JOB REFERENCE: RBS/RM

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

OF

A 1960's Detached Property, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire

FOR

Mr M

Marketing by:

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

CONTENTS

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 house 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 house is yours but we will do our best to offer advice to make the decision as easy as possible.

REPORT FORMAT

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

GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

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

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

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

ORIENTATION

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

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two storey detached property situated in a residential estate of similar properties. The property has an adjoining garage.

There are gardens to the front and rear and also some trees.

We believe that the property was built in the 1960s / 1970s. 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:

1960	Internet was developed as a communications system for the defence industry
1963	President Kennedy assassinated in Dallas
1965	The Death Penalty is abolished
1966	England win the football World Cup
1969	Man lands on the Moon
1971	Decimalisation
Early 1970s	British Property Boom
1973	Britain enters the European Economic Community
1977	Elvis Presley Dies
1978-1979	The Winter of Discontent
1979-1991	The Thatcher Years

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Front Elevation

Rear Elevation

Left Hand Side of property

Right Hand Side of the Property

Front Garden

Rear Garden

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Entrance Hall
- Kitchen
- Living Room / Dining Area

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Bathroom
- Four Bedrooms one with en suite

Outside Areas

There is off-road parking and roadside parking, as well as the garage.

INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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

Ground Floor

Entrance Area

Kitchen

Lounge Area

Dining Area

First Floor

Bathroom

Bedroom

Rear Bedroom

En Suite Shower room

Bedroom

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

EXTERNAL

Chimneys:	Two brick chimneys
Main Roof:	A shallow pitched roof, clad with concrete tiles
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Predominantly stretcher bond (assumed) brickwork to the side walls with cladding and brickwork to the front and rear.
External Joinery:	Double glazed plastic windows and plastic fascias and soffits

INTERNAL

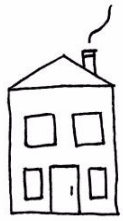
Ceilings:	Plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Solid, assumed blockwork
Floors:	Ground Floor: Suspended timber floor (assumed)
	First Floor: Joist and floorboards (assumed)

SERVICES

We are advised that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (assumed).

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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

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

Having said all of that, here are our comments:-

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

The Good

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

- The property is very light.
- The property has reasonable size rooms.
- There is off-road parking.

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) Large Flat Roof

To the front of the property is a very large flat roof. We could see moss on it, which does indicate that water sits on it when it rains. We could not see any real fall on the roof, which does tend to cause problems with water sitting, which eventually gets in.

General view across the front of the roof

ACTION REQUIRED: Ideally the roof should be re-laid to a fall; the best way we have found to do this is to use a product, which is an insulation cut to a fall and then a high performance felt over the top of it.

Looking at the felt flashings, we would prefer these to be replaced with lead flashings. These are likely to need some work in the near future.

ANTICIPATED COSTS: For this sized roof we would expect costs to be in the region of £5,000 - £7,500 (estimates required), depending upon how much work is required to the decking. However, we would stress that this roof has a fair amount of life left in it providing you keep it regularly maintained.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section of this Report.

2) **Ventilation to the Roof**

This is more of a preventative measure. We would recommend that vents are added to the soffit boards and to the roof itself to minimise condensation occurring in the roof space. The underlayer is already fairly brittle; this has probably occurred not only due to age but also due to some condensation within the roof.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add vents and ensure they are kept clear.

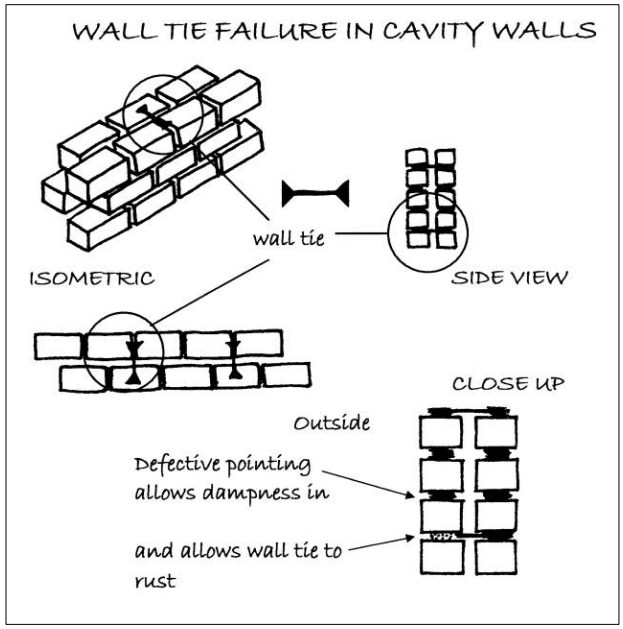
ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £1,000 - £2,000 because we believe the fascias and soffits will need to be replaced to add vents, although we would recommend initially that you add vents in the roof only. This is likely to be a lot cheaper, although if access is needed by scaffolding this will put the price up. Estimates required.

Please see the Roof Structure Section of this Report.

3) **External Walls – Insulation or Wall Ties Added?**

To the brickwork we could see circular marks where cement has been filled in mainly on the mortar joints. This usually indicates that either an insulation has been added or wall ties have been replaced.

In either case we need to know more information from your Legal Advisor. The problem with insulation being added after is that it is often added and voids are present and / or it settles. Both ways you have what is known as 'cold bridging' which can lead to dampness getting in the property. Generally we would not recommend this type of treatment to a property.



ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor to make further enquiries and to advise us with regard to this matter so we can comment further. We would add that there were no obvious visual signs of wall tie failure; these typically are horizontal cracking to the brickwork.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

4) **Windows**

We noted that the seals around the windows to the double glazing has been cut short in many instances; this in turn leads to the double glazing failing earlier than would normally be expected.

The trim has been cut too short.

We spoke to the owner who advised that they had been carried out under FENSA Regulations (he advised that he had sent the information onto the Legal Advisor, so we have not seen it and you need to check this). However, you also need to make further investigations as to whether guarantees are available for all windows, as during our question and answer session the owner indicated that the windows had been installed at different times by different people.

ACTION REQUIRED: Further investigation required.

Please see the External Joinery Section of this Report.

5) **Airbricks**

We noted that the airbricks around the property have been partially blocked in some areas by the wood decking that has been added.

ACTION REQUIRED: These vents need reopening and also to be kept clear to allow circulation under the floor, otherwise you could get wet rot or woodworm.

ANTICIPATED COST: This is a DIY / handyman type of job.

Please see the Airbricks Section of this Report.

6) **Trees**

A number of trees have been removed; it is impossible with our new varied climate to be 100 percent certain what effect this will have on the property. There will certainly be a change in the ground water table level that used to be 'balanced' by the trees taking water, it will now need to 're-balance'.

Cut down Tree.

ACTION REQUIRED: You do need to occasionally check around the outside of the property for cracks etc.

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.

Halved Tree.

7) **Woodworm**

As you are aware we have been advised that this property has woodworm, although we have not actually seen it.

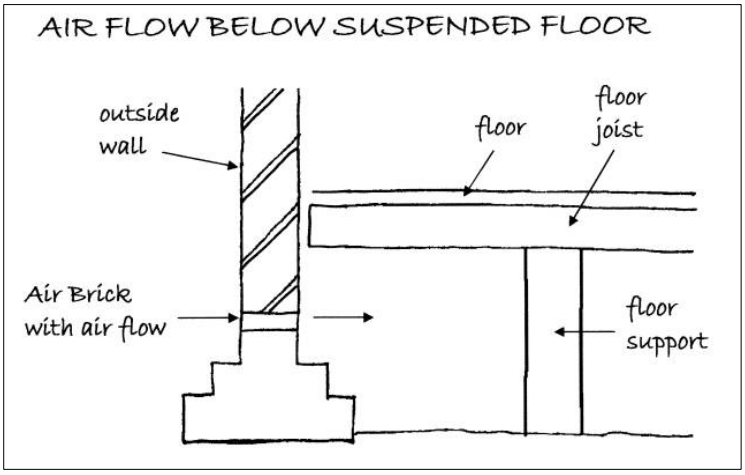
It is very unusual for a property of this age to get woodworm, particularly as the timber has normally been treated. We spoke with the owner about this during our question and answer session who advised that the woodworm had been found near the fireplace and has been treated and has a guarantee (which the Legal Advisor has got, so we have been unable to see this).

We can only think that this possibly relates to dampness coming down through the chimney (the owner advised that he has now had a lead flashing fitted – although we could not see this) and the suspended timber floor that is present to all the ground floor. This damp environment (please see the item on Airbricks), together with the warmth given off by the fire may give the ideal breading ground for woodworm.

The mystery is how the woodworm got there in the first place. It may have come off the adjoining decking and through the airbricks but it is more usual, when woodworm is found in newer properties, for it to be off old furniture and is often found at the base of the stairs or at the top of the stairs where furniture has rested before being put into a room. However, the furniture in this instance was fairly new; it may have been from the previous owner's furniture.

Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

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



ACTION REQUIRED: The owner advises that a 30 year guarantee has been issued. Your Legal Advisor needs to confirm this.

We have lifted a corner of the carpet up on the right hand side of the lounge floor and found no evidence of woodworm flight holes. We have also lifted the carpeting up on the first floor landing near the rear bedroom and again found no flight holes. Both of these areas were relatively small (probably 1 – 2 meters square). These areas of carpet were taken up with the permission of the owners.

Please see the Timber Defects Section 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 no items that we feel would fall within this category; however you do need to make further enquiries as set out above.

Specific Questions

Extension to the property

We spoke with you about extending the property to the rear and to the side. We feel it is likely to be less contentious if you extend to the rear. You do need to be aware that extensions have already taken place to this property, which may limit the amount you can extend the property.

ACTION REQUIRED: If this is an essential part of you buying this property you need to have a chat with the local Planning Officer before you commit to purchasing the property to establish if an extension can be carried out.

Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Electrics

Whilst we have carried out a visual inspection of the electrics (this is commented upon in the Electrics Section of the report) we also need to advise you of the following:

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** As the property is changing occupancy the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) recommend an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor carry out an inspection, test and report.

Maintenance

This type of property is relatively modern (i.e., less than one hundred years old) but nevertheless still requires ongoing maintenance and repair. A budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in a 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 decorating to your own personal taste.. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

Purchase Price

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

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Estimates of Costs

Where we have offered an estimate of building costs please remember we are not experts in this area. We always recommend you obtain quotations for the large jobs before purchasing the property (preferably three quotes). The cost of building work has many variables such as the cost of labour. For unskilled labour we currently use between £50 and £75 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

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

SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

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

We would refer you to Jeff Howell's website, a writer for the Sunday Telegraph, www.askjeff.co.uk where it gives further information with regard to cavity wall insulation.

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.

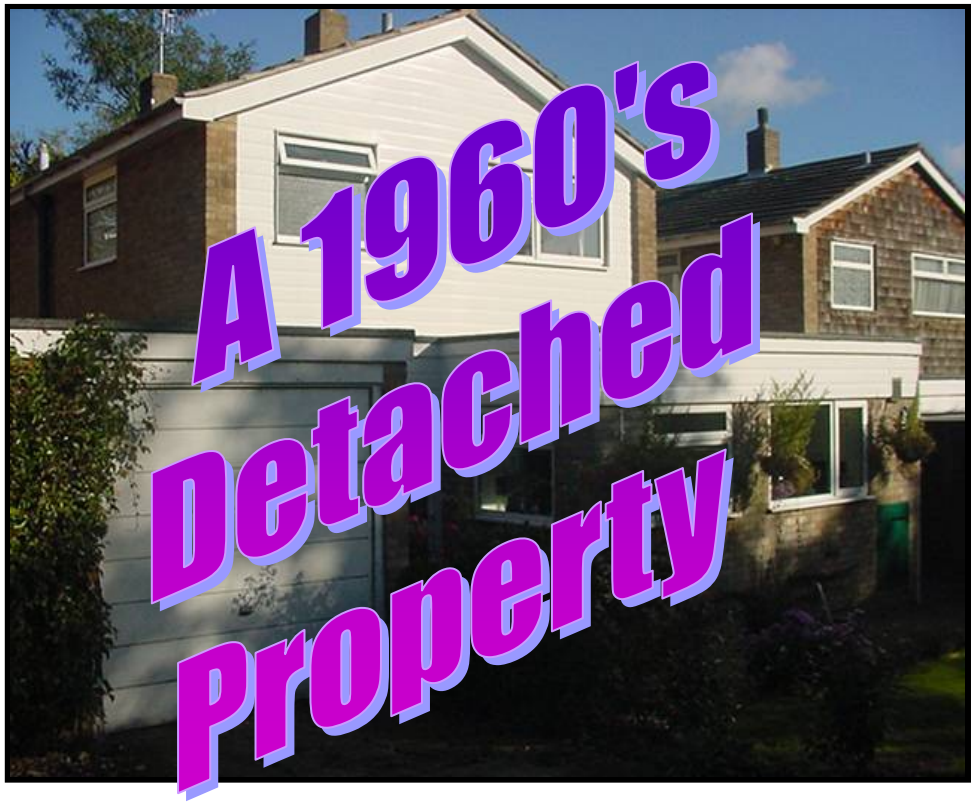
TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS

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



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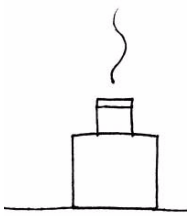


CHIMNEY STACKS

Chimney Stacks

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

This property has two chimneys, which are located on the main roof, one to the front and one to the rear.

Chimney One – Located to the Front

This chimney is built in brick with a lead flashing and no chimney pots. From what we could see the chimney needs repointing and the flashing needs checking / replacing. We were unable to see the very top of the chimney know as the flaunching, we therefore cannot comment upon it.

General View

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

ACTION REQUIRED: Carry out repointing, as soon as possible, Check flashing immediately. And replace with lead in the long term.

ANTICIPATED COSTS: £500 - £1,000, depending upon whether access can be gained with or without scaffolding.

The flashing looks to need repair / replacement.

Chimney Two – Located to Rear

This chimney is brick finished with one chimney pot and needs a close inspection, particularly the flashing, as our view was limited. We have spoken with the owner about this and he advised that dampness was getting in through this chimney but he has had a new flashing added. However, our photos do not look like a new flashing has been added. This may have been a wrong interpretation on our part or the owner's part.

General View

We could see that repairs have been carried to the inside of the roof, but it does look like from this chimney and the previous chimney that your flashings are from the weakness in the construction.

ACTION REQUIRED: Check as soon as possible, particularly the flashings.

Close up view

Flaunchings Defined

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

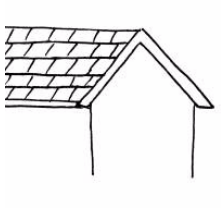
Flashings Defined

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.

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

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

ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

We will consider this roof in two areas; the main roof and the rear flat roof.

Main Roof

This roof has a shallow pitched, clad with concrete tiles. This type of roof was popular in the 1960/70s. Taking account of the roof's age we consider it to be in average condition. Typical problems are wind blown/driven rain getting under the tiles and rotting the battens.

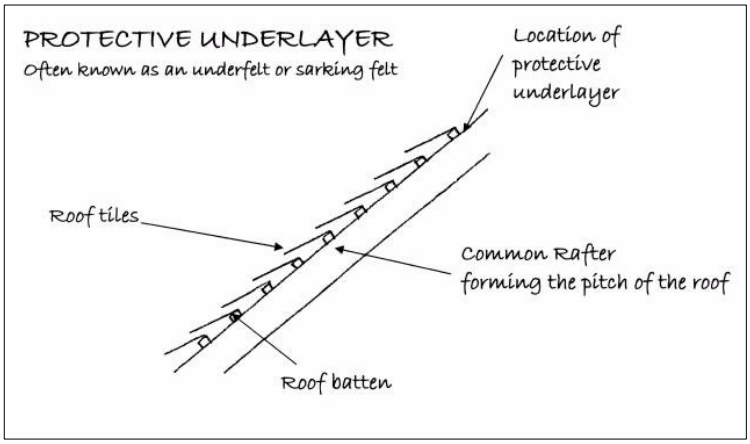
The roof was difficult to view and photograph due to its shallow angle.

In this instance we did not gain access to the main roof, it was viewed from ground level (because we did not want to put our ladder off the flat roof at the front because we thought it would damage the flat roof).

Some moss can be seen on the concrete tiles, this is fairly common but they do need clearing from time to time.

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

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



When we inspected the loft space we found a Hessian base Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s. We generally found it to be in average condition, although it is damaged in a few places but this is not unusual considering its age. The Hessian was quite brittle, indicating to us that condensation has occurred within the roof; this is why we have recommended it is ventilated. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

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.

The property has a felt flat roof to the front of the property. Typically this type of roof has a life of between 20 and 30 years, depending upon the quality of workmanship, materials and decking, although some roof manufacturers do claim longer.

We noted on the underside of the flat roof some water staining indicating that dampness is getting through. This is okay to some extent in the garage area but not if / when it gets into the kitchen area.

ACTION REQUIRED: Budget for a new roof.

The underside of the flat roof.

We would refer you to our comments in the Executive Summary.

For your general information, the latest Building Regulations require flat roofs to be ventilated. Building Regulations are not retrospective but the reason for the requirement is to make sure that any moisture that enters the roof construction is dispelled by way of ventilation. We would suggest that if the opportunity arises ventilation should be provided. This will stop the possibility of fungal growth above the ceiling in the flat roof area.

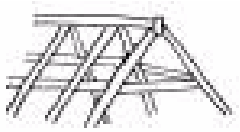
Also it could not be established if there is insulation within the roof or a vapour barrier, without the vapour barrier and combined with inadequate ventilation there will be an increase in the risk of wet or dry rot.

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

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

ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

Main Roof

Loft Access

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing. There is no loft ladder, permanent electric light or secured floorboards, although the owner did have an electric light set up in the roof that needed plugging into a socket point below. We recommend that these be added, as it will make the loft space safer and easier to use. The loft has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly.

Roof Structure

The roof has a semi pre fabricated roof, commonly used in the 1960s and 1970s, when we started to move away from the traditional purpose made cut roof structure, to a pre made factory manufactured roof truss, these were an early version of the pre fabricated truss commonly used today. This particular system used bolts to the pre-fabricated trusses and we have heard this commonly referred to as a TRADA Roof, after the Timber Research and Development Association who pioneered the research on this type of truss.

Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for serious active woodworm and for structurally significant defects to the timber together with dry rot and wet rot and we found the roof to be in average condition. We would add that our examination is limited by the configuration of the roof and the insulation. As mentioned previously we do believe that the property has some condensation. We did not see any vents to the roof to help prevent condensation.

Checking the battens

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

Water Tanks

The water tanks are insulated and, from what we could see, they looked to be formed in plastic. We therefore assume they are relatively new, possibly original (in surveying terms, in this instance, that is the last 30 years). Care has to be taken with roofs and water tanks to allow some warm air so that they don't freeze.

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

Ventilation

Where there is an underlayer and insulation to a roof, cross ventilation is now recommended and required under the current Building Regulations. This is to stop condensation occurring within the roof, which can affect the timbers and also cause dampness.

Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

Electrical Cables

We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of wiring found in the roof. In this case there was insufficient quantity to comment.

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

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

GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES

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

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

Gutters and Downpipes

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

Here you can see the underside of the gutters and also the soil and vent pipe.

The plastic used is the older style which is affected by sun light and loses its colour slightly and does become brittle over the years.

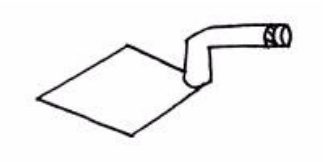
ACTION REQUIRED: We would always recommend that the gutters and downpipes are cleaned out, the joints are checked and the alignment checked to ensure that the gutters fall towards the downpipes.

Soil and Vent Pipe

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

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



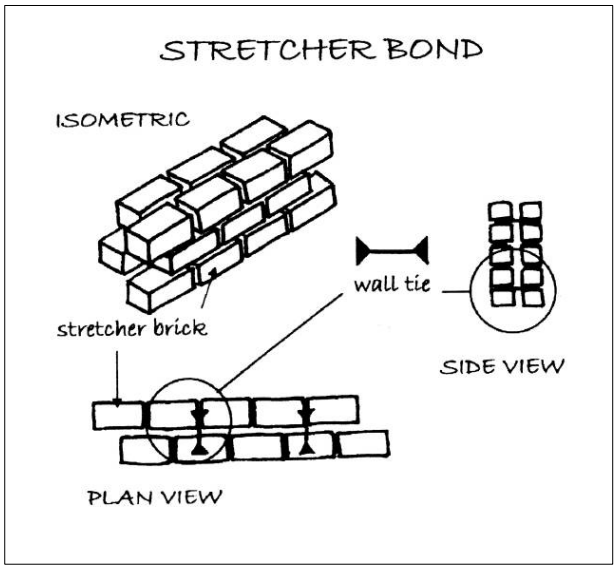
External walls need to perform a variety of functions. These include supporting upper floors and the roof structure, resisting dampness, providing adequate thermal and sound insulation, offering resistance to fire and being aesthetically presentable.

Brickwork

This property is brick finished and laid in a cement mortar. This is all bedded in what is known as Stretcher Bond construction.

In this age of property insulation was rarely originally added into the cavities as they were built. We could see that it has been added at a later date.

We would also comment that in walls of this age wall tie failure occurs as the wall ties used can rust. However, there were no signs of such deterioration – horizontal lines are typically visible at the mortar joint – however this is a progressive condition which needs to be monitored.



Circular Holes

Circular holes / mortar indicate that either insulation has been added, which is what the owner advised, or wall tie repairs have taken place.

Please see our comments with regard to this matter in the Executive Summary.

ACTION REQUIRED: In both cases your Legal Advisor needs to investigate further and advise us of any findings as soon as possible (before you legally commit to purchasing the property).

Hairline Cracking

There is hairline cracking above the window from the lounge. This may be due to the size of the window and the window directly above it.

Plastic Cladding

To the front and rear the property has plastic cladding; we have no way of knowing what is beneath the cladding without opening it up, which would cause damage. We would comment that the cladding does look to come from the cheaper end of the market. With plastic cladding we do find it needs a good clean from time to time, particularly where there are trees surrounding it.

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 / cladding / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age concrete lintels and metal

lintels are common, which can be susceptible to deterioration that is unseen, particularly if in contact with dampness.

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

FOUNDATIONS

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

Foundations

As the property is relatively new, it is reasonable to expect Building Regulations approval to have been gained. Since 1948 the Local Authority has been tasked to check that the property is built to Building Regulations standards.

Given the properties age and type, we would expect to find a strip concrete foundation. As these are generally used as they are both quick and economical.

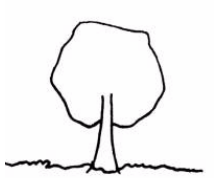
Building Insurance Policy

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.

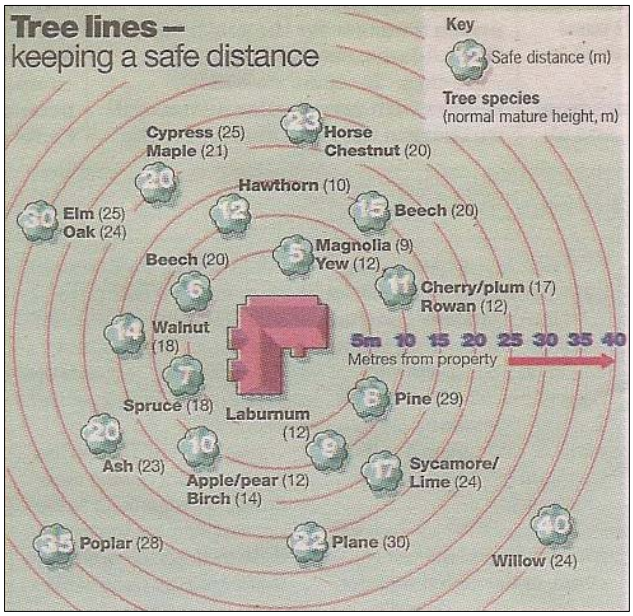
TREES

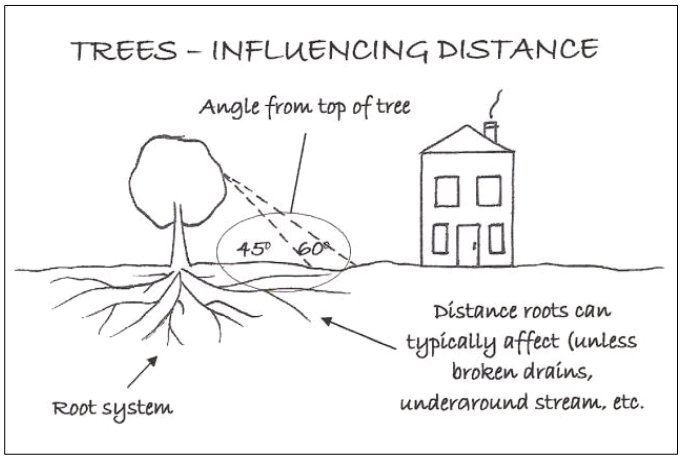


Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.

We noted that trees had been cut down around the property. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

We noted ivy had been cut back on the property; this does need to be kept under control.



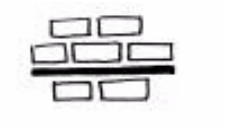


Influencing Distance Defined

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

DAMP PROOF COURSE



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

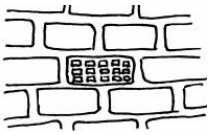
All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case we could see a thickening of the cement, indicating a damp proof course.

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

If you look closely there is an airbrick to the centre of this photo and just above it is the thickening of cement, indicating a damp proof course.

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.

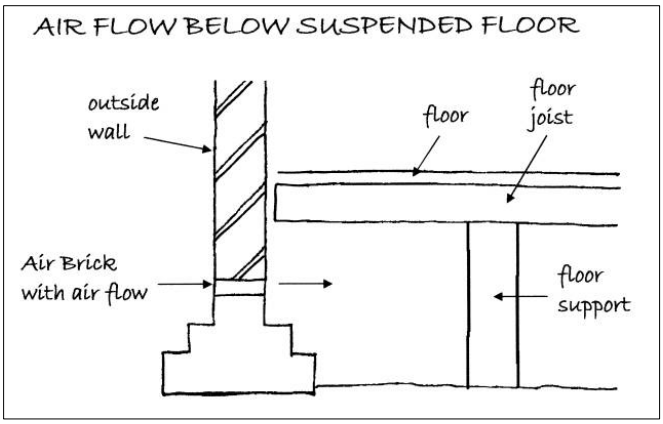
AIRBRICKS



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.

Airbricks are visible to this property, this is usually when a suspended timber floor has been used; this would be my thoughts in this case, although often a concrete flooring is used in this age of property. However, given that the floor has had woodworm(!) we assume that it is a wooden floor!

ACTION REQUIRED: The airbricks need opening up. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



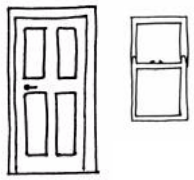
Airbrick, hidden behind the pipe.

Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

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

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

EXTERNAL JOINERY



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

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

Fascias and Soffits

The property has plastic fascias and sofits / bargeboards. They look to be what we would term as 'over-clad', which means they may have been clad over the original timber; however, without taking them off we cannot be certain of this. You do need to check by drilling into the soffit to see if there is wood behind; if there is these need to be stripped off from the timber beneath, if they are not we are recommending that a vent be added to the soffit, so in due course they will need to be taken off and replaced.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ideally add a vent to the soffit, which will allow ventilation to the loft space and help to prevent condensation forming.

ANTICIPATED COSTS: Quotations required.

Windows and Doors

The property has plastic, double glazed windows, which generally look to be of average quality, although we did not see any trickle vents which does lead us to comment further that they are probably from the cheaper end of the market.

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

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

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Trickle Vents Defined

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

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

EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

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

The external decoration required is minimal and as far as we could see is limited to the garage door and probably the fencing panels are the other main item that require redecoration. We would add that plastic never is maintenance free and does need a good clean, particularly to keep it in the condition that it presently looks in.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

INTERNAL

CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

Ceilings

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be plasterboard. They generally look in reasonable condition.

Plasterboard Defined

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

Internal Walls and Partitions

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

Generally internal walls are finished with a modern plaster believed to be carlite / gypsum plaster and decorated. Without the removal of the decorative finish we cannot be 100 per cent certain, this type of plaster is used in most modern properties.

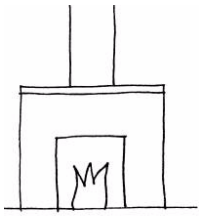
Perimeter Walls

We believe these are also finished with a gypsum plaster. Please see our comments with regard to 'cold bridging' in the Executive Summary caused by the insulation that we believe has been pumped into the cavity, which can in turn cause dampness.

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 centrally, one of which leads down into the feature fireplace in the lounge.

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

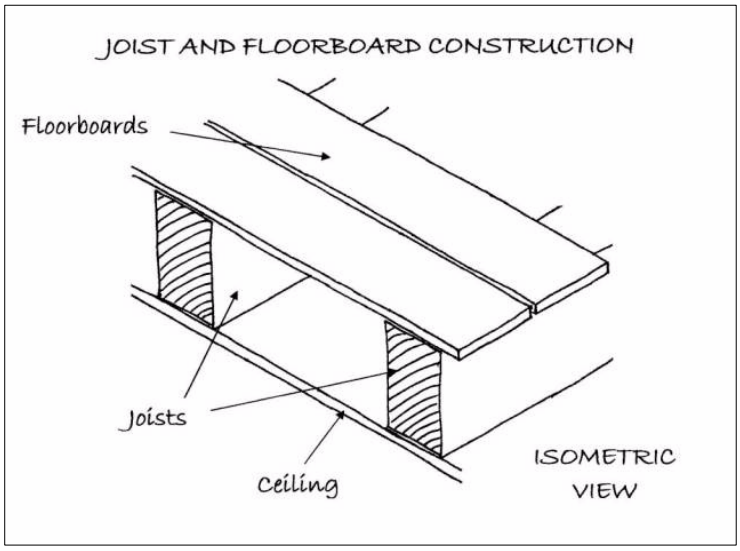
We assume that all the ground floor construction is suspended timber floor, as we could see airbricks around the property. We have only been able to see a corner of the floor in the right hand side of the lounge room.

First Floor

We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards as this is typical in this age of property. We have only been able to see a small section of it on the landing.

Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



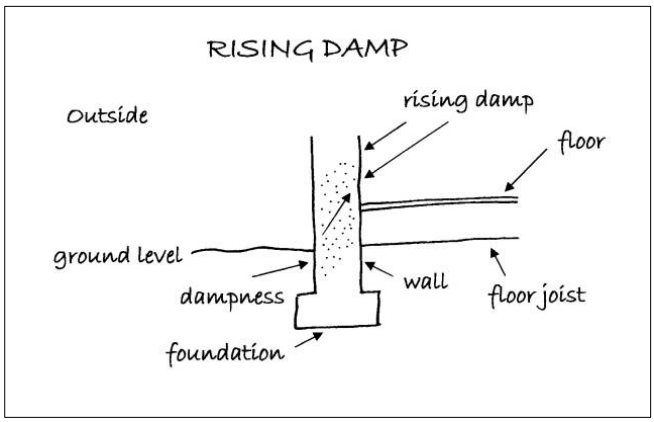
Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with fitted carpets. The comments we have made are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction. We would emphasise that we have not opened up the floors in any way or lifted any floorboards.

DAMPNESS

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

Rising Damp

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



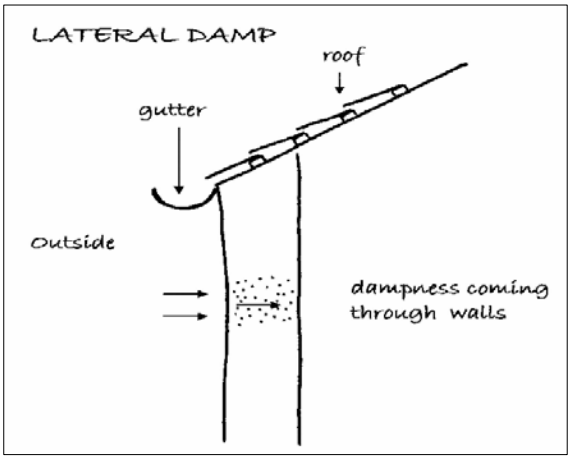
No evidence of any significant rising dampness was detected in the random areas checked. It is not unusual in this type of property for some minor dampness caused by the fall towards the house at the front and often also caused by raised levels of earth around the property. In this instance we think also that the decking may cause future issues.

Checking for Rising Damp

ACTION REQUIRED: We would therefore recommend that the earth level is reduced around the building and that the decking is cut a fraction further away from the property.

Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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



Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to internal walls, floors and other surfaces. No evidence of any significant penetrating/lateral dampness was detected.

Condensation

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

We can see no obvious signs of condensation (with the exception of the roof space area where we have recommended vents be added), however, it depends upon how you utilise the building. You do have a small internal en suite bathroom, which may well cause condensation problems. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Commonsense 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:** Check that the extract from the internal bathroom is working suitably and replace with a larger unit if necessary (you will soon know once you have used the internal bathroom a few times).

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

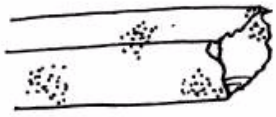
The property has hollow core doors (sometimes referred to as egg box doors, as this is what the internal of them looks like when they are opened up), which have a pressed and painted finish.

Kitchen

From our cursory visual inspection the kitchen looked in reasonable condition, although it has suffered from some general day-to-day marks. 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 over-view of the condition. Please also see the External Joinery/Detailing section.

TIMBER DEFECTS



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

Dry Rot

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

In the areas inspected no evidence was found of any significant dry rot; although we would add that possibly conditions do exist underneath the floor if the airbricks are not opened up.

ACTION REQUIRED: Open up the airbricks.

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.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary; again this relates to lack of air ventilation underneath the floor.

Woodworm

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

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

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm; however, as you are aware woodworm in this instance was 'found' to the ground floor.

Within the roof we found no obvious visual signs of significant woodworm activity or, indeed, signs of past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term ‘structurally significant’ damage.

We discussed the woodworm to the suspended ground floor with the owner and viewed a small area of the floor. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to be 100 percent certain that there is no active woodworm get the property checked when it is empty of fixtures, fittings, furniture, and carpets etc.

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

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

INTERNAL DECORATIONS

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

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

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

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

THERMAL EFFICIENCY

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

Roof Insulation

Various types of roof insulation were noted these included fibreglass insulation and loose-fill insulation. Current Building Regulations requirements are of 270mm of insulation. We believe you have got between 100mm – 150mm, we would not be overly concerned about this as we typically find between 100mm – 150mm of insulation.

Walls

Originally the cavity wall construction did not have insulation in; we now believe it has. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Advisor should make full enquires and investigation to see if insulation has been added and report any findings to us immediately. Problems can occur where insulation has been added at a later date.

Windows

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

Services

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

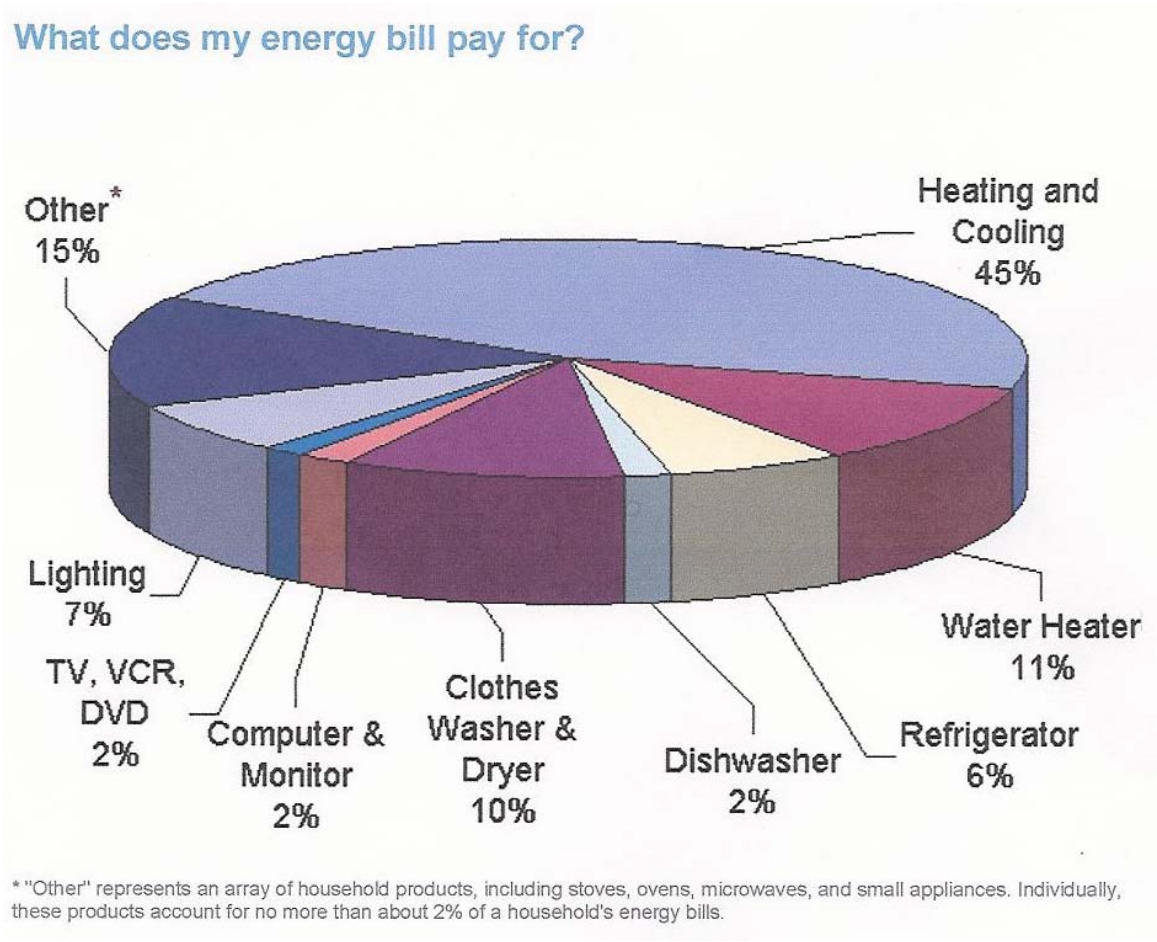
Summary

Assuming the above is correct, this property is average compared with what we typically see.

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

> *HTTP//www.est.org.uk, which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.*
>
> *or alternatively www.cat.org.uk*
>
> *or www.ecocentre.org.uk for an alternative technological view.*

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



OTHER MATTERS

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

Fire/Smoke Alarms

Some battery operated smoke detectors were noted and the ones tested did work (as they should, because the owner is a retired fireman!). The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply.(which means you no longer have to remember to change the batteries) 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 also like the radio activated fire/smoke alarms. We would also advise that if you wish to have any general advice the local Fire Authority are usually happy to help.

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.

Insurance

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

Asbestos

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

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

SERVICES

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

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

ELECTRICITY

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

Periodic inspections and testing of electrical installations is important to protect your home 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

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the hallway. We would date the fuseboard as being from the 1970s – probably original - and, whilst not the best now available, it is reasonable.

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

Earth Test

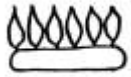
We carried out an earth test in the kitchen area to the socket point that is normally used for the kettle and this proved satisfactory.

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

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

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

GAS



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

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

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

PLUMBING AND HEATING

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

Water Supply

We were advised that the controlling stopcock is located in the kitchen (in this case not under the kitchen sink as, if you recall, the kitchen is an extension; it is where the kitchen sink once was, on the left hand side as you face the property). It is important that its presence is established in case of bursts or leaks. The stopcock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness.

Water Pressure

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

Cold Water Cistern

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

Hot Water Cylinder

The hot water cylinder is relatively new (in this case we mean in the past 30 years) as it is factory lagged and then it has an insulation jacket around it, something we haven't seen before, but it can only add to the thermal efficiency!

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, the make is Ideal Stelrad and the model is a Mexico. It is about 15 years old.

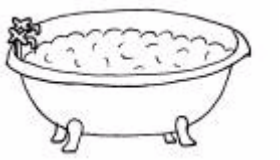
The heating was on at the time of the survey; we checked the hallway radiators (ground floor and first floor) and found them to be warm.

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

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

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

BATHROOM



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

The bathroom suite, looks in average condition.

The en suite shower room is internal and it is possible that condensation could occur here. Please see our comments in the Dampness Section of this Report.

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.

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

We have run the cold water taps in the cloakroom for 15 minutes, without any build up or back up.

Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We found one inspection chamber/ manhole to next door's driveway.

We duly lifted the cover and found it to be clear with no roots etc. It looked to have been built from pre-cast concrete ring manhole sections.

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

Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

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

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

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

OUTSIDE AREAS

GARAGES / PARKING

Garage

You have an adjoining garage to the property with a flat roof over it.

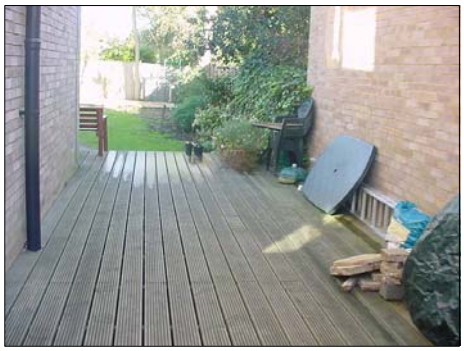
Please see our comments in the Roof Coverings Section with regard to the condition of the garage roof. It is not ideal but we have seen worse.

Front Garden

The front garden is on a slope and therefore water will discharge towards the property. Please see our comments in the Dampness Section of this report.

Rear Garden

The rear garden is fairly level and laid to lawn to the rear with decking down the side. Please see our comments with regard to how this decking is covering up the airbricks.



Boundaries: The left hand boundary (all directions given as you face the property) is usually the responsibility of the subject property; although in this instance the owners thought it was the right hand fence from the front.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor to check this.

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

Not in at the time of our inspection.

Right Hand Neighbours

We were advised that the right hand neighbours were on a cruise. Nevertheless we knocked on the door and they were not in.

POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

a) Responsibility for boundaries.

b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.

c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:

i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
ii) Rising damp treatments.
iii) Cavity wall insulation and cavity wall tie repairs.
iv) Double glazing / replacement windows.
v) Roof and similar renewals.
vi) Central heating installation.
vii) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
viii) Any other matters pertinent to the property.

d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.

e) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.

f) Liabilities in connection with shared services.

g) Adjoining roads and services.

h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.

i) General development proposals in the locality.

j) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.

k) Confirm from enquiries that no underground tunnels, wells, sewers, gases, mining, minerals, site reclamation/contamination etc., exist, have existed or are likely to exist beneath the curtilage of the site upon which the property stands and which could affect the quiet enjoyment, safety or stability of the property, outbuildings or surrounding areas.

l) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.

m) Any outstanding Party Wall Notice or the knowledge that any are about to be served.

n) Most Legal advisors will recommend an Envirosearch or a similar product is used by you to establish whether the area falls within a flood plain, old landfill site, radon area etc. If your Legal Advisor is not aware of Envirosearch or similar please ensure that they contact us and we will advise them of it. Any general findings should be brought to their logical conclusion, by using appropriate specialist advisers.

However, with regard to Envirosearch or similar general reports please read: www.1stAssociated.co.uk/leaderboard.asp

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

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

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

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

Finally, an extract from the book “Sold”!

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

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

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

REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses
Published by Estates Gazette Limited

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

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

House Builders Bible
By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

APPENDICES

LIMITATIONS

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

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

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

ENGLISH LAW

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

SOLE USE

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

ONLY HUMAN!

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

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

WEATHER

It was a dry pleasant winter's day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

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

NOT LOCAL

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

OCCUPIED PROPERTY

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

INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been limited as we were unable to gain access to the floors.

THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

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

Work You Cannot do Yourself

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

INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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

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

www.hometrack.co.uk

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

Motleyfool.co.uk

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

http://www.nethouseprices.com/

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