

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

Hounslow, London TW4



FOR

Mr N

Prepared by:

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Marketing by:

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# **REPORT FORMAT**

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

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

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

## **TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED**

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

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



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

## **ORIENTATION**

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

## **ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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

## **SYNOPSIS**

### **SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION**

This is a two storey semi detached property which has been extended, amended and altered over the years. The property is situated in a residential area of similar properties.

The front garden of the property has been converted to parking. The rear garden has a concrete patio area and there is a substantial garden building to the end.

The property is currently tenanted and therefore there should be certificates relating to the services as this is a legal requirement. We would advise generally that it was in a poor condition showing a lack of maintenance over the years.

We believe that the property was built during the War Years. As this property was built around the War Years there was a rationing of materials and limited skilled labour available which can mean that sometimes there are unusual constructions hidden beneath what appears to be a typical construction. If the exact age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds. 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:*

1936	The RMS Queen Mary left Southampton on her maiden voyage to New York
1937	The emergency (999) telephone number introduced
1938	The Empire Exhibition Opened in Glasgow
1939-1945	World War II (6 June 1944 D-Day)
1940	Food rationing introduced
1942	Anne Frank went into hiding

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# EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front View



Rear View



Left Hand Side



Right Hand Side



Rear Garden



Front Parking

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# **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

## **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Lobby
- 2) Staircase Entrance Area
- 3) Front Reception Room
- 4) Rear reception Room
- 5) Galley Kitchen
- 6) Cloakroom

## **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Landing
- 2) Front Bedroom
- 3) Two Rear Bedrooms
- 4) Front Left Hand Bedroom

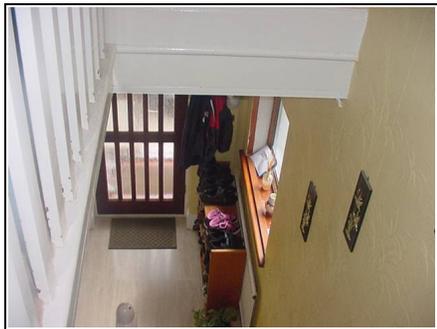
## **Outside Areas**

Parking is to the front of the property where the garden once was. There is also parking on the roadside on a "first come first served" basis.

# INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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

## Ground Floor



Entrance Area



Lounge



Front Reception room



Rear Reception Room



Galley Kitchen



Cloakroom

**First Floor**



Front Bedroom



Rear Bedroom (right hand side)



Rear Bedroom (left hand side)



Bathroom



Bathroom (showing the mould)

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## **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

### **External**

Chimneys:	One brick chimney
Main Roof:	Hipped Pitched, clad with concrete tiles
Gutters and Downpipes:	Cast iron / Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Cast iron (in poor condition)
Walls:	Render
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Aluminium and Plastic Double Glazed

### **Internal**

Ceilings:	Lath and plaster (assumed)
Walls:	Mixture of solid and studwork (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: Suspended floor to the front with a concrete floor to rear (assumed)
	First Floor: Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)

### **Services**

The Tenant advised us that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (assumed).

The Electrics are "dated" and are located under the stairs and the Boiler is located in the kitchen and is unbranded.

The above terms are explained in full in the main body of the Report.

We have used the term 'assumed' as we have not opened up the structure.



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 100 photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if an issue has not been discussed that you are interested in or concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it; if we have not we will happily go back.

Generally we found the property to be in below average condition considering the property's age, type and style. 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 would be vastly improved with redecoration and a general upgrade of the maintenance.
- The property has been extended to give extra space. Please see our comments with regard to the extension.

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) **Chimney Breasts have been Removed**

The Chimney Breasts have been removed in an unconventional manner.



Chimney Breast has been removed

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ask your legal advisor to check to see if the existing owners or previous owners have obtained building regulation approval for this amendment. If not then this would need to be applied for.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** It is very difficult getting retrospective approval and to some extent this has now stood the test of time although it is not an ideal way of supporting a chimney and we would prefer it if the chimney is raked back to reduce the weight.

Please see the Internal section of this Report.

### 2) **Plastic Sheeting on Roof**

The sides of this appear to discharge water onto the structure which can cause dampness.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would class this plastic sheeting as a temporary structure and you need to improve it by replacing with polycarbonate or something of an equivalent quality.



A Large amount of Plastic Sheeting on the Roof

We would at the very least recommend that this is redirected to have a central gutter.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would estimate this to be in the region of £1,000 to £2,000 to have this carried out properly. Quotations are required.



Looking down onto the plastic sheeting

### 3) **Damage to the Front Flat Roof**

We noted some damage to the front flat roof which is over the entrance porch.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a "patch repair".

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would estimate this to be a few hundred pounds. Quotations are required.



Damage to the front Flat Roof

### 4) **Polystyrene Type Paper used to Ceiling**

You have a polystyrene type paper used to the ceiling.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that this is removed as it can be a dangerous hazard if a fire was to break out, dripping plastic onto you.



Polystyrene Type Paper to the Ceiling

## 5) Double Glazed Windows

You have a range of windows. In some of these the double glazed units are misting over. Generally we find that double glazing has a life of ten to twenty years, depending upon the quality of the double glazing.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You may wish to replace some of the misted over units.

## 6) Airbricks acting as Gutters

The airbricks are acting as gutters. We do not think that there is a sufficient through flow underneath the floor. Our access was restricted by carpets. We have recently come across a case where there had been a severe outbreak of woodworm, due to lack of airflow and damp conditions.



Airbrick is too low

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend protecting the gutters to stop water getting in it and we would also recommend that the floor is opened up to check its condition.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We estimate this to be a few hundred pounds to open up and check the condition of the timber, to check that no wet rot, dry rot or woodworm is occurring. Quotations are required.

## 7) Rusting Radiator in Cloakroom

The cloakroom is liable to condensation due to the fact that it is in a relatively cold area and we suspect that the flat roof above it has next to no insulation. This should also be of concern to you with regard to the general heating of the flat roof area.



Rusting Radiator

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend opening up of the roof to check that there is insulation and adding this if it hasn't. With regard to the radiator, we would recommend that this is changed to ensure that a more efficient one is in place.

## 8) Liabile to Condensation

The house currently has some condensation problems, possible due to the lifestyle of the present occupants and also due to the mixture of the older type of construction which has next to no insulation in it and the newer construction that has been added such as the double glazed windows and the insulation in the roof. We see for example, condensation occurring within the bathroom and also as mentioned, within the utilities room. We also noted that steam cooking was taking place without the benefit of opening windows. We have included an article regarding condensation in the Appendices of this Report.



Steam cooking taking place

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that the bathroom, cloakroom and kitchen all have extract fans added which are thermostatically controlled.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would estimate this to be in the region of £500 to install them although quotations are required.

## 9) Services

### Boiler

We noted that the vent on the Boiler discharges into the plastic covered area to the left hand side. Despite this having an opening, we do not think that this would meet the Gas Safety Standards.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that a Gas Safety Report is obtained. You may also wish to look at replacing the boiler.

**ANTICIPATED COSTS:** We estimate that the cost of a replacement boiler would be in the region of £2,500 to £3,500 plus any radiator alterations and improvements. Quotations are required.

## **Electrics**

The electrics are located under the stairs and are "dated".

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Replace the fuseboard and have an Institute of Electrical Engineers test and report carried out to NICEIC standard.

**ANTICIPATED COSTS:** In this instance we would expect costs to be in the region of £200 to £400 for a new fuseboard, plus the costs for the test any repair work required. Quotations should always be obtained.

### 10) **DIY Standard Outbuilding**

There is an outbuilding which looks to be of "DIY standard".

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal advisor should check and confirm that this building has Planning Permission and Building Regulations Approval. We note that many similar buildings have been added.



Outbuilding

## **The Ugly**

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

We feel that there is nothing which falls within this category although there are a number of things which we feel would concern the average person. Generally you need to ensure that you negotiate hard to reduce the cost of the property to cover the various items which we have mentioned.

## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

## **Maintenance**

It should be appreciated that defects which would normally be highlighted in a modern property, effectively form part of the property's overall character and style. Such defects are considered acceptable and may not have been specifically referred to as defects within the context of this Report.

This type of property will require ongoing maintenance and repair and a budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in good condition. This will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration.

## **DIY/Handyman Type Work**

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as redecorating to turn the property into your home. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

## **Purchase Price**

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

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

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

## **Estimates of Costs**

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

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

## **SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION**



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

We would request that your legal advisor checks that Planning Permission and Building Regulations Approval have been obtained for the extensions and alterations that have been carried out to the property.

We would negotiate upon the asking price to allow for the items mentioned.

As the Property is tenanted, it should have certificates from Gas Safety to show that the boiler is working efficiently or not and dependant upon what this shows we would recommend a budget is allowed for a new boiler system.

We would refer you to our comments in the Executive Summary, 'Good', 'Bad' and 'Ugly' Section and ask that you re-read these.

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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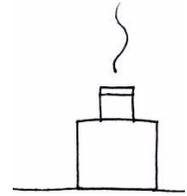
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## EXTERNAL

### CHIMNEY STACKS AND ROOF WINDOWS



#### Chimney Stacks

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

There is one chimney to this property which is located centrally and sits on the Party Wall.

#### Chimney One - located centrally

This chimney is brick finished with lead flashings. From what we could see the chimney looks in average condition. We were unable to see the top of the chimney known as the flaunching but we would comment that it looks in an average condition.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary with regard to the chimney which has been removed, which is not ideal.



Chimney



Chimney has been removed



Close up of Chimney

### Flaunchings Defined

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

### Flashings Defined

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

## **Roof Window**

The property has one roof window.

It seems inevitable with roof windows that they will sooner or later leak. If this doesn't occur then they seem prone to condensation. Keep a cloth handy!



Roof Window

## **Party Wall**

Earlier we have used the term Party Wall in relation to the chimney.

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

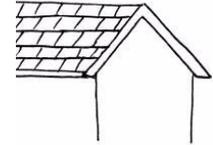
A structure that both parties enjoy the use of or benefit from. An example of this would be where both parties gain support from a wall or utilise a chimney or chimneys.

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

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

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

# **ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS**



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

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

## **Main Roof**

The roof is pitched and clad in a concrete tile. From what we could see the concrete tiles are lying level and true and look in reasonable condition. We were pleased to see that the main roof had been vented which reduces the chances of condensation.



Main Roof

Sometimes we find that deterioration occurs to the ridge and exposed areas such as the perimeter and so you should periodically check these areas.

Originally the roof may have been clad in a clay tile.

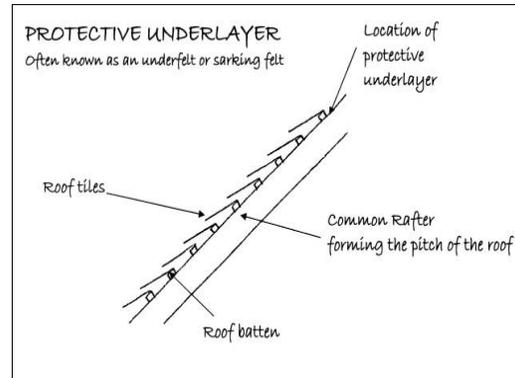
There is one roof light located to the rear of the property which looks to be a purpose made metal roof light, although our view is limited.



Roof Light

## Protective underlayer

From the 1940s onwards felts were used underneath tiles/slates to stop wind damage and water penetration, which, in more recent years, have been replaced with plastic equivalents. These are commonly known as under felts, although the name is no longer 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, its damaged in a few more places than we normally find.



Protective Under layer

## Roof Two (Rear Roof)

The property has a felt flat roof which has been covered in chippings. This type of roof typically 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. In this case we believe that it is approximately 5 to 10 years into its life. It is always difficult to comment upon the quality of workmanship due to it being covered in shingle.



Rear flat roof

Important areas are the flashings in this case the flashings are a mixture of felt and lead. The area looks to have been bitumen repaired in the past.



Flashing to the roof

### **Front Porch Roof**

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary with regard to the patch repairing required to this roof.



Front Porch Roof

### **Plastic Covered Roof**

Please see our comments with regard to upgrading the plastic covered roof.



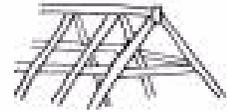
Plastic covered area

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

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

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

# **ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT**



## **(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)**

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

### **Main Roof**

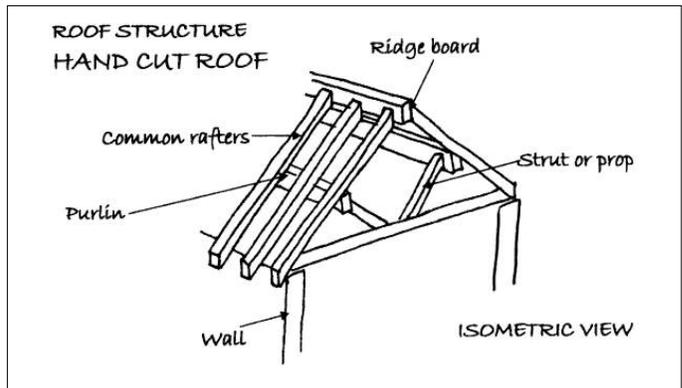
The main roof is the only accessible roof.

### **Roof Access**

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing. There is no loft ladder, electric light or secured floorboards. 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**

This type of roof is purpose made and hand built on site and is known as a cut roof. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects, however it is in line with what we typically see. In theory the original roof structure should have been strengthened by adding additional bracing, when the "new" concrete tiles were added as they are heavy. In this instance we could see no additional bracing, but the roof has stood the test of time.



Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## Roof Timbers

We found the roof timbers generally in average condition considering their age.

We have inspected the roof structure for:

- Serious active woodworm
- Structurally significant defects to the timbers
- Structurally significant dry rot
- Structurally significant wet rot



Roof Timbers

Our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof, the insulation and stored items. What we could see was generally found to be in average condition considering its age. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.

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

## Fire Walls

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

The property has one fire wall which is built in brickwork.

### Fire Walls Defined

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



You can see the brick built fire wall in the corner of this photograph

## **Water Tanks**

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

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

## **Ventilation**

We could see some ventilation in the roof space, this will help reduce condensation. And is a requirement of current building regulations and is generally considered good building practice.

## **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 a mass of insulation and an insufficient quantity of the wiring seen 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 Down Pipes

We noted predominantly plastic gutters and downpipes although there may be some cast iron remaining.

**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.



Gutters and Down Pipes

### Soil and Vent Pipe

The soil and vent pipes are cast iron, they appear to be satisfactory where a surface inspection is possible however we were unable to see the back very well or indeed high up.

Cast iron will need regular maintenance such as repair to any rusting or cracks and painting.

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



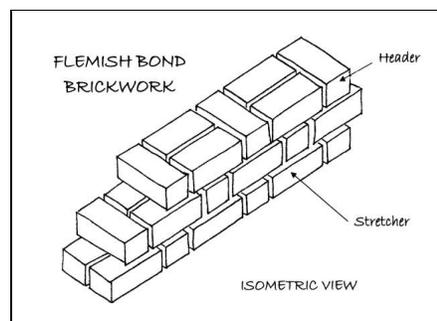
*External walls need to perform a variety of functions. These include supporting upper floors and the roof structure, resisting dampness, providing adequate thermal and sound insulation, offering resistance to fire and being aesthetically presentable.*

## Brickwork

The walls have a mixture of construction. They have painted render, painted brickwork and vertical tiles as well as unpainted brickwork to the side and rear.

## Brick Walls

The brickwork which can be seen is Flemish bond brickwork. There are areas of painted render which looks to be in a reasonable condition. We would recommend that you redecorate this before the winter of 2012.



The term Flemish Bond relates to the way the bricks are bonded together and have a pattern visible from the outside of the property that shows the end of the brick (header), then the side of the brick (stretcher), then the end of the brick, then the side of the brick, and this pattern repeats course after course, i.e. header-stretcher, header-stretcher. Before the 19th Century, the practice of building timbers into external walls was almost universal. These were known as bonding timbers. They are, of course, prone to rot as solid walls allow dampness through. Unfortunately, without opening up the structure, we are unable to confirm if this is the case. Generally Flemish Bond brickwork is liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon the condition of the brickwork and the exposure to the weather.

## Rear Walls / Cavity Walls

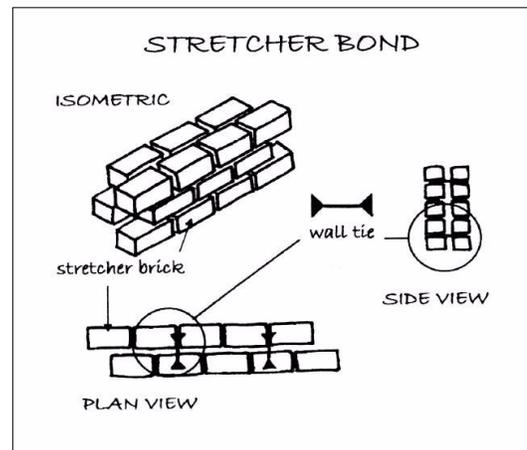
The walls to the rear of the property have been built in a more stretcher bond, also known as a cavity wall bond.



Stretcher Bond Brickwork to the rear of the property

The term "Stretcher Bond" means that from the outside of the property you can see a row of the sides of the bricks (known as "stretchers") followed by a course above of the same stretch of bricks set off so the joint is centrally above the "stretcher".

We generally found the brickwork and pointing in average condition.



## Vertical Tiling on the Bay

You have a two storey bay to the front of the property which has vertical tiling.



A example of painted render, painted brickwork and vertical

## Ground around the Front Bay

We noted that the ground is uneven in front of the front bay. Often front bays are added without any foundations. It may be relating to movement on this or it may just be poor workmanship when the parking area was put in.



Uneven Ground to the front bay

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

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

# **FOUNDATIONS**



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

## **Foundations**

In a property such as this it is likely to have a mixture of foundations, due to the property being extended and/or altered over the years. We would expect this to include shallow foundations to the older part of the property and concrete foundations to newer rear extension.

## **London Clay**

This property stands on London Clay, as with the majority of properties in London. It is, therefore, more susceptible than most should drains leak or trees be allowed to overgrow, etc. It is not unusual to have some settlement in London properties.

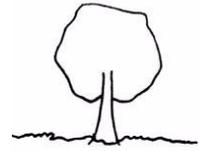
## **Building Insurance Policy**

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.

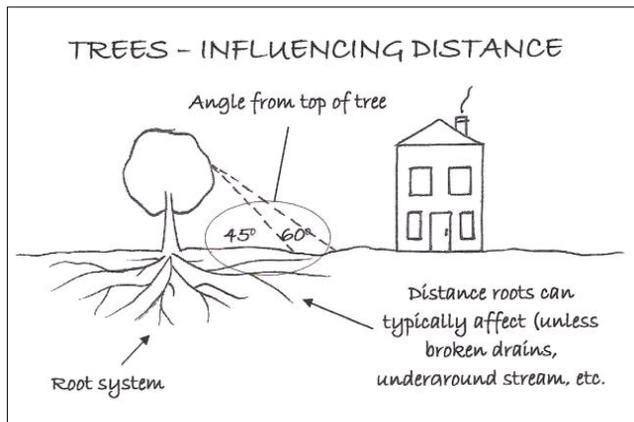
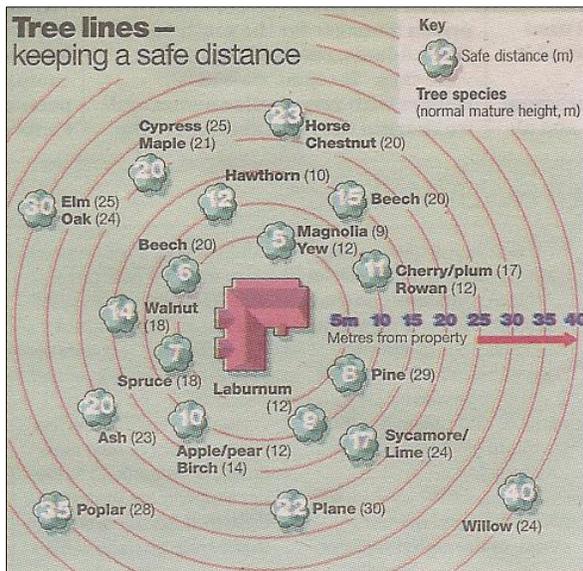
# TREES



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

## Influencing distance

There are no trees within your garden that are 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. 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**



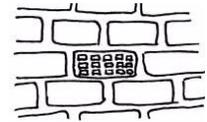
*The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required various other basic standards. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout London and then the country as a whole, 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, unfortunately we can't see a DPC to the property because of the render. We didn't find any significant dampness. It is likely to have had a damp proof course when originally built although we could not see it properly.

Please see the dampness section of this report

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

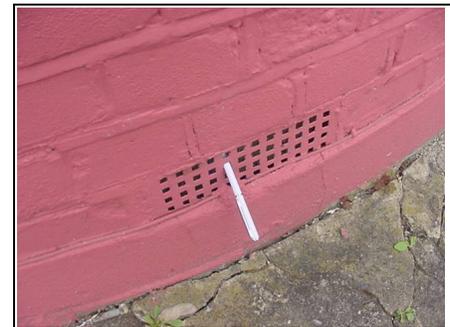
# AIRBRICKS



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

## Location of Air bricks

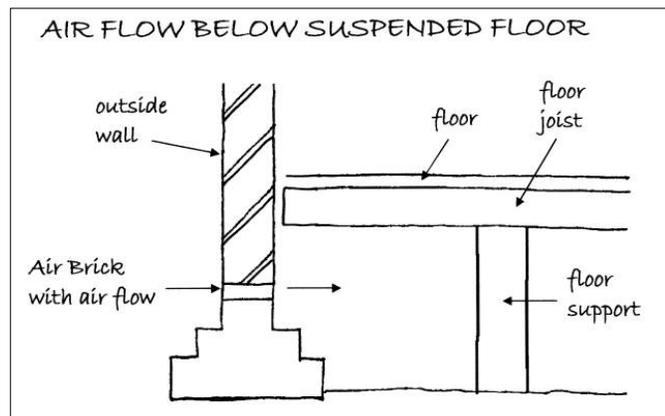
We noted air bricks at the front and rear of the property. Which indicates a suspended floor. From what we could see, providing the air bricks are kept clear you have adequate ventilation.



Airbrick to the front of the Property

## 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.



### Air Bricks acting as Gutters

The air bricks are acting as gutters and so they need protecting.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend bricks are bedded around the air bricks to stop water getting into them.

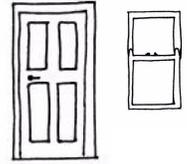
Without opening up the floor we cannot confirm its condition we would be very surprised if the floor did not have some rot.



Airbrick to the rear of the Property

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

# FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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

## Fascias and Soffits

The property has painted timber fascias and soffits although much of the fascia is hidden by the guttering, what we can see looks in average condition, starting to degrade. We were able to have a close inspection to the rear of the property when we were standing on the flat roof. Here you can see where the paint is starting to come away in the adjoining photograph.



Fascias and Soffits

## Windows and Doors

You have a range of windows in this property with different styles and quality however, some of them are starting to deteriorate. We noticed that you have the most modern type of window with a trickle vent.

### Trickle Vents Defined

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



Window showing Trickle Vent

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You may wish to replace and improve these. You can pay as much or as little as you wish for a new double glazed window.

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

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

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

# **EXTERNAL DECORATIONS**



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

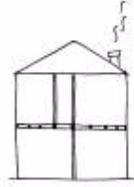
## **Paint When?**

Generally overall the external decorations are in average to good condition and we would expect some redecoration to be required within the next few years.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

# INTERNAL



## CEILING, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

### Ceilings

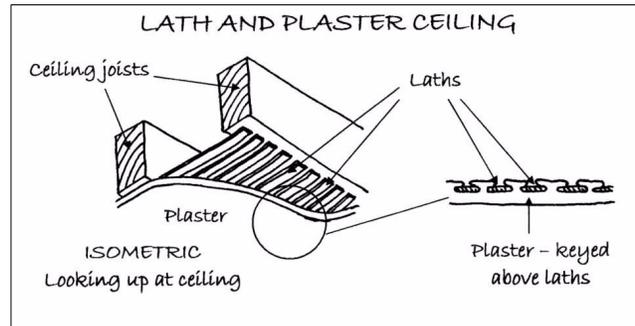
As should be expected with a building of this age, the ceilings have been finished in a variety of ways. From within the roof we could see lath and plaster although we would expect plasterboard in the newer extensions and alterations.



Lath and Plaster ceiling

#### Lath and Plaster Defined

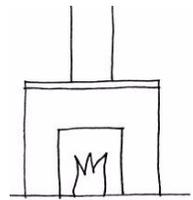
Laths are thin strips of timbers which are fixed to the structure. Wet plaster is applied to the laths, usually in several layers. The plaster forms a key as it is forced between the laths. This plaster, once dry, is given further coats and often a decorative finish.



#### Plasterboard Defined

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

# 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.*

Please see our comments within the Executive Summary with regard to the Chimneys.

Building Regulations Approval should have been obtained and your legal advisor should confirm that works were completed in accordance with statutory requirements. However, in the real world, it is very unlikely the permission or even professional advice has been sort.



Unsupported Chimneys

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please refer to our comments within the Executive Summary.

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 section of this Report.

# FLOORS



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

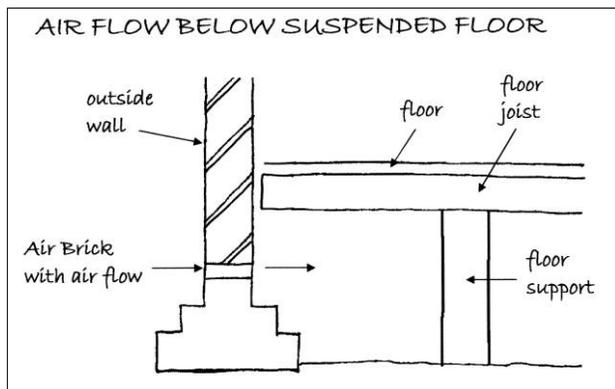
## Ground Floor

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

The extension appears to be more solid underfoot although it is difficult to confirm if it has airbricks in it. The only way to do this would be to open up the floor. Due to the gutter acting as an airbrick, we recommended opening up the floor. Please see our comments within the Executive Summary.

### 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.

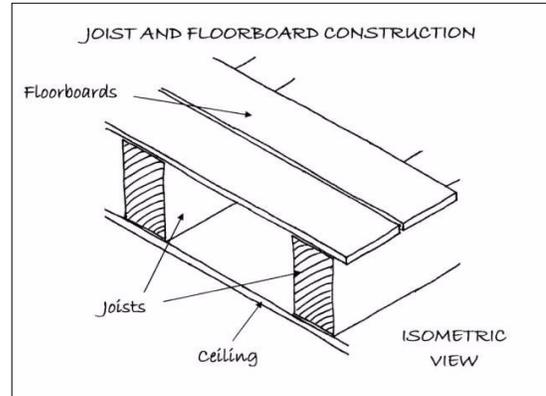


## First Floor

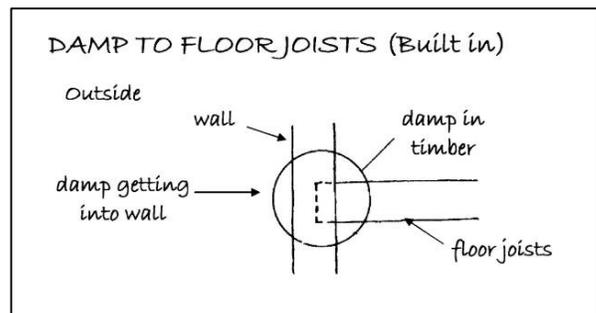
We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards as this is typical in this age of property. The floor is likely to have embedded timbers.

### 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 and floor coverings. The comments we have made are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction. We would emphasise that we have not opened up the floors in any way or lifted any floorboards.



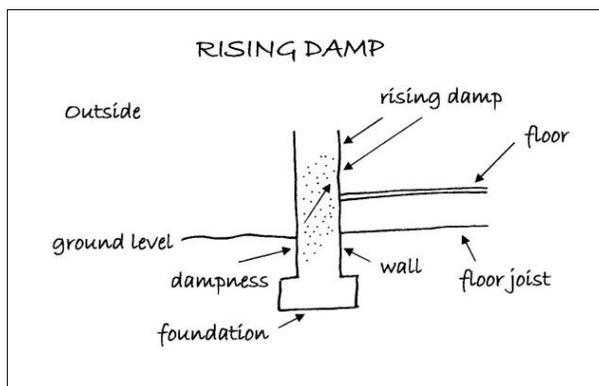


## DAMPNESS

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

### Rising Damp

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



A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls and some internal walls. We carried out tests with an electronic damp meter and found minimal dampness. We considered that this may be condensation bearing in mind our comments with regard to the steam cooking and lack of extract fans throughout the property.



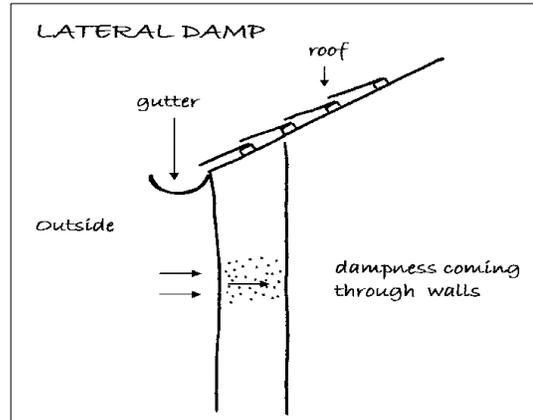
Checking for Damp

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add extract fans to the kitchen and the bathroom areas as soon as possible, ideally with humidity controlled thermostats.

## Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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

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



## Condensation

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

Please see our comments within the Executive Summary with regard to condensation seen in the bathroom and also in the outbuilding area. We believe that this relates to a lack of extract ventilation and general airing of the property.

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

### Condensation General Information

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

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



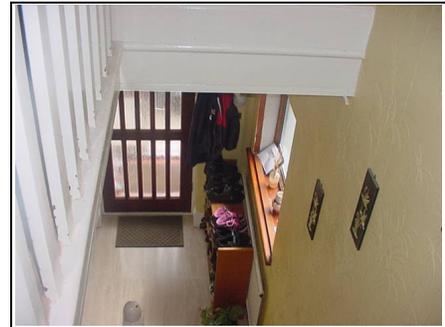
*This section looks at the doors, the stairway, the skirting boards and the kitchen to give a general overview of the internal joinery's condition.*

## Doors

Given the age of the property the doors look original and fit surprisingly well.

## Staircase

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



Staircase

## Kitchen

From our cursory visual inspection the galley style kitchen looked in average but worn condition.

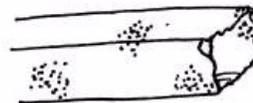
Unusually it has a suspended ceiling normally meaning the ceiling behind is likely to be damaged which would not be surprising given the amount of condensation in the area.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add a large extract fan which is controlled by a humidity thermostat.

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

## TIMBER DEFECTS



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

### Dry Rot

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

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

Please remember we have not opened up the floors and have had a limited view of inside the roof.

### Wet Rot

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

In the areas visually inspected no evidence was found of any significant wet rot. There may however be some in the soffit and fascia boards due to the blocked gutters and also possibly under the suspended timber floor as the airbrick is acting as a gutter.

Please remember we have not opened up the floors and have had a limited view of inside the roof.

## Woodworm



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

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the roof we found no obvious visual signs of woodworm activity or indeed signs of past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage. In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection is usually restricted by insulation covering some of the timbers and general stored items in the roof, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings.

The conditions of dampness under a floor are ideal for woodworm. Below are some photographs of woodworm which we found recently in a property where there were airbricks acting as gutters. Please note that these photographs are not from your property.



Woodworm which we recently found in another property (not yours)

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to be 100 per cent certain that there is no woodworm the only way would be to check the property when is emptied of fixtures and fittings etc.

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

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

## INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

The decoration is average to poor, with minor marks as you would expect in a property that's been used.

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

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Redecorate throughout the whole property.

# **THERMAL EFFICIENCY**



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

## **HIPs**

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

## **Roofs**

Some roof insulation was present, although not to current Building Regulation requirements of 270mm. In this instance we found approximately 300mm.

## **Walls**

### **Solid Walls**

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

### **Cavity Walls**

The newer parts of the property are of a cavity wall construction. We do not know whether these have been insulated.

## **Windows**

The windows are double glazed some are defective and ultimately need replacement. The thermal properties should be reasonable generally, the defective double glazing will not be as good as it should be.

## 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 in an average condition compared with what we typically see.

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

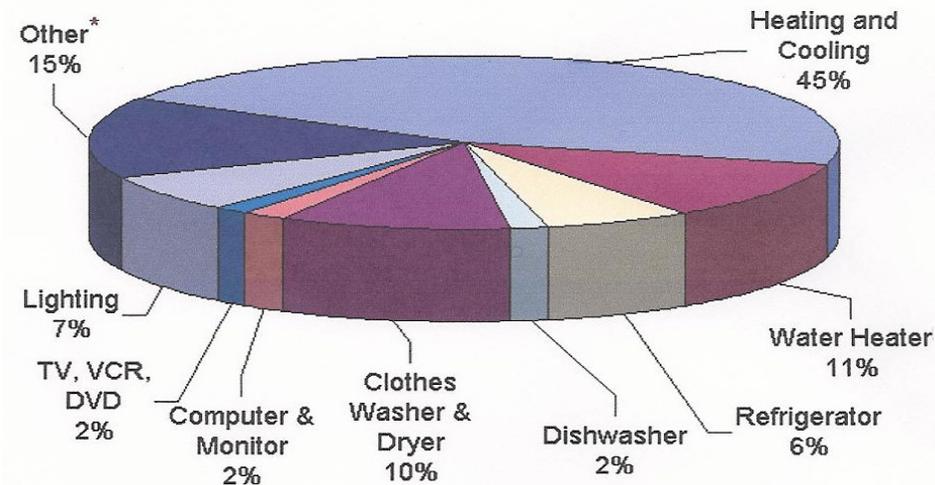
*HTTP//www.est.org.uk, which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.*

*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.

### What does my energy bill pay for?



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

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0800 298 5424

## OTHER MATTERS



### Security

We noted a security system. A good alarm system should not only help reduce break-ins but also your insurance. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further. Further information should be obtained from the vendor and the installer at a later date.

### Fire / Smoke Alarms

We noted some fire/smoke alarms although we haven't checked to see if these work. We recommend that you have a hard wired fire alarm system into the main power supply.

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

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

### Insurance

Normally insurance is carried out to the whole of the property in a leasehold/freehold situation.

### Asbestos

Please see our earlier comments with regard to the possibility of asbestos within the ceiling. We would again point out that we are not asbestos surveyors.

## **SERVICES**

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

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

# ELECTRICITY



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

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

## Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located under the stairs. The fuse board looked dated.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that the fuse board is replaced and that you arrange to have an Institute of Electrical Engineers test carried out. Please see our comments within the Executive Summary.



Dated Electrics

## Earth Test

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

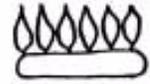


Earth Test

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The property has tenants and should therefore have the services regularly checked, both legally and for insurance. In addition to this your Legal Advisor is required to make full enquires with the owners to establish if any electrical installation work has been carried out and to provide suitable certification for any works carried out after 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005. Any comments made within this report or verbally do not change this requirement.

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

## GAS



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

We are advised that the property has mains gas.

The property has tenants and should therefore have the services regularly checked, both legally and for insurance.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As a matter of course it is recommended that the entire gas installation is inspected and repaired or replaced, as necessary, by a Gas Safe registered contractor. There after the installation should be serviced annually. As this property is tenanted it should have a Gas Safe Certificate.

# **PLUMBING AND HEATING**



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

## **Water Supply**

The controlling stopcock was located under the sink. The stopcock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Check with the owners that this is working.

## **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 average. 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.

## **Plumbing**

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

## **Heating**

The boiler was located in the kitchen and does not carry a brand name.

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. Please see our comments within the Executive Summary with regard to the rusting to the radiator.

### **Ten Minute Heating Test**

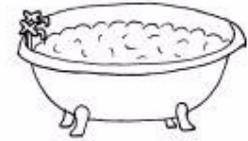
We asked the occupier to turn the heating on for approximately ten minutes, we then checked the hall way radiators (ground floor and first floor) and found them to be warm.

Heat is a very subjective thing and this isn't the latest heating system so it may not warm the property as quickly as you wish.

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

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

## **BATHROOM**



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

The family bathroom suite, looks in average condition although mould is present. Please see our comments within the Executive Summary.



Condensation present in the Bathroom, causing mould

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

## MAIN DRAINS



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

It is assumed that the drains are shared and discharge into a public sewer;

Shared drains can have problems during heavy rain fall this should be confirmed by your Legal Advisor prior to exchange of contracts, who should also provide information in respect of any common or shared drains, including liability for the maintenance and upkeep of the same.

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

### 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 did not find any manholes to the property which is unusual.

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

## **Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage**

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

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

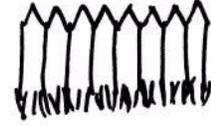
We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal. In this age of property it is likely to be into shared drains. These can be a problem during heavy rainfall and peak periods, such as the 9 o'clock rush to work.

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

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

## OUTSIDE AREAS

### EXTERNAL AREAS



#### Gardens

The front garden has been converted to a parking area.



Front Garden



Rear garden

**Boundaries:** Since 1948, the left hand boundary (all directions given as you face the property) is usually the responsibility of the subject property, however on older sites this varies and will be identified on the deeds.

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

## **Neighbours**

### **Left Hand Neighbours**

We knocked on the door of your left hand neighbours but there was no reply.

### **Right Hand Neighbours**

We knocked on the door of your right hand neighbours but there was no reply.

## **POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

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

mining, minerals, site reclamation/contamination etc., exist, have existed or are likely to exist beneath the curtilage of the site upon which the property stands and which could affect the quiet enjoyment, safety or stability of the property, outbuildings or surrounding areas.

- l) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.
- m) Any outstanding Party Wall Notice or the knowledge that any are about to be served.
- n) Most Legal advisors will recommend an Envirosearch or a similar product is used by you to establish whether the area falls within a flood plain, old landfill site, radon area etc. If your Legal Advisor is not aware of Envirosearch or similar please ensure that they contact us and we will advise them of it. Any general findings should be brought to their logical conclusion by using appropriate specialist advisers.

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

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

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

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

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

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

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

## **REFERENCES**

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

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

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

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

# APPENDICES

Independent Chartered Surveyors

—— Marketing by: ——

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

0800 298 5424

# **Old Dark Patches To The Corner Of My Room, Is It Condensation?**

## **The condensation problem overview**

Since the 1970's our clients have been living in this property as a tenant and ever since he had known it there had been mouldy patches in several of the rooms, although he had complained on and off to his landlord and various things had happened over the years (as we will explain), but nothing would solve the damp patch problem. It was only with the arrival of his new wife that they really became a problem! This ultimately resulted in us being called in to give independent advice.

## **The house with condensation**

The house was built circa 1914 (or that is the date on the hopper head). It is a semi-detached property with surrounding gardens. It is constructed as follows:

- A rendered chimney
- A pitched hipped roof clad in concrete tiles
- a painted render wall
- modern plastic windows (with trickle vents)
- a suspended timber ground floor
- joists and floorboards to the first floor
- rear extension, which has a concrete floor, a flat roof and is built in brick

## **Mould to the render a close up look**

First of all we examined the outside of the property, which showed within the render several things. There was mould to the rear left hand corner at the bottom of the single storey extension and there was mould just above the single storey extension in the main building, where it met the single storey extension. Other than that the render looked in reasonable condition apart from some hairline cracking. Whilst hairline cracking can allow dampness into a property, in this case it was surface level and we believe was caused by the plastic double glazed windows being inserted into the property and whilst the render on the surface moved the plastic windows did not and this caused the cracking. This is why you should have windows appropriate for the buildings age and type and construction, not to mention the aesthetics.

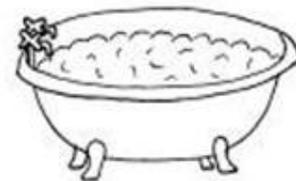
So, considering the mouldy render in the two areas identified we then looked for leaking gutters, downpipes and soil and vent pipes in the area. Whilst we suspected there was some leakage in these areas, as we could see rusting and some cracking to the gutters and downpipes, we didn't think this was sufficient to cause the mould, but we did note that the flat roofed singled storey extension had an edge of the flat roof that if it allowed rainwater over would come down the face of the side where the mould was. This was impossible to see at ground level, although in theory it shouldn't have been as the guttering is to the adjacent side and the floor should have been away from this area. Nevertheless, we used a ladder to get up onto the roof and checked. We found that the flat roof did have a reasonable fall on it and also there was no damage or major deterioration to the flat roof that would cause such a problem.

### **The inside inspection of the property**

Dampness at ground floor level that is causing the mould was in the ground floor bathroom and at first floor level was in the rear bedroom.

### **Ground floor bathroom dampness**

As this area was on the ground floor we did a check for rising damp and did find damp to the side wall but not to the rear wall (the rest of the walls were internal and they didn't have any signs of dampness). Therefore rising damp could definitely be a cause of the dampness, or a contributory factor.



### **Is the bathroom ventilated sufficiently?**

To the exterior of the property on the extension we noted two vents; one at high level and one at low level. These would be sufficient for most bathrooms of this size, however, when we went inside to inspect these areas we found that the low level vent had been covered over by a radiator (not good planning) and meant that the amount of ventilation in the room was not sufficient. This therefore is an additional contributory factor to the mould.

## **Ventilation to the windows**

Another important area to look with regard to ventilation is the windows to see how large the opening panels of the windows are, or if they are fixed windows. In this case the windows were casement windows with half of them being able to open. This doesn't mean that people open them but it does mean that option is available. We also noted that the windows have a trickle vent, which means that, providing the trickle vent is open, there will always be a flow of air in the area.

## **Examining the mould**

The mould at the time of our inspection, which was in the summer, was relatively minor, but during our question and answer session with the occupier they advised that it was far worse during some periods of the year and it was relatively minor at present.

Interestingly, the actual examination of the mould is not about how black the mould was but was more about its location and height.



## **So, is this condensation, penetrating damp or something else?**

We would say that part of it is rising damp but the majority of it is condensation. One point we haven't mentioned is the surface finish. In this instance the surface finish was not a plaster but a hard cement render with a plastic based paint upon it. These tend to “sweat” and contribute towards condensation.

## **What is the remedy?**

In this instance the remedy is to add more ventilation, both in the form of an air vent, which vents naturally, and in the form of a mechanical vent. We also needed to educate/advise the owners to open their windows more frequently, particularly when taking a long shower or bath and if any clothes need drying on wet days to use other suitable areas, rather than the ground floor bathroom.

# **LIMITATIONS**

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

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

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

## **ENGLISH LAW**

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

## **SOLE USE**

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

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

## **WEATHER**

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

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

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

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

## **NOT LOCAL**

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

## **OCCUPIED PROPERTY**

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

## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited due to us not being able to open up the floors which is particularly important to be carried out with regard to the airbrick acting as a gutter. the roof space was also cluttered with stored items which limited our view in this area.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

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

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

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

## **Work You Cannot do Yourself**

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

## INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[Motleyfool.co.uk](http://Motleyfool.co.uk)

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

<http://www.nethouseprices.com/>

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

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

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