

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

OF

**Guiltsborough, Northamptonshire NN6**



**FOR**

**Ms B**

**Prepared by:**

**INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS**

**Marketing by:**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# **REPORT FORMAT**

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

## ***GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION***

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

## **TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED**

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

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



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

## **ORIENTATION**

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

## **ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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

## **SYNOPSIS**

### **SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION**

This is a detached two storey property, which has been extended and altered considerably over the years, including, we are advised, major extension/refurbishment in the 1990's.

The property is built over a sloping site, which accounts for the various changes in level in the property.

There is both off-road parking and a garage (not viewed).

We believe the original property dates back from the early to mid-1800's. 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:*

1823	MacIntosh invents waterproof fabric.
1824	Railway transportation was born in England when Stephenson's 'Locomotion' ran from Darlington to Stockton, carrying 450 persons at 15 miles per hour (24km/h).
1833	The Factory Act of 1833 introduced a compulsory two hours schooling each day for children. It wasn't until the 1880 Education Act that school attendance became compulsory for all children up to the age of ten.
1837	Victoria becomes Queen of Great Britain.
1840	The First Postage Stamp
1851	First World Exhibition held in London
1854	Florence Nightingale pioneers modern nursing in the Crimea

# EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front View



Left hand gable end



Garden



Left hand gable end



Right hand gable end

# **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

## **Ground Floor (on various levels)**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Kitchen/Dining Area
- Cloakroom
- Utilities Room

Downstairs to:

- Reception Room
- Access Corridor
- Hallway
- Office
- Lounge to right hand side

## **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Bedroom with en-suite (left hand side)
- Three further bedrooms, one currently being used as a weights room
- Family bathroom

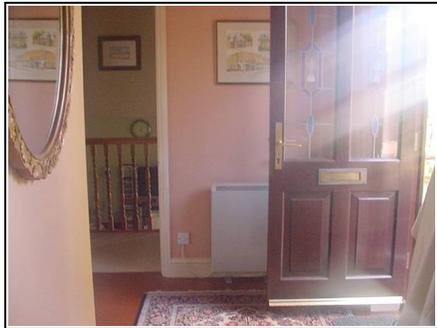
## **Outside Areas**

There is a walled garden to the front property. The rear of the property sits on the boundary of the site. There is also an adjacent garden and there is a shared access (we are advised, your legal adviser to check).

## 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



Entrance Hall



Cloakroom



Kitchen/Diner



Utility Room

### **Downstairs to:**



Middle Reception Room

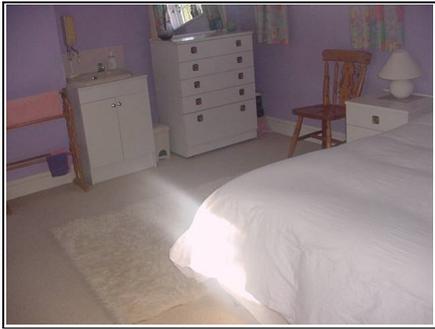


Office



Lounge

**First Floor**



Bedroom One



Bedroom Two



Bathroom



Bedroom Three



Master Bedroom



En-Suite Bathroom

# **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

## **EXTERNAL**

Chimneys:	Two brick chimneys
Main Roof:	A pitched roof, clad with concrete tiles at high and low level
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Finished predominantly in a stretcher bond brickwork, with some areas of render to the older part of property (assumed)
External Joinery:	Plastic double glazed windows and stained timber fascias and soffits

## **INTERNAL**

Ceilings:	Plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	A mixture of solid / hollow (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: Solid underfoot, assumed concrete. Note: this is below the ground level at the rear of the property.  First Floor: Joist and floorboards (assumed)

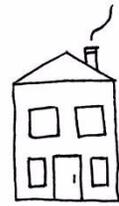
## **SERVICES**

We are advised by the owner that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity (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 fifty 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 or concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it. If we have not we will happily go back.

Generally we found the property in average condition considering the property's 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!*

- The property has character, due to the different levels and the way the property has been extended and developed over the years, to accommodate the fact that it sits on a sloping site (although do see our other comments in relation to water and sloping sites).
- There is generally good natural light.
- The property has larger room sizes than a newer property.

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

## The Bad

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

### 1) High Level

#### Chimneys

We noted that the chimneys would benefit from being re-pointed. The middle chimney, in particular, would benefit from being re-pointed in the next few years, otherwise we suspect it will get damp within it and this then in turn will get into the property.



Chimney in need of repointing

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Have the chimneys re-pointed. You will probably need access scaffolding, which will be the most expensive part of it.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £100 to £250, plus access scaffolding. Please obtain quotations.

#### Roofs

We noted that there was moss accumulating to parts of the roof. This is relatively common on concrete roofs but is probably accelerated by the surrounding trees limiting sunlight.

We also noticed that gutters were blocked with moss and other vegetation, for example to the front near the steps and to the rear at the corner junction of the property between the old and the new.



Moss on roof tiles



Vegetation in gutters

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to periodically remove the moss from the roof and also to clear the gutters. We suggest you do it in the first week or so when you move into the property or it will be forgotten about with all the other jobs that need doing around the house.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A DIY type job or a few hundred pounds. Obtain quotes.

Please see the Chimney Stacks and Roofs Sections of this Report.

## 2) Plastic Underlayer

The underlayer in the roof space is plastic. These can cause condensation.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add ventilation to all roofs to help reduce condensation.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds. Please obtain quotes.

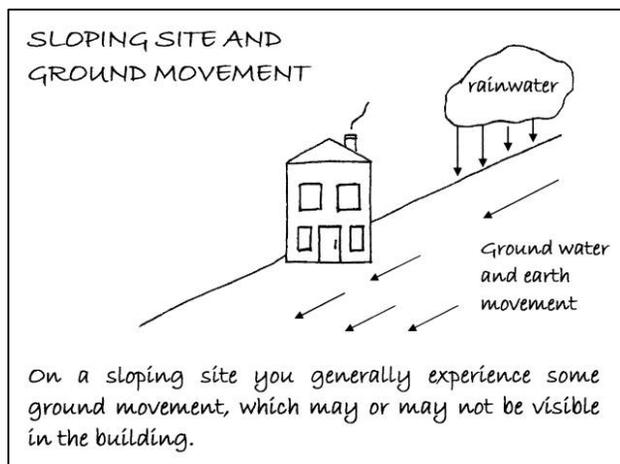


Plastic underlayer

Please see the Roof Coverings and Underlayers Section of this Report.

### 3) Sloping site and dampness

The property sits on a sloping site. If you recall we showed you the rear of the property where the flashing is loose and needs securing/re-bedding. We also commented on how damp earth was sitting against the wall of the rear of the property with little more than a bitumen paint to separate it from the surrounding damp earth.



Lead flashing to rear where we believe dampness is getting in

Internally we were able to show you damp meter readings, particularly to the corridor area. These areas may prove problematic with returning dampness that you simply cannot get rid of.



Taking readings using a damp meter

**ACTION REQUIRED:** To resolve this problem 100% would be very expensive, involving the addition of tanking and deep French gully on the outside of the property. It will also be difficult due the ownership of the boundary to the rear. An acceptable alternative is the addition of a shallow French gully (pea shingle gutter). Please see our further information in the Appendices. Alternatively, redecorate when signs of dampness are noted internally, possibly adding a false wall and a drainage channel.

We suggest you live in the property for a while and see how it develops. If you do wish to have a 100% answer before you purchase the property then trial holes around the property will need to be dug to establish the condition of the damp proof membrane to the rear of the property.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** This could range from £1,000 plus for the tanking work (quotations needed) to a few hundred pounds and DIY type work for the redecoration, albeit that this will be not a solution to the problem.

#### Next time it rains

Next time it rains heavily you need to see how the water gets from the top of the sloping site to the bottom of the sloping site. We find it is best to help water to get around the property as otherwise it starts to go through it.

Please see the Other Matters Section of this Report.

#### 4) **Crack at the top of the stairs**

We believe this to be differential movement between the old and the new property, possibly combined with the leaking gutters, which has a mass of vegetation in it.

##### Differential Movement Defined

This is where two structures or materials move at different rates.



Cracking caused by differential movement

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Monitor and if you wish to be 100% certain we would recommend the existing owner puts in an insurance claim with regard to the matter and you use the same insurance company when you take on the property and have the liability transferred yourselves.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A worst case scenario where you take on the insurance and it does prove to be a problem would then be the excess.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

## 5) Services

### Electrics

There are two separate fuseboards. We are not 100% certain what they do. The owner thought that the right hand board looks after the right hand side of the house and the left hand board looks after the left hand side of the house. When we carried out an electrical test it tripped the circuit.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Have an NICEIC approved electrician carry out an IEE (Institute of Electrical Engineers) test and report. We would be happy to comment upon this if you e-mail it on to us.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £350 plus any recommendations. Obtain quotations.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

## 6) Who's responsible for what?

We were advised by the owner that there is a right of way over the road with no responsibility for it. It is essential your solicitor checks this. We would also comment on the surrounding trees, some of which are quite substantial. You need to establish whether you have a responsibility in relation to them and also if there are Tree Preservation Orders upon them.



Access road – who maintains it and who pays for it?



Access road needs maintenance, who is responsible?



Roadway leading to property - another area may have to pay for

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal adviser to check ownership of access road and surrounding trees.

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.

## 7) Difficult Boundaries

As with many older properties the boundaries are difficult and slightly unusual.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal adviser needs to check this, together with such things as where the boundary to the front of the property, that next door's garage is situated on, starts and ends.

Please see the Outside Areas Section of this Report.



The gutter from next door. This needs to be checked as to where the boundary ends, or is this guttering trespassing?

## The Ugly

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

There is nothing which we feel falls within this category, but we would add the dampness to the rear of the property comes very close, as do the electrics.

## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

## **Maintenance**

It should be appreciated that defects which would normally be highlighted in a modern property, effectively form part of 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 such as redecoration to turn the house into your home and a few other jobs that we have mentioned. 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:

We would refer you to the Executive Summary, particularly the potential dampness problem, which really have to be considered a characteristic of this type of property.

The electrics are in need of work and we reiterate that we ask that you re-read the Executive Summary and contact us on any issues that you may wish to discuss.

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**

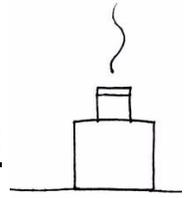
Our aim is for you to be completely happy with the service we provide, and we will try and help you in whatever way possible with your property purchase - just phone us.

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



## EXTERNAL

# CHIMNEY STACKS, FLUES, DORMER WINDOWS



### Chimney Stacks

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

This property has two chimneys, which are located to the middle of the property and one to the right hand side (all directions given as you face the property).

### Chimney one, located to the middle of the property

This chimney is built in brick with a lead flashing and two chimney pots. From what we could see the chimney needs repointing and the flashing needs checking/repairing. We were unable to see the very top of the chimney know as the flaunching, we therefore cannot comment upon it.



Middle chimney

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary with reference to repointing work on this chimney.

## **Chimney two, located to the right hand side of the property**

This chimney is brick finished with a lead flashing and one chimney pot. It looks to have been re-built, which is understandable as this chimney is to the older part of the structure. Unfortunately, again we were unable to see the flashing, we therefore cannot comment upon it.



Right hand chimney

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Inspect this chimney when the work/inspection is being carried out to the middle chimney.

### 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.

## Dormer Windows

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

There are two dormer windows to this property. They have been inspected from ground level. It has a large plain concrete tiled roof with shiplap boarding to the sides, which is in need of redecoration, and some lead flashings.



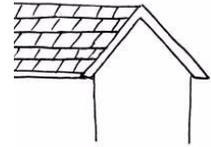
Dormer windows

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Redecorate the side shiplap boarding; the sooner the better.

Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the chimney stacks, flues and dormer windows 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**

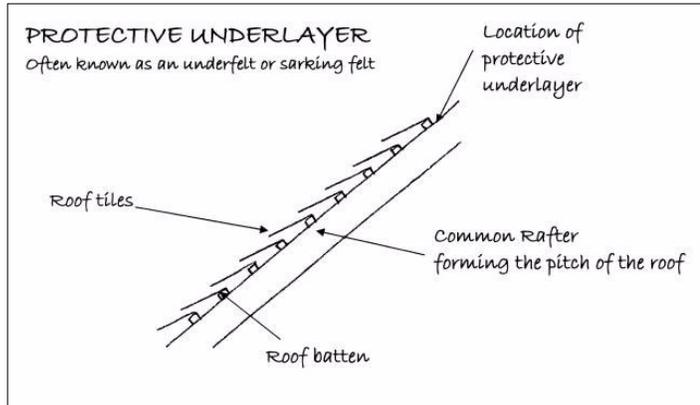
The roof is pitched and clad in a plain large concrete tile. From what we could see the concrete tiles are lying level and true and look in reasonable condition. Sometimes we find that deterioration occurs to the ridge and exposed areas such as the perimeter and so you should periodically check these areas.



Close up of main roof

## 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.*



When we inspected the loft space we found a reinforced plastic protective underlayer. This type of underlayer was used in the 1970s/1980s and its use was generally stopped because it was susceptible to causing condensation unless the roofs are adequately vented, which they are usually not.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend vents are added.

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

## Low Level Roofs

This roof is also pitched and clad in a large plain concrete tile. Again it suffers from moss.



## Moss

There is moss growth present on all the roof slopes. This can, in extreme cases, impede the run-off of rainwater, lead to gutter blockages and cause water penetration, which, in turn, may lead to rot or other defects in nearby timbers. In this case the moss does seem to be causing a problem with the blockage of gutters.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Clear all moss from the roofs, and remember this will be a yearly job, and then clear it from the gutters. We recommend that the moss is cleared with a soft brush rather than pressure hose, as this can take the surface of the concrete tiles off in some cases.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds. Please obtain quotes.

## Valley Gutters

The valley gutter looks to have been tarred in the past (the black marks on it). This normally indicates that there have been leaks. Again, we also noted a built up of moss. This is a weak area.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We suggest you clear the valley gutter and check the condition of the lead and re-tar as necessary.



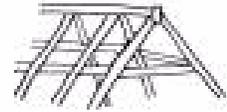
blocked valley gutter,  
which has been tarred in the past

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

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

# **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**

We will consider the roof in two areas; the original roof and the newer roofs, which we had various accesses to.

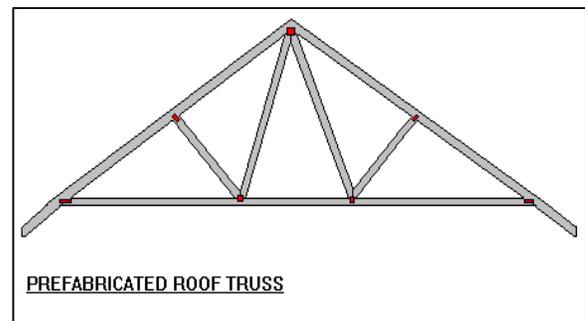
### **Roof Access**

We had loft access via the left hand lounge and via several of the bedrooms, none of which had ladders. Some had very small openings and we viewed from the top of our ladder rather than getting into the roof.

If you do intend to use the roof space we recommend that ladders, secured floorboards and more lights are added as it will make the roofs safer and easier to use. All lofts have been viewed by torchlight.

### **Roof Structure**

All the roof structures are pre-fabricated fan trussed roof rafters, which look like “W” (see adjoining sketch). These are made in a factory and transported to site and then lifted into place. Without the manufacturer’s calculations and installation details we cannot comment categorically on the roof structure. We were surprised that even the older part of the property had the roof structure renewed.



## **Roof Timbers**

We have inspected the roof structure for serious active woodworm and for structurally significant defects to the timber together with dry rot and wet rot. Whilst our examination is restricted by the general configuration of the roof and the insulation and stored items, what we could see we found in generally average condition, with some minor condensation and staining.



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

## **Water Tanks**

The water tanks are in the left hand roof. If you recall it is difficult to access this roof due to the small access hatch. The tanks are insulated and, from what we could see, they 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.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add vents.

## **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 there was insufficient quantity to comment.

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

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

# 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 what is known as profile plastic, which means the gutters and downpipes are shaped. There also look to have been minor leaks on the guttering, some of which have been sealed with a mastic. We think that most people could live with these minor leaks, however we think the main problem is with the gutters being blocked with the moss and various debris building up.



Leaking downpipe

**ACTION REQUIRED:** It is essential that you regularly clean the gutters and downpipes and also collect leaf debris and branches from the nearby trees. We would always recommend that the joints are checked and the alignment checked to ensure that the gutters fall towards the downpipes.

## Soil and Vent Pipe

The property has plastic soil and vent pipes.

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



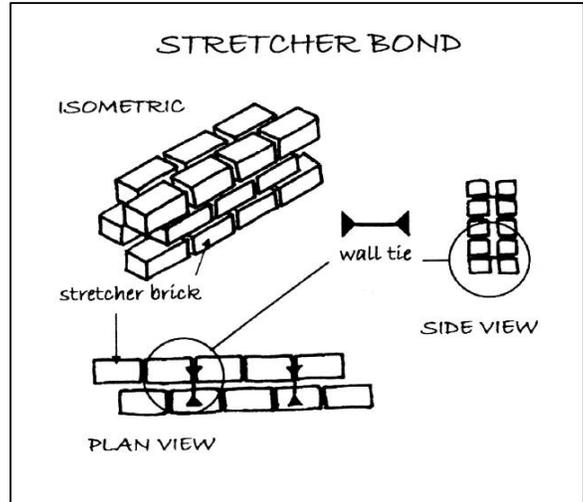
*External walls need to perform a variety of functions. These include supporting upper floors and the roof structure, resisting dampness, providing adequate thermal and sound insulation, offering resistance to fire and being aesthetically presentable.*

We will consider the walls in two main areas; brickwork and render.

## Brickwork

The more modern part of the property is brick finished, laid in a cement mortar in what is known as Stretcher Bond.

We believe that the Stretcher Bond was built in the mid-80's. Prior to this there were problems with wall ties in the mid-70's and, whilst this should not be a problem in this instance, we are aware that on some house extensions wall ties were used. We would typically see horizontal cracking if there are problems, which we cannot see in this instance.



We are unable to establish if the cavity walls are insulated or not. It would obviously be of benefit thermally to have the insulation added to the cavity walls if they are not. We did use a thermal imaging camera on the property but due to the warm ambient temperature we were unable to identify any major differences in thermal conductivity of the materials.



Modern brickwork



Older brickwork spalling

## Render

To the older part of the property it is partly rendered at low level and partly in brick. The render is unfinished, which is how we prefer render (assuming it is a waterproof render).



Render at low level meeting brickwork

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

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

# **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**

In properties of this type the foundations will have been specially designed. We can only assume that the original design met the Building Control standards of the day. We would expect this type of property to have deep strip foundations, or possibly pile foundations (due to the sloping site). Without opening up the structure we cannot be certain. However, from what we could see it has stood the test of time with no visible signs of movement to the walls.

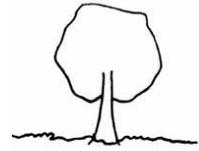
## **Building Insurance Policy**

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.

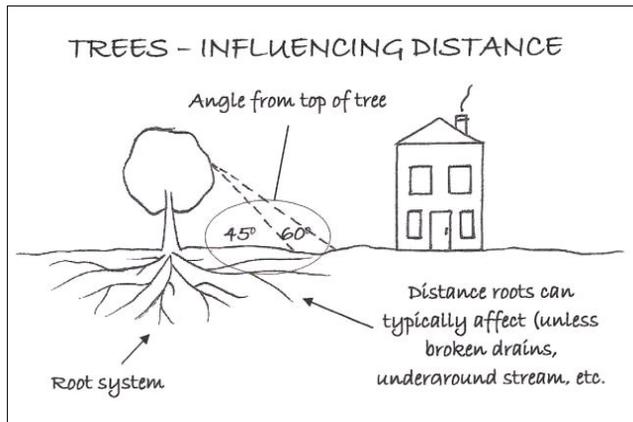
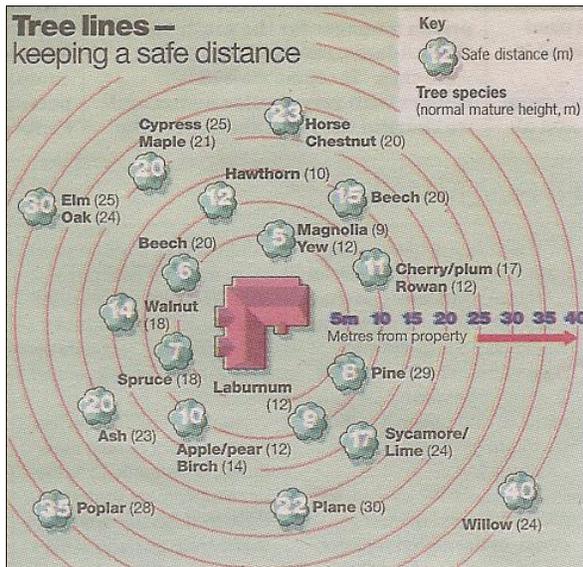
# TREES



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

Damage to foundations and underground services can be caused by trees and shrubs. There are a number of these in the vicinity of the building, what we term within influencing distance, and we believe that these trees may be affecting the property.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to obtain advice from an arboriculturist (not a tree surgeon). Please see our comments within 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.*

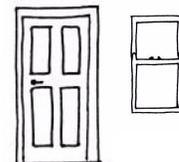
All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, we could see a damp proof course to the newer part of the property to the front. Your attention is drawn to the section of the report specifically dealing with dampness.



To the older part of the property we could see a DPC has been inserted.

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.

# EXTERNAL JOINERY



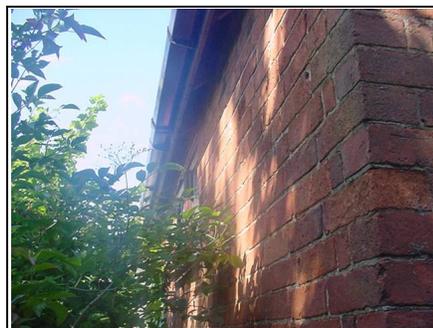
*The external joinery part of this section covers fascias, soffits and bargeboards, windows and doors, and any detailing such as brick corbelling etc.*

*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 fascia and soffit detail includes exposed rafter feet hidden by a soffit. We generally find that due to the awkwardness of these they do not get painted / stained as often as they should and you may find rot if they are closely examined.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Paint/stain fascias and soffits in the next three years. At the same time we suggest you re-do the dormer window shiplap boarding.



Fascias and soffits

## Windows and Doors

The property has plastic, double glazed windows, which generally look to be of a reasonable quality. We were pleased to see trickle vents. The owner advises that the windows are relatively new and there may be a guarantee.



Trickle vents

### Trickle Vents Defined

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

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. In this case they are in average condition.

Enquiries should be made as to the existence of any transferable guarantees. Generally it is considered that double glazed units have a life of about ten years.

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



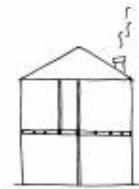
*The external decorations act as a protective coat for the building from the elements. Where this protective covering has failed, such as with flaking paintwork, the elements will infiltrate the structure. This is of particular concern as water is one of the major factors in damage to any structure.*

The external decoration required is minimal; the fascias and soffits will need painting in years to come and the fence once repaired and more immediately the shiplap timbers to the side of the dormers.

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**



# **CEILING, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES**

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

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be plasterboard (assumed). The older part of the property may have originally been lath and plaster but we cannot see any remains of this.

### 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 to 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 walls and hollow/studwork walls.

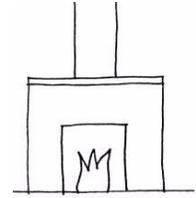
## **Perimeter Walls**

Generally it is a reasonable assumption that the solid walls are likely to be made from a mixture of brickwork to the older part of the property and blockwork to the newer part and these will be the structural walls, with the studwork walls being purely to divide the rooms; sometimes they allow the transfer of sound between the rooms.

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.

## **CHIMNEYBREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES**



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

The chimney breasts are located to the left hand side of the property and within the middle reception room (all directions given as you face the property). We are advised by the owners that they both work, we would however double check this and they certainly have not been swept recently.

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

# 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

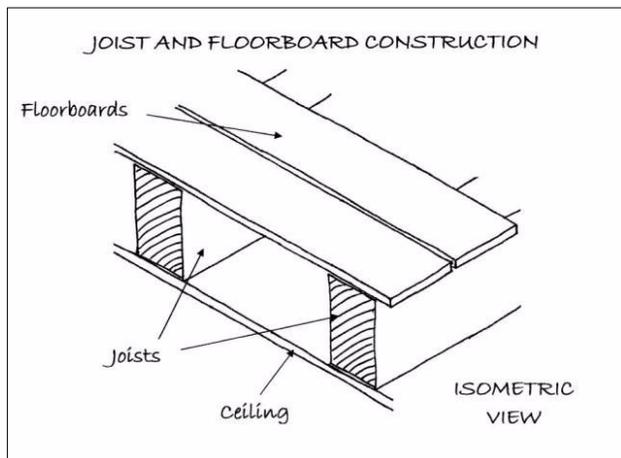
The floors felt solid underfoot so we have assumed they are formed in concrete, however, we have not opened up the floors or lifted the carpets. Where the ground floor is below the ground level, as in this case, there can be problems with water pressure causing the floor to blister. As the ground floor is carpeted it is very difficult to identify if this has occurred. We did however walk the carpet and there were no obvious visual signs. The only way to be 100% certain is to have the carpet fully lifted and check.

## First Floor

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

### Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with fitted carpets. 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.

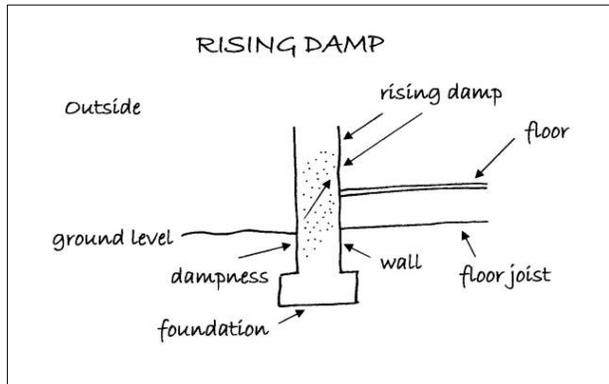
# DAMPNESS



*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 have carried out tests with an electronic damp meter to a random selection of areas and we found rising damp.

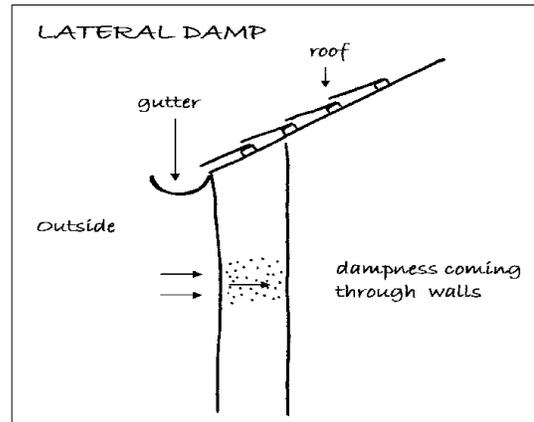
Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Testing for rising damp

## **Lateral or Penetrating Dampness**

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



Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to internal walls, floors and other surfaces. We get high readings, in some areas due to walls on the ground floor being below ground level. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Testing for lateral dampness

## **Condensation**

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

We can see no obvious signs of condensation, however, it depends upon how you utilise the building.

If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating 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 painted panel doors and, all things considered, they are in good condition and fit acceptably. We noted a glazed door in the middle reception room area. This should be safety glass and should be changed. We did not see any kite marks on the glass.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Change glass in glazed door for safety glass.

Painted panel door

## Staircase

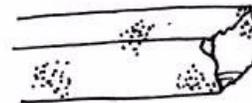
We noted that the underside of the staircase was lined where we could see it, however, part of the stairs are hidden from view. All stairs need lining for fire regulations.

## Kitchen

From our cursory visual inspection the kitchen looked in average to good condition. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

## TIMBER DEFECTS



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

### Dry Rot

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

In the areas visually inspected no evidence was found of any significant dry rot.

### 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, with the possible exception of the soffit and fascia boards due to the blocked gutters and in the future condensation within the roof space.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Make sure gutters and downpipes are regularly cleared so no water can overflow.

## Woodworm



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

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the roof we found no obvious visual signs of significant woodworm activity or, indeed, signs of past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage. We must remind you that some of the roof loft hatches were very small and we did not access the roof, only viewing it from the top of a ladder.

In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection is usually restricted by insulation covering some of the timbers and general stored items in the roof, and roof configuration, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings. If you wish to be 100 per cent certain that there is no woodworm the only way would be to check the property when it is empty of fixtures and fittings, etc.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to be 100 percent certain get the property checked when it is empty of fixtures, fittings and furniture, etc.

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

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

## INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

The decoration is average to good, with minor marks as you would expect in a house that has been lived in.

You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste. It is very difficult to advise on how frequently redecoration should take place, as it very much depends upon the use and abuse the decoration gets, for example, hallways will need tending to more often than a spare bedroom.

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

# **THERMAL EFFICIENCY**



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

## **HIPs (Home Information Packs) Report**

We are making general comments. You will be provided with a HIP Report that should be more specific with regard to the thermal efficiency of the property. We have not seen the HIP Report on this property so cannot comment further.

### **Roof Insulation**

Some roof insulation was present, although not to current Building Regulation requirements of 270mm. We would not be overly concerned about this as we typically find in roofs between 100mm – 150mm of insulation. In this instance you have approximately 150mm.

### **Walls**

The property has a stretcher bond construction and we can only assume from the age of the property that it is likely that when it was built it included cavity insulation but, without opening up the wall, we cannot be certain. The property was built in the era insulation start to be used.

### **Windows**

The windows are double glazed and therefore have reasonable thermal properties.

### **Services**

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

## Summary

Overall, provided our assumptions correct and considering the properties age, type and style, it has average thermal properties for what we see but refer to your HIPs report.

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

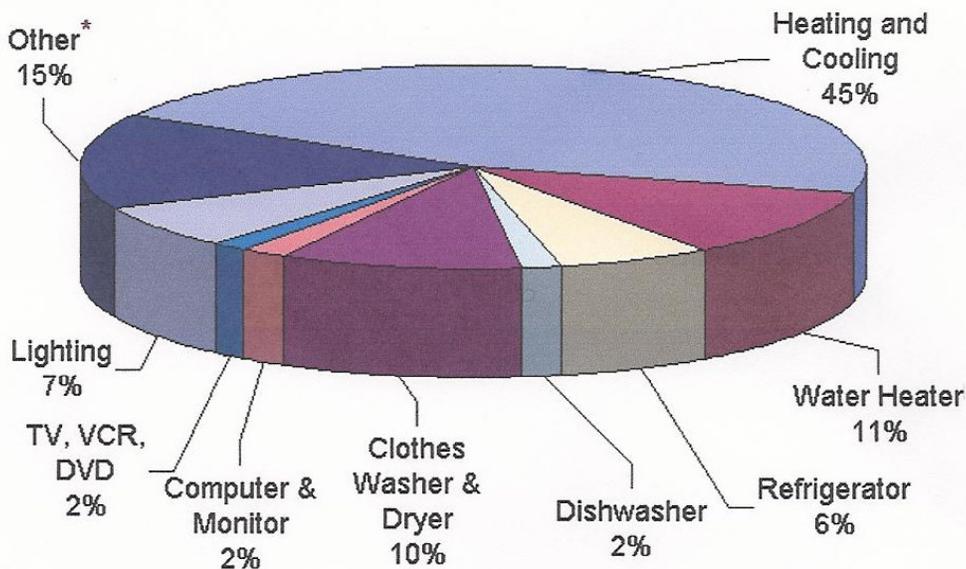
*[HTTP//www.est.org.uk](http://www.est.org.uk), which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid*

*or alternatively [www.cat.org.uk](http://www.cat.org.uk)*

*or [www.ecocentre.org.uk](http://www.ecocentre.org.uk) for an alternative technological view.*

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

### What does my energy bill pay for?



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

## OTHER MATTERS

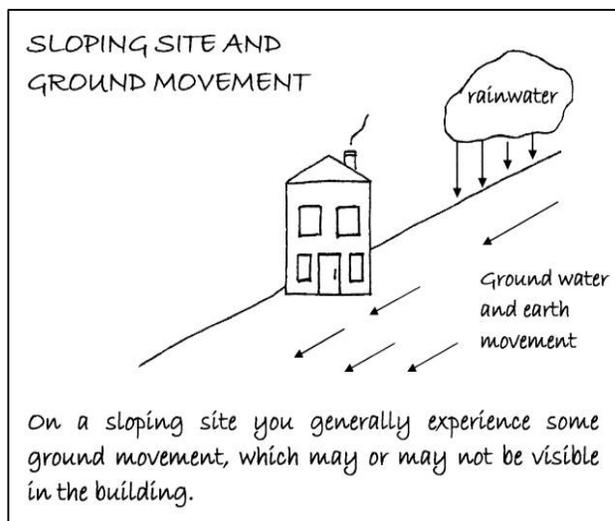


*In this section we put any other matters that do not fit under our usual headings.*

### Sloping Site

We would reiterate our earlier comments that the ground floor of the property is below the outside ground level; this leads to dampness sooner or later.

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



### Security System

A security system was noted. We are advised it is working (we have not tested it). It is a personal decision as to whether you feel one is necessary. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further. We suggest you contact a member of NACOSS (National Approval Council for Security Services), obtainable through directory enquiries, or your local Police Force for advice on a security system.

### Fire / Smoke Alarms

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend, for your own safety, that smoke detectors be installed.

We have seen recently a smoke detector that fits within a light fitting (although we have not used these personally), which is charged when the light is switched on, providing it is switched on a certain number of times a year. We feel this is an excellent idea as it alleviates the problems of batteries running out. We would also advise that if you wish to have any general advice the local Fire Authority are usually happy to help.

### **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 19<sup>th</sup> century with gas lighting still being the norm for a good many years after.*

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

## Fuse Board

The property has two fuseboards; one located in the right hand lounge and the other in the kitchen. Both fuseboards date from the 1960s. Rewireable fuses are now superseded and far better fuse boxes are now available.

**ACTION REQUIRED** Replace the fuseboard as soon as possible.



Fuseboard

## 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 caused the electrics to trip when we tested them for the second time, as you are aware because we were trying to put the electrics on when you arrived.



Earth test

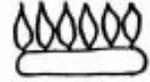
**ACTION REQUIRED:** It is recommended that the installation be tested by a competent electrician (NICEIC registered) and all recommendations implemented. Thereafter, the installation should be re-tested every five years.

Also note that Building Regulations require certain electrical work to be certified by an approved contractor. Please see the appendices at the end of this survey for further details.

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

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

## 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.*

We were advised that there was no gas supply in the house.

# **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 were run to carry out the drainage tests we checked the pressure, literally by putting a finger over a 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!).

We have not used a listening stick to check for water leaks

## **Cold Water Cistern**

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

## **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.

## **Ten Minute Heating Test**

We noted that there are electric storage heaters. We were not able to carry out our usual ten minute test as storage heaters do not work that way.

We would add that people used to gas central heating may find that storage heaters do not warm the property to the heat they desire. We would also add that heating is very subjective between males and females.



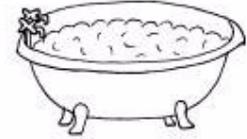
Storage heater

Changing to gas central heating can dry out the property and result in cracking, particularly to modern gypsum plaster, like you have in most of the property.

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 family bathroom suite looks in average to above average condition.

The cloakroom fixtures and fittings are reasonable and we feel it is a good sized and well positioned cloakroom.

The en-suite suite to the master bedroom is in average condition.

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

## MAIN DRAINS



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

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

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

We assume that the property has the benefit of mains drainage, although this should be confirmed by your legal advisor's enquiries.

### 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 (located outside the perimeter on the left hand side)

We duly lifted the man hole/ inspection chamber cover and found the drain to be free flowing, we noted it was finished in brick.



## **Inspection Chamber / Manhole Two (located centrally within the garden path)**

We duly lifted the man hole/ inspection chamber cover and found the drain to be free flowing, we noted it was finished in brick.



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.

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

### GARAGE/OFF ROAD PARKING



The property has a detached garage that we have not inspected internally. We noted externally that there is moss to the roof, as we would expect on a shallow pitched roof, that needs removing. We also noted the windows are not in the best condition and there was cracking around the lintel.



Garage roof



Garage roof



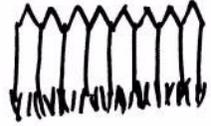
Cracking to garage wall



Rotten timber to garage window

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Clear the moss, stain and repair the windows and make good the cracking.

## EXTERNAL AREAS



### Front Garden

There was a small walled front garden. We noted the boundary wall did not have any weep holes. We would suggest these are added.



weep holes should be added  
to the garden wall

### Rear Garden

There is next to no rear garden, as it goes onto the boundary of the adjoining school. There is a garden to the left hand side.

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

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

## **Neighbours**

We have met two of your neighbours to the right hand side; both were very pleasant and we believe that you have also met some of the neighbours.

We do think you need to discuss the garage to the front of the property with the neighbours to your right hand side and also the access rights and the repair liability on the road, as these things are best discussed while you are friendly with your neighbours. We know all too well about dealing with neighbour disputes!

## **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) Cavity wall insulation and cavity wall tie repairs.
  - iv) Double glazing or 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: However, with regard to Envirosearch or similar general reports please read the article on our website by following the quick link 'Environmental Reports' on our home page: [www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk).

- 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.

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

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

## **REFERENCES**

The repair and maintenance of houses  
*Published by Estates Gazette Limited*

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

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

House Builders Bible  
*By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press*

# 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 overcast day with the odd spell of rain 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 as we were unable to get into some of the roofs and we have not had access to the floors or seen any of the original construction drawings, which would have been of interest, particularly in relation to the sloping site and the foundations and the damp proofing.

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

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

## **Work You Cannot do Yourself**

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

## INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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](http://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.

[www.globrix.com](http://www.globrix.com)

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

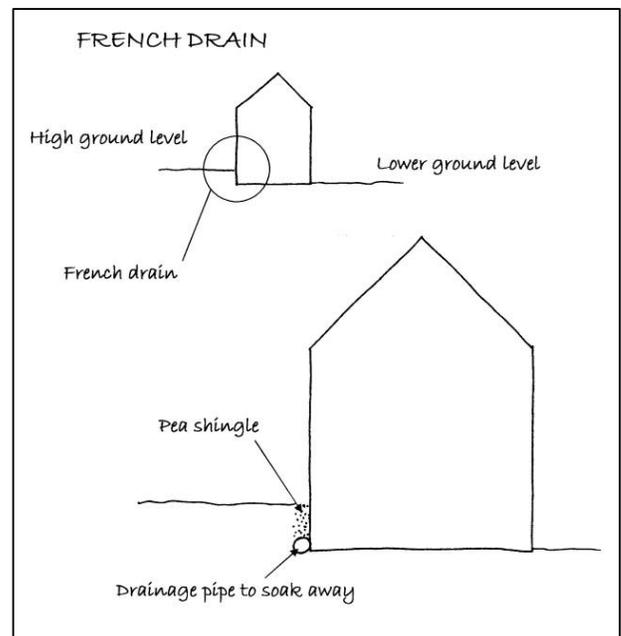
## Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

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

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

### What use is a French drain?

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **The French pond!**

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