

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY
OF
Edwardian Terraced Property, Letchworth, Hertfordshire,
SG6



FOR
Mr A

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 house is usually one of the largest financial outlays made (particularly when you consider the interest you pay as well).

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

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

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

REPORT FORMAT

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

GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

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

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



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

ORIENTATION

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

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two storey period terrace property that sits within a residential area of similar properties. There are small gardens to the front and rear of the property with a Right of Way access.

There is a date plaque on the adjoining terrace of properties, stating they were built in 1907. If the exact age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

1899-1902	Boer War between Britain and Boers in Southern Africa
1901	Queen Victoria Died
1903	First flight by Wright Brothers
1903-1928	The Campaign for Women's Suffrage
1912	The Beginning of the Motoring Age
1914-1918	World War I

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



The Common



Bottom of Rear



Top of Rear



Rear Patio

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Front Lounge
- Rear Kitchen
- Rear Bathroom

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Front Bedroom
- Rear Bedroom

Outside Areas

We would refer you to our earlier comments and we would add that at the time of the survey we were able to park on the road, although it was fairly busy, considering most people would have been at work, so there may well be some parking problems in the area and you need to ensure you are happy to live with these.

INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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

Ground Floor



Front Lounge



Kitchen



Bathroom

First Floor



Front Bedroom



Rear Bedroom

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

EXTERNAL

Chimneys:	A painted rendered chimney with eight chimney pots (four of which are yours)
Main Roof:	A pitched roof clad with concrete tiles
Gutters and Downpipes:	A mixture of cast iron and plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Internal
Walls:	A painted rough cast render finish
External Joinery:	Plastic double glazed windows and exposed rafter feet

INTERNAL

Ceilings:	Lath and plaster (assumed)
Walls:	Lime based plaster to external walls and studwork to internal walls (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: A mixture of a suspended timber floor and a concrete floor (assumed) First Floor: Joist and floorboards (assumed)

SERVICES

We are advised by the owner that the property has a mains water supply, drains, electricity and gas.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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

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

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

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

The Good

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

- Considering its age, the painted render is in good condition and we were pleased to see that this has a bell-mouth detail to the base and drip details above the windows, which tend to make the render last longer.
- The common in front of the property means that you are not by the roadside and the noise that goes with it, but equally it does mean that you have to walk the distance when moving anything in and out of the property.

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

The Bad

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

1) Firewall

Although difficult to see in the photo the firewall is not complete to the left hand side of the property. This means that should there be a fire in one property it could transfer to the next. It is generally a rule by most mortgage lenders that any firewalls are built up to the roof.



ACTION REQUIRED: Complete the firewall.

ANTICIPATED COST: A few hundred pounds. The biggest difficulty will be getting someone to do it as it is awkward and dirty work.

Please see the Roof Structure / Loft Section of this Report.

2) Rising Damp

Rising damp was found to the front of the property on the left hand side. It may be elsewhere in the property too, but unfortunately we were unable to get at the wall in the kitchen due to the units.



ACTION REQUIRED: You should instruct a qualified and experienced contractor who is a member of the BWPDA (British Wood Preserving and Damp Proofing Association) issuing a long-term

insurance backed guarantee to carry out a quotation on the property, which should be forwarded to us for comment, and to implement all necessary remedial works. In conjunction with the above, damp affected plaster should be replaced in accordance with the specifications of the specialist contractor; failure to do so may nullify the validity of the guarantee.

ANTICIPATED COST: Quotation required, but expect £2,000 - £3,000 bearing in mind that re-plastering will probably also be required, together with redecoration.

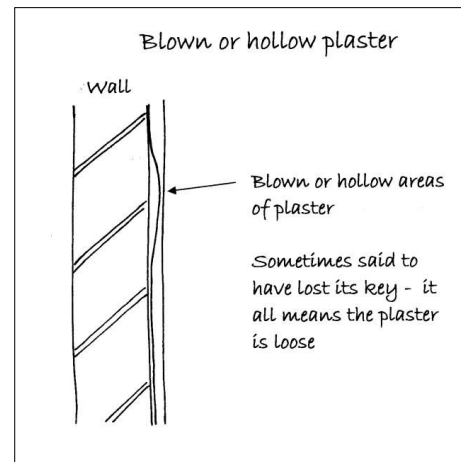
Please see our comments in the next section and also the Dampness Section of this Report.

3) **Poor Plasterwork**

There are above average areas of 'blown' plaster. However, we would expect some 'blown' plaster in a property of this age.

ACTION REQUIRED: This means that when you come to redecorate there may well be some re-plastering required too.

ANTICIPATED COST: This depends upon the extent.



Please see the Internal Walls Section of this Report.

4) **Services**

Electrics

The fuseboard, which is located in the lounge, has the old style wire fuse from the 1960s. There are much better systems now available.

There also looks to be some DIY standard of wiring, or maybe lazy professional wiring, as there is a lot of surface mounted conduit.



ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend replacement of the consumer board. An NICEIC registered electrician to check the wiring at the same time. You may also wish to add extra socket points.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £250 - £300 for a new fuseboard, plus any recommendations carried out by the electrician.

Please see the Electrics Section of this Report.

5) **Right of Way**

It looks like to the rear of the property there is a Right of Way, allowing other owners to walk through your garden, although we did note that some of the gates had bolts on. These original Rights of Way were normally there for coal men to make their deliveries and the agreement may no longer be in use.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor to advise.

The Ugly

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

We have no items that we feel should fall within this section.

Specific Questions

1) Wall Paper Peeling by the Radiator in the Kitchen

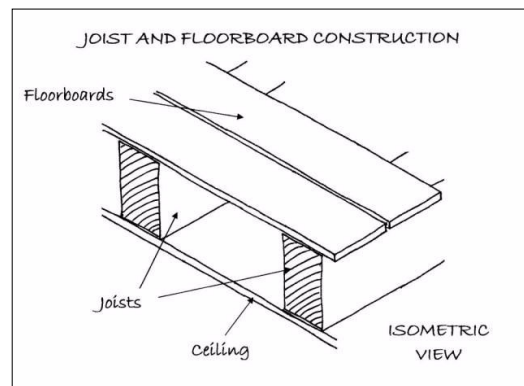
We have checked this wall for damp and did not find any. We would agree that this sort of problem could be caused by the hanging of clothes.

2) Check for Damp

Please see our comments above in the 'Bad' section.

3) Is it Possible to Tell if there are Floorboards Upstairs?

There are fitted carpets throughout the first floor, however our assumption is that this property is traditionally built – and we see no reason for not making this assumption – and we would expect there to be joists and floorboards underneath the carpet.



Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Maintenance

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

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

DIY/Handyman Type Work

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as redecoration internally to make the house 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. For unskilled labour we currently use between £50 and £75 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

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

SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



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

Due to the isolated nature of the dampness, we wonder whether this may be related to gutter problems. The simplest way to check is next time it is raining heavily you should look to see if the gutter is leaking over and it could simply be blocked.

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.

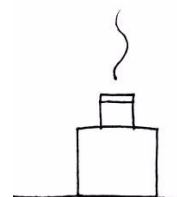
THE DETAILED PART OF THE REPORT FOLLOWS, WORKING FROM THE TOP OF THE PROPERTY DOWNWARDS

We believe these properties may fall under the management / advice of the Letchworth Heritage Society. Whilst we haven't spoken with them specifically about these properties, there will be limitations placed upon what you can do to the building, to preserve the aesthetic integrity of all of these properties. For example there may well be restrictions upon the colours you can paint the exterior etc.



EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS AND DORMER WINDOWS



Chimney Stacks

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

This property has one chimney, which is located to the left hand side.

This chimney has a painted render finish with a lead flashing and eight chimney pots. From ground level there looks to be a need for minor repair. This is fairly typical for a chimney of this age. Unfortunately we were unable to see the top of the chimney known as the flaunching.

Please see the photo of next door's chimney. You can see how deterioration can occur, and this in turn will cause dampness into the structure.

ACTION REQUIRED: Carry out minor repairs, ideally within the next five years, but this is nothing to be overly concerned about.



Your Chimney
Deterioration starting to occur.



Next Door's Chimney
This shows why you have to keep chimneys in good order.

Flaunchings Defined

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

Flashings Defined

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

Dormer Windows

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

The property has dormer windows to the front and the rear. The dormer roofs are in the same tile as the main roof and look in average condition.

The cheeks / sides are clad with timber and in average condition as viewed from ground level.



Party Wall

Earlier we spoke about the chimney, which sits upon the Party Wall.

Party Structures Defined – Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

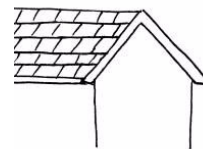
A structure that both parties enjoy the use of or benefit from. An example of this would be where both parties gain support from a wall or utilise a chimney or chimneys.

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 Dormers 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 nibbed concrete tile (possibly a clay tile, it was difficult to be 100 percent certain). From what we could see the tiles are lying reasonably level and true and look in reasonable condition considering their age. Sometimes we find that deterioration occurs to the ridge and exposed areas such as the eaves and so you should periodically check these areas.



There is moss on the tiles; this can cause problems with damage to the tile surface and / or block gutters.

ACTION REQUIRED: Clear moss.

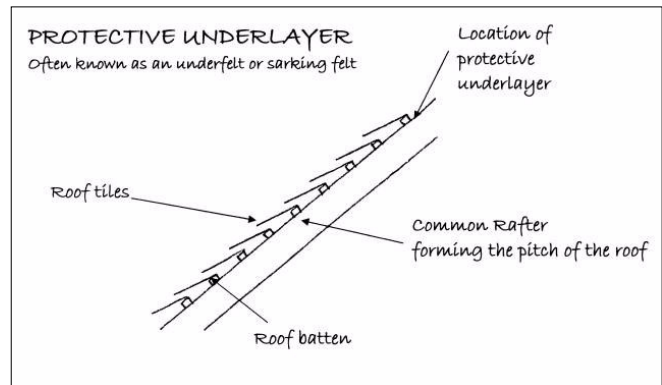
ANTICIPATED COSTS: A few hundred pounds or a DIY type job.

Nibbed Tiles Defined

A nibbed tile is one which has raised areas known as nibs, usually two in number, at the top of the tile to enable the tile to be fixed to the roof batten which, in turn, fixes to the roof structure.

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

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



The property has a Hessian based bitumen underlayer. This type of underlayer has been used since the 1960s, which is possibly when the property was re-roofed.

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



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 90 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)

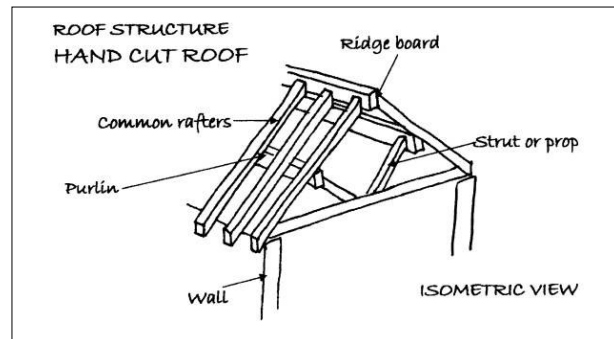
The roof structure or framework must be built in a manner which is able to give adequate strength to carry its own weight together with that of the roof covering discussed in the previous section and any superimposed loads such as snow, wind, foot traffic etc.

Main Roof

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing. There is no loft ladder, roof 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.



This type of roof is what is known as a cut timber roof, which is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects; however it is in line with what we typically see. The roof is not exactly like this sketch, there are no struts or props and the purlins are much lower.



Roof Timbers

We found the roof timbers generally in reasonable condition. We have inspected the roof structure for serious active woodworm and for structurally significant defects to the timber together with dry rot and wet rot. Our examination is usually impeded by the general configuration of the roof, the insulation and stored items, as mentioned what we could see we generally found to be in an 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. In this instance we did not see anything that would lead us to recommend carrying out this work.

Fire Walls

Firewalls help prevent the spread of fire through roofs and are a relatively recent Building Regulation requirement. In this instance the firewalls are built of brickwork, but are not complete in some areas.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Water Tanks

The water tanks are insulated and, from what we could see, they looked to be formed in plastic. We therefore assume they are relatively new (in surveying terms, in this instance, that is the last 30years). 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

When the property was built ventilation was not a requirement. However, now, where there is a protective under layer and insulation to a roof, cross ventilation is now recommended and required under the current Building Regulations. This is to stop condensation occurring within the roof, which can affect the timbers and also cause dampness. Ideally ventilation should be added, however this may well conflict with the historic nature of the property.

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 we saw an insufficient quantity to comment.

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

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

GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

Gutters and Downpipes

The gutters and downpipes are a mixture of plastic and cast iron.

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



Soil and Vent Pipe

The soil and vent pipes are a mixture of cast iron and plastic, they appear to be satisfactory where a surface inspection is possible.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to decide to either maintain the cast iron or replace with plastic.

Finally, gutters and downpipes and soil and vent pipes have been inspected from ground level. As it was not raining heavily 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.

Painted Render

The walls to this property are finished in a painted cast render. We have carried out a tap test to the render at low level (literally hitting the render with the back of a hammer) to try to establish if there are any hollow areas and found the render in average condition.



We did note that there have been some hair line cracks to the render, some of which have been repaired. All cracks need sealing as soon as possible to stop dampness getting in the property.

ACTION REQUIRED: Seal cracks.

Detailing to Render

A way of telling the quality of the render, we have found over the years, is by the quality of detailing above the windows and to the base of the property.

Windows and door details

The windows have a nicely formed render drip detail.

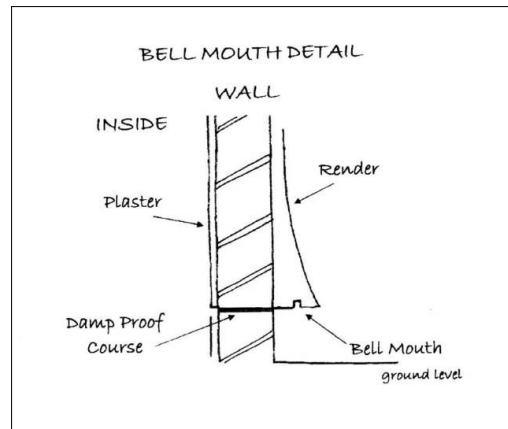


Base of wall

The render detailing to the base of the property in this instance is good, as it has in most areas a bell mouth.

Bell-Mouths Defined

A bell-mouth is a curve at the base of a wall which throws the water away from the structure therefore preventing dampness.



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

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

Typically, with a property of this period, we would expect to find a stepped brick foundation approximately half a metre deep.

The Building Act of 1878 required a minimum standard for foundations, although this was often not adhered to!

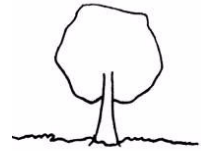
Building Insurance Policy

You should ensure that the Building Insurance Policy contains adequate provision against any possibility of damage arising through subsidence, landslip, heave etc.

Finally, we have not excavated the foundations but we have drawn conclusions from our inspection and our general knowledge of this type, age and style of property.

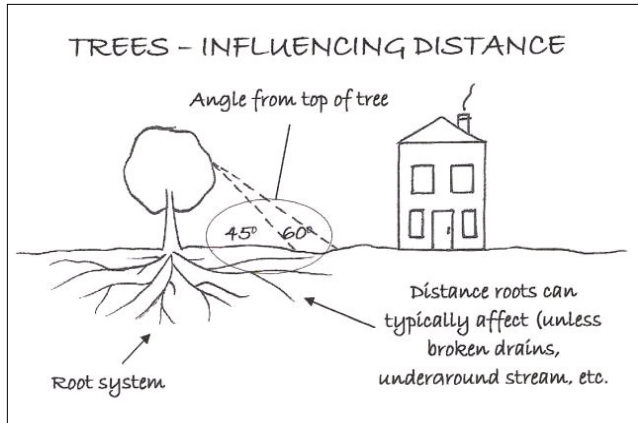
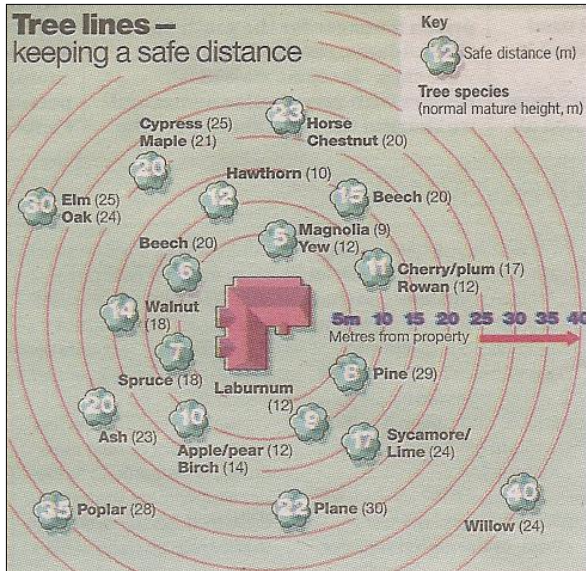
As no excavation has been carried out we cannot be 100 percent certain as to how the foundation has been constructed and we can only offer our best assumptions and an educated guess, which we have duly done.

TREES



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

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

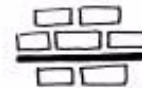


Influencing Distance Defined

This is the distance in which a tree may be able to cause damage to the subject property. 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 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 properties of this age it is unlikely that a damp proof course would have been built in originally, however, often they have had damp proof courses added at a later date.

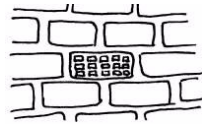
We would comment that we did find some damp to the front of the property to the left hand side (all directions given as you face the property). It may be that a damp proof course has been added and that has now become defective. Without opening up the structure we cannot be 100% certain.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor needs to specifically ask if a damp proof course has been added. If not quotes should be obtained from qualified and experienced contractor who is a member of the BWPDA (British Wood Preserving and Damp Proofing Association) issuing a long-term insurance backed guarantee, guarantee. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

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

AIRBRICKS



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

We noted air bricks at the front of the property, but there should also be airbricks to the rear of this property to get an air flow.

ACTION REQUIRED: Airbricks need to be added to give air flow, although this is likely to be difficult. There is likely to be some rot under the floor.

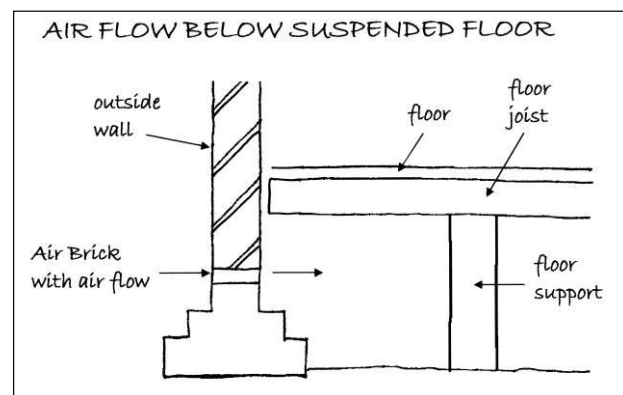


Front Airbrick, indicating a suspended timber floor



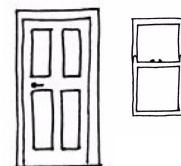
No Airbricks to the rear.

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



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

EXTERNAL JOINERY



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

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

Fascias and Soffits

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

ACTION REQUIRED: Paint / Stain in the next three years



Windows and Doors

The property has plastic, double glazed, predominantly casement windows, which generally look to be of a reasonable quality.

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.



ACTION REQUIRED: Legal Adviser to check if any transferable guarantees are available and, if so, to transfer. Generally it is considered that double glazed units have a life of about ten years.

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

EXTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

The painted render is generally in reasonable condition. However, we would comment that, the redecoration of the render when it is required will be either fairly expensive or take up several of your weekends and you should not underestimate re-decorating render. You may well have to obtain permission to redecorate or be part of a planned redecoration for all the properties, where you all contribute to a central fund.

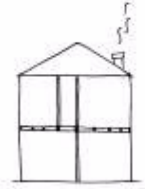
ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor to ascertain the situation regarding redecoration etc.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

INTERNAL

CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES



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

Ceilings

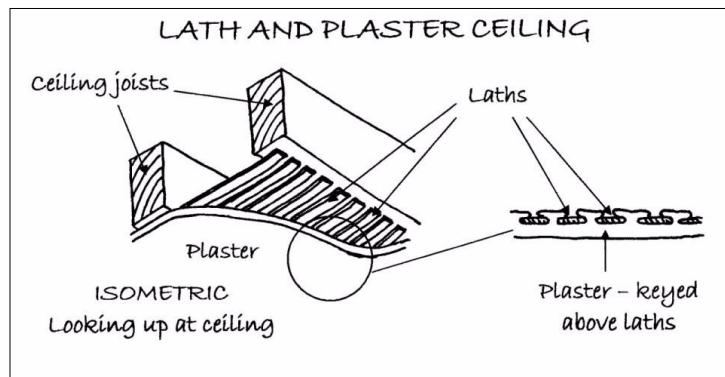
The ceilings are formed in lath and plaster; please see sketch below. In this age of property, you would expect some minor hairline cracking to the lath and plaster and possibly areas where the plaster has lost its key or bond to the ceiling, which is usually due to old age and possibly minor dampness.



If you look very closely you can see the laths to the top right hand side of this photo.

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.



Internal Walls and Partitions

We have carried out a tap test to the internal walls (this is not rocket science, it is literally tapping the walls and listening for the sound made) and found them to be mainly studwork walls and which is quite common in this age of property.



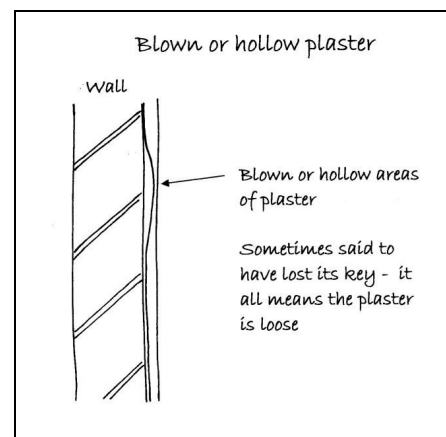
Slight movement where the central studwork partitions are.

Studwork Defined

Usually a timber frame, clad in either lath and plaster or plasterboard and used to divide areas. Studwork can be structural, i.e. load bearing, or alternatively non-structural depending upon its construction. Within more modern properties, a proprietary metal system or a honeycomb cardboard may also be found. Modern Building Regulation requirements also require minimal sound transfer and this is usually adhered to by the incorporation of insulation.

Perimeter Walls

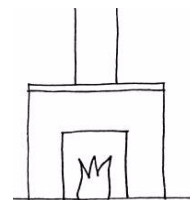
To some areas the plaster is 'blown'. This term is used where the plaster is no longer sticking to the wall and is sometimes known as 'losing its key'. The plaster to the walls is in below average condition; this is nothing to be overly concerned about, you simply need to do some re-plastering when you redecorate.



Finally, ceilings, walls and partitions have been inspected from floor level and no opening up has been undertaken (unless permission has been obtained by yourselves). In some cases the materials employed cannot be ascertained without samples being taken and damage being caused.

We cannot comment upon the condition of the structure hidden behind plaster, dry lining, other applied finishes, heavy furniture, fittings and kitchen units with fitted back panels.

CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

The chimney breasts are located on the left hand side of the property (all directions given as you face the front of the property).

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

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

Finally, it is strongly recommended that flues be cleaned and checked for obstruction prior to use to minimise the risk of hazardous fumes entering the building.

Please also see the Chimney Stacks, Flues and Parapet Walls section of this Report.

FLOORS

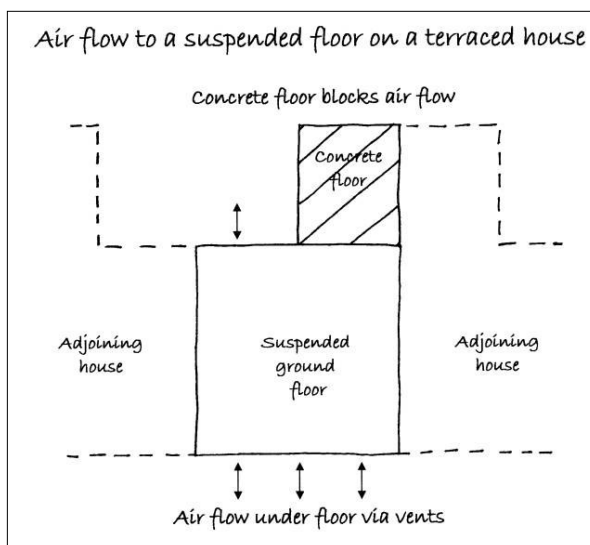


Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.

Ground Floor

Based on our knowledge of this age of construction we believe that, predominately, the ground floor construction is 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 remainder of the flooring (to the kitchen) is solid under foot and assumed to be concrete.



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.

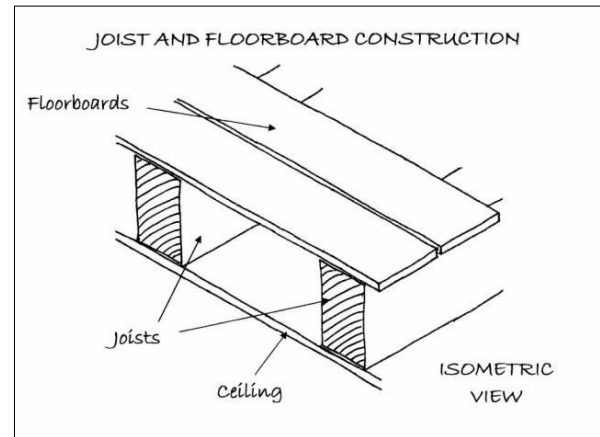
First Floor

We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards, as this is typical in this age of property. However, we were unable to view the floor due to the laminate covering.



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

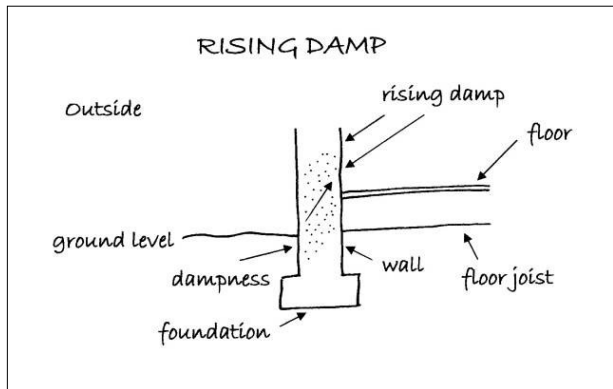
DAMPNESS



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

Rising Damp

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

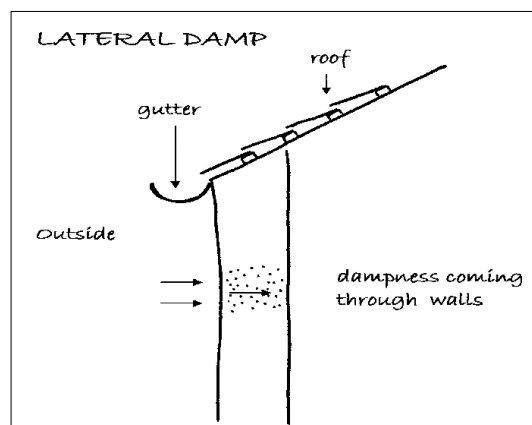


We have carried out tests with an electronic damp meter to a random selection of areas and we found rising damp. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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

Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to internal walls. Our readings were in line with what we would expect for this age of property, i.e. minor dampness. No evidence of any significant penetrating/lateral dampness was detected.



Condensation

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

We believe there may be some condensation in the roof space.

Within the main building we could see no obvious signs of condensation, although the bathroom is fairly small and may generate some. It very much depends upon how you utilise the building. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating and ventilation of properties. Normally opening windows first thing in the morning resolves most condensation issues.



We noticed staining on the back of the loft hatch door, which could indicate that there is condensation occurring within the roof.

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

You have stripped timber doors that fit into their frames well. This is a good sign, showing there has been minimum movement in the property.



Checking the structure for movement.

Staircase

We noted that the underside of the staircase was exposed. It is more normal today to have a half hour fire barrier to stop fire spreading from the ground floor to the first floor in a worse case scenario. You may wish to take a view on whether you add this.

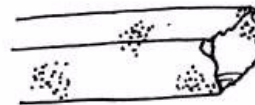


Kitchen

From our cursory visual inspection the kitchen looked dated, although it has suffered from some general day-to-day marks. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

Finally, it should be noted that not all joinery has been inspected. We have viewed a random sample and visually inspected these to give a general 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.*

Given the conditions found within this property there is an outside chance that dry rot is present, although we have not seen it. This is due to the possible dampness in the floor, as explained elsewhere within this report.

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.*

Again, in the areas inspected no evidence was found of any wet rot, however there is an outside chance that there is wet rot in the property because we have rising damp in the walls, which will effect the floor timbers beneath.

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.

In our opinion the roof is the most likely place to find woodworm, in this property, we have inspected this area and found no sign of any significant (likely to cause structural damage) woodworm flight holes or frass (the woodworm dust), which are the usual signs of woodworm activity.

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

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

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

INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

Generally we thought the internal decorations were dated. 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, hallways will need to be tended to more often than a spare bedroom.

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

THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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

Roofs

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

Walls

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

Windows

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

Services

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

Summary

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

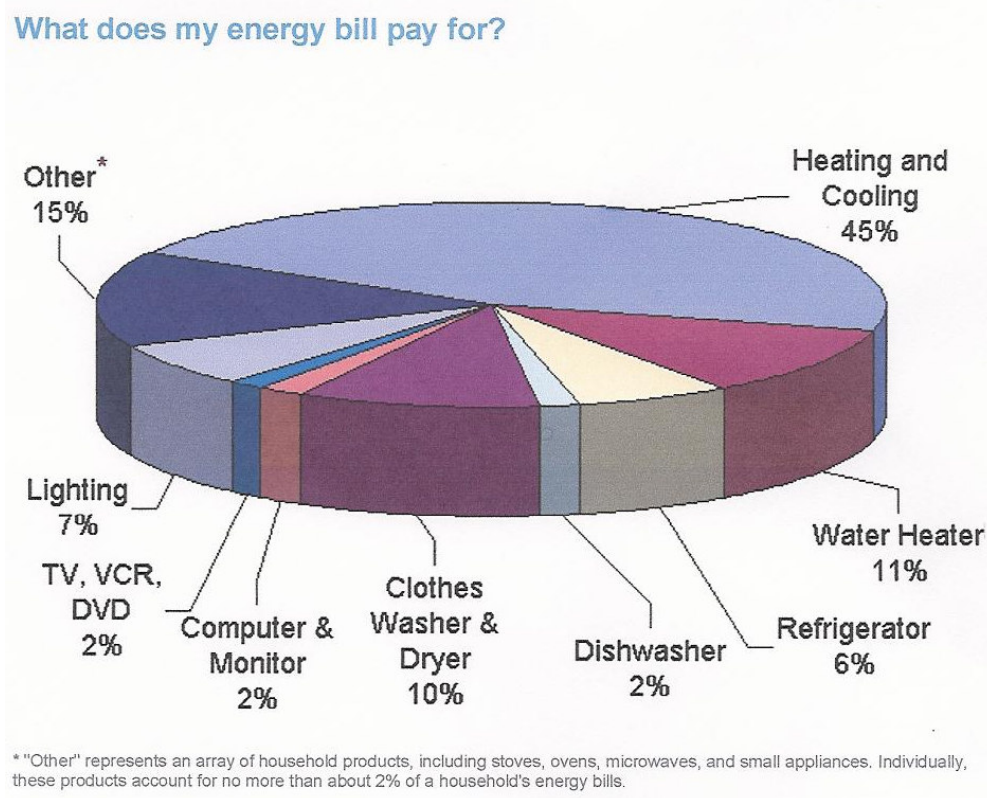
Further information can be obtained with regard to energy saving via the Internet on the following pages:

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

or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

or www.ecocentre.org.uk for an alternative technological view.

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



OTHER MATTERS



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

Security

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

Smoke Alarms

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

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

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

Insurance

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

SERVICES

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

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

ELECTRICITY

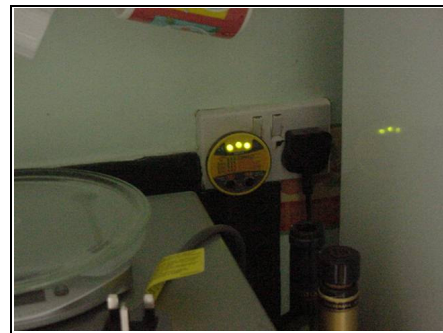


It is strange to think that electricity only started to be used in domestic properties at the turn of the 19th century with gas lighting still being the norm for a good many years after.

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

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the Lounge. We would date the fuseboard as being from the 1960s.

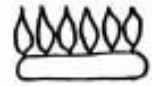
We carried out an earth test in the kitchen area to the socket point that is normally used for the kettle, this proved satisfactory.



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

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

GAS



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

We are advised that the property has mains gas. The consumer unit is located under the stairs.



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

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

PLUMBING AND HEATING



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

Water Supply

We did note a stopcock in the bathroom, though we were not certain whether this was the main stopcock and the owners didn't know either. It is important that its presence is established in case of bursts or leaks. The stopcock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness.

Water Pressure

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

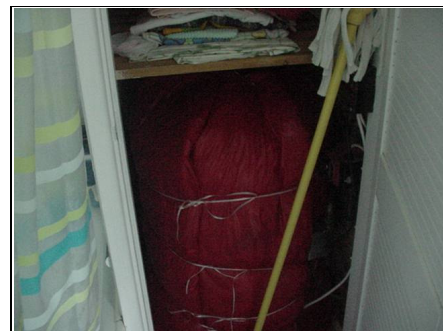
The Water Board have to guarantee a certain pressure of water to ensure that things like boilers, particularly the instantaneous ones have a constant supply of pressured water (they would blow up if they didn't!).

Cold Water Cistern

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

Hot Water Cylinder

The hot water cylinder is dated (in this case we would estimate over 30 years). In our experience, in this age of hot water cylinder defects can start to occur and, unfortunately, hot water cylinders rarely give any proper warning before they leak/bust!



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

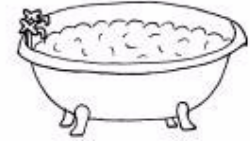
The boiler was located in the bathroom, it is a Prima.

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 is placed with an approved heating engineer.

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

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

BATHROOM



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

The property has a three piece bathroom suite, which looks in average to good condition.

You may well get condensation in this room. Better extraction will reduce this.

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

MAIN DRAINS



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

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

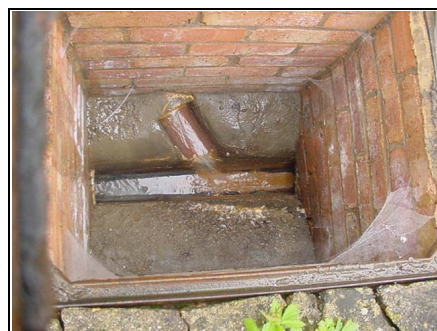
The cold taps have been run for approximately quarter of an hour in the bathroom and kitchen. No build up or back up was noted.

Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We have identified one inspection chamber / manhole located to the rear of the property. We have duly lifted this to check to make sure it was not blocked.

From what we could see it is brick built.



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

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

Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

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

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

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

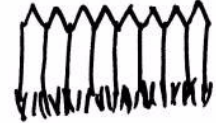
OUTSIDE AREAS

PARKING



Parking is on a first come first served basis on the nearby road, as far as we could see. It was reasonable at the time of our inspection. Please see our earlier comments in the 'Accommodation and Facilities' Section.

EXTERNAL AREAS



Gardens

You have a small front garden and probably a share of the common in front of you.

There is a small paved area to the rear.

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

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

Neighbours

Left Hand Neighbours

Were out at the time of our inspection.

Right Hand Neighbours

We had a brief chat with the right hand neighbours who advised that they were selling too, but said that the present neighbours were very pleasant and it was not because of them that they were moving.

POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

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

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

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

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

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

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

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

Finally, an extract from the book “Sold”!

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

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

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

REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses
Published by Estates Gazette Limited

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

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

House Builders Bible
By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

APPENDICES

LIMITATIONS

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

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

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

ENGLISH LAW

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

SOLE USE

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

ONLY HUMAN!

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

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

WEATHER

It was a rainy summer's day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

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

NOT LOCAL

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

OCCUPIED PROPERTY

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

INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited due to not being able to inspect underneath the floor; ideally we would like to have done so due to the dampness to the front wall.

THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

Work You Cannot do Yourself

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

INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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

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

www.hometrack.co.uk

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

Motleyfool.co.uk

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

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

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