

**RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY  
OF  
Horbling, Lincolnshire NG34**



**FOR**

**Mr F**

**0800 298 5424**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

We are aware that a report of this size is somewhat daunting and almost off-putting to the reader because of this. We would stress that the purchase of a 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" type face for clarity.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**



We utilise photographs to illustrate issues or features. In some photographs a pencil has been used to highlight a specific area (with this property we have taken approximately one hundred photographs in total and we have enclosed a sample of these within the report).

## **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**

A turn of the century, two storey, semi-detached property that has been considerably extended to the rear. It has a good size garden, backing on to fields at the rear of the property. There is off-road parking for several cars and during the course of our inspection we found the area in general to be relatively quiet.

# EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation  
Original Property



Front Elevation  
New Extension



Side Elevation



Rear Elevation



Rear Elevation  
with Garden



Rear Elevation  
With next door's huge Pigeon Loft



Fields at the bottom of the  
Garden

# **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

## **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

### **Original Property**

- Living Room
- Study

### **Newer Rear Section of the Property**

- Entrance Hallway/Link Corridor
- Airing cupboard
- Family bathroom
- Bedroom with en suite
- Large kitchen/dining area

## **First Floor (older part of the property)**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Two Bedrooms

## INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

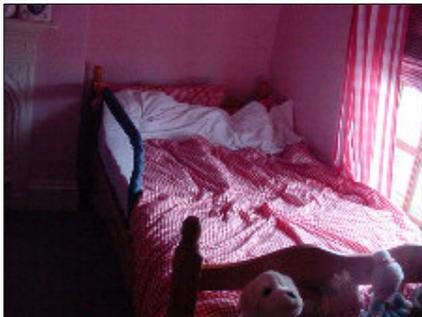
Please note that some of the photos may have been taken with a concave lens, to enable us to show you as much of the room as possible, which does make the photos slightly blurred.



Main Bedroom



Fireplace in Main Bedroom



Rear Bedroom



Fireplace in Rear Bedroom



Kitchen



En Suite Bathroom



Lounge

# **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

## **EXTERNAL**

Chimneys:	One brick chimney
Main Roof:	A pitched roof, clad with slates
Rear Single-storey Extension Roof:	A pitched roof with, clad with an 'imported' slate
Rainwater Goods:	Mixed, mainly plastic with some in original cast iron
Walls:	Brickwork finished in a Flemish bond (assumed)
External Joinery:	Timber, double-glazed casement windows and painted fascia

## **INTERNAL**

Ceilings:	A mixture of the original Lath and Plaster and Plasterboard (all assumed)
Walls:	A mixture of studwork and solid walls (all assumed)
Floors:	<u>Ground Floor:</u> Part suspended timber floor with a concrete floor at the rear (all assumed)  <u>First Floor:</u> Joist and floorboards (assumed)

## **OUTSIDE**

Good size gardens to the front and rear, although only in keeping with adjoining property. The front section has been pea shingled to allow off-road parking. The rear garden is level and mainly grassed with a small sitting out area.

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 300 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 property in reasonable condition, we would however draw your attention to the following:

## 1) Ad hoc Re-pointing

Some re-pointing is required to the older part of the property, particularly on the gable end. We do not consider this emergency work, but we do consider it necessary, as without it the property is susceptible to dampness. This photo has not turned out particularly well, but the pointing is weathered. Please see our further comments in the next section of this Executive Summary on dry lining.



This photo has not turned out particularly well, but the pointing is weathered.



This is a close up of the rear of the chimney, you can see some weathering has occurred to the pointing and also to the brickwork. Chimneys are usually the most exposed items and therefore suffer.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ad hoc re-pointing. We recommend that a skilled bricklayer is used who is able to match the existing pointing in both colour and mix.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We believe in the region of two to three days work, if this is done properly it is relatively slow work and you should expect costs to be in the region of £200 - £400.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

## 2) Dry lining

The internal of the old part of the property is dry lined. This is where lining has been added to the brickwork. It is usually added on older properties such as this, to hide or avoid damp areas. It should, in theory, be vented to stop wet rot and dry rot occurring behind it – it is not vented. Unfortunately we have no way of looking behind it to check if dampness is occurring.

Ideally, the present owner needs to open a section of the dry lining to allow us to investigate. Realistically, we find that approximately 50% of owners are prepared to do this. We do feel overall, bearing all things in mind, on this particular property, it is an acceptable risk to take in purchasing it without the opening up, however, we feel that some reduction in price should be negotiated based upon the risk you are taking (assuming that the owner is not happy/willing to open it up).

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Open up a section of the wall and inspect.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** From nothing (other than the opening up costs) to complete replacement and repair. We would add that we have personally owned a property where we purchased taking this risk and discovered problems and it cost us a fair amount of money. In this case we believe that if there are problems it will cost a few thousand pounds to rectify, as it will involve removing all the plaster, boarding internally and studwork behind it etc. etc.

Please see the Internal Walls Section of this Report.

### 3) Box valley gutter

To the rear of the property, where the single storey extension changes direction, there is an awkward box valley gutter. We believe this has been formed in lead, which, we believe, is the best material. There are no obvious signs of disrepair. We have checked internally with a damp meter to see if damp is coming through; it is not. The photo shows the rear of the box gutter, some of the mortar has fallen out to the perimeter of the roof, ideally this should be re-pointed.



This photo is taken looking down the valley gutter, you can see that there is some slight ponding on it, but nothing excessive. The bit we could not see is where it sits against the new building. We suggest you get a long ladder and get onto this bit of the box guttering as soon as possible to check out the other side of the flashing.



Having said all that, this sort of detail leads to problems and you will need to regularly maintain it, keeping it clear of leaves, etc. We noted some of the slates around it are slightly displaced. These need to be watched as well.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Nothing at present.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section of this Report.

4) **Two Storey Birdhouse**

Just in case you have not noticed, next door there is a two-storey birdhouse, for want of a better description, which is literally Travel Inn size. We have never seen anything quite like it before. We went round to talk to the neighbours, but unfortunately there was no one in at the time. You need to ensure that you are happy to live with this and we assume that it could also have a change of use into residential housing fairly easily.



This is the largest bird house we have ever seen in someone's garden.

Please see the External Section of this Report.

5) **Specific Question – Extension in to the loft area or second storey on top of the first floor extension**

Loft area extension

This would be fairly difficult due to the type of roof, which is an 'A' frame – you can see in the photo the timbers would get in the way of any decent room space. The difficult part would be getting the right head room. You could possibly use dormer windows, although this would mean they overlook next doors gardens, which could be objected to.



The other difficulty would be adding a staircase in without losing a bedroom. We often find with this sort of alteration, you maybe gain a bedroom, which isn't ideal, but you'd lose also a bedroom with the stairs area. We would be more than happy to discuss this further with you.

Second storey on the single-storey extension

From our verbal enquiries with the local planning office it would appear that an application for a two-storey extension was made in the year 2000. We were advised that the file was currently out (ref.:500/314). If you or your Legal Advisor wishes to chase this up, you will be able to get a definitive answer.

From what we could see, it may be argued against due to over-development of the site or, alternatively, you may be asked to put in deeper foundations, but usually with a modern property one meter foundations are used and are suitable for both single storey and two storey buildings.

### **DIY/Handyman Type Work**

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as external redecoration to the windows and internal redecoration to your particular tastes, clearing the gutters etc. etc. These problems are fairly typical for this age, style and type of property. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

The above issues are explained in full 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, we are currently using between £75 per day for unskilled labour up to £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 with our thoughts a few days after the initial survey. We would add the following:-

Ideally the dry lining should be opened up to check what is behind it or a discount should be negotiated on the price to account for the risk.

From our discussions with the owner we believe the property to have previously been refurbished by a builder, but generally found the standard to be reasonable.

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. If you so wish we can prepare specifications and obtain quotations for the work, whatever you do don't allow the estate agent to organise the quotes as he will utilise people he regularly uses who know they have to keep in with him/her to get further work and therefore are very keen to please the estate agent, as opposed to you the real client and at the end of the day it doesn't take long to organise.

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**

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.

### **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 house purchase - just phone us.

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



**Street View**

## EXTERNAL

### CHIMNEY STACKS

#### Chimneys

There is one chimney to this property. This chimney is brick built with a lead flashing and two chimney pots, it looks to have had more at one time, possibly four. The photo shows a close up of the base of the chimney showing the lead flashing, which on reflection may not be lead at the very bottom as it does not look to be tucked into the brickwork. We suggest a closer look at this chimney is carried out when it is re-pointed.



From ground level the pointing looks to have weathered and some re-pointing is necessary. This is fairly typical for a chimney of this age as it is in an exposed position. We were unable to see the flaunchings and therefore cannot comment upon these.

#### **ACTION REQUIRED:** Re-pointing.

#### Flaunchings Defined - Also known as Haunchings

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 chimneystacks 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 UNDERFELTS**

*The roof coverings and underfelts 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 underfelts function is to prevent wind and minimise water damage. Dependent upon the age of your property this may or may not be present, please read on:*

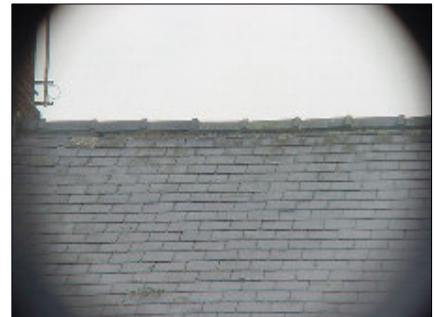
We will consider the roofs in two areas; the high and the low level section.

In this photo the new roof (low level roof) is in the foreground, you can see a vent at the ridge area and in the background is the old roof.



## **Main Roof**

The main roof is pitched and clad with, possibly, the original slate. This photo was taken with a zoom lens.



*Slate has been commonly used as a roofing material in many areas, particularly where it was available as a natural resource. It was towards the end of the Georgian period, that slates tended to supersede the use of tiles in most parts of the country becoming very predominant during the Victorian age. This was partly due to improved transport systems which made slates readily available to those that wished to use them and partly due to fashion. Slates continued to be used up until the end of the 19th Century.*

Unfortunately we were only able to see approximately 75 percent of the 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.

As a general comment on the roofs as a whole, as viewed from ground level, the roof coverings showed nothing out of character for their age and type, albeit there are some cracked and slipped tiles, as we would expect.

## **Rear Roof**

The roofs to the single storey portion of the property are also pitched and clad with slate. This is a more modern imported Spanish slate. This roof also looks in reasonable condition.

## **Areas of Weakness – Box Valley Junction**

As mentioned in the Executive Summary, there is an awkward box valley gutter detail to the far right hand corner. It is directly over the bathroom areas (both of them). We ran a damp meter along these and could not find any damp meter reading, but they are more likely to be noted in the winter months rather than the summer, particularly after several hot days like we have had when we carried out the survey.

## **Junction of Old property and New**

Here, we are pleased to say, we found a lead flashing detail and, although rather messily pointed in, it looks to serve its function. We could not actually see the far side of it even when we went next door to view the roofs.



## **Membrane Under the Roof Coverings (Both high and low-level roofs)**

*From the 1940s onwards felts were used underneath tiles 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 used as often.*

## **Main Roof**

No membrane or underfelt was found.

### Low level roofs

When we inspected this roof space, we found a modern Hessian based felt. This type of sarking felt has been used since the 1960s, although it has improved over the years. From our random inspection we generally found it to be in reasonable condition.

Where there is a sarking felt 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.

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

## **ROOF STRUCTURE AND ROOF VOIDS** **(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.*

We were able to enter both the high-level roof and the low-level roofs by access hatches. The high-level roof access is located on the first floor landing. This particular hatch did not have a ladder, lights or boarding, which we recommend are added to make access easier and safer and, indeed, make it more usable.

The low-level roof had all of the above and was quite luxurious in comparison!

Some of the roof space has been viewed by torch light, particularly the perimeter, which has limited our viewing slightly.

### **Main Roof - High Level**

This roof structure has what is known as a cut timber roof. This is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects; however it is in line with what we typically see.

We have inspected the roof for active woodworm and structural defects to the timber and wet rot but our examination was impeded by insulation, which covered the timber and the general configuration of the roof.

We noticed some splits in the timber, which is possibly due to condensation. This occurs in well-insulated older roofs where there is not any ventilation. This particular roof is an 'A' frame – which is fairly difficult to convert, although nothing is impossible in the building world and you will just have to pay a higher price! The roof area was generally well insulated.

It is feasible that there are problems in the roof, which are hidden, although we feel this is unlikely, however the only way to be 100 per cent sure is to have the roof cleared and checked.

Please see our earlier comments on ventilation.

## **Fire Walls**

Firewalls help prevent the spread of fire through roofs and are a relatively recent Building Regulation requirement. In this instance the firewall is built in brick.

## **Water Tanks**

There are no water tanks in the roofs.

## **Insulation**

Please see the thermal efficiency section for details on this section

## **Electrical Cables**

We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of wiring found in the roof. In this case, due to the amount of insulation, we could not see any and so we cannot comment.



General view of the inside of the roof. You can see there is no felt. What is known as blinding has taken place where lime cement mortar has been filleted on the back of the battens.



A close-up of the end of one of the purlins. These areas can rot, but not in this instance.



A view underneath the purlins.

## Low Level Roof

This is a relatively modern roof and has a pre-fabricated trussed roof rafter. These are made in a factory and transported to site and then lifted into place. Without the manufacturers calculations and installation details we cannot comment categorically on the roof structure other than to say it is in line with what we typically see when looking at pre-fabricated trussed roofs.



General view of the roof. The trussed rafter is visible and you can also see the sarking felt between the rafters and all the stored items sitting on the ceiling joists.

An area that did concern us was the ceiling lights that have been used as the heat from these can cause fires. We noted that some of the ceiling lights have been cut around and in some areas the insulation had started to cover them.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** When the loft space has been emptied we suggest that you check that none of the backs of the lights are covered.



Ceiling light cut around.



The insulation starting to cover the ceiling lights.



Insulation covering the back of ceiling light.

Within this roof we found a considerable number of stored items that restricted our view. This together with the amount of insulation used reduced what we could see. We did however note, there is a water tank in this section of the roof, which is formed in plastic, we therefore assume it is relatively new. We were pleased to see that the water tank was insulated.

We would ask you to note that a general inspection of the roof timbers has been made, we have not examined every single timber because some parts of the roof are inaccessible and it is simply not practical.

## **RAINWATER GOODS**

*Rainwater goods is the term given to the rainwater gutters and the rainwater downpipes. Their function is to carry rainwater from the roof to the ground keeping the main structure as dry as possible.*

*Defective rainwater goods 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.*

The original property would have had cast iron rainwater goods and some of these may still remain, although most have been replaced with plastic. The new section of the property has plastic rainwater goods. We could see that some of the low-level gutters required clearing, as shown in this photo.



We would generally comment overall that from ground level the condition and alignment of the rainwater goods appeared to be satisfactory.

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.

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

Finally, gutters and downpipes have been inspected from ground level. We were not able to make a close inspection of the roof level rainwater goods (our ladders are not long enough) and therefore cannot be 100% certain of the type of material used or the condition. 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 to Original Property

This property is brick finished with a cement lime mortar, which was originally bedded (we assume) in lime mortar. The brickwork is what is known as Flemish bond pattern, although there also looks to be some English bond pattern to the gable end, which may have been used for decorative purposes.



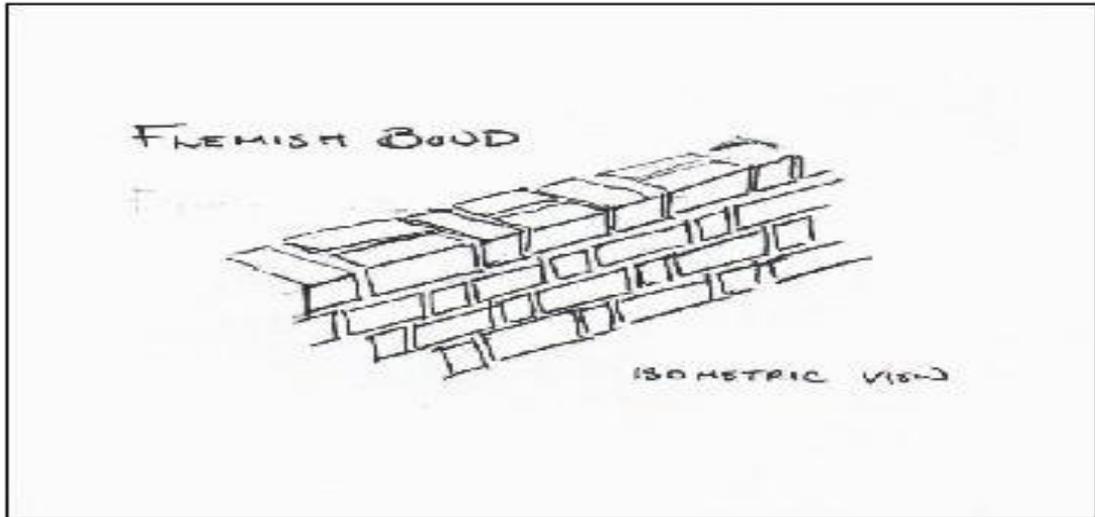
*Brick has been used for many Centuries. However, it wasn't until the 16th Century that it began to be used in domestic architecture. Originally, the bricks were hand made. This later developed into more automated processes. The predominance of brickwork very much depended upon the natural resources available in the area, with most small towns that had suitable resources having their own brickworks.*

*It wasn't until transportation costs were reduced, mass production techniques were developed, and the end of brick tax in 1850, that brickwork became the predominant material used in England for house building.*

The term "Flemish Bond pattern" 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 reason we have termed this "Flemish Bond pattern", is because we are only able to see the outside view. In some instances, tradesmen would imitate this pattern with a single skin of brickwork, bonding a cheaper brick on the inside, thereby saving money/increasing profits and reducing structural integrity.

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.



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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** In this case, we believe, some re-pointing is required, particularly to the gable end. We recommend you use lime mortar in any future repairs regardless of what the builders say! Using lime mortar will limit further damage to the brickwork, which is almost impossible to repair successfully.

#### Lime Mortar Defined

A mix used to bed bricks upon; its characteristics being that it flexes and moves with the structure. It was used up to the War years.

#### Cement Mortar Defined

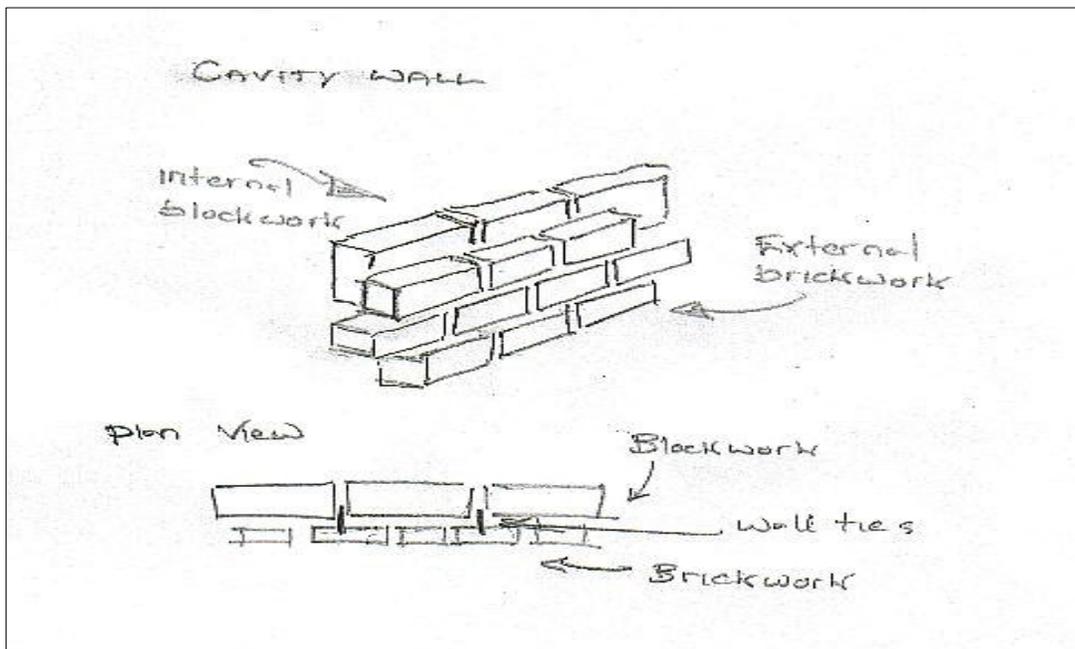
A sand cement mix used commonly in brick houses from about the First World War onwards (first invented about 150 years ago). It is relatively strong and brittle and therefore does not allow much movement.

### **Detailing**

Brick corbelling has been used under the guttering and the bricks look in reasonable condition.

## **Brickwork to New Property**

The brickwork to the new property is in a stretcher bond and is common with cavity walling. The pointing and brickwork looked in reasonable condition.



## **Lintels**

Where the window and door lintels are concealed by brickwork/plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age timber lintels, concrete lintels or metal lintels are common which can be susceptible to deterioration which is unseen particularly if in contact with dampness.

Finally, the external walls have been inspected visually from ground level and randomly via a ladder within the boundaries of the property.

## **FOUNDATIONS**

*The foundations function, if suitably designed and constructed, is to transfer the dead or superimposed load through the soil so it can suitably carry the loads. Many properties prior to the 19th Century have little or not foundations, as we now think of them, with a minimum depth of around one metre filled with concrete.*

To the older part of the property, typically, with a property of this period, we would expect to find a stepped brick foundation, approximately half a metre deep. This may have been laid upon a bed of cement, but this would have been unusual.

To the newer part of the property to the rear it is reasonable to expect Building Regulations approval to have been gained. Over the past thirty or forty years a duty performed by the Local Authority is to check that the property is built to Building Regulations standards. Bearing in mind these factors, and that there are no visible signs to the walls to indicate any problems, we believe your foundations to be sound.

In specific answer to your question about extending two storeys, generally you would require a meter deep foundation. Without excavating the foundations, we can't be certain and, unless building control specifically saw the foundations going in, they will ask them to be excavated in various areas to prove the depth.

### **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, no examination has been made of any foundation to the building because to do so requires extensive excavation. We therefore cannot confirm 100 per cent the stability of the walls the foundations support but we have drawn conclusions from the surface evidence available at the time of the inspection and our general knowledge of this type of construction.

Likewise, we cannot comment upon how the foundations are constructed, we can only offer you our best assumptions, which we duly have done.

## TREES

There are no trees within influencing distance of the main house.

### Influencing Distance Defined

This is the distance in which a tree may be able to cause damage to the subject property.

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 the Country.*

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, we could see a damp proof course to parts of the older part of the property, for example the gable wall. Ironically we could not see one to the newer part of the building. In this photo the pen indicates the height of the damp proof course, which should be two bricks from the ground level.



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

Finally, it is often not possible to inspect or even identify if there is a damp proof course in a wall, although sometimes the edge of the damp proofing can be seen. Very often the exact position is covered with mortar or render and is not visible. We have made our best assumptions based upon our findings during the course of this inspection.

## **AIRBRICKS**

We believe the floors to the front original part of this property to be suspended timber, we are not absolutely certain, but if this is the case this means they should have an air flow beneath them. In this case we could not find any airbricks. When the walls are opened up you also need to try and open up the floor, if at all possible.

Typically in properties of this age they would have had a suspended timber floor.

## **EXTERNAL JOINERY**

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

*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. Another element of external joinery is the fascias and soffits. These offer protection to the rafter feet and also allow the securing of guttering.*

### **Fascias and Soffits**

To the newer part of the property there is a timber fascia board, which is in reasonable condition, although part of it is hidden behind the guttering and this is usually where the rot occurs.

To the older part of the property, brick corbelling is being used under the guttering on the front, which can sometimes cause problems if there are any leaks, where water gets into the front of the property. We couldn't see any visual signs of this, but we need to make you aware of it.

### **Windows**

The property predominantly has casement windows; these are stained timber and double glazed. They look relatively new, although the present owner advises us that they did not put them in. The timber looked to be of good quality.

Having seen the double-glazing to next door, we think this is a good advert for timber windows.



As mentioned, the windows are fitted with double glazed units. 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 we could not see any problems. Enquiries should be made as to the existence of any transferable guarantees.

We would suggest with regard to the windowsills that the paint is left to come off, as it is much better to have the sills unpainted as it allows them to 'breathe'.



Finally, a general and random selection and inspection of the fascias and soffits, windows and doors and any exposed timbers, has been made visually to give an over-view of the general condition. 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.*

In this case, the main external decoration is to the windows, which do need to be treated to keep them in good condition.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

## INTERNAL

### CEILING, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

#### Ceilings

From within the roof space we could identify the ceilings as being formed in a mixture of lath and plaster in the older part of the property and plasterboard in the newer part. Although, having said that, some of the older part of the property also looked to be plasterboard, for example, we noted hairline cracking to the ceiling. We believe this relates to movement between the plasterboard that has been used to form the ceiling on the first floor landing area and the timber frame structure behind it. This is fairly typical for this type of construction where there has been a mixture of old and new materials, i.e. the old joists and structure of the building and the new plasterwork.

#### Lath and Plaster Defined

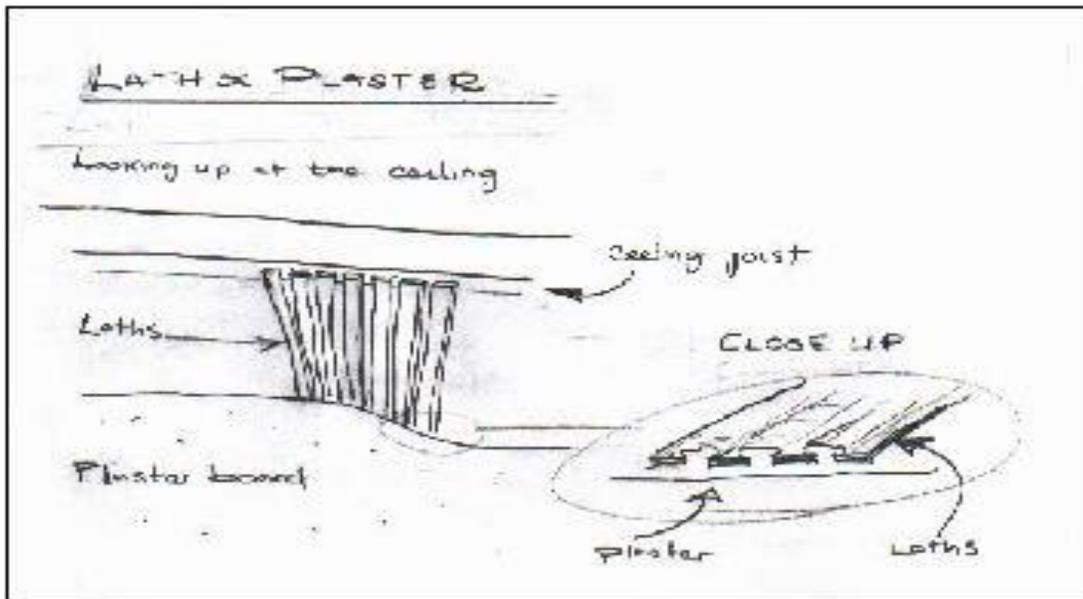
Laths are thin strips of timbers which are fixed to the structure. Wet plaster is applied to the laths, usually in several layers. The plaster forms a key as it is forced between the laths. This plaster, once dry, is given further coats and often a decorative finish.

Common defects with this type of plastering are that the laths are placed too close together or too far apart therefore the plaster cannot form a key. It can also deteriorate due to dampness within the structure, general vibrations, structural movement and age.

Without lifting all the roof insulation, we cannot be certain of its 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, to the older part of the property, the majority to be solid when tapped, indicating that internal construction is likely to be, for this age of property, brick. We much prefer this type of construction as it minimises noise transfer between rooms. In the newer part of the property we carried out the same test to the internal walls and found them to be hollow. This means that they are likely to be formed of a studwork and you may have some noise transfer between rooms.

### **Perimeter Walls to the Old Part of the Property – Dry Lined**

We noted that the perimeter walls were dry lined. We have discussed this in the executive summary and commented that this sort of construction is often used where there is dampness in the property. This is perfectly feasible in this instance, given the condition of the pointing externally.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally a section of the dry lining should be removed, preferably to the gable wall at higher level, as this is where the pointing looks to be at its poorest. The idea being, that if you look at the poorest case, than things can only get better. You may well find that, if opened up, the original plaster is still in place, which will be a lime based plaster and on to this they put timber batons and then possibly insulation, depending on when the work was carried out, and then a plasterboard lining.

### **Structural Alterations**

Obviously structural alterations have been carried out to give access from the original part of the property to the new. Also, on the ground floor of the original part of the property, walls have been moved, from what we could see. Such works should have been completed to the satisfaction of the Local Authority Building Inspector in accordance with the requirements of the Building Regulations.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Advisor should confirm the aforementioned. If no Consent has been granted, further investigation is necessary to establish whether the work has been carried out to a satisfactory standard.



There is a hairline crack to the wall in the front right hand small bedroom.



Beam to the Living Room.

Finally, ceilings, walls and partitions have been inspected from floor level and no opening up has been undertaken. The type of materials employed cannot be ascertained fully without 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**

We were pleased to find that all the chimneybreasts follow through from the roof level to the ground floor. This means that structurally they are obtaining support throughout their length (as opposed to when a section of the chimney has been removed and no support is present).

We would add that there are some very nice fireplaces in the property. The owner advised during our question and answer session, that he had added the one to the ground floor.



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.*

No exposure was carried out due to the restrictions of fitted carpets, floor coverings etc. The comments are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction.

### **Ground Floor**

We were unable to establish if any of the original part of the property has a suspended timber floor or not. The only real way to do this is to literally lift all the carpet. This age of property would usually have a suspended timber floor, although this may have been removed part or in whole during the refurbishment; this is the dilemma. We did not actually see a timber suspended floor, but it could be there. If it is there and there is dampness getting into the property and/or it is hidden behind the dry lining then problems could occur. However there is only an outside chance of this happening. We do not wish to be over pessimistic, but we still need to be realistic in our advice to you.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** When the walls are opened up to check the dry lining we would also suggest a further check is made for a suspended timber floor.

The newer part of the property had blue concrete floors. The floors felt solid and firm underfoot so we have assumed they are formed in concrete, we have not accessed the floor.

## **First Floor**

Given the age of the property and from what we could see and the type of construction that had been used in this age of property, we assume that the first floor construction was joist and floorboard.

No floorboards were lifted, and the floor was not accessed.

### 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.

## **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 as there are also other sources of dampness such as condensation, which may inadvertently by the inexperienced eye be considered to be lateral dampness or rising damp.*

### **Rising Damp**

*Rising damp depends upon three components, the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation from the wall surface. The water rising from the ground will tend to rise in the raw materials and will continue to do so due to capillary action to varying degrees of intensity and height. It may not be confined merely to walls but may also occur in floors and other parts of the structure such as internal partitions, particularly where they are in direct contact with the soil. Damage and deterioration can result. It is the extent of this damage and deterioration that we discuss below.*

Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to internal wall surfaces. No evidence of any significant rising dampness was detected.

However, it is not as simple as that in this case, due to the dry lining we have mentioned elsewhere within the report. You may well discover there is dampness but that it is hidden behind this dry lining. In fact, we would go so far as to say that, we would expect to find dampness.

Effective testing was prevented in areas concealed by heavy furniture, fixtures, such as kitchen fittings with back boards, and wall tiles etc.

### **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 material, inadequate rainwater goods or corroded downpipes.*

Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to internal walls, floors and other surfaces. Our readings are in line with what we would expect to find with this age, type and style of property, i.e. minor dampness.

### **Condensation**

We can see no obvious signs of condensation, however, it depends upon how you utilise the building. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating and ventilation of properties. Normally opening windows first thing in the morning resolves most condensation issues.

## **INTERNAL JOINERY**

*This section looks at the doors, the stairway and the skirting boards.*

### **Doors**

Wood finished panel doors have been added throughout the property, although not by the present owner.

### **Staircase**

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

### **Kitchen**

The kitchen units are in reasonable condition, although they have suffered from some day-to-day wear and tear. We have not inspected the kitchen equipment, as we are not qualified to do so.

Finally, it should be noted that not all joinery has been inspected. We have taken 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.*

### **What is Wet Rot or Dry Rot?**

*Wet and Dry rot are species of fungi that initially need moisture to allow their airborne spores to germinate. Dry Rot can grow rapidly when conditions are good and if water continues to enter a building unchecked, wetting internal wood. Wet Rot can also spread throughout the timber in a property over a short period of time.*

### **Dry Rot**

In the areas inspected no evidence was found of any dry rot and we feel it is unlikely that it is occurring, given the conditions found, although there is an outside chance that it is behind the dry-lining.

### **Wet Rot**

In the areas inspected no evidence was found of any wet rot, however there is an outside chance that there is wet rot in the property. That said, from the conditions that we have seen and the style and age of this property we do not consider this likely, although, once again, there is an outside chance that it is behind the dry-lining.

### **Woodworm**

Wood boring insect infestation is quite common in older properties and we would expect to find some in the older part of this property if we carried out a very detailed inspection, lifting floor coverings, emptying out cupboards etc. Our inspection of the property was limited as described elsewhere in the report and we would therefore comment that we did not see any, what we would term as 'significant' woodworm, during the course of our survey.

When you move into the property, and you have the benefit of replacing carpets etc., 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.

## **INTERNAL DECORATIONS**

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.

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**

It is very difficult to comment upon thermal efficiencies in a building of this age and type. For example, many requirements of present Building Regulations, which cover thermal efficiency would not be appropriate to this type of structure as they are designed for modern buildings, which are constructed to different standards.

We would, however, comment as follows:-

### **Roofs**

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 200mm. We would not be overly concerned about this as we typically find in roofs between 100mm – 150mm of insulation. In this instance in the older roof, there is approximately 150mm and in the newer roof there is a similar amount, which is why it is important to vent the old roof.

### **Walls**

#### **Original Property**

The walls to this property are solid. It is very difficult to improve thermal efficiency in solid wall construction without major alterations. These will usually affect the external appearance or reduce the internal space.

#### **Newer Extension**

It is likely that these walls have insulation in them, without opening them up we cannot be certain.

### **Windows**

They are double-glazed and therefore should have a reasonable thermal efficiency.

### **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 above average compared with what we typically see.

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

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.*

## **OTHER MATTERS**

### **Security**

No security system was noted. It is a personal decision as to whether you feel one is necessary. As a matter of policy we do not comment upon layout and design. We suggest you contact a member of NACOSS (National Approval Council for Security Services), obtainable through directory enquiries, or your local Police Force for advice on a security system.

### **Smoke Alarms**

We were advised that one smoke alarm is hard wired in and there are further battery operated smoke alarms. The current Building Regulations require that they are 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 are installed.

We would recommend Fire Angels, these are smoke alarms that are fitted within the light system, the batteries to them are recharged when the lights are switched on and they act as a fairly unobtrusive smoke alarm and of course have the benefit of the batteries never running out unless the room light is not used for a long period of time.

### **Insurance**

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

## **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 should be requested to provide copies of any service records, test certificates and, ideally, the names and addresses of the installing contractors.

## **ELECTRICITY**

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the living room. We carried out an earth check, which is satisfactory, although this doesn't replace an NICEIC check (the last one we had Cost £75).

Visible wiring and fittings are of a modern type – it may well have been upgraded to some extent when the property was refurbished by the builder.

We did note that there seemed to be a lack of electricity points, you may wish to ask the electrician for a quote on these at the same time as they are doing the test.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If there is no record of an electrical test having been undertaken within the last five years, it is recommended that the installation be tested by a competent electrician (NICEIC registered) and all recommendations implemented. Thereafter, the installation should be re-tested every five years.

## OIL

We were pleased to see the property has a plastic oil tank. We were advised that this is only a few years old. These are typically double lined and are now used to replace the old metal tanks that can rust or leak.



All appliances, pipework and flues should be subject to an annual service by a competent engineer.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** 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.

## PLUMBING AND HEATING

### Water Supply

We were advised that the stopcock was located in the airing cupboard. 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.

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.

## **Water Pressure**

When the taps were run to carry out the drainage test we checked the pressure literally by putting a finger over the tap and this seemed reasonable.

The Water Board have to guarantee a certain pressure of water to ensure that things like boilers, particularly the instantaneous ones have a constant supply of pressured water (they would blow up if they didn't!).

## **Cold Water Cistern**

We found this located in the newer portion of the rear roof.

## **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**

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.

## **Soil and Vent Pipe**

The soil and vent pipe is internal and vents via a plastic flue. We have not opened up the boxed-in services.

## **SANITARY FITTINGS**

*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 sanitary fittings are fairly modern but they suffer from day-to-day general wear and a number of taps are worn. A general clean up and overhaul is recommended.

And finally, it is important to ensure that the tiling and seals are properly made and maintained at the junction between wall surfaces and baths, showers etc., as damp penetration can lead to the development of fungal decay in concealed areas. This may not become apparent until a major attack has developed necessitating extensive and costly repairs.

# **MAIN DRAINS**

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

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

## **Manholes**

For your information, 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 identified one manhole cover.

### **Manhole One (to the left hand corner of the original property)**

This manhole is brick built and a reasonably neat and tidy job has been made of the benching. We duly lifted the cover and found it to be free flowing at the time of our inspection.



#### Benching Defined

Concrete in the base of an inspection chamber, cast to form a deep channel sloping gently up to the walls each side. It ensures that no solids are left after flooding, and is stood on when rodding.

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

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**

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal. However, in the newer part of the property it is likely to be to soak-aways and in the older part it simply, from what we could see, discharges into the ground.

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 Rainwater Goods section.

## **OUTSIDE AREAS**

### **GARAGES AND OUTBUILDINGS**

No garages and outbuildings have been considered within this report.

### **EXTERNAL AREAS**

#### **Boundaries**

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.

In this case, we have been advised that the right hand side is your responsibility (it is usually the left hand boundary as you face the property).

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Adviser should confirm this.

There is off-road parking for several cars. We noted the area is shingled and in some parts it looks to have had a lining put underneath it, which we feel is good practise.

We noted that the garden has been turfed and these are starting to discolour.

#### **Neighbours**

Left hand side – The neighbours were not answering the door at the time of our inspection. We did note a very large pigeon loft, which is, in fact, two storeys. You should check that you are happy to live with this.

Right hand side – The neighbours were very pleasant. They seem to run a small gardening business, which is more of a hobby.

We noted across the road that the property towards the church had several limited company brass plaques. During the course of our visit there were no comings and goings from the property - we may have got a quiet day or we may have got a typical day.

## **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) Double glazing
  - 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 of the knowledge that any are about to be served.
- n) We strongly recommend that Envirosearch or a similar product is used by your Legal Advisor to establish whether this area falls into a flood plain, old landfill site etc., and brought to its logical conclusion. If your Legal Advisor is not aware of the system please ensure that they contact us and we will advise them about it.

## **LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREA**

From our investigations the property has not been identified as being Listed or in a Conservation Area.

Your Legal Advisor should confirm the above and carry out any searches he/she feels are necessary.

## **BUILDING CONTROL AND PLANNING**

### **Building Control**

We have made verbal enquiries of the South Kesteran District Council and were informed that Building Control information is only supplied upon written application.

We therefore recommend a formal approach by your Legal Advisors to be the best course of action, which should normally be carried out as part of the purchase.

### **Planning**

We have been informed by the South Kesteran District Council of the following Planning Applications:

- 1997** Application for a two storey rear extension – refused.
- 1998** Application for a two storey rear extension – refused . Also refused at appeal.
- 2000** Application for a two storey single extension - result of this unknown, as the file is currently out - (ref 500/314).

This was confirmed by the Planning Department.

Your Legal Advisor should confirm this and carry out any checks he/she feels necessary.

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! Please do not hesitate to contact us on **0800 298 5424**.

## **REFERENCES**

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

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

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

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

# **APPENDICES**

## **LIMITATIONS**

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

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

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

## **ENGLISH LAW**

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

## **SOLE USE**

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

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

## **WEATHER**

It was a pleasant summers 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 are probably aware the year 2000 was the wettest year on record and 2003 the driest year on records, 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 roof space and obviously day to day household goods throughout the property. We have, however, done our best to work around these.

## 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.