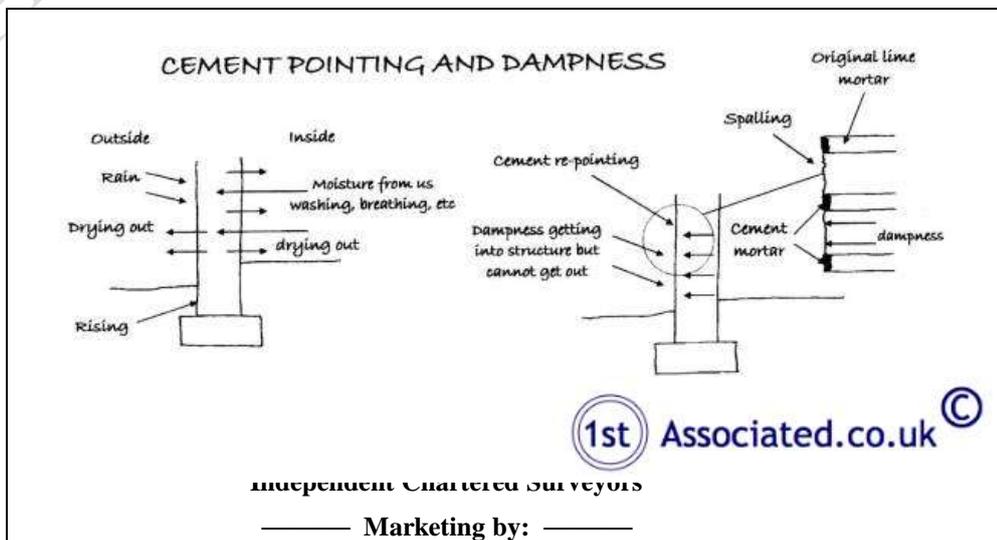


Cement pointing



Cement pointing coming away

The use of cement mortar causes deterioration to brickwork and does lead to the face of the bricks deteriorating, which in turn leads to dampness. This is a very important point.



ACTION REQUIRED: Find an old bricklayer that is used to using lime mortar and for them to gradually remove the cement mortar over several years with a soft brush and repoint in lime mortar to allow the building to breathe.

ANTICIPATED COST: A few hundred pounds per year; please obtain quotations. The good thing about cement mortar is that it does tend to fall away. Eighty percent of houses that we look at tend to have been wrongly repointed in a cement mortar.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

7.0) Sliding sash windows fit poorly

The sliding sash windows fit poorly in some cases and would generally benefit from redecoration.



Sliding sash windows don't fit



Sliding sash windows need redecoration



Windows in need of redecoration

ACTION REQUIRED: Ease and adjust the windows to make them fit as well as possible and possibly add draught seals and redecorate in the summer of XXX. We would also advise that you may wish to add secondary glazing.

ANTICIPATED COST: We would set aside the sum of £2,500 - £5,000 for easing and adjusting the sliding sash windows and adding draught seals as appropriate as the windows don't fit very well; please obtain quotations.

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Please see the Windows and Doors Section of this Report.

8.0) Cold Bridging/condensation

We believe that cold bridging/condensation is occurring in the property as we can see there are no extract fans in the bathroom and we can see what looks to be mould that has been painted over in the rear bedroom (to right hand side of window).

This should be considered a characteristic of this type of property and is something that is very difficult to change.

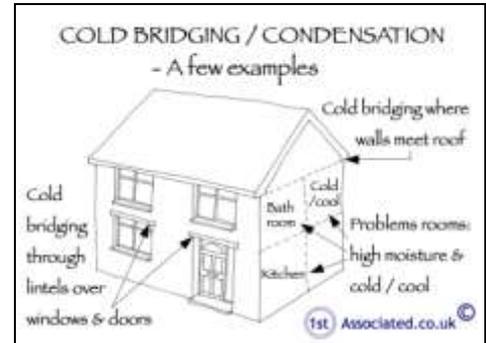
ACTION REQUIRED: Add large humidity controlled extract fans to the bathroom and kitchen and any other humidity creating areas such as the utility room and also any rooms that are used for drying clothes.

ANTICIPATED COST: A few hundred pounds per extract fan depending upon electrics necessary; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

9.0) Dampness

We found dampness throughout the property at a higher level than what we would expect for this age, type and style of building although we



Cold bridging/condensation



Vent rather than extract fan in bathroom

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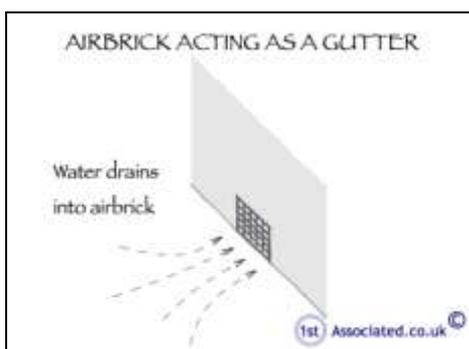
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would add that dampness is blown out of all proportions by companies that are ‘damp proof specialists’.

We believe the problem relates to the property having a high ground level in some areas and air vents that are acting as gutters. We can also see other areas where there are no vents or the vents have been covered over which means there will be dampness in the suspended timber floor.



High ground level



Airbrick acting as gutter



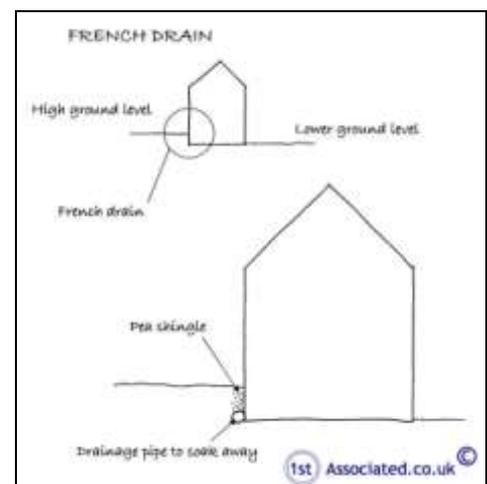
High damp readings



Dampness coming into utility room which looks to be from the leaking external tap

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend lowering the ground level and adding French drains to the rear of the property.

We wouldn't recommend it to the basement to the front as this is an area that we would expect to remain damp to a certain extent but you may wish to add it if you are going to utilise this area.



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ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £2,000 - £5,000; ideally it needs to be connected into the main drains with a perforated pipe. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

10.0) Cellar

We couldn't find a sump pump within the cellar. We are finding it is becoming much more common for cellars to flood even though the owners advised that it has never flooded. This is due to the building in the London area increasing the water table level. We would also comment that it feels like the weather is more unpredictable.

SUMP PUMP DEFINED

A pump which removes liquid or wastes from a sump.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add a sump pump.

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

Please see the Cellar Section of this Report.

11.0) Overlooked

We have viewed the property from the flats built to the left hand side of the property and noticed that your house and garden to some extent is overlooked.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to ensure you are happy with this, we suggest that you have a walk around the nearby block of flats and have a view for yourself.



View from left hand side flats of your property

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12.0) Services

12.1) Heating this type of property

Sliding Sash windows and large rooms

There are large rooms within this large house and there are sliding sash windows. If you have not lived in a property with sliding sash windows previously, you should be aware that typically they are draughty and rattle. There is no easy way to eliminate this problem. In our experience, a general ease and adjustment of the windows and the addition of a plastic tube draught sealer (available from most DIY stores) and regular redecoration is the best option to minimise the draughtiness of the windows and possibly secondary glazing.

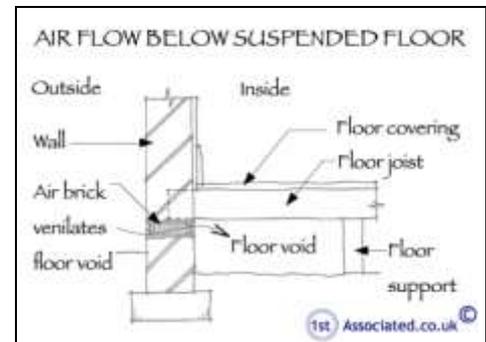
Suspended timber floor and large rooms

There is also a suspended timber floor which can be draughty and the heating system is a mix of old and new radiators and we would suggest that the boiler is running at capacity.

We spoke to the existing owners about the problems of heating this building and they advised during our discussion about things they would do if they were staying that they would look at adding secondary glazing or even some form of appropriate double glazing within the existing units (if the local authority planning department/conservation officer allows this).

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend that you live in the property to see how it suits your requirements for warmth and make appropriate amendments. We would be more than happy to return to advise on this.

ANTICIPATED COST: You really can spend as much or as little as you want on heating a property such as this. You could increase the heat capacity way above the recommended British thermal units (known as BTU). We generally find that keeping your heating



Suspended timber floor

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constantly on low is the best way to heat these properties as the walls absorb the heat which they then retain and return.

12.2) Fuse Board

The fuse board looked 1970's/1980's and better are now available. We recommend that the fuse board is replaced.



Fuse board

ACTION REQUIRED: Replace fuse board. As the fuse board is dated there are likely to be electrics that are dated as well. 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.

The Ugly

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

We have found more than the average number of things that we would classify as bad. We would specifically comment upon:

- 1) The roof and roof structure
- 2) Movement

There are enough other things within the bad section to make this a high risk purchase and to most clients we would recommend not purchasing the property unless you are very comfortable with older properties and are happy to accept that when you come to sell it there may be problems and maybe with insurance both now and in the future and that you are happy you are buying a property with a known defect.

Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Maintenance

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

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

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 fuse board is dated and is located within the cellar, please see our comments in the Executive Summary. The Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE) recommend a test and report whenever a property changes occupancy. This should be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

Heating

The property may not heat as quickly as you would like due to the large room sizes and the slightly old heating system. As mentioned we would live in the property and see how it suits the way you live. We would recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

Drainage

We are not certain what work was carried out to the drainage. We did talk to the present owner about the drains being lined which she thought had taken

place however wasn't certain. If it hasn't, you do have the possibility of further leaks although the tree to the front has now been removed.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend a close circuit TV camera report.

Water Supply

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

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

DIY/Handyman Type Work

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as redecorating to turn the property into your home. 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 £125 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

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

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SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



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

Our concerns are:

- 1) The roof and the roof structure
- 2) The movement in this property and adjoining properties and with this being an end terrace 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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MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT

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

TENURE – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)

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

ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

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

SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR

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

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS

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

OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION

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

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



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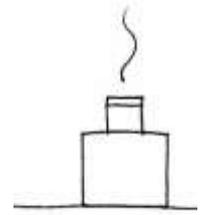
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EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS, PARAPET WALLS AND ROOF WINDOWS



Chimney Stacks

(all directions given as you face the property)

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

There are two chimneys to the main roof which are located to the front left side and rear left side but there is also possibly a chimney to the rear of the property which has now been removed.

Chimney One – located to the front left side

Unusually the chimney sits outside the parapet wall and we believe the brickwork to the chimney also gives support to the house as a whole although we haven't been able to inspect this area closely. This chimney is brick finished with render to the gable end and numerous chimney pots, we are not absolutely sure with regards to the flashing although we can say that it is allowing water inside. From our limited view at ground level and our view inside we suspect there is a problem with the flashing or the flaunching or the pointing.



Chimney one



Flaunchings



Dampness coming in around chimney

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ACTION REQUIRED: Inspect the chimney.

Chimney Two – located to the rear left side

This chimney is also brick built with a few chimney pots and looks to have a lead flashing.

ACTION REQUIRED: Again this chimney needs to be checked.



Chimney two

Missing chimney

It is very likely that there was originally a chimney to the rear of this property as all rooms at one time would have had a real fire.

We have been unable to check and confirm whether this chimney has been removed and unfortunately we didn't gain access to next door (we knocked on the door but no one answered).



Missing chimney?

Flashings Defined

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

Flaunchings Defined

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

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Render Defined

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

Parapet Walls

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

In this case there are parapet walls to the front and also to the rear right hand side. They are brick built. We could see from our vantage point from the flats to the rear of the property that the flashing has come away and also we obtained damp meter readings within the roof space.



Lead flashing coming away on parapet wall



Dampness to parapet wall



Parapet wall to left side in need of some repointing



Parapet wall to right side



Rear parapet wall.

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ACTION REQUIRED: All the flashings need to be checked, particularly where a soft red brick such as this is being used for the capping. We also believe some repointing is needed. This needs to be carried out the sooner the better. The difficulty will be how to access the rear of the property as it is likely to need scaffolding or a very large cherry picker.

ANTICIPATED COST: We would estimate the scaffolding would be more expensive than the actual work. In the region of £2,000 - £5,000 to repair the flashing; quotations required.

Finally, we were only able to see approximately forty percent of the parapet wall; therefore we have made our best assumptions based upon what we could see. A closer inspection may reveal more.

Roof Windows

(Also known as roof lights or Velux windows which is the trade or generic name)

The property has a purpose made roof window, which looked in average condition. The important factor with roof windows is the flashing around them; in this instance we simply couldn't see it as we didn't have a vantage point where we could see the roof window properly.



Roof window

We would make a general comment that it does seem inevitable with roof windows that they will sooner or later leak. If this doesn't occur then they seem prone to condensation.

We would normally say to keep a cloth handy, obviously in this instance there is no way you would be able to reach the roof window to clean it without a set of step ladders.



Roof window that goes into landing area

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Party Walls

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

Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

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

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

Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the chimney stacks, parapet walls 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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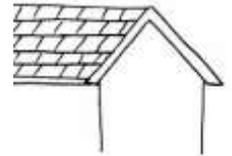
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ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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 rear bay window pitched roof.

Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad with weathered manmade slates and, from ground level, this looks in average to slightly below average condition considering the roofs age type and style.

The problem with manmade slate is that it is relatively lightweight and can be lifted by wind. We would add that it is only in recent years, the past fifty or so years, (relatively speaking with regards to buildings) that we have used them so to some extent we are still learning about them, for example you can see the weathering and the discoloration in the slate compared compared to a new manmade slate as you can see in the first photo.



Your roof has weathered man made slates (circled)



Damage to some slates

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Unusual lead upstand/flat area

We would comment that there is an unusual lead upstand to the roof which is leaking and that the slates may have an asbestos content.



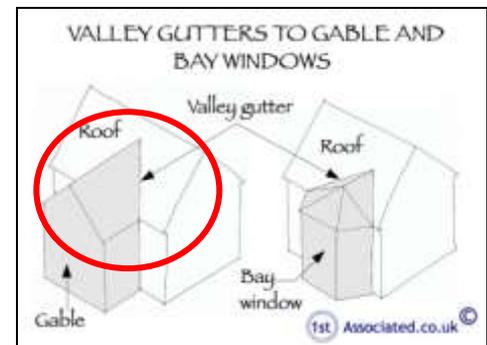
Unusual lead upstand

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary. Carry out periodic inspections and maintenance of the roof, as required.

Valley gutter

This property has valley gutters. Valley gutters are formed where two roofs meet and these are generally problematic.

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



Valley gutter



Valley gutters to front of property seen within roof space

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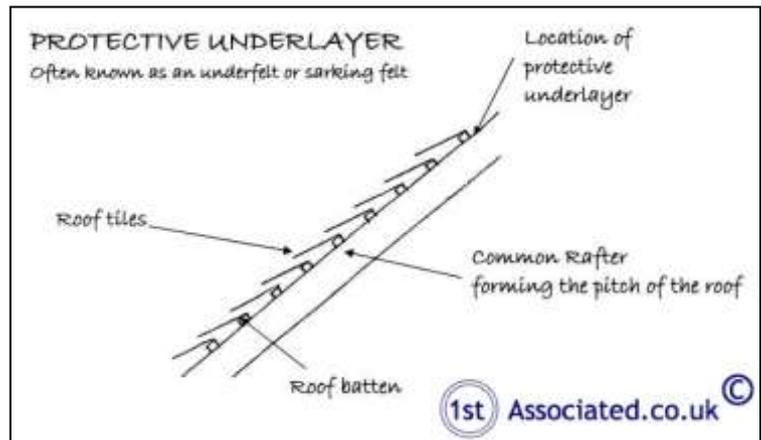
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Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)

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



Protective underlayer

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



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

Rear bay window pitched roof

There is a small single pitched roof to the rear which we were pleased to see has a lead flashing where it meets the main building. Bearing in mind the other lead flashing that is coming away to the parapet wall, we would check this in the summer of XXX.

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Pitched roof to rear



Small rear pitched roof

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend the lead flashing is checked in the summer of XXX.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of a few hundred pounds; quotations required.

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 our ladder or via any other vantage point that we managed to gain. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see, however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

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

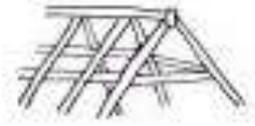
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ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

Main Roof

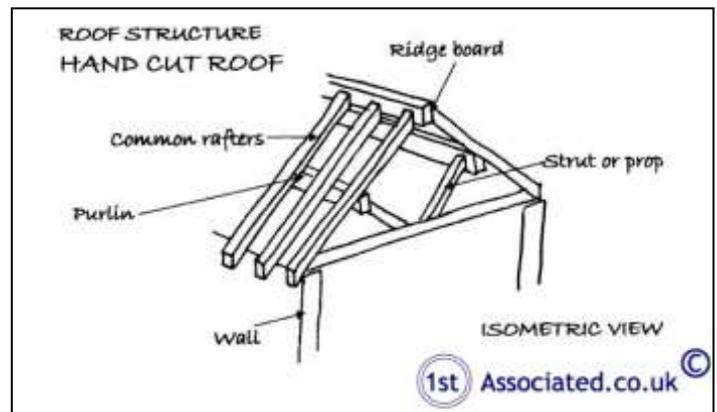
Roof Access

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing. There is no loft ladder, there was an electric light and a few secured floorboards. We recommend that a ladder is added and a good set of electric lights and secured floorboards throughout, as it will make the loft space safer and easier to use.

The loft has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly particularly in the main roof.

Roof Structure

This type of roof structure has what is known as a cut timber roof. This is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects however we would comment that the roof structure is lightweight



and the timbers are thinner than we would expect.

Cut timber roof

What is unusual with this roof structure as well as it being lightweight is that the purlins are not embedded into the wall.

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

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Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

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

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 average condition for its age, type and style with the exception at junction points such as the valleys, parapet walls and the roof upstand which are in below average condition. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.

In addition there looks to have been a fire to the front right side of the property at some point in time (the present owners didn't know anything about this). The timber remaining from the fire looks to be of reasonable quality.



Boarding and common rafters to rear of main roof



Rear lean-to roof



Fire damage

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

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Dampness within roof – from the parapet wall



Dampness from parapet wall



Dampness in top of common rafters and crack in wall

Common rafters

Timbers which form the pitch of the roof.

Fire Wall

The property has a brick firewall which is located to the right hand side (all directions given as you face the property). The firewalls are also Party Walls.

Fire Walls Defined

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

Water Tanks

We didn't see any water tanks.

Ventilation

There are vents in the roof which we were pleased to see as this helps reduce condensation which is a growing problem as we heat our houses more and insulate them more.



Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.



Insulation

Electrical Cables

We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of wiring found in the roof. In this case we could not see it due to the mass of insulation.

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

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

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GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

Gutters and Downpipes

The property has plastic gutters and downpipes. There are a few problems to these with regard to support to the guttering and we also noted that in some areas the rainwater goods discharge directly into the ground which can cause dampness into the property and is a practice that we are not keen on as they are often prone to blockages. Ideally, they should be changed to a gully system but this would involve running in new drains as well. If the budget doesn't permit for this then we would recommend slates are added to protect the walls.



Downpipe discharging directly into ground

Support to gutters

The support bracket to the gutters are spaced too wide (often the old cast iron gutter spacings). Plastic cannot support such weight and as such we can see a twist in the guttering which could in turn mean the water discharges down the wall.



Unsupported guttering and missing downpipe on left side

To the gutters and downpipes themselves there may be some minor leaks particularly where there are twists in the guttering but most people would be happy to live with these providing repairs are carried out within the next six to twelve months.

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ACTION REQUIRED: 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. Add extra supporting clips.

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

Soil and Vent Pipe

The soil and vent pipes are plastic, originally they would have been cast iron.



Soil and vent pipe



Repairs needed to soil and vent pipe

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

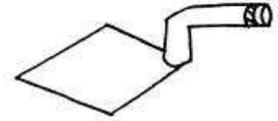
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WALLS



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

The walls are constructed of brickwork with render to the gable.

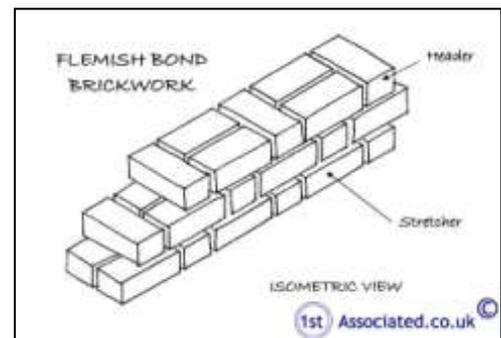
Brickwork

The property is built in a brick originally in a lime mortar in what is known as Flemish bond brickwork wrongly repointed in a cement mortar.

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



Flemish bond brickwork



Flemish Bond brickwork

Solid walls

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

Bonding timber

Before the 19th Century, the practice of building timbers into external walls was almost universal. These were known as bonding timbers. They are of

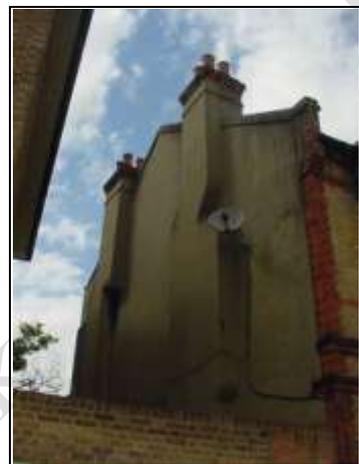
course prone to rot as solid walls allow dampness through. Unfortunately, without opening up the structure, we are unable to confirm if this is the case.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary with regards to Lime every time and repointing.

Render

We were not able to view this area properly due to the way the building is constructed. From what we can see of the render there were dark areas which may be due to lack of airflow around the building particularly as there is a large block of flats to the left hand side.

We normally carry out a tap test (literally hitting the render with the back of a hammer) but we have not been able to in this instance.



Render to gable end on left side

Cracking

We would remind you that any hairline cracks that appear in the render need to be sealed as soon as possible to stop dampness and water getting in and causing blisters and hollow areas. The brickwork areas should also be repaired to stop further deterioration.

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

Timber lintels

In a building of this age there are often substantial timber lintels particularly over bay windows (which you have to both the front and rear) which if any dampness gets in can cause problems. There is likely to be a large timber lintel over the bay window. If this has rotted over the years this can lead to movement in the front bay which in turn can move the entirety of the house.

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Finally, the external walls have been inspected visually from ground level and/or randomly via a ladder. Where the window and door lintels are concealed by brickwork / render / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age timber lintels, concrete lintels, rubbed brick lintels, or metal lintels are common, which can be susceptible to deterioration that is unseen, particularly if in contact with dampness.

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

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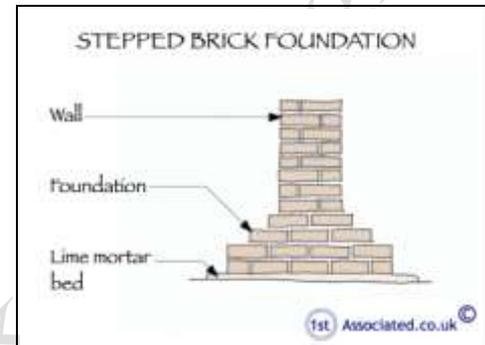
FOUNDATIONS



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

Foundations

Given the age of the property you may find different depths of foundations. We would expect to find very little foundations or a shallow brick foundation, often with a bedding of lime mortar.



Stepped brick foundation

Bay Windows

Bay windows in this era of property typically do not have foundations underneath them and have been subject to movement. We are aware that some insurance companies underpin bay windows with a modern foundation. We think this is excessive and unnecessary.



The red circle indicates where the foundations are usually non-existent or minimal

Concrete/underpinning

We have mentioned in the Executive Summary that we are uncertain as to what work has been carried out underneath the property.

London Clay

As with most properties in the London area, this property stands on London Clay. It is therefore more susceptible than most should drains leak or trees be

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allowed to overgrow etc. It is not unusual to have some settlement in London properties.

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.

Cracks

Please remember to talk about any cracks identified within the property. Often insurers will refer to progressive and non-progressive cracking. Unfortunately this is something we are unable to comment upon from a one-off inspection; the Building Research Establishment recommend a year of monitoring of any cracking.

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

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

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

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

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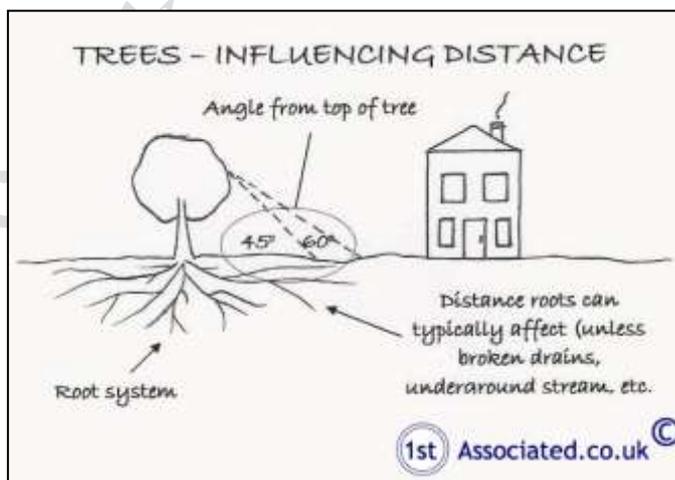
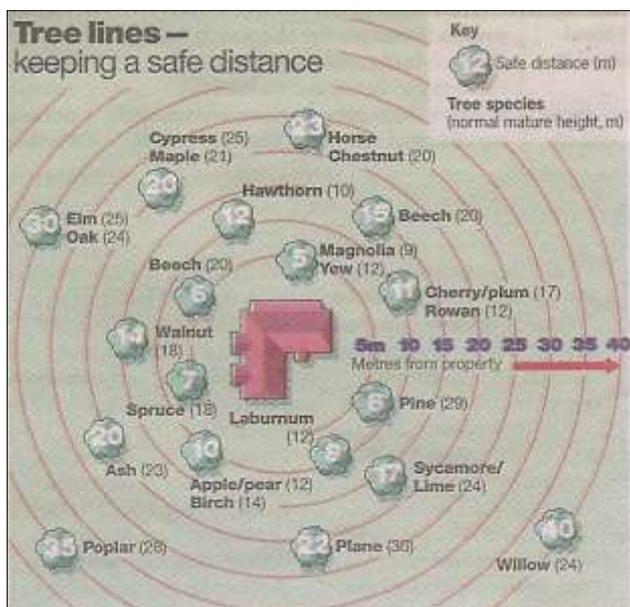
TREES



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

The elder tree has been removed to the front of the property; there does remain a tree to the rear. It is much debated as to the long term affects of removing trees and we would advise that we believe the jury is still out with regard to this.

ACTION REQUIRED: We are advised an arboriculturalist has looked at this property already and the tree was removed. We would ask via your legal advisor that a copy of the report is forwarded onto us electronically before legal commitment to purchase.



Influencing distance of trees to a property

Influencing Distance Defined

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

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

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make enquiries with regard to the insurability of your property in relation to trees and other features when you purchase the property.

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

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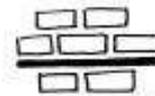
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DAMP PROOF COURSE

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. Often there was a slate damp proof course behind the plinth which we believe is the case here.



Plinth

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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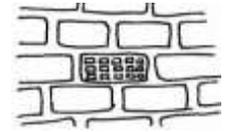
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AIRBRICKS



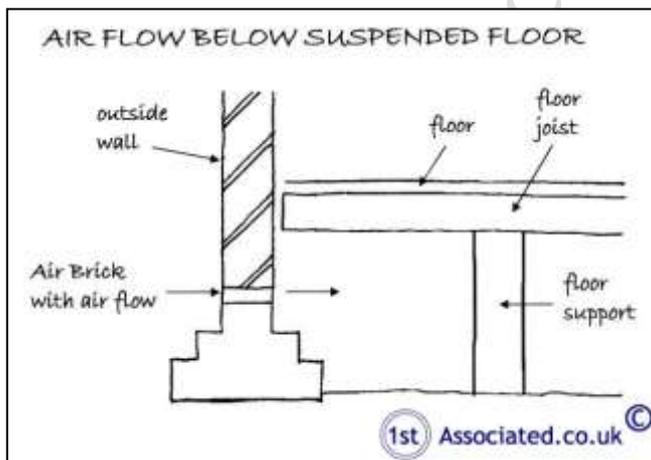
In properties with suspended floors you need to have an airflow beneath to stop deterioration. The air is allowed to pass under the property by the use of airbricks. Generally the rule of thumb is that airbricks are spaced every metre and a half approximately, but this depends upon the specific circumstances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

Air Bricks

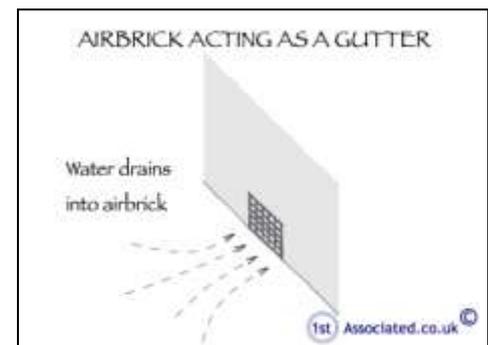
The property has a suspended timber floor which needs air bricks to vent it. There are airbricks to the front of the property. Air bricks are essential to have a through flow of air as this helps to reduce the chances of wet rot, dry rot and woodworm. Some of the airbricks are low and are acting as gutters.



Air brick into basement/cellar



Suspended timber floor



Airbricks acting as gutters

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary. Make sure there is a clear flow of air through the building and ensure that none of the air bricks are acting as gutters (please see our earlier comments).

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

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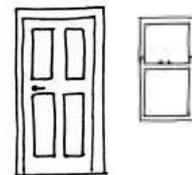
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FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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

Fascias and Soffits

The fascias and soffits are timber. Where we can see this detailing it is predominantly a fascia only. As mentioned the guttering is not supported and as such has twisted therefore may be discharging rainwater onto the timber fascia boards which of course will cause them to deteriorate.



Fascias

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

Windows and Doors

The property has single glazed timber sliding sash windows. We would specifically comment that the windows do not fit properly and are in need of redecoration.



Sliding sash windows

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

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General Information on Sliding Sash Windows

If you have not lived in a property with sliding sash windows previously, you should be aware that typically they are draughty and rattle. There is no easy way to eliminate this problem. In our experience, a general ease and adjustment of the windows and the addition of a plastic tube draught sealer (available from most DIY stores) and regular redecoration is the best option to minimise the draughtiness of the windows in this case. Horizontal Sliding Sash Windows (sometimes known as York Windows).

Knife Test

We have tested the windows by pushing a knife into a random selection. We generally tend to do the lower windows as access is easier.

Doors

One of the features of the property we liked is the entrance door which we discussed with the owner during our question and answer session and they advised that it had been specially renovated. In the little sunlight there was on the day of our inspection it did look an excellent renovation.



Leaded window which has been specially renovated

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.

The fascia boards in many cases are hidden behind the gutters. The windows need easing and adjusting and painting the sooner the better. The fencing needs repairing and staining.

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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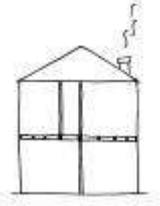
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INTERNAL



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 within the roof and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are a mixture of the original lath and plaster with replacement plasterboard. We particularly noted to the front right hand side which is over the master bedroom new plasterboard in this area which in turn means the cornice has been recreated (the owner during our question and answer session confirmed this).



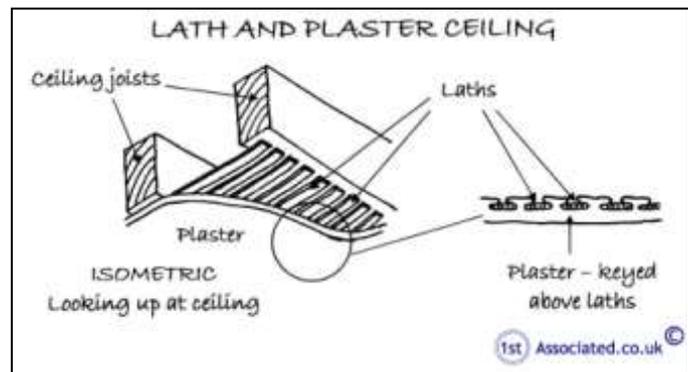
Decorative cornice in the master bedroom



Replacement ceiling over master bedroom

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.



Lath and plaster ceiling

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Plasterboard Defined

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

Internal Walls and Partitions

Based upon our knowledge of this age, type and style of construction we believe the majority of the walls are solid brickwork walls with more modern partition walls for example around the utility room. The only place we could see the partition wall (without taking a wall down) is to the side of the cellar area where we could see a brick on edge had been used.



Brick on edge within cellar.

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 solid wall, Flemish bond brickwork with a wet plaster applied. Some of the walls seemed too smooth to be an original lime plaster; we assume these have been upgraded by the existing owner who as you may know is a plasterer. We spoke to his wife during the question and answer session who advised that all she could remember for definite that had been carried out was to the rear lounge/dining room where he had evened out the splays to the side of the French door area.



Splays to French door area

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.

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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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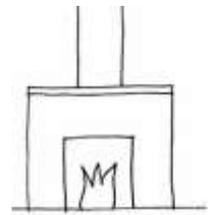
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CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

The chimney breasts are located to the left hand side (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

Vents

We were pleased to see that the chimneys were vented as this helps reduce the chances of sulphate attack and other deterioration.



Vent to rear chimney

Possible chimney removed

To the rear of the property we would have expected to find a chimney as all rooms in this era would have had chimneys for warmth; there was no chimney visible or on the adjoining property.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend you meet with your next door neighbour to see if they have a chimney on their side as this could affect your property. We are more than happy to return if they do.

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

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concealed very well when chimney breasts are hidden particularly when plastered over.

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

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

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

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FLOORS



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

Cellar

There is a worn concrete floor within the cellar. Please note our earlier comments with regards to not being able to find a sump pump to remove water should the cellar get flooded.



Concrete floor in cellar

Ground Floor

There is a suspended timber floor to the property, which require air movement underneath to minimise wet rot, dry rot and woodworm. The timber floor is a modern, thinner board than we would have expected to originally find.



New and old timber in ground floor viewed from within cellar



Timber floor

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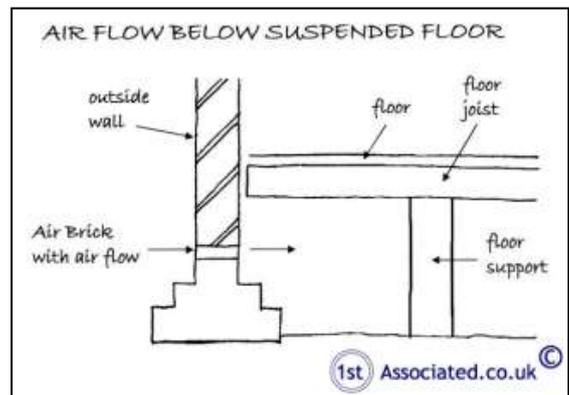
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Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

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



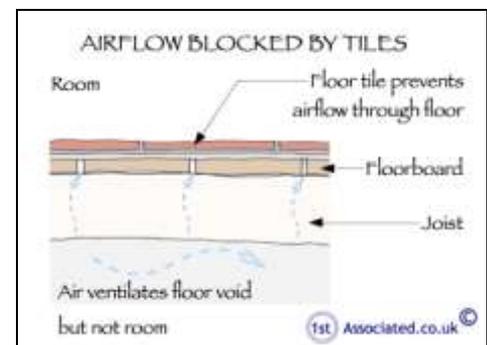
Suspended timber floor

Draughty ground floor

We find that people who have not lived in large Victorian or Georgian properties previously find that the draughts coming up under the floor can be surprisingly cold during the winter months particularly if they convert their house to the floorboard style that is very popular with some people.

Floor tiles in kitchen and utility room

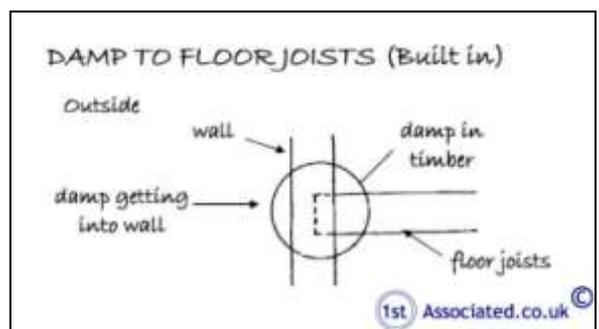
Whilst the floors have a tile finish they are a suspended timber floor which requires air movement underneath to minimise wet rot, dry rot and woodworm. Our concern where floors are tiled is that we physically cannot see the floors. Our other concern is that a hard material such as a tile onto a soft floor that deflects means that ultimately the joints will start to crack and deteriorate and you will need to repoint.



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.

We noted a leak from the upstairs bathroom which has caused staining to the utility area below. The owner advised that



Embedded timbers

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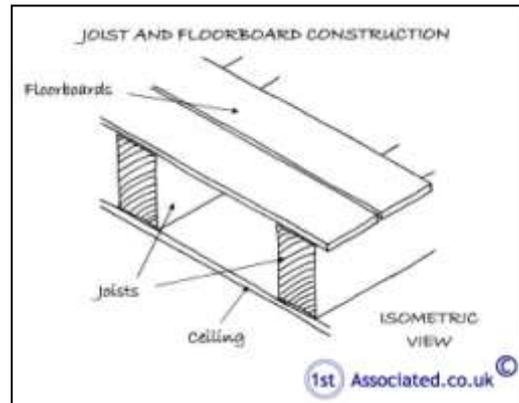
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it particularly related to an incident with the grandchildren where the water was allowed to overflow.

Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



Joist and floorboards

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

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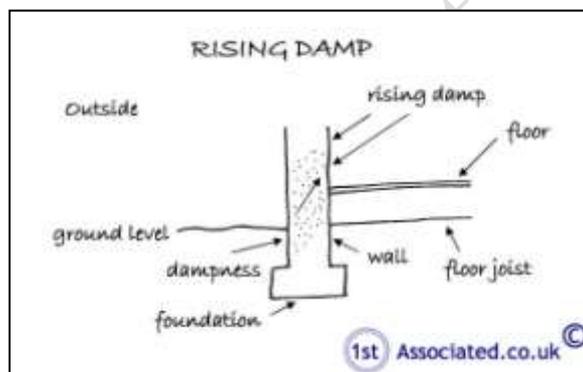


DAMPNESS

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

Rising Damp

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



Rising damp

A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we have found rising damp.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see the Executive Summary.

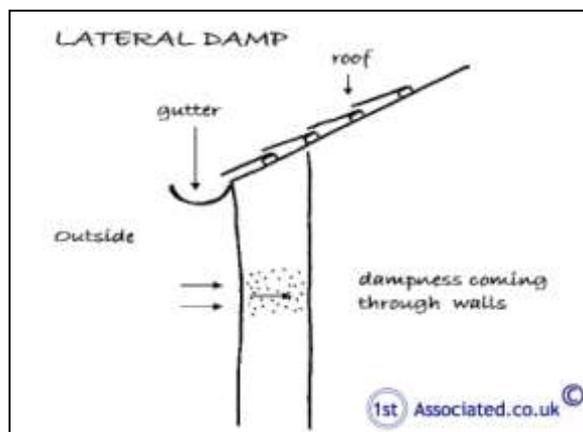


High damp readings

Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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

We used a damp meter on the external walls. We have not found dampness.



Lateral dampness

Condensation

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

At the time of the inspection there were no obvious signs of condensation however it is a characteristic to this type of building and modern day heating levels do tend to promote condensation in these buildings particularly as there are no modern extract fans in the bathroom, kitchen and utility room.

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

Extract fans in kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas

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



Vent rather than extract fan in bathroom

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

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

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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 a mixture of doors including panel doors and modern hollow core doors (sometimes referred to as egg box doors, as this is what the internal of them looks like when they are opened up).



Checking door frames which are out of level



Egg box door

Period features

The property benefits from period features such as the archway in the hallway.



Attractive period feature in the hallway

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Borrowed light

We particularly like the borrowed light from the utility room into the hallway.



Borrowed light

Staircase

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



Cellar stairs not lined

Kitchen

We found the kitchen in average condition, although perhaps a little dark. If you want to redesign it you really can spend as much or as little as you like on a kitchen.

We would comment that the configuration of the kitchen is slightly unusual as the sink is not underneath the window.



Kitchen sink not under window

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

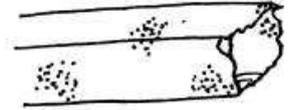
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TIMBER DEFECTS



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.*

During the course of our inspection we have seen signs of wet rot within the roof and possibly some to the fascia boards given that the gutters are twisting and therefore probably leaking. There is also the start of some within the windows. The worst scenario that could move the wet rot to dry rot would be if the roof leaks are left.

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

Woodworm



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

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The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. The damp conditions within the roof are ideal for woodworm. Within the roof we found no obvious visual signs of woodworm activity or indeed signs of past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage however please note the limitations of our inspection as we had to use a torch.

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. We would recommend the entirety of the roof is fully lit and reinspected.

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

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

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INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

Internal decorations are in average condition, slightly dated in some areas and of course cracks are visible.

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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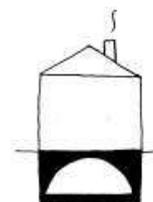
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CELLARS AND VAULTS

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

The cellar is damp as we would expect it to be.

We would comment that we didn't find a sump pump within the cellar. It is generally considered more and more likely to have flooding in cellars today due to the way we have developed our building.



Cellar

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

Stairs

The stairs to the basement are worn and would benefit from repair or you need to take care.



Stairs to cellar

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Cracking

The cracking goes throughout the building; we did find some cracking within the basement as well.



Crack in cellar

Finally, we have made a visual inspection of the cellar/vault only and have no way of knowing what the construction is without opening up the structure.

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THERMAL EFFICIENCY



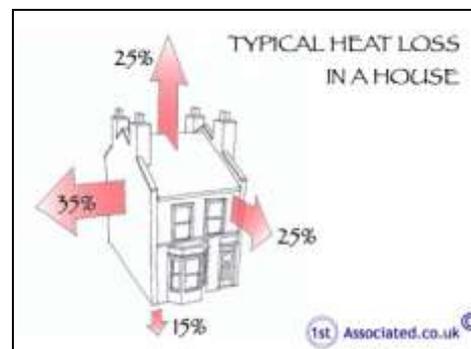
Up until the mid 1940s we did not really consider insulation in properties, for example it was only in the 1960s that we started putting insulation in the roof and then it was about 50mm, in the 1970s this was upgraded to 100mm. Then we started to think about double glazing and cavity wall insulation.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

HIPs

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

Roofs

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 300mm. In this instance there was 200 to 300mm.



Walls

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

Windows

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

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Services

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

Summary

Assuming the above is correct, this property is average for a house of this era without plastic double glazing which we would not recommend.

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.

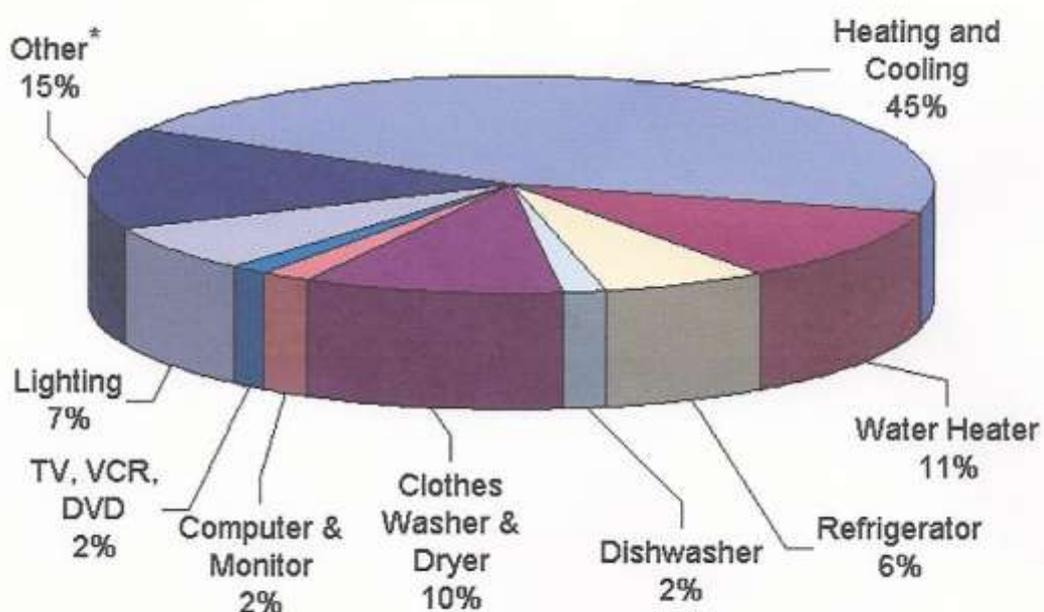
or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

*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=UR8wRSp2IXs*

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

What does my energy bill pay for?



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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 was noted. We were advised in our question and answer session with the owner that it wasn't working. A good alarm system should not only help reduce break-ins but also your insurance. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further.

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

Fire / Smoke Alarms

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

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

Insurance

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

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

Asbestos

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

noted asbestos.

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

Our insurance company requires us to advise that we are not asbestos surveyors and that an asbestos survey should be carried out.

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

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SERVICES

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

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

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ELECTRICITY



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

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

Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the basement. The fuse board looked 1970's/1980's and better are now available. We recommend that the fuse board is replaced.



Fuse board

Earth Test

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



Earth Test

ACTION REQUIRED: Replace fuse board. As the fuse board is dated there are likely to be electrics that are dated as well. As the

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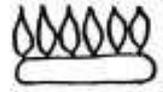
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property is changing occupancy an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test and report should be carried out by a NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

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

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

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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 cellar.

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 the owner that the controlling stopcock is located in the cloakroom.

Water Pressure

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

Cold Water Cistern

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

Plumbing

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

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Heating

The boiler was located in the cloakroom within the utility room, it is manufactured by Alpha and the model type is CD32C. This boiler is one that we don't come across very often and it may be difficult to obtain spare parts.



Boiler

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

Ten Minute Heating Test

The owner / occupier turned at our request turned on the heating for approximately ten minutes. We checked the radiators and these were warm.

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

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

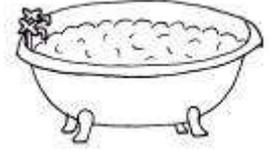
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BATHROOM



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

Bathroom

The property has a three piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin and WC, which looks in average condition, subject to some day-to-day wear and tear, as one would expect.

We would always recommend mastic is replaced around the shower before you use the shower.



Dampness from shower has caused problems in utility room

Cloakroom

The cloakroom is located within the utility room and comprises a W.C and wash hand basin.



Cloakroom

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 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 no inspection chambers / manholes other than the one on the next door driveway which we believe is referred to in the report of the elder tree and the drains being repaired. As mentioned you do need to find out what these repairs were via your legal advisor.

No Manholes Found

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

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

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our earlier comments with regards to a closed circuit TV camera report of the drains given the problems that have been occurring with the drains.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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Manholes Defined

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

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

Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

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

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

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

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OUTSIDE AREAS

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

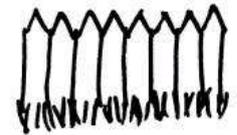
PARKING



Parking currently is in a garage which is rented to the left side of the property which we are advised includes the driveway; the owner is happy to transfer this to your use subject to appropriate agreement. Other than this, parking is on the road on a first come, first served basis.



Rented garage



EXTERNAL AREAS

Front Garden

There is a small garden to the front with shingle. The fences to the front and side would benefit from staining.



Front garden



Front fence

Rear Garden

The fence would benefit from staining and some repair.



Rear garden



Garden shed



Fence needs repairing to left hand side

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

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

Neighbours

Left Hand Neighbours

We didn't come across anyone to talk to we took photographs from this side.

Right Hand Neighbours

We knocked at the time of the inspection but there was no response.

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POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:
 - i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
 - ii) Rising damp treatments.
 - iii) Roof and similar renewals.
 - iv) Central heating installation.
 - v) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
 - vi) Removal of any walls in part or whole.
 - vii) Removal of any chimneys in part or whole.
 - viii) 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 Home Page.

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

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

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

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

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

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

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REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses
Published by Estates Gazette Limited

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

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

House Builders Bible
By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

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LIMITATIONS

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

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

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

ENGLISH LAW

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

SOLE USE

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

ONLY HUMAN!

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

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

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WEATHER

It was warm with showers at the time of the inspection.

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

OCCUPIED PROPERTY

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

INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been limited as:

- 1) We viewed the roof by torchlight.
- 2) We were not able to open up the ground floor or the first floor.
- 3) We didn't have the benefit of meeting you at the property to talk about your specific requirements and risk levels. We have subsequently spoke with you on the phone but this is not the same.

BUILDING INSURANCE

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

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

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

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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

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APPENDICES

1. Information in relation to insurance claim
2. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
3. Information on the Property Market
4. French Drain Article
5. Settlement, Subsidence and Heave

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INFORMATION IN RELATION TO INSURANCE CLAIM

XXX Insurance dated XXX, client reference XXX. We haven't seen the proposed or actual work specification and tender documents.

The insurance claim appears to have been handled on XXX Insurance's behalf by:

XXX Associates

Engineers:

XXX Consulting

We are uncertain as to the details of this claim

Certificate of Structural Adequacy

The Certificate of Structural Adequacy was prepared and issued on XXX. It doesn't clarify if there was or wasn't underpinning, it is silent on this but it does advise there were works to the localised cracks but it doesn't say what.

We would finish by advising and quoting from the Certificate of Structural Adequacy:

'that the certificate is considered a professional opinion and is not a warranty or guarantee as regards to the work undertaken. No liability should be attached to us except to the extent that we fail and fail to exercise reasonable skill, care and diligence that the provision of our services on the terms of appointment. This certificate does not in any way increase our liability beyond the agreed terms of appointment'

which we have not seen.

'The certificate is for the sole benefit of the above named insured and may not be relied upon by any other person. Written permission needs to be gained from XXX Consulting. A further re-inspection may be required'

Has this been obtained?

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ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal Advisor needs to confirm with the consultant engineer that they are happy to extend the permission to yourselves and offer them the opportunity to revisit.

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THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

Work You Cannot do Yourself

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

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INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

www.XXX.co.uk and www.nationwide.co.uk

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

www.hometrack.co.uk

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

www.motleyfool.co.uk

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

www.rightmove.co.uk

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

www.zoopla.co.uk

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

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French Drain

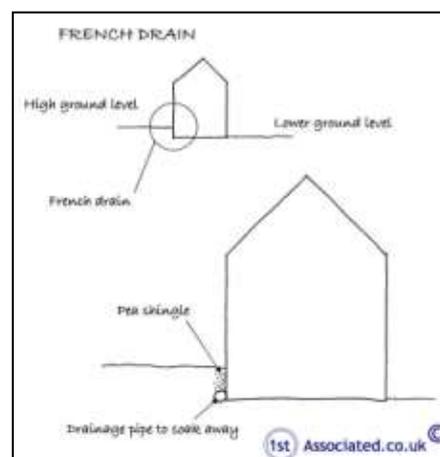
Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

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 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.

Settlement, Subsidence and Heave and the part clay soils play in this

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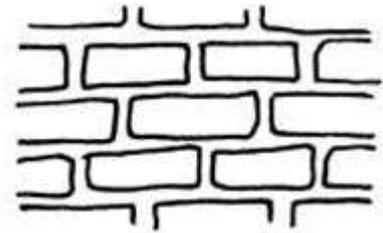
We are highly qualified independent surveyors who can provide help and advice with regards to problems with your property. We can carry out a Specific Defects Report (often known as an Engineers Reports), Building Surveys (also known as Structural Surveys) and Independent Valuations but please note these are not for bank lending but are to advise you how much we feel the property is really worth.

Our surveys are easy to understand, listing out the property problems and how to resolve them, plus an estimate of costs for work.

Please Free phone us on 0800 298 5424 for a friendly chat with a surveyor.

The magical properties of clay

Clay has several unique properties. It can both cause problems when it is a clay soil that your house is built upon and be useful when it is used for the bricks that your house is made of.



Clay expands and contracts, depending upon its moisture content. It is at its bulkiest at 40% to 60%, however, it changes form if it gets wetter or dryer. It is this change of its bulk that causes problems. When the clay soil gets too wet the clays bulk becomes larger and almost pushes the property out of the ground. This is known as heave. When the clay dries out it becomes dust like, then we get settlement of foundations and subsidence of the building, as its bulkiness has reduced considerably.

Its ability to change size wouldn't be such a problem if it weren't that most London properties are built on clay, and there are many areas of clay throughout the country, such as Bedfordshire and Peterborough , which, interestingly enough, are also known for brick making.

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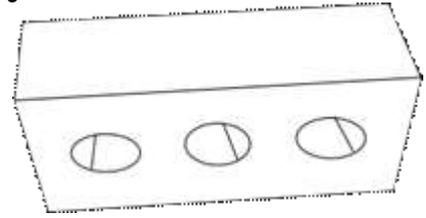
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Finding out if your property is built on clay soil

There are several ways of finding out if your property is built on clay soil.



Cracks

If the property has historic cracks it may be that it is built upon clay. It is best to check before you panic. You can do this by looking at geological maps or ringing up your friendly insurance broker, as they have a postcode index as to what areas are considered high risk with clay and which aren't. However, we must add that these maps are quite general and that when we were on a course many years ago we asked how these maps were originally made. We were advised that students were employed during their summer holidays, so the reliability of them, it could be argued, is limited for the purposes of identifying if clay is under your building, as they were originally produced to help farmers.

Clay test

This is what a good surveyor would do if they had come to investigate problems with your foundations and the owner of the property was happy for them to dig up the garden! We take a lump of soil from the garden; this should be approximately the depth of the foundations. If it is a Victorian or Edwardian property it may be a lot less, in a modern property it is likely to be 1 metre to 1.2 metres, to even 1.4 metres deep.

On a summer's day you can leave the lump of soil in the garden for it to dry out in the sun. When it dries out if it becomes powdery and much lower in volume then it is clay. Equally, if it rains and it becomes a larger volume then it is clay. Also, if it is not warm you can leave it inside on the radiator. We believe (although we would need to check it) that a growth or reduction of approximately 30% (for some reason 28% is ringing bells). This type of clay is known as shrinkable clay.

Not all clay expands and contracts

We would add that not all clay expands and contracts. The deeper clay tends to be the more stable and harder clay and therefore doesn't expand to the same extent.

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Clay that is used for brick making

We thought we would just add something about clay that is made for the use of brick making.

Old soft red bricks

The older bricks, were possibly even sun baked rather than fired, used a softer red clay. They have their own oil so they can affectively cook themselves.

You will also notice that it is the softer red clay bricks, even up the post-war era, that tend to be affected first by spalling.

Blue clay

Blue clay is fairly well known. This type of clay tends to be the harder clay and produces harder bricks and you may find bricks made out of this clay. A classic brick, and generally considered the hardest brick, is the Accrington brick and you would have to dig deep for this clay, i.e. normal clay would be dug at about 30 feet, or the metric equivalent!

Yellow or white clay

A yellow or white clay, that is used in a London stock brick, is harder than the soft red bricks but not as hard as the blue clay bricks.

Fletton brick

The one thing that used to confuse us for many years is what is the difference between a Fletton brick, a stock brick and a common brick. A Fletton brick, we believe, has its origins in Fletton near Peterborough , where bricks are produced in such quantities that it became the common name. Stock bricks tend also to be a common brick, but it specifically relates to bricks that don't have their own oils to fire, they would typically have to have methane today and years gone by coal dust to fire them, where as the soft red bricks tend to have their own oil that they can fire in. Therefore, you tend to find many of the older properties have a red brick as they were fired in the sun. The term common brick is a generic name.

Silicone brick

This isn't a brick at all, but, we believe, is made from concrete.

You may also be interested in these articles regarding cracking in properties:

Structural Cracking

Cracks in my Wall

How, in our experience, Insurance Companies deal with Cracks in Properties

Please see our section on: Specific Defects Reports

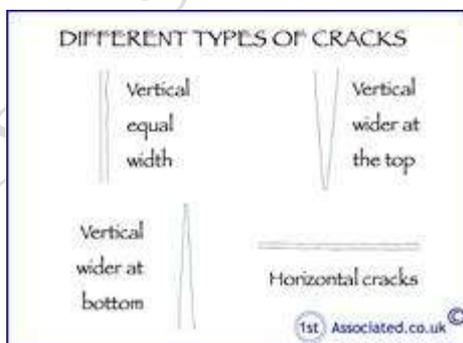
Why have an independent survey with us?

We have a wealth of knowledge about all things property related (not just bricks!) and always recommend that you have an independent building survey as this will pin point any property problems. Caveat emptor means buyer beware and is why you need to have a building survey to find out if there are any problems within the property; the estate agent certainly will not advise you of any problems but we most definitely will!

Remember the independent building Surveyor that you employ will be the only person working for you with your interests at heart.

The sketches and photos, circles and ovals in our reports

We include sketches and photos in our building surveys to identify problem areas and to help to explain pictorially the problems we have found. We also use ovals and circles in our photos and sketches to highlight certain areas to you like the one below of a crack between the original building and the extension.



Example of one of our sketches



Example of one of our photos

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Our article

We hope you found the article of use and if you have any experiences that you feel should be added to this article that would benefit others, or you feel that some of the information that we have put is wrong then please do not hesitate to contact us (we are only human).

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