

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

Harrow, Middlesex HA1



FOR  
**Mrs H**

Prepared by:

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Marketing by:  
[www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk)  
0800 298 5424

## **CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION  
REPORT FORMAT  
SYNOPSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

### **EXTERNAL**

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

### **INTERNAL**

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

### **SERVICES**

ELECTRICITY  
GAS  
PLUMBING AND HEATING  
BATHROOMS  
MAIN DRAINS

### **OUTSIDE AREAS**

OUTBUILDINGS / PARKING  
EXTERNAL AREAS

POINTS FOR LEGAL ADVISOR

### **APPENDICES**

LIMITATIONS  
ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS  
GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

Independent Chartered Surveyors

—— Marketing by: ——

[www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk)

0800 298 5424

## **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 semi-detached property, which has had a roof/loft conversion, which we were advised was carried out in 2003. The property is situated in a residential area of similar properties.

There is a small garden to the front of the property and a large garden to the rear with trees and garden shed. There is shared access to the left hand side.

Parking is on the roadside on a first come first serve basis. At the time of the survey there was a reasonable amount of roadside parking.

The property was built in the late Victorian/early Edwardian era (the present owner thought 1910). If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

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

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

1878	Electric Street Lights are installed in London
1896	First modern Olympic Games (Athens)
1899-1902	Boer War between Britain and Boers in Southern Africa
1901	Queen Victoria Died
1902	Boer War ends
1903	First flight by Wright Brothers
1903-1928	The Campaign for Women's Suffrage
1904	Number plates introduced
1905	Einstein proposed his Theory of Relativity
1906	Suffragettes disrupted the state opening of Parliament
1907	Picasso introduced Cubism
1908	Olympics held in London
1909	Pension scheme came into force
1910	Death of King Edward VII

# EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Rear View



Street View



Front garden



Rear garden

Independent Chartered Surveyors

Marketing by: \_\_\_\_\_

[www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk)

0800 298 5424

# **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

## **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Entrance hall with staircase
- 2) Through lounge / dining room
- 3) Rear side kitchen

## **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Rear bathroom
- 2) Two double bedrooms
- 3) One single bedroom

## **Top Floor**

The top floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Master bathroom
- 2) Shower room

## **Outside Areas**

There are gardens to the front and rear of the property and off road parking on a first come first serve basis.

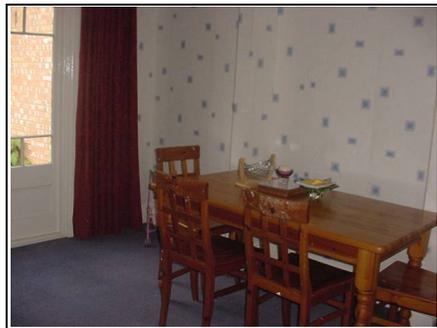
# INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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



Front of lounge/dining area



Rear of lounge/dining room



Kitchen

Independent Chartered Surveyors

Marketing by: \_\_\_\_\_

[www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk)

0800 298 5424

## First Floor



Front left hand side single bedroom



Front Double Bedroom



Rear Double Bedroom



Bathroom

## Top Floor



Master Bedroom



Shower Room

Independent Chartered Surveyors

Marketing by: \_\_\_\_\_

[www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk)

0800 298 5424

## **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

### **External**

Chimneys:	One brick chimney
Main Roof:	Pitched and clad with clay tiles
Low Level Roofs:	Pitched and clad with clay tiles And Georgian wire polish plated glass roof to rear
Flat Roof:	Hidden – cannot confirm the finish
Gutters and Downpipes and Soil and Vent Pipe:	Mixture of cast iron and plastic
Walls:	Flemish Bond brickwork to ground floor (assumed) and painted pebbledash render to upper floors
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Double glazed aluminium windows

### **Internal**

Ceilings:	Mixture of lath and plaster and plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Predominantly solid with some studwork (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: Suspended timber floor to the front (assumed)
	First Floor: Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)
	Top Floor: Steel “I” beam and joists

### **Services**

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (assumed). The boiler is located in the kitchen and is a Potterton Flamingo. The electrics are located under the stairs and are from the 1960s.

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

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 100 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 to be in slightly below 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!*

- 1) The property has had a roof extension, which gives extra space.
- 2) Older properties typically have more space than newer properties, both in the actual size of the rooms and the height of the rooms.
- 3) The property has good natural light due to the bay windows.

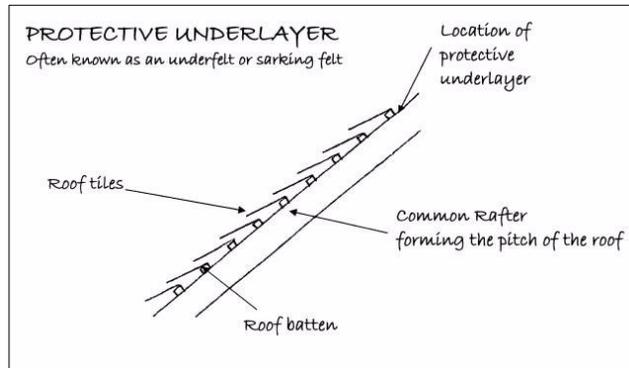
We are sure you can think of other things to add to this list.

## 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) The Main Roof

The main roof has the original clay tiles. There is no protective underlayer (often known as a sarking felt). This means that wind driven rain may well get into the roof.



We are surprised that the addition of a new sarking felt was not carried out when the loft conversion took place. This leads us to believe that the loft conversion is therefore from the cheaper end of the market.

We would make a more general comment that we can see that there has been damage to the roof tiles on the front right hand side of the property and also to the verge.



Clay tiles to main roof



Looking at the back of the roof tiles

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to budget for the possibility of a new roof and we would expect a discount on the purchase price in the region of £10,000 for the inconvenience and appending additional costs.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** For a new roof and associated scaffolding we would expect costs to be in the region of £10,000 to £15,000, particularly if a protective roof has to be formed above it; please obtain quotations. We are most of all very surprised that a protective underlayer was not added when the loft conversion was carried out.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

## 2) **Hidden Flat Roof**

We simply cannot see the flat roof that is over the master bedroom.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend an access hatch is made into the roof to allow inspection. We have checked random areas of the perimeter of the ceiling beneath the flat roof and have not found any dampness, however it does look in areas as if something has been painted over?

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £300 to £400 for the roof light; please obtain quotations. We are not expecting there to be major repairs given that the loft conversion was carried out in 2003, but what we see in the building industry never ceases to surprise us.

In this case we are slightly concerned because popping is occurring to the plasterboard which is adjacent to the flat roof which can indicate that dampness is getting in. We would be more than happy to comment upon photos that are taken and forwarded on to us.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.



Flat roof over master bedroom



Popping below hidden flat roof indicating dampness is getting in

### 3) Gutters and Downpipes and Soil and Vent Pipe

You have some cast iron that is in poor condition and in need of repair and redecoration or replacement. Equally, the plastic can be seen to be leaking and again will need repairing or replacing. Once these are repaired you can repair the fascias and soffits.



Cast iron rusting to the front of the property



Rusting soil and vent pipe

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repair and/or replace cast iron and plastic as necessary.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £500 to £1,000, as some of the work is at high level. Please obtain quotes.

Please see the Gutters and Downpipes Section of this Report.

### 4) Blown Plaster

To the walls, particularly the left hand gable wall adjacent to the stairs, there is an above average amount of blown plaster. This we believe is due to the gable walls getting wet when it rains and as it is so close to the adjoining property not having a chance to dry out due to sunlight not getting in properly or air to vent the area.



Damp access to left hand side of property



Blown plaster

**ACTION REQUIRED:** This is very difficult to resolve. You need to check periodically that the pointing is in good condition. You may need to carry out some re-plastering when carrying out redecoration work.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

#### 5) Dated Metal Windows

Double glazed metal windows were very popular in the 1960's/1970's and to some extent the 1980's. However, we would say they have been superseded by timber or plastic double glazed windows. The main problem with metal windows that we have come across is that they can cause condensation.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to consider replacing these.

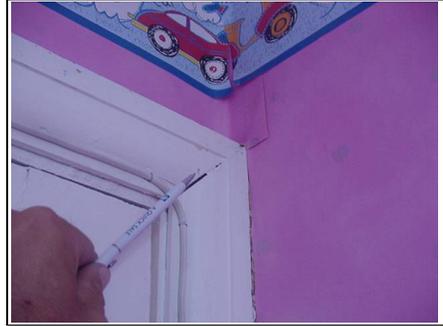
Aluminium windows

**ANTICIPATED COST:** You can spend many thousands on double glazing depending upon the quality you decide to choose.

Please see the Windows and Doors Section of this Report.

## 6) Movement

There has been some movement in the property, although we believe it to be historic. We can see there is a twist to the stairs and there are also some areas that do not fit properly in the way the doors close. We believe this properly occurred when the roof work was carried out, with the change of the distribution of loading with the metal “I” beams being added to give support to the top floor and this weight being transferred down through the structure.



Movement visible

Although we would equally add that in this age of property it could also be leaking drainage, which we have not been able to identify any manholes for, which sometimes occurs in this age of property, as does minor settlement taking place from leaking drains over many years.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally we would recommend a closed circuit TV camera report of the drains to check and establish their condition. Also there should be a manhole. Please ask the existing owners, although they are not aware of any to the rear of the property from our discussions during our question and answer session.

Please see the Walls and Main Drains Sections of this Report.

## 7) Cross floorboarding and deflection

There is deflection over and above what we would expect to the front first floor bedroom.

We noticed it has been cross-floor boarded to the front and rear first floor bedrooms. We find this will mean that floorboards have been put on top of the original boards, which we rarely come across, as normally the original boards are either sanded and made good or they are replaced completely, but not floorboards placed on top of floorboards.

From what we can see they are in a different direction to the original floorboards.



Cross floorboarding



Cross boarding and the timbers cupping

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You really need to consider this as a characteristic of the property and ensure that it is acceptable for you to live with this. Deflection may also relate to a removal of a wall, which in turn goes further to explain the movement that we could see within the structure noted earlier.

Please see the Walls and Main Drains Sections of this Report.

8) **Painted to sell, painted to cover up dampness or just badly painted!**

We cannot decide which of these it is. The painting looks like it has been carried out very quickly and is not to a good standard. However, equally in some areas, for example the bathroom, there also looks to have been painting to cover over mould, etc. We cannot be conclusive on this but we do feel it is worth mentioning.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The design of the building may promote condensation. Therefore you do have to ensure there are extract systems in humidity generating areas, such as the shower room, the bathroom and the kitchen. You will also need to regularly air the property.

Please see the Internal Decoration Section of this Report.

## 9) Services

### Electrics

You have an electric unit located under the stairs (that are not lined) which is from the 1960's.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Replace the fuseboard and have an Institute of Electrical Engineers test and report carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor.



Fuseboard

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £300 to £400; please obtain quotes. We would also expect the electrician to require replacement of some wiring and for your benefit we would also recommend adding additional electric points.

### Dated Boiler

The Potterton Flamingo boiler is located in the kitchen and is an old wall mounted boiler. The owners advise that it has been there during their 14 years occupying the property and we would say it is past its sell by date. Although having said that, if it is being well maintained it may have a few years left in it but will not be as efficient as a modern day boiler. Nevertheless, you need to consider replacing it.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Budget for a new boiler. We would also advise that at the same time as the boiler is being fitted you should re-position all of the radiators to ensure they are underneath the windows. This is the best place for them and gives a circulation of air and reduces condensation.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £2,000 to £5,000, depending upon what needs doing to the rest of the system. Normally as a minimum, when installing a new boiler they will want to drain down the system and carry out a pressure clean.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

10) **No Manholes Found**

We would reiterate our comments earlier that no manholes have been found to the property, which is to some extent unusual.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a closed circuit TV camera report is carried out.

Please see the Main Drains Sections of this Report.

**The Ugly**

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

We have found more than the average number of things that we would classify as bad. There is no one specific thing that we would put in the Ugly Section, however when putting all the items in the Bad Section together we do feel this makes this a high risk purchase.

## **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 redecorating to turn the property into your home. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

## **Purchase Price**

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

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

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

## **Estimates of Costs**

Where we have offered an estimate of building costs please remember we are not experts in this area. We always recommend you obtain quotations for the large jobs before purchasing the property (preferably three quotes). The cost of building work has many variables such as the cost of labour and estimates can of course vary from area to area when giving a general indication of costs. For unskilled labour we currently use between £75 and £100 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

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

## **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 were slightly taken aback by the standard of the loft conversion and various other things, such as rather than new timbers being used they have carried out what is known as back to backing, which is where different timbers have been added to the original timbers. Whilst there is nothing against this it just is not the normal practice that we come across.

We also noted some insulation but not to the standard we normally expect to see, although having said that even though the work was carried out in 2003 this is some time ago insofar as energy efficiency is concerned, with rapidly changing requirements and regulations. Our concern would be with this insulation level you may get heat gain during the summer and heat loss during the winter, which will make the loft conversion not particularly comfortable to live in.

We did not note at the time, but now looking at the photos it looks like there may be some woodworm in the roof. It may alternatively be just how the light has caught the timber.

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**



Independent Chartered Surveyors

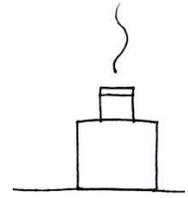
Marketing by: \_\_\_\_\_

[www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk)

0800 298 5424

## EXTERNAL

# CHIMNEY STACKS, FLUES 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.*

### Intro Chimneys/ Overview

There is one chimney to this property they are located to the right hand side (all directions given as you face the property).

### Main Roof Chimney One

This chimney is brick finished with four chimney pots with a cement flashing to the side and lead flashing to the front, which is quite unusual. From what we could see the chimney looks in average condition. We were unable to see the top of the chimney known as the flaunchings and therefore are unable to comment on its condition. We can see that the chimney pots have mesh on them; we assume this is to stop birds from nesting in them.



Chimney



Close up view



Close up showing the cement flashing to left hand side and lead underneath and displaced tile

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would like to view the chimney close up from the flat roof when the opening has been added, as we have recommended. Cement flashings are notorious for leaking as they are brittle and crack. There are also some tiles displaced around the chimney which is another reason we would like to inspect it close up.

#### 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**

The property has one roof window to the front of the property. It is purpose made with metal externally and timber internally. There are no visual signs of major staining to the timber. We would add that it seems inevitable with roof windows that they will sooner or later leak. If this doesn't occur then they seem prone to condensation. Keep a cloth handy!



Roof light showing no signs of leaking internally

### **Party Wall**

The chimney looks to be on what is known as the Party Wall. Therefore, if you carry out any work you may fall under Party Wall regulations. A brief outline of these follows below.

#### Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

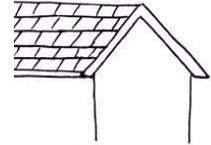
A structure that both parties enjoy the use of or benefit from. An example of this would be where both parties gain support from a wall or utilise a chimney or chimneys.

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

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

## Roof Intro/ Overview

We will consider the roofs in three different areas; the main roof, the front and rear roofs.

### Main Roof

The roof is pitched and clad with a small clay tile and, from ground level, this looks in average condition (see our comments in the Executive Summary) considering the roofs age type and style. With this age of roof there will usually be a few missing or displaced tiles; this is nothing unusual.



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

Close up of clay tiles

### Gable End

There are tiles missing to the gable end. The tiles to the front look like they have been caught by the wind. You may be able to mend the bargeboard detail to protect the tiles or add a cement fillet.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that general work to the roof and specifically to the valley gutters at the gable end is carried out by the summer of 2012.

Tiles missing to gable end

## Valley Gutters

There are valley gutters to the front of the property. The valley gutters are formed in lead, we can see that some of the cement is coming away and some tiles are loose in the area.

### Valley Gutters Defined

This is where two roofs meet and change direction. There is normally a drainage run and this can be formed in a variety of materials.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally repairs are required.



This photo shows a tile missing to the edge and shows that the edge needs finishing in cement and in lead valley gutter cement is coming out of it.

## High Level Hidden Flat Roof

Unfortunately we cannot see the flat roof. We were advised that the extension was carried out in 2003. Typically flat roofs have a life of 10 to 15 years but this does depend upon the materials used and the quality of the workmanship.

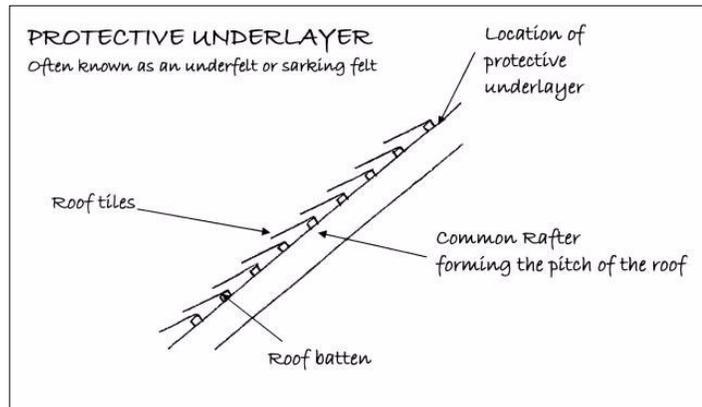
**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would like to have access to view this roof which is why we have recommend a roof light be put in. We would be more than happy to comment on photos that are taken.



Roof extension

## **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 there was no underfelt and it is therefore possible that during periods of heavy and prolonged driving rain some water penetration could take place through the roof coverings.



Lack of sarking felt

## **Other Roofs**

There is a pitched roof over the porch to the front of the property, a flat roof to the rear at high level and a glazed roof at low level.

### **Front Porch Roof**

There is a decorative tile roof over the porch which looks in reasonable condition and we were pleased to see a lead flashing, although it does look like some cement mortar is coming out of it. We would re-bed this using a lead wedge and lime mortar and/or manmade sealant or some equivalent sealant product.



Front porch roof

## **Rear Flat Roof**

*Whilst these roofs are called "flat", present building regulations and good building practice presently requires a minimum fall of 12 degrees.*

*Flat roofs are formed in a variety of materials. Difficulties can arise when the water is not discharged from the roof but sits upon it, as this can soon lead to deterioration which flat roofs are renowned for.*



Rear flat roof

There is a metal flat roof. At first we thought it was lead but the sections look too large for lead. This is over the bathroom area and may mean the area is more prone to condensation.

## **Low Level Glazed Area**

There is a low level glazed area which has Georgian wired polished plate glass. We note that one of these is broken and needs replacing. This gives a good covered sitting out area to the rear which is protected from the rain.



Low level glazed canopy

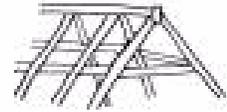


Broken pane

Finally, all the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. Flat roofs have been inspected from upper floor windows and/or ground level.

Unfortunately we were only able to see approximately fifty percent of the main roof (and none of the high level flat roof at all) 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.*

### **Roof Intros/ Overview**

We will consider the roof in two areas; the main roof and the extension.

### **Roof Access**

The top floor has rooms formed in the roof. We were able to gain access via two front panels.

### **Panel One to Front**

This gave us a view into the front of the roof. Here we able to see there was no protective underlayer and that the timbers forming the loft conversion had been added to the existing timbers rather than new replacement ones.

We were also able to see a small amount of insulation by looking between the common rafters (the ones that form the pitch of the roof).



General view to front of roof



Common rafters with silver insulation to bottom of photo

We were also able to see the base of the valley gutter. Here there is some staining, which leads us to believe dampness is getting in.



Base of valley gutter

In the adjacent photo you can see the darker original timbers with the lighter newer timbers that have been added to help form the roof structure, which we rarely see.



Old and new timbers

**Panel Two to Left Hand Side**

(all directions given as you face the property)

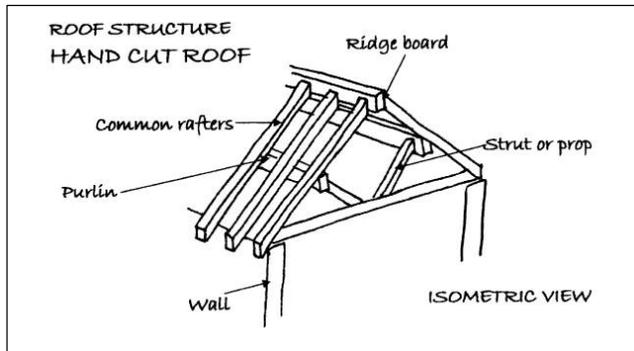
The second access panel was on the left hand side. This enabled us to view the water tank. We can also see some insulation but it was a generally limited view.



Water tank at bottom of photo

## Roof Structure

We had a very limited view of the roof structure. We would take an educated guess that originally it was a cut timber frame roof that has been added to and modified to form the large dormer roof.



## Roof Timbers

We had a limited view of approximately twenty per cent of the roof. Here we looked for:

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

Whilst our examination was limited of what we could see we did not see any deterioration relating to the above items. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden as we can only see a small percentage of it.

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

## Fire Walls

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

### Fire Walls Defined

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



Fire wall

## **Water Tanks**

A plastic water tank was visible to the front left hand side of the roof space (all directions given as you face the property).

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!



Water tank

## **Ventilation**

This type of roof without an underlayer has natural ventilation.

## **How this roof has been converted**

As is common with many loft conversions that we have seen, steel “I” beams have been added into the structure. This is to take the extra weight and has to be allowed for when converting a ceiling to a floor. As mentioned in the Executive Summary this can create point loads which in turn can cause movement within the structure.



Metal “I” beam

## **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

The property has a mixture of the original cast iron gutters and down pipes and the more modern replacement plastic gutters and downpipes. What we saw of the gutters and downpipes were mainly in below average to poor condition and therefore they are causing deterioration to the property.



Old cast iron downpipe

**ACTION REQUIRED:** There seems to have been a piece meal approach to the gutters and downpipes in the past. These now need viewing, overhauling and repair and replacement. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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.

## Soil and Vent Pipe

The soil and vent pipes are a mix of cast iron and plastic, they appear to be leaking from our visual inspection.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to decide whether to maintain the existing system or replace with it with plastic.



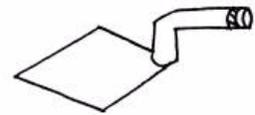
Soil and vent pipe

## **General Note**

With regard to the gutters and downpipes and the soil and vent pipes, the cast iron does need regular maintenance. If it is regularly maintained it will last longer than plastic.

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.*

## Intro Walls / Overview

We will consider the walls in two main areas; brickwork to the ground floor area and pebbledash render to the first floor area.

## Brickwork

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

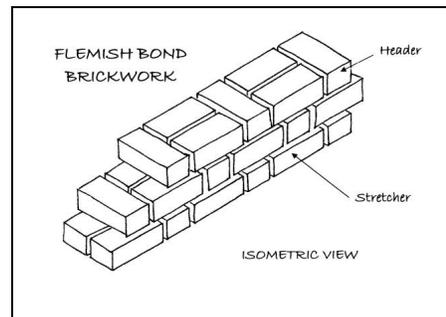
The term Flemish Bond relates to the way the bricks are bonded together and have a pattern visible from the outside of the property that shows the end of the brick (header), then the side of the brick (stretcher), then the end of the brick, then the side of the brick, and this pattern repeats course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

The solid external walls may be liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon their condition and their exposure to the weather. External faces should be kept in good condition. Unfortunately cement will cause deterioration, particularly to the softer red brick, as you can see in the adjacent photo.

Before the 19th Century, the practice of building timbers into external walls was almost universal. These were known as bonding timbers. They are of course prone to rot as solid walls allow dampness through. Unfortunately, without opening up the structure, we are unable to confirm if this is the case.



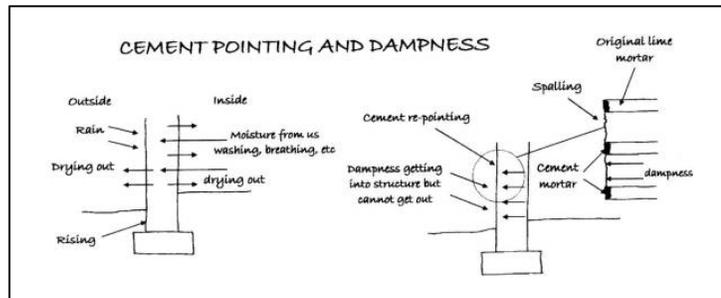
Original lime mortar repointed in cement mortar which needs



Soft red brick deteriorating due to cement mortar and also lack of sunlight in the area

Generally Flemish Bond brickwork is liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon the condition of the brickwork and the exposure to the weather. In this case it is essential that external faces be kept in good condition.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Careful repointing is need, removing the cement mortar with a soft brush where it is loose and repointing in a lime mortar. This can be carried out over a number of years, gradually returning the brickwork back to its original characteristics, where although it gets damp it does then dissipate the dampness through the brickwork.



## Pebbledash Render

The top of the walls to this property are finished in a pebbledash painted render. The walls are in average to slightly below condition. We suspect this is due to the leaking of the gutters and downpipes.



Pebbledash render to first floor



Close up of pebbledash render

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Before the winter of 2011 you need to check via a long ladder that there are no hairline cracks to the render. Based upon what you find you should then carry out repair work in the summer of 2012. We have done our best to identify significant hairline cracks from ground level and could not see any major ones, but this does not stop them from opening up in the different seasons.

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

Our comments have been based upon how the brickwork / pebbledash render / plaster has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork / pebbledash 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 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**

Given the age of the original property, we would expect to find a shallow stepped brick foundation possibly with a bedding of lime mortar to this area.

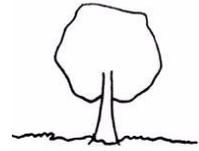
## **Building Insurance Policy**

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

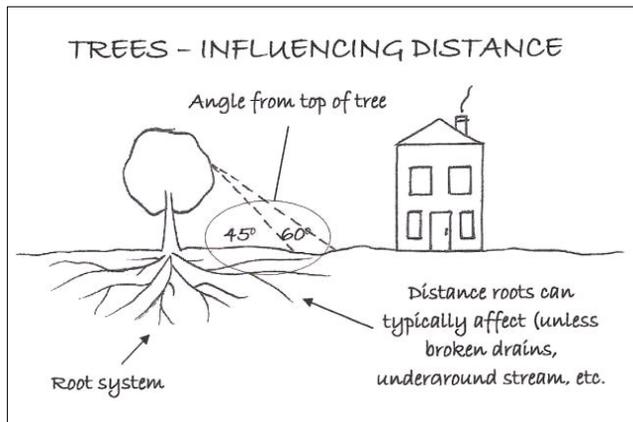
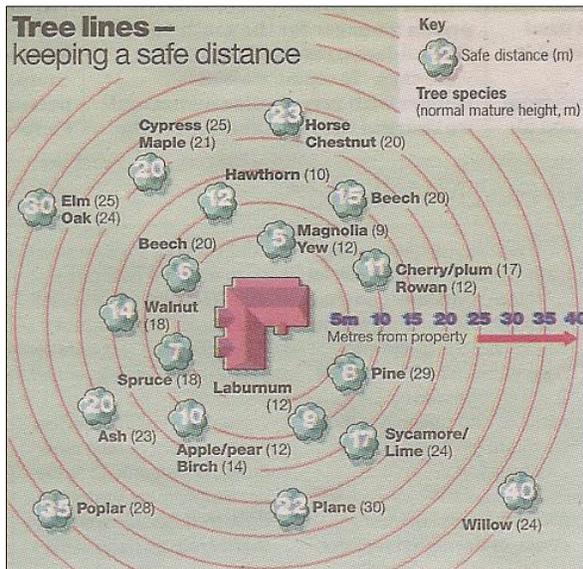


*Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.*

There are some trees in the surrounding area, some of which are just about within what we would term as influencing distance, or coming into influencing distance, of the property. We do not believe at present they are causing any problems, although please be aware that we have not been able to check the drains, which is a common place where tree roots grow down into as a supply of free drinking water. This is why it is important to have a closed circuit TV cameral report, as mentioned in the Executive Summary.



Tree in rear garden



## 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.

Independent Chartered Surveyors

Marketing by: \_\_\_\_\_

[www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk)

0800 298 5424

## DAMP PROOF COURSE

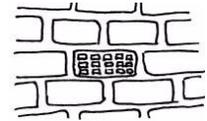


*The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required various other basic standards. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout London and then the country as a whole, 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, unfortunately we cannot see a DPC because of the render plinth. In this particular property its possible it will have a slate Damp proof course hidden behind the render plinth. Your attention is drawn to the section of the report specifically dealing with dampness.

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

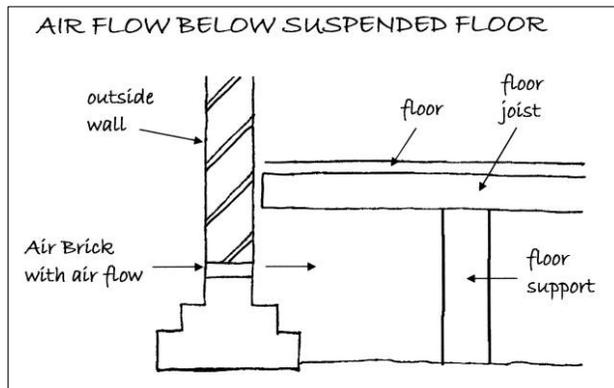
# AIRBRICKS



*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.*

## Location of Air bricks

We noted air bricks at the front of the property, and rear and side. which indicates a suspended floor.

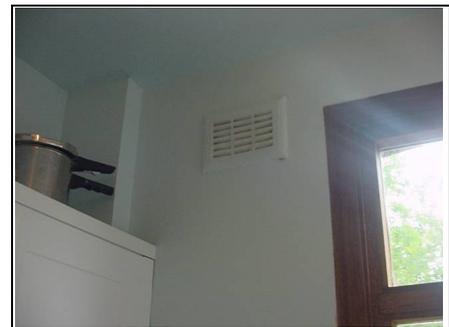


Air brick to front

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to ensure the air vents are kept clear to vent the floor.

## High Level Airbricks

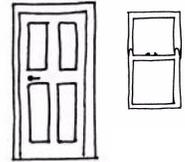
We noted some high level air bricks. These are often added to help reduce condensation, or vent a room with a boiler. In this case we found one in the kitchen so we believe it is for both.



High level vent

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.

# FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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

## Timber Fascias and Soffits

The gutters are not in the best of condition which usually means the fascias and soffits will need some repair and then painting.



View of soffits and fascia board to bay window



Close up view of the paint flaking to the fascia board

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Redecoration of fascias and soffits. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## Windows and Doors

The property predominantly has aluminium windows. Aluminium glazed aluminium units were common and popular in the 1960s and 1970s.

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



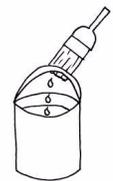
Aluminium windows 44

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.



Close up of aluminium window

## **EXTERNAL DECORATIONS**



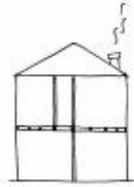
*The external decorations act as a protective coat for the building from the elements. Where this protective covering has failed, such as with flaking paintwork, the elements will infiltrate the structure. This is of particular concern as water is one of the major factors in damage to any structure.*

There is a great deal of painted render at first floor level that will need redecorating in the next few years and you should not underestimate this and you may need scaffolding to have the work carried out. Alternatively, it will take up many weekends of your time to carry out redecoration. Remember the decoration is very important as it is effectively a raincoat that protects your building.

You also need to redecoration the fascias and soffit boards once the problems with the gutters are resolved. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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.*

### Ceilings

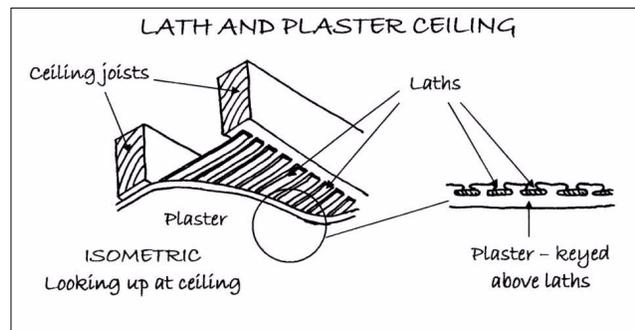
As should be expected with a building of this age, the ceilings have been finished in a variety of ways, from the original lath and plaster to more modern plasterboard. There are some interesting ceiling details, such as the decorative ceiling mould/rose that can be seen in the adjoining photo.



Decorative mouldings

#### 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

These are predominantly solid with some studwork.

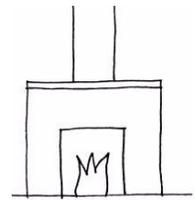
### Perimeter Walls

Some of these have suffered from blown plaster, predominantly on the left hand side which we believe is due to lack of drying out in this area. There looks to have been plaster repairs in the past.

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.*

The chimney breasts are located on the right hand side (all directions given as you face the front of the property). We were pleased to see vents which help stop sulphate attack occurring within them where the sulphur acts like blotting paper, drawing in dampness and then transferring this through the brickwork and causing damage.



Vents to chimney

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.

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.

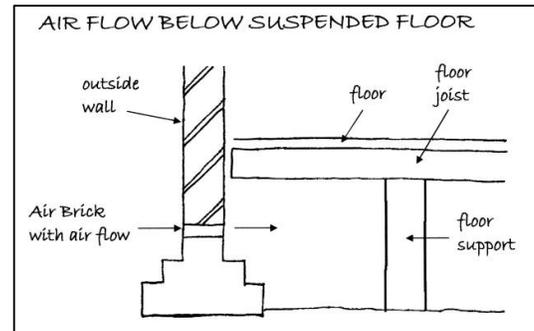
# FLOORS



*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

Based on our knowledge of this age of construction we believe that the ground floor construction is predominantly a suspended timber floor. This type of floor needs air circulation under it to reduce deterioration from wet rot and dry rot; please see our comments in these sections.



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

Some areas of the floor felt solid and may be concrete, such as the kitchen.

We noted that the wooden floors had additional timbers placed on them, as per adjacent photo.



Floor hidden underneath wooden floor in entrance hall

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ensure that the air vents are clear. Ideally we would open up a section of the floor to check the timbers underneath.

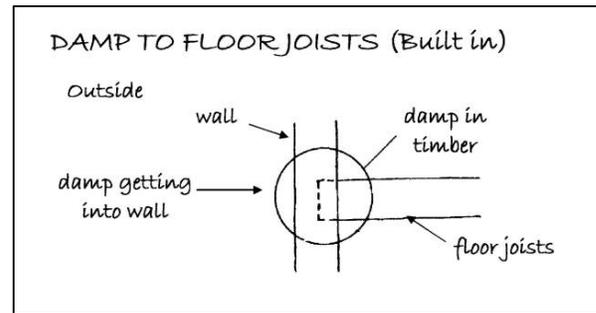
## First Floor

We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards as this is typical in this age of property. The floor is likely to have embedded timbers. Onto this additional boarding has been added.



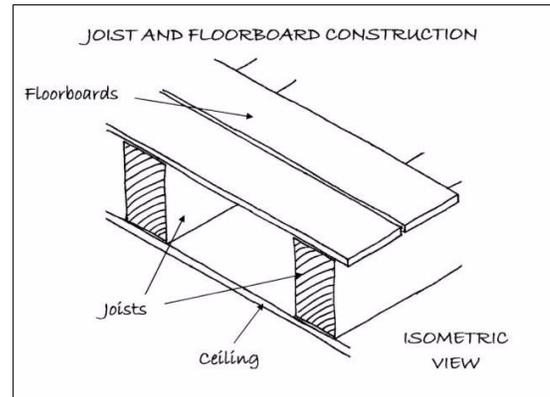
Wear to floor in front bed

We have comment about the deflection within the front first floor room. This is above what we would expect and may be due to some dampness getting into the embedded timbers.



#### 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.



### Top Floor

We have assumed that the top floor construction is originally ceiling joist and floorboards with RSJs added. We have seen the RSJ to the front of the property and strengthening to the timbers.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal adviser needs to check that Local Authority Approval has been obtained.

Woodworm can be seen in the floor and we assume the floor joists are embedded and some rot is present.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend the floor be opened up and checked and repaired as necessary. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with fitted carpets, floor coverings and timber over the top of the original timber. 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.

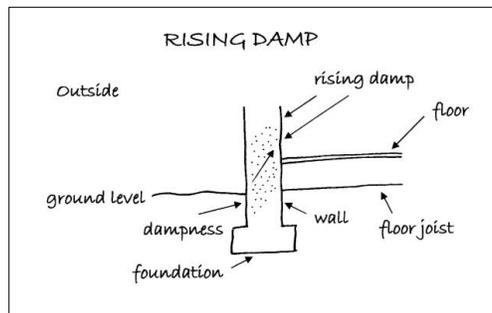


# DAMPNESS

*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 carried out tests with an electronic damp meter and found average dampness considering the condition of the property.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend work is carried out to make the building water tight and then reviewed.

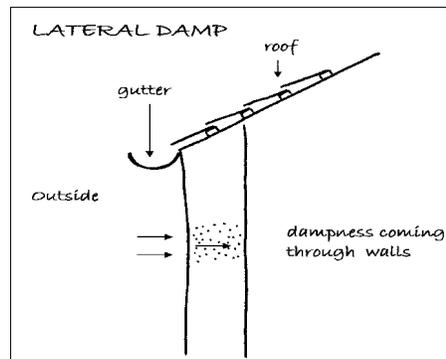


Checking for rising damp

## 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.*

A visual inspection was carried and tests were taken with an electronic conductivity meter at selected points to walls. No significant penetrating/lateral dampness was seen or detected considering the properties age type and style.



Testing for lateral dampness 51

Independent Chartered Surveyors

Marketing by: \_\_\_\_\_

[www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk)

0800 298 5424

## **Condensation**

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

We think that some condensation may be occurring in the bathroom. This may be due to the way it is used at the moment or due to the windows not being open. We also think there is some condensation occurring in the shower room.



Mould in bathroom

It really does depend on how you utilise the property, for example 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.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to ensure that the property is well vented when you have a bath or shower or use any areas that create a lot of humidity. We would also refrain from drying clothes internally and add an extract fan.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds; please obtain quotes.

## **Metal Windows**

You have metal double glazed windows which do tend to suffer from condensation. You may end up wiping wet window cills during colder days.

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**

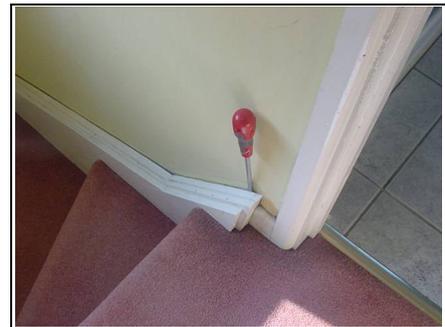
The property has a range of different types of doors, mainly painted panel doors.



Painted panel door

## **Staircase**

We noted that the underside of the staircase was partly lined, we recommend all of it is lined to help reduce the spread of fire. There has been some movement in the structure that can be seen in the staircase area.



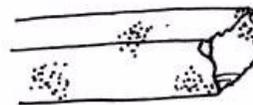
Stairs area

## **Kitchen**

From our cursory visual inspection the galley style kitchen looked in average 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. Please remember we have not opened up the floors or the roof.

### **Wet Rot**

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

In the areas inspected no evidence was found of any significant wet rot, however there is an outside chance that there is wet rot in the property in several areas:

1. to the suspended floor
2. to the joist ends at first floor level
3. to the fascias and soffits, and
4. to the valley gutters

## 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.*

When we inspected the roof we did not see any, however we believe that we have seen some woodworm on one of the photos when we have been reviewing. On the top diagonal timber the white section looks like an area where woodworm has occurred. Whilst we do not believe this to be structurally significant we would recommend a second opinion.



Possible woodworm?

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.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend you have the roof checked for woodworm and specifically ask the woodworm company if it is active. Remember, many woodworm companies are looking for you to have a problem.

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.*

### **Decoration Condition**

The decoration is as new. Our concern here is what defects are being hidden by the paint work. We would term this property as cleaned/painted to sell?

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

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

# THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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

## HIPs

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

## Roofs

The roof area cannot be viewed as rooms have been formed in the roof area and in this age of conversion we would expect insulation to have been added (assuming it has been built to building regulations approval which your Solicitor should check). Therefore in the summer months you may get solar gain and in the winter months the rooms will get cold. This in turn makes the rooms not ideal to live in.



We could see some roof insulation (left hand side of photo)

## Walls

The walls to this property are solid and will have a relatively poor thermal efficiency. It is very difficult to improve thermal efficiency in solid wall construction without major alterations, which will usually affect the external appearance or reduce the internal space.

## Windows

The windows are double glazed and therefore have reasonable thermal properties, however they are metal and therefore can suffer from condensation.

## Services

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

## Overall Opinion

Overall, considering the properties age, type and style, it has below average thermal properties.

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

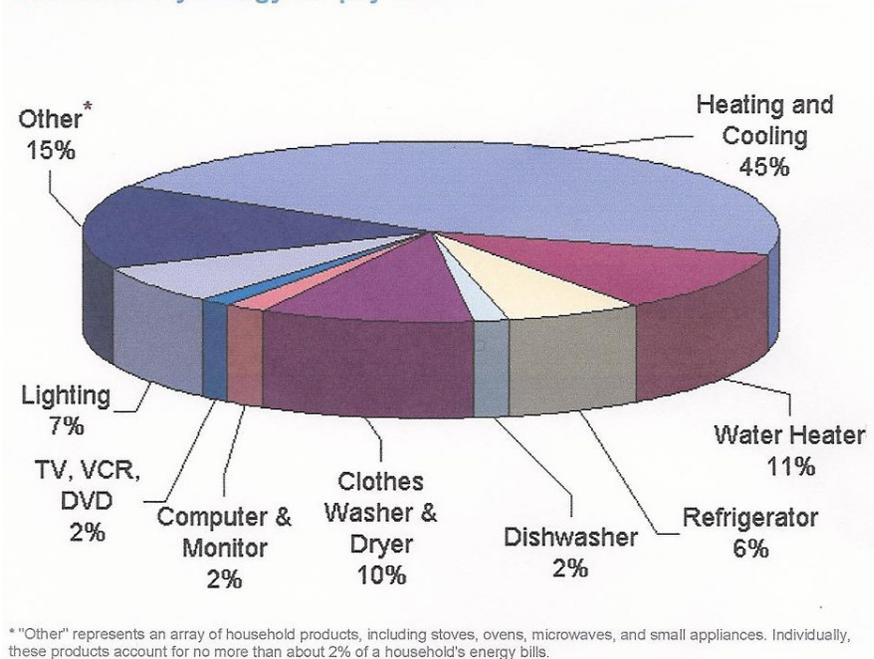
*[HTTP//www.est.org.uk](http://www.est.org.uk), which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.*

*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 likely to be required for future house sales.

What does my energy bill pay for?



Independent Chartered Surveyors

Marketing by: ———

[www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk)

0800 298 5424

## OTHER MATTERS



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

### Security

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

### Fire / Smoke Alarms

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

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

We 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.

## Fuseboard type and location

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the kitchen. We would date the fuseboard as being from the 1960s. Re-wireable fuses are now superseded. Far better fuse boards are now available.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Replace the fuseboard as soon as possible and please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Fuseboard

## Earth Test

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

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

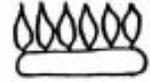


Earth test

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 Gas Safe registered plumber.*

..

We are advised the gas meter is located under the stairs, although we did not actually see it. All gas appliances, pipework and flues should be the subject of an annual service by a competent engineer, i.e., a member of Gas Safe; works to gas appliances etc., by unqualified personnel is illegal. Unless evidence can be provided to confirm that there has been annual servicing we would recommend that you commission such a service prior to use to ensure safe and efficient operation.

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

# PLUMBING AND HEATING



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

## Water Supply

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ask the owners.

## 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.

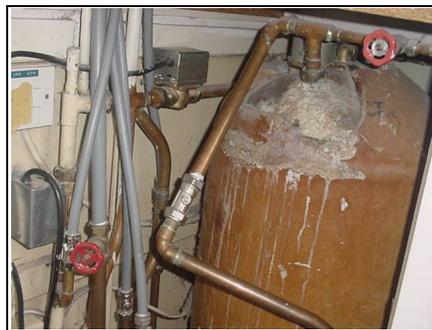
The Water Board have to guarantee a certain pressure of water to ensure that things like boilers, particularly the instantaneous ones, have a constant supply of pressured water (they would blow up if they did not!). We have not used a listening stick to check for water leaks.

## Cold Water Cistern

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

## Hot Water Cylinder

The hot water cylinder has seen better days. It looks to have had a major leak. We noticed an isolating valve has been added meaning that you can switch the hot water cylinder supply off without having to drain down the entire system.



Hot water cylinder has seen better days

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend a service is carried out of the whole system and advice is taken as to whether the cylinder needs replacing. There are far more energy efficient cylinders now available.

## **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 boiler was located in the kitchen and is dated but working. Our limited inspection of the hot water and central heating system revealed no evidence to suggest any serious defects, however we would recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.



Old Potterton boiler

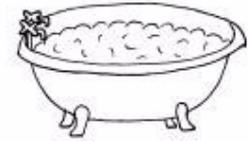
## **Ten Minute Heating Test**

We asked the owner to turn the heating on for approximately ten minutes. We then checked the hallway radiators (ground floor and first floor) and found them to be warm.

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

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

# **BATHROOM**



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

## **Family Bathroom**

The family bathroom suite looks in average condition.

## **Shower Room**

The shower tray within the shower room needs to be re-masticed as soon as possible and looks to have been masticed previously.



Shower looks to have previously leaked and has been re-masticed

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.*

### Type of Drains

We assume that the property has the benefit of mains drainage, although we could not identify which way it travels. 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.

### Manholes

We did not note any manholes during the course of our survey.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend a closed circuit TV camera report of the drains.

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

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

## **Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage**

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

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

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

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

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

## OUTSIDE AREAS

### PARKING

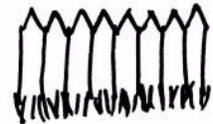


Parking is usually roadside parking on a first come first serve basis.



Street parking

### EXTERNAL AREAS



#### Front Garden

A small garden, slightly overgrown.



Front garden

#### Rear Garden

Some work is required to the fences and the gate, which has seen better days,



Rear gate has seen better days

Independent Chartered Surveyors

Marketing by: \_\_\_\_\_

[www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk)

0800 298 5424

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

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

## **Neighbours**

### **Left Hand Neighbours**

We knocked at the door but no-one answered.

### **Right Hand Neighbours**

We knocked at the door but no-one answered.

## **POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:
  - i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations
  - ii) Rising damp treatments
  - iii) Double glazing or replacement windows
  - iv) Roof and similar renewals
  - v) Central heating installation
  - vi) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals
  - vii) Any other matters pertinent to the property
- d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- e) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.
- f) Liabilities in connection with shared services.
- g) Adjoining roads and services.
- h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- i) General development proposals in the locality.
- j) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.

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

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

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

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

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

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

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

Independent Chartered Surveyors

—— Marketing by: ——

[www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk)

0800 298 5424

## **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 summer's day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

Our weather seems to be moving towards the extremities from relatively mid range. A few interesting facts in Britain over the years have been:

2000	Wettest year on record at the time
2003	Driest year on record at the time
2004	Wettest August on record at the time
2004	Boscastle was the worst flash flood on record at the time
2005	Third driest year on record at the time
2006	Warmest year recorded on record at the time
July 2006	Hottest July on record at the time
2006	Hottest autumn on record at the time
2007	Warmest spring on record at the time
2007	Wettest June on record at the time
April '06-April '07	Hottest 12 months on record at the time
2008	
2009	Third wettest August since 1956
2010	Heaviest snowfall in march since 1991
	Britain faces one of the coldest winters for 100 years

References                      BBC News [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

## **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 not being able to open up the floors, not being able to look into the drains or see the high level flat roof and have not had the benefit of meeting you at the property to discuss your specific requirements.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

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

# **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.