RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

OF

Greetham, Nr Horncastle, Lincolnshire, LN9

FOR

Mr F

Prepared by:

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Marketing by:

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

REPORT FORMAT
SYNOPSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS AND ROOF WINDOW
ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS
ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT SPACE
GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES AND SOIL AND VENT PIPES
EXTERNAL WALLS
EXTERNAL JOINERY
EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

INTERNAL

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

SERVICES

ELECTRICITY
GAS
PLUMBING AND HEATING
BATHROOMS
MAIN DRAINS

OUTSIDE AREAS

EXTERNAL AREAS
OUTBUILDING AND CONCRETE BARN

POINTS FOR LEGAL ADVISOR

APPENDICES

LIMITATIONS
ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS
GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REPORT FORMAT

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

GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

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

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

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

ORIENTATION

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

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two-storey detached property that has been extended and altered over the years, which is not unusual for this age of property.

There is an adjoining outbuilding with a conservatory and off road parking together with many acres of land (not measured) including a pond and concrete barn.

We are advised that the property was built in the early 1900s, the owner thought about 1905/1906. If the exact age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

Putting Life into Perspective!

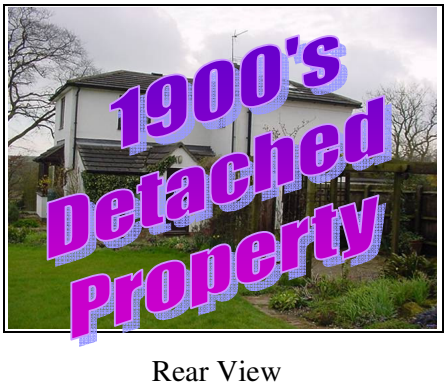
Some of the things that were happening around the time the property was built:

1899-1902	Boer War between Britain and Boers in Southern Africa
1901	Queen Victoria Died
1903	First flight by Wright Brothers
1903-1928	The Campaign for Women's Suffrage
1912	The Beginning of the Motoring Age
1914-1918	World War I

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

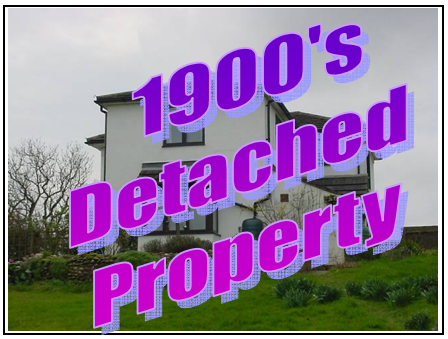
We have considered the front of the property as the side facing the main road (the lounge side), the right hand side is the kitchen side and the left hand side is the study side with the rear being the side that faces the outbuildings.

Front and Right Hand Side View

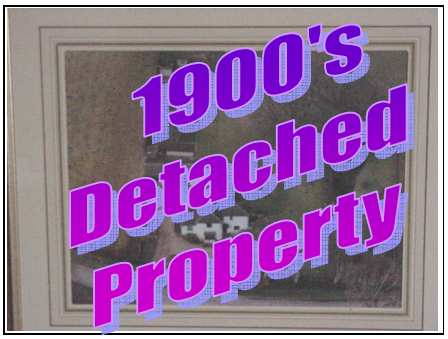


Rear View

Left Hand Side and Front View



Right Hand Side / Pond Side



Owner's photo showing aerial view

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Kitchen
- Pantry
- Utility Room
- Front Lounge
- Dining Room
- Single Guest Bedroom
- Toilet under the stairs
- Study

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Two Bedrooms both with En Suite Facilities

Outside Areas

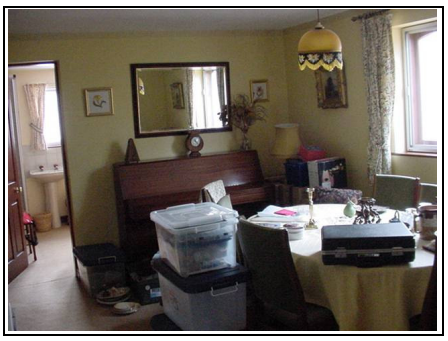
We have used the term 'outbuilding' to describe the building across from the house, which incorporates the garage, store, workshop and conservatory. We have used the term 'concrete barn' to describe the concrete barn!

INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

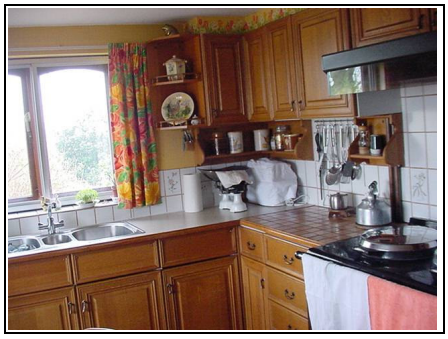
The following photos are of the internal of the property to help you recall what it looked like and the general ambience (or lack of). We have not necessarily taken photographs of each and every room.

Ground Floor

Guest Bedroom



Dining Room



Kitchen

Utility Room

Pantry

W.C. Under the Stairs

Lounge

Study

First Floor

Pond Side Bedroom

En Suite

Drive Side Bedroom

En Suite

Built in Cupboards

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

EXTERNAL

Chimneys:	One brick chimney
Main Roof:	A shallow tiled main roof, clad with concrete tiles. Low level roofs clad with interlocking concrete tiles.
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Finished in painted cement render (assumed)
External Joinery:	Double glazed stained timber windows and painted timber fascias and soffits

INTERNAL

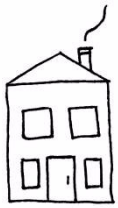
Ceilings:	Plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Predominantly solid (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: Solid underfoot, assumed to be concrete. We are advised that there is also insulation under the floor.
	First Floor: Joist and floorboards sheets (assumed)

SERVICES

We are advised (by the owner) that the property has a mains water supply, a septic tank, electricity and LPG gas (assumed).

The above terms are explained in full in the main body of the Report. We have used the term 'assumed' as we have not opened up the structure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 50 plus photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if an issue has not been discussed that you are interested in/concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it. If we have not we will happily go back.

Generally we found the property to be in average condition considering its age, type and style with a few exceptions. We have divided the Executive Summary into 'The Good', 'The Bad' and 'The Ugly', to help distinguish what in our mind are the main issues.

The Good

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

- Location

- Potential, particularly with regard to your ideas for the concrete barn; however if these plans are essential to you purchasing the property we would recommend that you have detailed discussions with the Planning Authority and submit an outline Planning Application before you purchase the property to establish if they are happy with this change of use. We would also recommend at the same time that you put in an 'option to purchase' on the adjoining land with the farmer to safeguard any future development.

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) **Roof**

Unfortunately we were unable to view the main roof properly or gain access to it. However, from our knowledge of this type of construction, and particularly bearing in mind the alterations that have been carried out, we feel that the shallow pitched roof will be prone to condensation, which unfortunately will lead to dampness in the timbers, indeed there may already be dampness in the timbers. We literally could only see approximately five percent of the entire roof structure.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend that an additional access hatch is added to allow access to the roof space. We would then recommend that ventilation is added, which can be added in the form of vents to the ridges and to the fascias and soffits.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £1,000 - £4,000, depending upon what you find when you open up the roof structure.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section of this Report.

2) **Render**

Vertical Crack to Render

We could see a vertical crack in the render to the driveway side of the property. There was no obvious apparent reason for this vertical crack.

Vertical crack to the centre of the photo

During our question and answer session we asked the owner to talk through the different alterations and extensions that have been carried out. From our understanding of what he said, this is an original extension carried out prior to them

coming to the property. The crack may be caused by the openings to the study and the guest bedroom beneath, meaning that this is a weak point in the wall structure. Equally it may be caused by minor settlement to the front or the rear of the property.

It would be interesting to see how the roof timbers sit in this area when you open up the roof, as mentioned in the item above.

Horizontal Crack on Right Hand Side

Again, this cracking may be caused by the openings and minor settlement in the structure.

Horizontal cracking to centre of photo.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ensure that all cracks to the render are sealed and made watertight to stop rainwater getting behind the render.

The owners advised that they paint the render every two years. It is very important to keep the render in good decorative order, as this effectively is a protective layer and it is amazing how quickly the cement render with deteriorate if the protective layer is not kept in good order.

ANTICIPATED COST: To seal the cracking: £500 - £1,000. To do this properly you need to get a tradesman to cut out the render on either side and then re-render and redecorate. Alternatively you can continue using mastic which is currently being used.

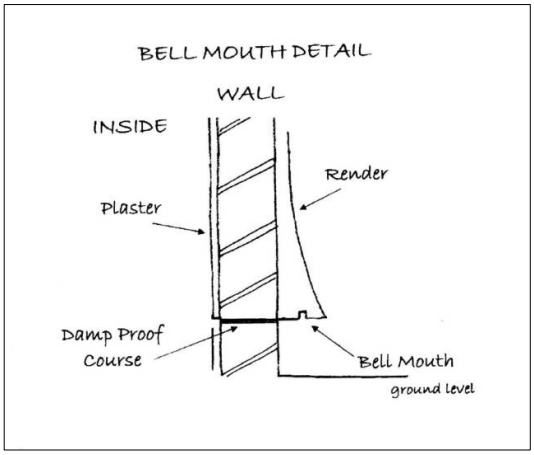
Poor Detailing

We noted that there were no drip details over the windows and no bell-mouths at low level. This does tend to be a sign of a poorer quality rendering.

No bell-mouth

Bell-Mouths Defined

A bell-mouth is a curve at the base of a wall which throws the water away from the structure therefore preventing dampness.



Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

3) **Trees**

Without wishing to state the obvious, the property has trees surrounding it, which you will have a liability / responsibility for. From our discussions during our question and answer session with the present owners they advised that the highways authority asked them to prune back the trees approximately two years ago, this will obviously be an on-going process.

ACTION REQUIRED: We feel it would be good practice to ask an arboriculturist (not a tree surgeon) to advise on future maintenance of all the trees on the land. It would also be good to establish exactly which trees are on your land and which are not.

ANTICIPATED COST: £250 - £500 for a report and advice.

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.

4) **Services**

Heating

You may wish to improve the present heating, which consists of an Aga that heats one radiator (we are advised that this is the maximum that this type of Aga can heat). We believe we are right in saying that modern Agas / Rayburns / or equivalent can power a central heating system with many radiators. You may wish to investigate this further.

The remainder of the heating is electric, which the owners advised keeps the house warm. However, from our own personal experience, heating of a property is a very personal preference and what the existing owners feel is warm you may not feel is adequate.

ACTION REQUIRED / ANTICIPATED COST: Set aside a budget of £5,000 for a new heating system, which we feel should incorporate any future anticipated plans.

Electrics

We carried out an earth test on the electrics and the circuit board tripped out, indicating that there is a fault on the system.

ACTION REQUIRED: Have an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) inspection, test and report carried out by an NICEIC or equivalent registered and approved electrical contractor.

ANTICIPATED COST: £200 - £400, depending upon the faults found.

A further thought we have had with regard to the electrics is that it would be worth getting the electrician to check the outbuildings when carrying out the tests on the house and to also comment on the concrete barn.

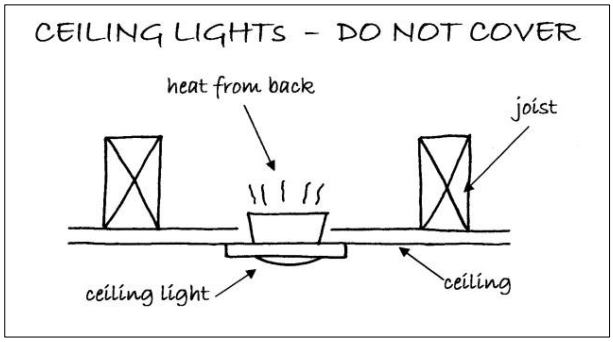
Please see the Services Section of this Report.

5) **Property Décor and Fixtures and Fittings Dated**

Generally the property is dated throughout and also has a slightly awkward layout, as have many houses that are altered and extended. You may wish to amend and adjust the layout when you carry out any future extension plans.

6) **Older Style Ceiling Light in the Bedroom**

The property has an older style ceiling light. In some instances these can cause problems as the heat given off has in some cases lead to outbreaks of fire; these tend to be in the older type of ceiling lights and we recommend that where ceiling lights are used that the rear of the light is not covered; this is particularly the case in rooms with a loft space above it where stored items are placed in it.



ACTION REQUIRED: Check when putting stored items into the roof that you do not cover the lights. You should ensure that this is incorporated in the electrical test that you have.

7) **Change in Level**

This is more a statement of fact, than something you can actually do anything about. There is a fairly noticeable change in level at first floor, where the original property joins the new two storey extension.

Please see the Floors Section of this Report.

The Ugly

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

There are no items that we feel should fall within this category.

General Comment

This report focuses on the main property and not on the outbuildings or the concrete barn. We have, however, made further comments in the section below.

Other Items we discussed during the survey, which may or may not be of use!

Moving on to more general information.

In Relation to the House

Extension and Amendment to the Layout

As mentioned, the layout is slightly awkward and would benefit from being amended and altered to suit your personal requirements.

Just a reminder about our comments with regard to an extension, the drains run across the back of the property (assuming the front of the property is the side that faces the main road). Drains should always be taken into consideration when carrying out extensions and alterations.

Conservatory to Take Advantage of the Views

A conservatory on the right hand side of the property does seem to be an obvious extension. Thinking about it, it may have been added to the outbuilding rather than the house due to Planning restrictions and perhaps Building Regulation requirements to have proper foundations and a soak-away for rainwater.

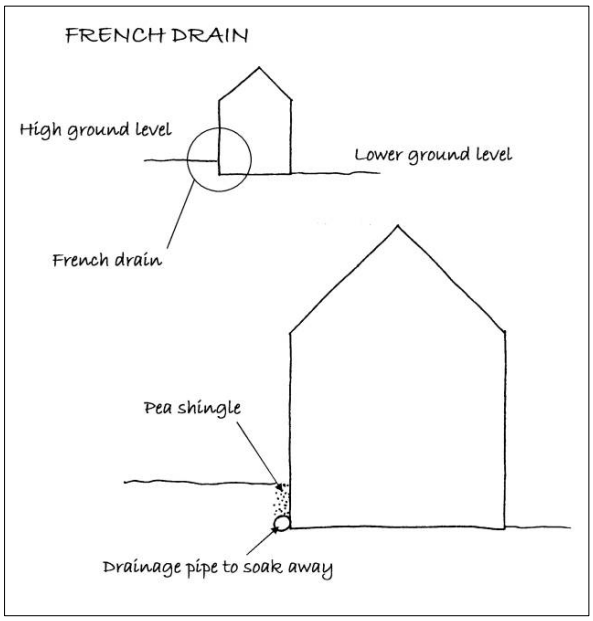
We would recommend that you have an informal, off-the-record, 'cup-of-tea' meeting with the Planning Officer to discuss fully all the proposed alterations that you are thinking about to the house and also to the concrete barn. We

would recommend that you remain open minded about these and whilst offering sketch proposals, take on-board the Planning Officer's comments.

In Relation to the Outbuilding

High Ground Level to the Rear

The high ground level to the rear is causing dampness, which we feel is acceptable in the property as it is at the moment, but if you wish to change its use, for example to an office, then you may wish to add a French gulley to the rear.



In relation to the Concrete Barn

Potential

As far as possible, we recommend that you try and keep an open mind as to what you would like to do with the concrete barn. As we discussed this could range from guest rooms to an equestrian use and possibly something to do with the disabled / less able or rural studies, functions, weddings etc etc.

Property is all about people, so you do need to familiarise yourself with the local Planners, local Councillors and the Highways Authority Officer, each of which will need to be an integral part of your proposals and also to take into consideration their future development in the area.

Specific problems that we have had in the past and that were more difficult to overcome than we expected was with the Highways Authority regarding both the access road giving clear vision and also the parking of cars appropriately. Again, we recommend that time is taken to talk to all the individuals with an open mind.

When we talked to the owner he advised that he had carried out part of the architectural qualification and part of the surveying qualification but unfortunately never got qualified in either, he also said that he had worked for the Local Authority in the latter part of his career. Having heard this it did occur to us that it is rather surprising that he did not consider 'options' on the concrete barn himself.

Use of Existing Structure

We also discussed the use of the existing structure. We think if this is the route you decide to go down then Building Regulations would possibly need to check the depth of the existing foundation and may even want core samples of the concrete to establish the strength of the concrete and the condition of the reinforcement in it. Again, a 'cup of tea' meeting with a Building Control Officer as soon as possible would be of great benefit.

Services

Whatever you decide to do with the concrete barn you will need some services running to it for heating and light, a water supply and waste disposal (sewerage), which can be a large cost factor / issue in this type of development and also having to deal with semi monopolies.

Caravan Park

This will need Planning Permission as it is a change in use of the land. You may wish to seek advice from a professional / trade association. In the past we have dealt with the British Holiday and Homes Park Association, the website is the rather catchy www.bhhpa.org.uk, we have had a brief look on the website and the only telephone number we could find (you may be able to find one with a longer look) was in the media section for John Boston on 01768 895 225.

You may wish to re-route the electric cables slightly, or even a lot, to make the future requirements of the caravan park environment better; equally you may recall that we discussed the possibility of using land drains, in the form of French drains, to make the site drier.

Finally, don't forget to discuss an 'option' to purchase the adjoining land with the farmer; it is also probably worth having a 'cup of tea' meeting on a more general basis to discuss his and your future plans.

Maintenance

Main Property

It should be appreciated that defects which would normally be highlighted in a modern property, effectively form part of the property's overall character and style. Such defects are considered acceptable and may not have been specifically referred to as defects within the context of this Report.
This type of property will require ongoing maintenance and repair and a budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in good condition. This will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration.

DIY/Handyman Type Work

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work / projects such as project managing the kitchen and bathroom refurbishment and redecoration, depending upon time available you may wish to carry out some of these items yourself. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

Purchase Price

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

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Estimates of Costs

Where we have offered an estimate of building costs please remember we are not experts in this area. We always recommend you obtain quotations for the large jobs before purchasing the property (preferably three quotes). The cost of building work has many variables such as the cost of labour. For unskilled labour we currently use between £75 and £100 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an

accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

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

SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

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

Whilst we have made some comments upon the potential of the concrete barn, we would comment that this is not a commercial / business survey / appraisal, but a residential building survey on the house, utilised as a home. Having said that, if the concrete barn conversion into a guest house is an integral part of this purchase you do need to make as detailed planning enquiries as possible before you legally purchase the property.

There are no other items that we wish to draw to your attention, other than to say as a general comment for any work required we would always recommend that you obtain at least three quotations for any work from a qualified, time served tradesperson or a competent registered building contractor prior to legal completion.

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

MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT

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

TENURE – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)

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

ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

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

SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR

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

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS

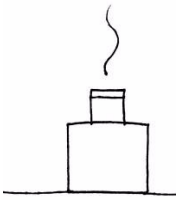
This report is being carried out under our terms of engagement for Residential Building Surveys, as agreed to and signed by yourselves. If you have not seen and signed a copy of our terms of engagement please phone immediately.

OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION

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

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

EXTERNAL



CHIMNEY STACKS AND ROOF WINDOWS

Chimney Stacks

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

This property has one chimney, which is located centrally. This chimney is brick finished with a chimney flue. From what we could see the chimney looks in slightly below average condition. It is quite unusual to have a step in it, it is almost as if it used to be rendered to the base; a close look at the chimney would certainly be beneficial. Unfortunately we were unable to see the top of the chimney known as the flaunchings and we could not see the flashings properly, we therefore cannot comment upon these.

ACTION REQUIRED: Inspect the chimney closely within the next year.

Flaunchings Defined

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

Flashings Defined

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

Roof Windows

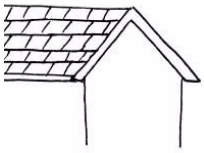
These are often known as Velux windows or roof lights. You have one roof window in the en suite walk-in cupboard area; this is a purpose made metal roof window and there was no obvious signs of water coming in internally. Unfortunately the area where these type of windows often leak is around the flashings, but we simply could not see this area.

It seems inevitable with roof windows that they will sooner or later leak. If this doesn't occur then they seem prone to condensation; this may be slightly more of a problem where it is presently situated close to the bathroom (keep a cloth handy!).

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

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

ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

We will consider the roofs in two areas; the main roof and the low level roofs.

Main Roof

This roof has a shallow pitch and is clad with concrete tiles. We believe these are interlocking concrete tiles, which were popular in the 1970s, however our view was limited.

Moss can build up on the concrete tiles and needs clearing from time to time.

From what we could see of the concrete tiles (and this was a fairly small area) they are lying level and true and look in reasonable condition considering their age. Sometimes we find that deterioration occurs to the ridges and the perimeter, so you should periodically check these areas.

Typical problems are wind blown/driven rain getting under the tiles and rotting the battens. In this instance we were unable to lift the tiles to check.

Given the age and style of the property we believe that the roof was probably originally slate; if this is the case and heavier concrete tiles have been added, as it would appear they have, then we would expect additional roof support; in this case our view of the roof structure was very limited, so we have not been able to establish if additional support has been added. Building Regulations now make it a requirement to check the structural stability of a roof where you change from one material (i.e. slate) to another (i.e. concrete tiles).

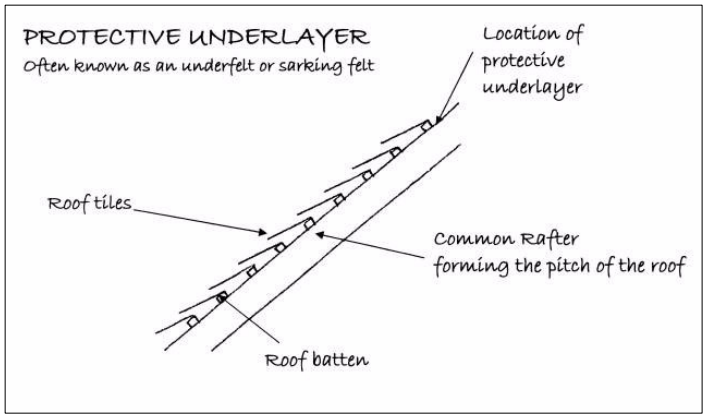
General Information on Concrete Tiles

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

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend a close inspection within the year. We have also recommended that an access hatch is opened into the roof to check the condition and add vents to reduce any chances of condensation / wet rot.

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.



From our very restricted inspection of the loft space we found a Hessian based Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s. We generally found it to be in average condition, although it is damaged in a few places but this is not unusual considering its age.

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

We would add that there looked to be a newer felt in some areas, which may have been added because of problems with the ridges or valley gutters, but the area of roof we could see really was very small, so it is difficult to make specific comment.

Low Level Roofs

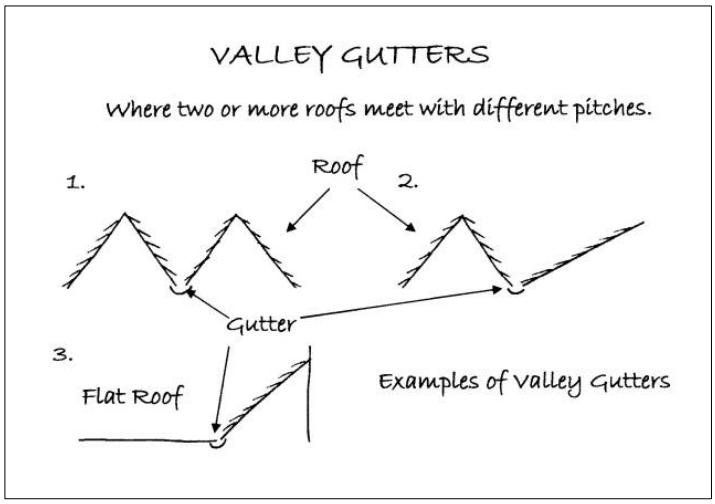
The low level roofs are pitched and clad with interlocking concrete tiles. Where they meet the main building there are metal flashings believed to be lead. Generally we would comment that they look in average condition.

Interlocking concrete tiles

Metal flashing where roof meets the main building.

Valley Gutter

The only adverse comment we would make, and this often occurs where a property has had lots of extensions, is that you have an awkward roof layout which means you have some awkward narrow valley gutters.



Low Level Valley Gutter

ACTION REQUIRED: You will need to check periodically that these are clear of leaves etc, as if they block up and back up rainwater will get into the roof structure and eventually into the property.

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

Unfortunately we were only able to see between 10 and 20 percent of the main roof covering from ground level via our ladder or via any other vantage point that we managed to gain. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see; however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

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

ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT

(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

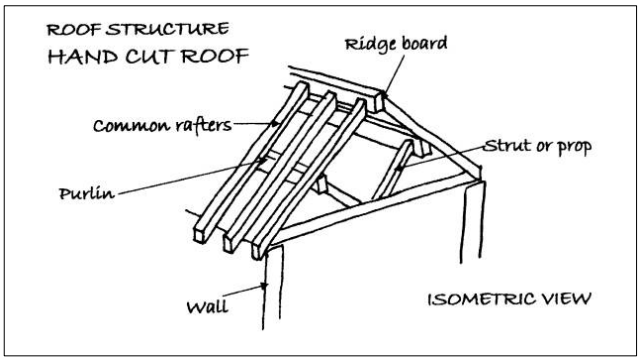
Main Roof

Roof Access

We had limited access to the roof structure from the en suite built-in cupboards area. The access was also fairly awkward, having to manoeuvre ourselves around the hot water cylinder. We believe we managed to look at about 5-10 percent of the roof structure, which is why we have recommend an access hatch is formed to allow you to examine the roof structure in its entirety.

Roof Structure

However, from our knowledge of this age and type of structure, and taking an educated guess, we believe it will have what is known as a cut timber hipped roof. This is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site, similar to the adjoining sketch.



Roof Timbers

We had a limited view of the roof timbers, partly due to the limited access space of 5-10 percent of the whole roof, and partly due to the polystyrene insulation that had been put in place. We spent some time removing one section of polystyrene insulation only to discover another section behind it!

The small amount of roof timbers we could see were inspected for:

- Serious active woodworm
- Structurally significant defects to the timbers
- Dry rot
- Wet rot

As we have explained, our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof and the access, together with the insulation. The little we could see was in average condition. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the remainder of the roof.

> **ACTION REQUIRED**: The only way to be 100 percent certain is to have an access hatch added and then to have the roof checked.

Water Tanks

One of the reasons why we could not access the roof was the adjoining water tanks. We had a very limited view of these, but from what we could see they are insulated and looked to be formed in plastic. We therefore assume they are relatively new (in surveying terms, in this instance, that is the last 30 years). Care has to be taken with roofs and water tanks to allow some warm air so that they don't freeze.

We would always recommend that water tanks be drained down and cleared of any debris etc. (we have seen dead birds and other unmentionable things in these tanks). As you are cleaning your teeth with this water it is best that it is as clean as possible!

Ventilation

We did not see any vents to the roof to help prevent condensation. We find condensation is more likely in shallow pitched roofs such as this, all things being equal.

> **ACTION REQUIRED**: Add ventilation.

Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

Electrical Cables

We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of wiring found in the roof. In this case our view was very limited and therefore we cannot comment.

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

Finally, we would reiterate that we had a very limited view of the roof space and therefore have not examined every single piece of timber. We have offered a general overview of the condition and structural integrity of the area.

GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES

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

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

Gutters and Downpipes

From ground level the gutters and downpipes looked to be plastic and appeared in average condition. There may be a few repairs, but we feel that most people would be happy with getting these carried out.

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

Grass growing in the gutter (centre of photo); this is the base of the valley gutter.

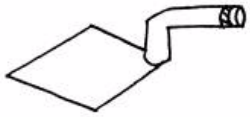
Soil and Vent Pipe

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

In this photo you can see how the soil and vent pipe has been added to over the years.

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

WALLS



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

Render

The walls to this property are finished in a smooth faced painted render. We have carried out a tap test to the render at low level (literally hitting the render with the back of a hammer) to try to establish if there are any hollow areas. We have found some areas but this is typical for this age of property.

Render meeting the box bay window which appeared to be in good order.

Cracking

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Render Detailing

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

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

FOUNDATIONS

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

Foundations

Typically, with a property of this age, we would expect to find a mixture of foundations with the shallower foundations being on the older part of the property and the deeper foundations being on the newer sections of the property, typically ranging from one foot to three foot (about one meter).

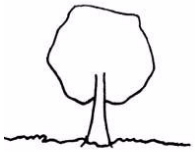
Building Insurance Policy

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

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

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

TREES

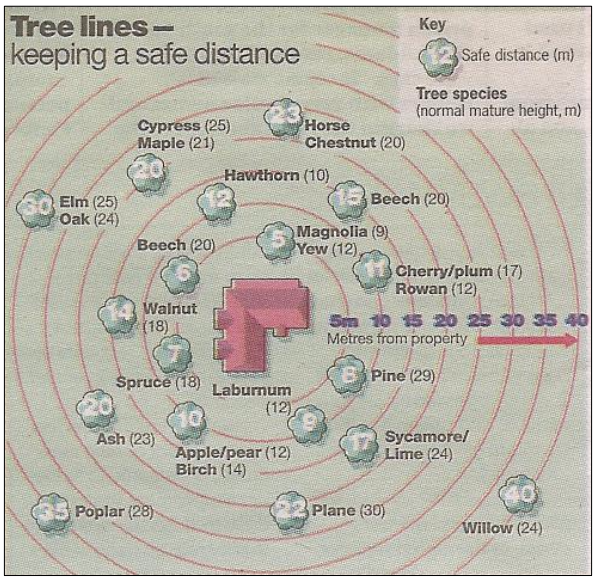


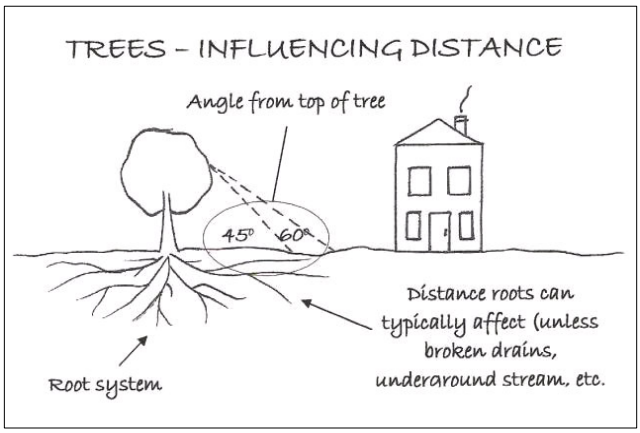
Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.

It should be remembered that trees need professional maintenance on a regular basis.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** We feel it is probably best if you talk to an arboriculturist about your proposals on the land as a whole and he can give you a report advising of future maintenance of the trees, because no doubt if you do open a guest house and caravan park you will then be liable for anything the trees do! You will need to show that you have carried out due diligence.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.





Influencing Distance Defined

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

DAMP PROOF COURSE

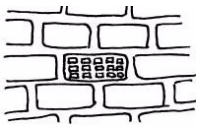
The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required various other basic standards. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout London and then the country as a whole,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

We were not able to see a damp proof course, which does not mean there isn't one. It is unlikely that one was originally built in (unless it was slate), but the present owners when they carried out their refurbishment and alterations may well have added one.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** Your solicitor to specifically ask the owners if a damp proof course has been added. Please see our later comments with regard to dampness.

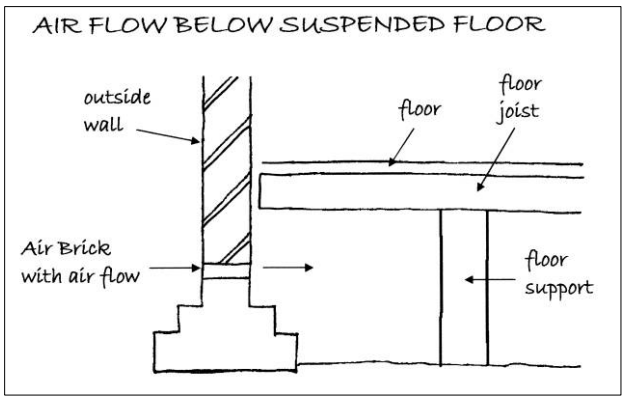
Finally, sometimes it is difficult for us to identify if there is a damp proof course in a property. We have made our best assumptions based upon our general knowledge of the age, type and style of this property.

AIRBRICKS



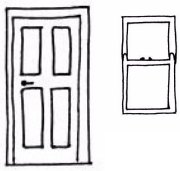
In properties with suspended floors you need to have an airflow beneath to stop deterioration. The air is allowed to pass under the property by the use of airbricks. Generally the rule of thumb is that airbricks are spaced every metre and a half approximately, but this depends upon the specific circumstances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

A few airbricks are just about visible to the property; these once provided an airflow underneath the suspended timber floor. However, during our question and answer session the owner advised that he had removed the entire timber floor and replaced it with a concrete floor, which included insulation. We did comment that this was quite forward thinking in the time when they carried out the alterations and we went through the actual construction process, which the owner was able to recall but not provide any drawings or other information on.



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.

EXTERNAL JOINERY



The external joinery part of this section covers fascias, soffits and bargeboards, windows and doors, and any detailing such as brick corbelling etc.

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

Fascias and Soffits

The property has painted timber fascias and soffits and these are in average condition, (which means there is likely to be some minor rot) although much of the fascia is hidden by the guttering.

You may wish to take the opportunity to replace the gutters and fascias and add a ventilation to the soffit to vent the roof.

Windows and Doors

The property predominantly has stained timber double glazed casement windows. They are generally well decorated with Sadolin or an equivalent.

Generally we consider the windows in average to above average condition.

We would draw your attention to the fact that sealed double glazed units can fail, particularly as a result of poor workmanship during installation. Failure of the seal leads to condensation between the two panes of glass and simply replacing the affected units may not provide a satisfactory long-term solution.

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

EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

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

Generally overall the external decorations are in average to good condition. The present owners advised that they redecorate every two years.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that you redecorate every two years, sealing any cracks that become apparent as and when they are seen.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

INTERNAL

CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

Ceilings

The ceilings were originally lath and plaster, but now we would expect them to have been replaced with plasterboard.

Lath and Plaster Defined

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

Plasterboard Defined

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

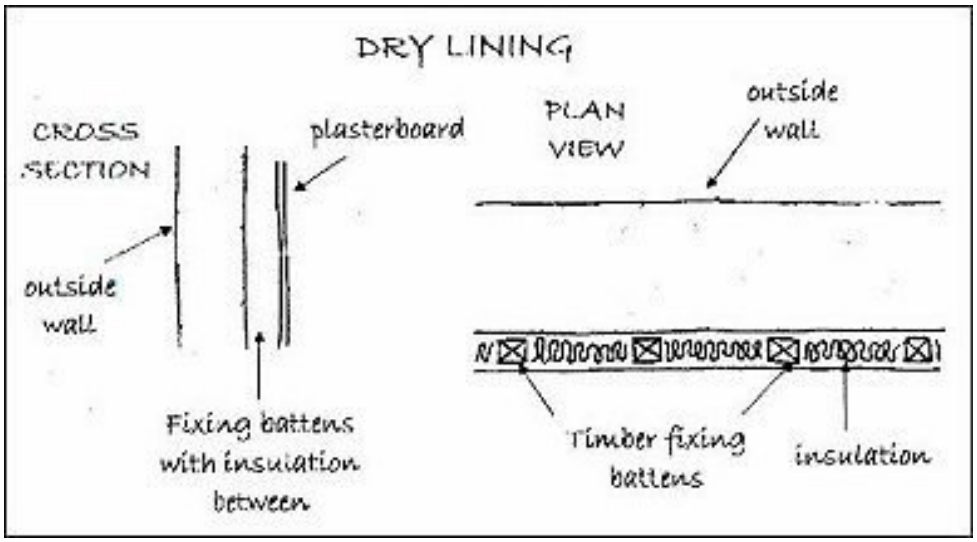
Internal Walls and Partitions

We have carried out a tap test on the internal walls (this is not rocket science, it is literally tapping the walls and listening for the sound made) and found them to be a mixture of solid and studwork when tapped, which, for this age of property, indicates that internal construction is likely to be brick or blockwork. We much prefer this type of construction as it minimises noise transfer between rooms.

Perimeter Walls

False wall commonly known as dry lining has been used. This is often used in older properties to hide/prevent dampness coming through, as well as the increased insulation value. From our personal experience we have found that dampness can often be hidden behind these walls causing deterioration.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally a small section of the dry lining should be opened up and checked to see if there is any dampness and deterioration to the timber battens within it. We suggest you do this when you are carrying out your alterations.



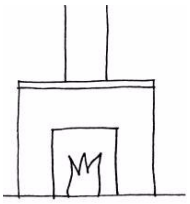
Dry Lining Defined

This technique is usually used on solid walls particularly where dampness is occurring. In older properties, where the internal wall is not flush, battens would be added and then lath and plaster. In more modern properties, the walls may be lined with plasterboard on battens or plaster dabs.

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

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

CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

There is one central chimney breast. We carried out random dampness tests to the chimney and found no dampness.

At the time of the survey the chimney was not in use. Any chimney that you do not propose to use should be capped and ventilated to prevent dampness.

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

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

FLOORS

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

Ground Floor

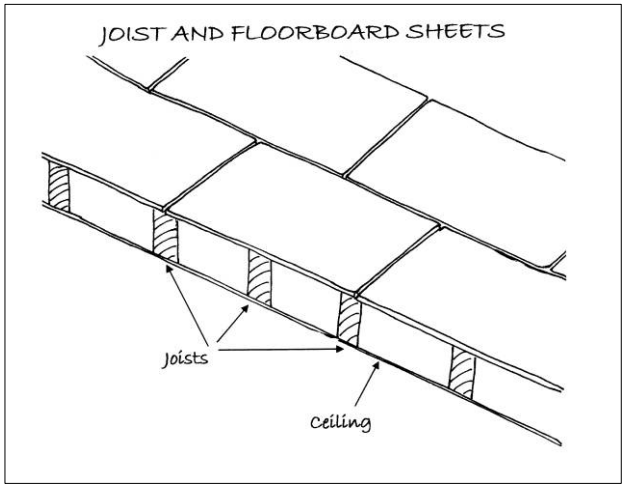
The floors felt solid and firm underfoot so we have assumed they are formed in concrete, however, we have not opened up the floors or lifted any floor coverings. As already mentioned, the owner advised that the floors are concrete with insulation added.

First Floor

We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboard sheets, as this is typical in his age of property. We say floorboard sheets rather than floorboards because we have discussed this with the owner during our question and answer session.

Joist and Floorboard Sheets Defined

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



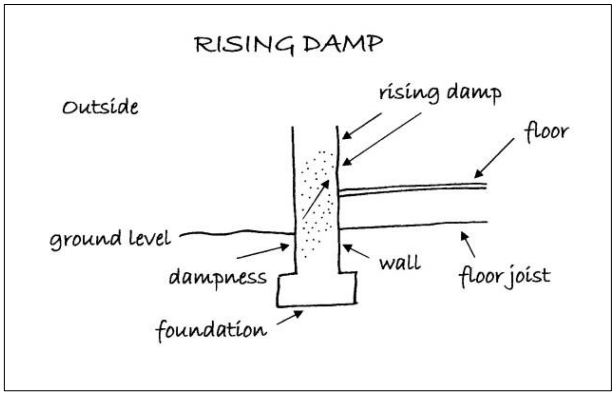
Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with fitted carpets and floor coverings. The comments we have made are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction. We would emphasise that we have not opened up the floors in any way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

DAMPNESS

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

Rising Damp

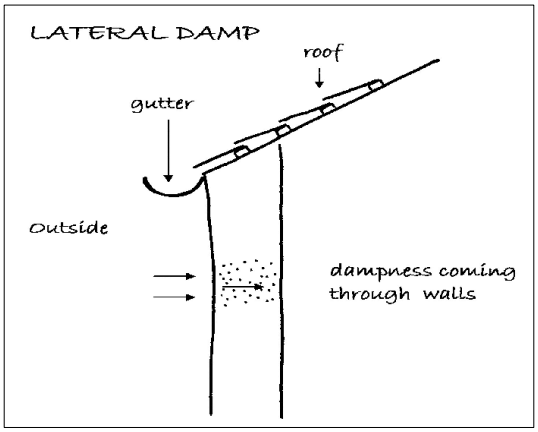
Rising damp depends upon various components including the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation of the material, amongst other things. Rising damp can come from the ground, drawn by capillary action, to varying degrees of intensity and height into the materials above.



We would normally carry out tests with an electronic damp meter. However, as your property is dry-lined we were unable to do this. We therefore carried out a visual inspection and did not find any signs of significant dampness coming through. However, this is an older property and you may get some dampness coming through.

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.



As with the previous section, we would normally carry out tests with an electronic damp meter. However, as the property is dry-lined, we were unable to do this. We therefore carried out a visual inspection and did not find any signs of dampness coming through.

Condensation

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

At the time of our inspection we could see no obvious signs of condensation, however, it depends upon how you utilise the building, for example the bedroom that has the shower within the room may suffer slightly from condensation, depending on how long your showers are! And, of course, if you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating and ventilation of properties. Normally opening windows first thing in the morning resolves most condensation issues.

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

INTERNAL JOINERY

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

Doors

The property has traditional panel doors and, all things considered, they are in reasonable (although not ideal) condition and fit acceptably.

Staircase

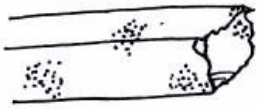
We were unable to examine the underside of the stair timbers due to it being lined, which precluded our inspection, so we cannot comment further upon the stair structure. We can, however, say that the lining plaster gives a resistance to the spread of fire if such circumstances were to occur.

Kitchen

From our cursory visual inspection the kitchen looked dated but functional and has suffered from some general day-to-day marks. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances. It is not to the standard of the rest of the property.

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 over-view of the condition. Please also see the External Joinery/Detailing section.

TIMBER DEFECTS



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

Dry Rot

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

Given the conditions found within this property it is unlikely that dry rot is present. We do have to add the proviso that we have not seen the roof space properly, and another area, if we do really want to be pessimistic, where it can occur is within the battens on the insulated walls.

Wet Rot

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

In the areas visually inspected no evidence was found of any significant wet rot. Again, we must add the proviso that we have not seen the roof space properly.

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.

Recent research has shown that many woodworm chemicals do not actually work and it should be remembered that the chemicals are poisons. Also, unless great care is taken, the people applying the treatment can cause significant damage. The woodworm can only really be seen in action during the breading season, which runs from April to July. We have therefore tried to take a pragmatic view on this matter.

As you are aware we had a very limited view of the roof space. What we could see of the roof space we noted no obvious visual signs of significant woodworm activity or indeed signs of past woodworm activity. However, we would reiterate that we could only see about 5-10 percent of the roof structure.

In many properties of this age, there is an element of woodworm that is not active.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** Open up the remainder of the roof and if you wish to be 100 percent certain get the roof space checked.

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

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

INTERNAL DECORATIONS

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

Generally we thought the internal decorations were slightly dated. You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste.

If you recall we talked about various ways of making the rooms lighter, such as concealed lighting behind coving and lights on the stairs and low level wall lights to the stairs area.

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

THERMAL EFFICIENCY

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

Roof Insulation

In this instance the small area we could see had polystyrene boards of approximately 50mm as well as fibreglass insulation. The owner seemed extremely keen on insulation; therefore we would expect to find quite a bit when you open up the roof.

Walls

The walls to this property are solid. We are advised that they have been dry lined using an insulation board; although the owner could not recall how thick it was.

Windows

The windows are double glazed and in some cases have secondary glazing as well; they therefore have reasonable thermal properties.

Summary

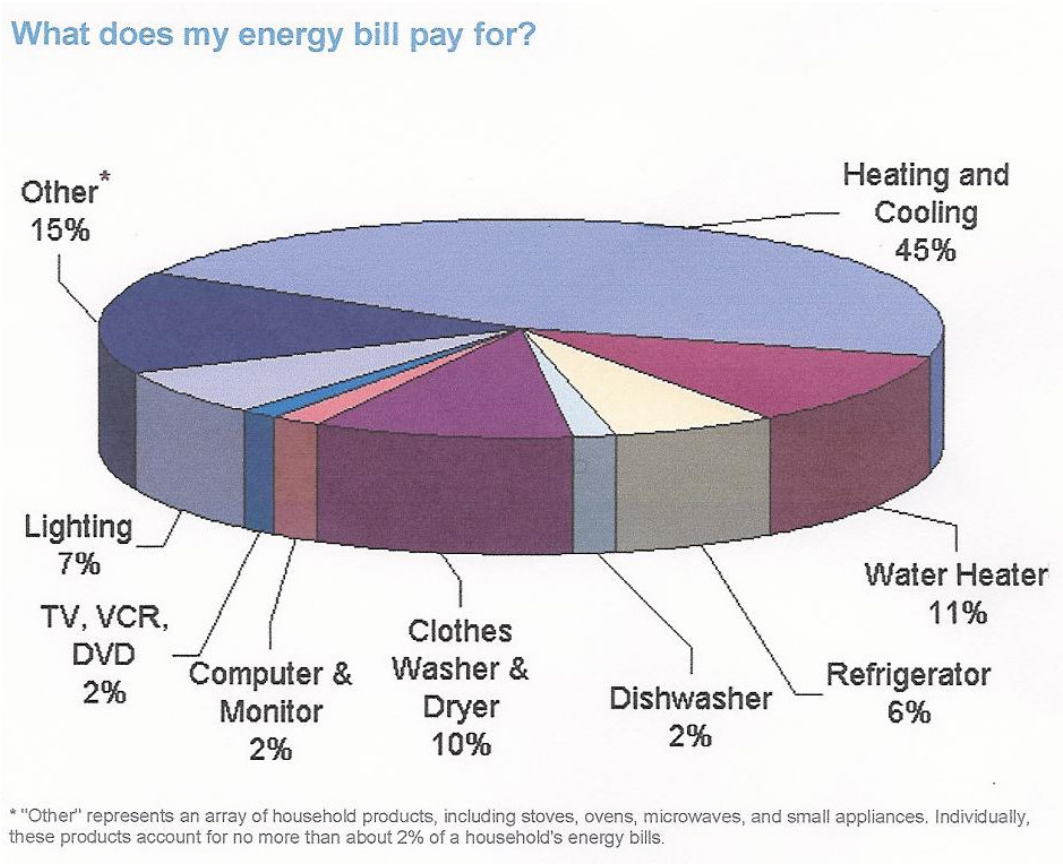
We feel that you will need to add a new heating system. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary. We spoke briefly about using green or alternative technology; here are a few internet websites that may be of use to you:

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

or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

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

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



OTHER MATTERS

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

Security System

We did not note a security system within the house. You will of course have your dog! Whether to have a security system is a personal decision. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further. We suggest you contact a member of NACOSS (National Approval Council for Security Services), obtainable through directory enquiries, or your local Police Force for advice on a security system.

Smoke / Fire Alarm

One battery operated smoke detector was noted and this was at the top of the stairs and tied into the main power.

If you are having alterations carried out we feel it is worth having a hard wired fire alarm system into the mains and therefore you do not ever have to change batteries in the fire alarm system again.

Insurance

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

Asbestos

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

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

SERVICES

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

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

ELECTRICITY

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

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

Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the study. We would date the fuse board as being from the 1990s and, whilst not the best now available, it is reasonable. However, it did trip out when we carried out the earth test.

Earth Test

We carried out an earth test in the kitchen area to the socket point that is normally used for the kettle and this tripped the electrics.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

Earth Bonding to Pipes

We were pleased to see earth bonding to the pipes.

ACTION REQUIRED: As the property is changing occupancy an IEE report should be carried out by a NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor.

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.

GAS

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

Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)

You have a tank situated to the left hand side of the property. We are advised that this is used for the Aga which in turn heats one radiator.

We feel that you will have to look at having a new heating system.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** As a matter of course it is recommended that the entire gas installation is inspected and made good, as necessary, by a CORGI 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 that the controlling stopcock is located in the kitchen. It is important that its presence is established in case of bursts or leaks. The stopcock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness.

Water Pressure

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

Cold Water Cistern

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

Hot Water Cylinder

We were pleased to see a factory insulated hot water cylinder, which means it is relatively new (we mean in the last 30 years in this instance), the owner advised that it was installed about 20 years ago.

Plumbing

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

Heating

The Aga is located in the kitchen and runs one radiator. The rest of the heating is electric.

In the photo the towel rail above the radiator is not plumbed in, but is getting heat off the radiator below.

Ten Minute Heating Test

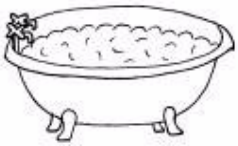
We would normally carry out a ten minute heating test to the radiators. You have only got one radiator; we checked this and it was warm.

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

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

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

BATHROOM



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

The property has two en suite bathrooms, which are in average condition but dated. You may wish to change the bathroom suites in due course.

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

MAIN DRAINS

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

It appears that the property's foul drains discharge to a cess pit, traditionally an underground chamber designed for the storage of foul water. Once the chamber has filled it will require pumping out by the Local Authority or a private contractor.

We have been unable to determine the size, construction or condition of the chamber: obviously the size of the chamber will determine the frequency of the required pumping out, which is, nowadays, a relatively costly operation. In some cases, cesspools have been provided with overflows, or some similar arrangement, designed to reduce the frequency of emptying. This course of action should not be adopted and will result in pollution taking place and the building owner could be liable for prosecution. With regard to the subject property, we have been unable to confirm whether an overflow has been provided or not.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** We suggest that you make enquiries of the vendor and ask to see invoices for past emptying of the chamber so that a judgment may be made. We also believe that it is worth talking to the company that empties the cesspool so that you can understand any problems it may have and indeed talk to them about your future plans and have another 'cup of tea' meeting!

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

Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We have identified two inspection chambers / manholes.

Inspection Chamber / Manhole One – Rear Left Hand Side

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

From what we could see it is pre-formed in plastic.

Inspection Chamber / Manhole Two – Rear Right Hand Side

We duly lifted the cover and found it to be free flowing at the time of our inspection, although it has had some rather unusual plumbing go through it.

Again, it is pre-formed in plastic.

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

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

Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

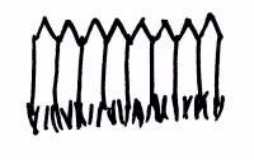
We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal, although we suspect it is directly into the ground.

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

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

OUTSIDE AREAS

EXTERNAL AREAS



Front Garden

Predominantly this is a off-road parking area also with a driveway to the garage.

Rear and Side Gardens

The rear and side gardens (for want of a better term), include the acreage, there is an area that is fenced that includes the pond, which is on a good fall and has many mature trees and then there is a further area that includes the concrete barn.

Pond

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.

OUTBUILDING AND CONCRETE BARN

Outbuilding / Garage

The outbuilding is a painted rendered building with a shallow pitched roof clad with concrete tiles.

We discussed the issue with the higher ground level to the rear of the outbuilding; this area will be damp. If you look there are also downpipes that discharge from the gutter directly into this area. To make this watertight all of this area will need rearranging and a French gulley adding. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Front of Outbuilding

Back of Outbuilding

Garage

Inside Garage

Wood Store

Work Shop

Conservatory

Conservatory

One of the double glazing panels has condensation within it.

Concrete Barn

A reinforced concrete built structure with a cut timber roof with a Roman pantile on it and no underlay. The barn generally looks in acceptable condition, bearing in mind what it is. There are vertical and horizontal cracks within the concrete.

To use this property as a habitable building it will need Planning Permission for change of use and it will also need the Building Control Officers to either accept the existing construction, which is usually carried out by opening up the foundations for them to have a look at and analysing the concrete, together with structural calculations as necessary, or they may wish to have amendments to the structure. You need to look at both of these options and look at the cost of the entire operation. It may be cheaper to clear the site and put up either a traditional brick and block built property or even a steel framed structure which is then clad to look however the planners would like it to look. You also need to think about the services.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Front of the Barn

Right Hand Side of Barn

Rear of Barn

Close up of Front

Inside

POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

If you wish to proceed with your purchase of the property a copy of this 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) Solid wall insulation
   iv) Double glazing replacement windows.
   v) Roof and similar renewals.
   vi) Central heating installation.
   vii) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
   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.

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 read: www.1stAssociated.co.uk/leaderboard.asp

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

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

When you booked this survey we asked you if you required us to carry out a verbal check on the status of the property with the Local Authority regarding whether it is a Listed Building, in a Conservation area and any history that is available over the phone with regard to Planning Applications and Building Control. In this instance you have not requested that we carry out this work.

Finally, your Solicitor should carry out Local Authority enquiries and any additional enquiries he/she feels necessary, advising us if they feel that we can have further input.

Finally, an extract from the book "Sold"!

"When you receive your full structural survey (now known as a Building Survey) or House Buyers Report, do remember that you have requested a list of the property's faults so it is unlikely to make cheerful reading. Every property has its faults but what you are looking for are the serious ones. If your Report does reveal a serious problem that you had not anticipated when making your offer, the first thing to do is to decide whether you want to take on the repairs if an adjustment is made to the price. If you do, then get quotes for the work as quickly as possible and present your case in a fair manner. Most people are reasonable under such circumstances and will compromise but inevitably there are those who are sufficiently confident of their position to say take it or leave it. In a very active market, prices may have moved up sufficiently to cover the extra expenditure in theory and the vendor will not hasten to point this out but remember that he has probably got a vendor pressing him to proceed quickly and starting with a new purchaser will cause him delay"

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

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

REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses
Published by Estates Gazette Limited

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

Surveying buildings
By Malcolm Hollis 4th edition published by Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Books.

House Builders Bible
By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

APPENDICES

LIMITATIONS

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

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

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

ENGLISH LAW

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

SOLE USE

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

ONLY HUMAN!

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

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

WEATHER

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

We would add that some defects only become apparent upon physical occupation or are only present as a result of the extremes of weather (which are becoming a more frequent occurrence). As you may be aware 2006 was the warmest year in Britain since records began, we believe, in the 1700s; with July 2006 being the hottest July on record in Britain. 2005 was the third driest year on record in Britain with 2003 being the driest. The year 2000 was the wettest year on record and August 2004 was the wettest August on record in Britain. This may have adverse effects on lots of buildings in years to come.

NOT LOCAL

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

OCCUPIED PROPERTY

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

INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited due to our very limited view of the roof space and we did not have access to the floor to see the insulation or the walls to see the insulation. We have also only had a cursory inspection of the outbuildings and the concrete barn as our main focus has been on the residential property.

THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

1. A certificate showing the work has been done by a Government-approved electrical installer - British Gas or NICEIC Electrical Contractor.

2. A certificate from the local authority saying that the installation has approval under the building regulations.

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

Work You Cannot do Yourself

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

INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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

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

www.hometrack.co.uk

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

Motleyfool.co.uk

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

http://www.nethouseprices.com/

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