

JOB REFERENCE: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

XXXXXXXXXXXX,
XXXXXXXXXXXX,
XXXXXXXXXX,
Norfolk NR2 XXX



1stAssociated

FOR

Mr XXXXXXXXXXXX

Prepared by:
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

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INTRODUCTION

Firstly, may we thank you for using our services once again and your kind instruction of XXXXXXXXXXXX; we have now undertaken a Building Survey (formerly known as a Structural Survey) of the aforementioned property. This Survey was carried out on XXXXXXXXXXXX.

As you may recall 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.

As we mentioned previously we are aware that a report of this size is somewhat daunting and almost off-putting to the reader because of this. Again 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).

As always we recommend that you set aside time to read the report in full, consider the comments, make notes of any areas that 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.

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REPORT FORMAT

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

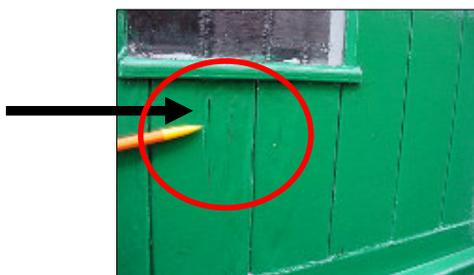
GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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, pen, circle or arrow 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.

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SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a mid-terraced 1970's property, with a conservatory to the rear and a garden.

There is also a garage within a nearby block of garages, although the owner parked in a nearby private car park buying a yearly permit.

To the front is a communal garden area and a there is a small garden to the rear, which gives access to the garage block area.

We believe that the property was built around the 1970's. 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:

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1971 | Decimalisation is introduced throughout the UK |
| 1974 | New Year's Day is celebrated for the first time as a public holiday |
| 1976 | The first commercial Concorde flight took off from France. |
| 1979 | Mother Theresa awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for giving help and comfort to those living in poverty |
| 1981 | The WSPA is founded to protect animal in over fifty countries |

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EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front View



Rear View



Rear garden



Rear alleyway



Garage block

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ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

(All directions given as you face the front of the property)

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Open plan Lounge / Dining / Kitchen Area
- 2) Conservatory to rear

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Bedroom to front
- 2) Bedroom to rear
- 3) Bathroom to rear

Outside Areas

There is a communal garden to the front and a small garden to the rear, giving access to the garage which is situated in a garage block to the rear. There are also some visitors parking spaces but these are limited and we were advised by the owner that she has parked for many years in a nearby local authority run car park and paid for an annual permit. We recommend you speak to her about this.

Finally, all these details need to be checked and confirmed by your Legal Advisor.

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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



Stairs in entrance hallway



Through lounge looking to front



Kitchen / Dining area



Conservatory

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First Floor



Landing



Bedroom to front



Bedroom to rear



Bathroom to rear

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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Main Roof:	Shallow pitched, clad with concrete
Main Roof Structure:	Pre-fabricated truss roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Painted Stretcher Bond Brickwork (assumed)
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Plastic double glazed windows

Internal

Ceilings:	Plasterboard or proprietary boarding (assumed)
Walls:	Mixture of solid and hollow (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Solid to rear, assumed concrete(assumed)
First Floor:	Joist and floorboard sheets (assumed)

Services

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (all assumed):

Heating: Wall mounted Glow worm boiler in kitchen

Hot water: Hot water cylinder with jacket

Gas meter: Front left corner

Electrics: From 1990s/2000's, located front left corner

Drains: Shared drain to rear (not viewed), advised manhole underneath paving slabs

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

Finally, your Legal Advisor needs to check and confirm the above and advise us of anything they require further clarification on before legal commitment to purchase the property.

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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 250 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.

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.

Once you have read the report we would recommend that you revisit the property to review your thoughts on the building in light of the comments we have made in this survey.

The Good

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

- 1.0) The property is well presented, although it has to be appreciated that this is superficial.
- 2.0) It has good natural light, with the layout of the through lounge/dining room/kitchen feeling spacious.
- 3.0) Off-road location.
- 4.0) There is a garage, although please see our comments on parking.

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

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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.

1.0) Awkward roof detail

There is an awkward/awful roof detail where the dormer to the front meets the main roof. We have tested internally and not found any damp but we do think it is a potentially weak area.



Awkward roof detail



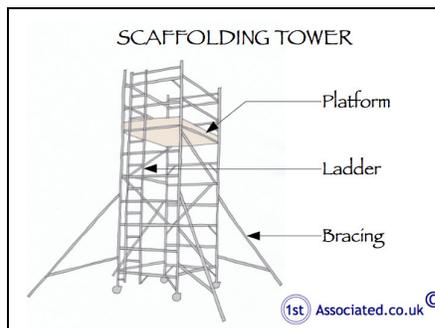
Close up view

ACTION REQUIRED: Having said that, as mentioned we have not found any dampness and you just need to be aware that it is a potential weak area, particularly when it snows, as this is when roofs are really tested.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

2.0) Fascias boards in need of redecoration

The fascia boards are in of redecoration. You will possibly need a tower scaffold for this as it is high level work.



Awkward roof detail



Timber fascia boards in need of redecoration

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ACTION REQUIRED: Redecorate timber fascia boards, you may wish to consider replacing with plastic.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of a £1,000, of course costs will be more if a tower scaffold is needed. Please obtain quotations.

3.0) **Dampness/hairline cracking to left side of property**

There has been minor movement to the front left side of the property, which we feel is acceptable. We believe this is due to water getting in via the brickwork and we can see that the paint has degraded.

We suspect that the dampness is coming via the roof where the verge on the tiles is not sufficient to throw the water away from the property.

Unfortunately, you will have to consider this a characteristic of the property as the solution that we are absolutely sure of that would work would be to completely re-roof, otherwise there is a plastic verge alternatively but we have not seen this work particularly well.



Close up of left gable where dampness getting in and been slight structural movement



Dampness getting in to left gable

ACTION REQUIRED: Re-paint and make good the verge detailing. An alternatively may be to add a plastic verge (please see our article on plastic verges at the back of the report).

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

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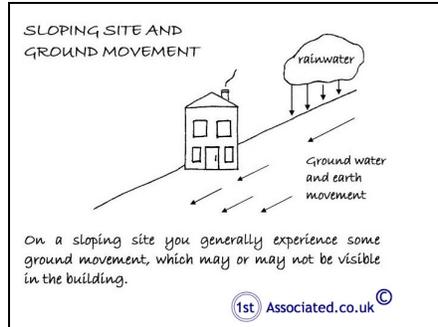
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4.0) Sloping site

The property is on a slight slope, which means that the right side wall is in danger of having some dampness.



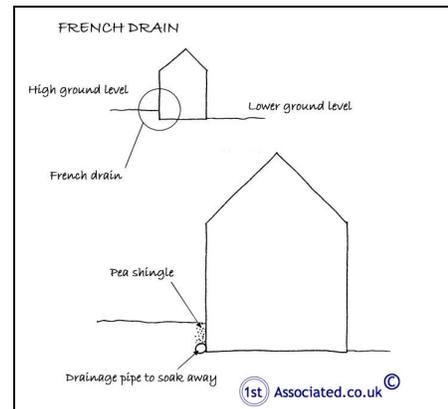
Sloping site



High ground level right hand side

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend you reduce the ground level around the front of the property slightly. In a worst case scenario it would mean the adding of a French Drain (see Appendices), although we think this is unlikely and should be tested by reducing the ground level.

ANTICIPATED COST: DIY type job or a few £100; please obtain quotations.



French drain

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

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5.0) Plastic windows relatively old

The plastic windows are relatively old as they do not have trickle vents and do not shut properly in some instances. We were advised that this related to the heat.

Lack of trickle vents

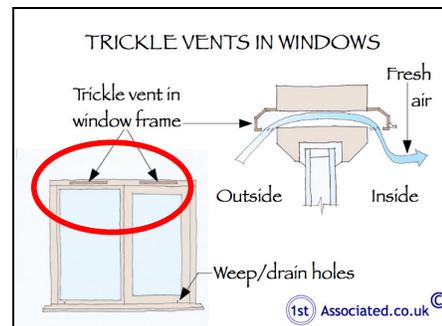
There is a lack of trickle vents to the windows. Please see our comments on extraction.

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 sticking in kitchen



Trickle vents

ACTION REQUIRED: You may wish to budget in the future to replace the plastic windows.

ANTICIPATED COST: They really can range from a few thousand pounds to many thousands of pounds depending on the quality and style of window. Please obtain quotations.

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5.1) **Moss on rear plastic windows and conservatory**

We are finding with older plastics that moss occurs. We have spoken to a plastic manufacturer regarding this and they advised that plastic does require cleaning and ultimately, depending upon what sort of plastic it is, it is not maintenance free.



Moss and mould on plastic windows



Moss on conservatory roof

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend you clean the plastic.

ANTICIPATED COST: DIY type job and elbow grease, or a hundred pounds or so as access may be slightly difficult; please obtain quotations.

5.2) **Small guttering around conservatory**

The gutter around the conservatory is very small and is not likely to catch the water properly and will overflow on to next door's wall.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to gain access to the right hand side property to see if it is causing any damage to the wall.



Small guttering on conservatory

Please see the Windows and Doors Section of this Report.

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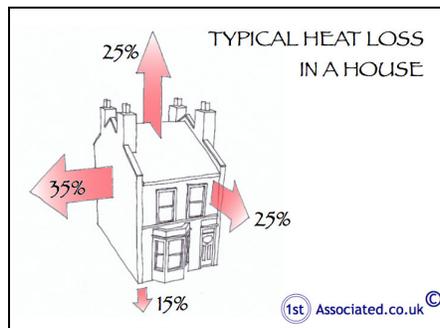
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6.0) Heat gain and heat loss

In smaller properties where there is no porch and door goes into the lounge there can be heat loss during the winter months, and equally here you have a conservatory you can get heat gain, as this can gather a considerable amount of warmth and heat up the rest of the house, if not make it too hot.



Typical heat loss



Front door straight into front room, may cause heat loss during cold winter months

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to get to know and understand how to heat the property to best suit yourselves.

Please see the Windows and Doors Section of this Report.

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7.0) Services

7.1) Hot water cylinder

There is a hot water cylinder upstairs in the cupboard of the front bedroom. This has had insulation added around it in the form of an insulated jacket. These are the older style cylinders and may leak at any time without warning.



Hot water cylinder

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend you look at replacing this.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £750 to £1,250; please obtain quotations.

7.2) Manhole covered up

We ran the taps for approximately 15 minutes with no built up or back up.

We were advised there was a manhole to the rear underneath the paving slabs, although the owner was not certain which one, and there was no obvious sign. However, we would add that as the paving slabs have not been lifted recently it does tend to indicate that there is no problem.



Manhole under slabs and pots

Manholes Defined

Access areas which usually fit a man (or woman) into them and are put in where the drains change direction.

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7.3) Drainage system - Private or Local Authority?

Sometimes in an arrangement such as this you may have a private drain which you have liability for.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments about the sinking fund/saving fund for property maintenance.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

8.0) Car parking

There may a slight problem with car parking, although you have a garage. The present owners do not use theirs but instead buy parking permits in the nearby car park in the Hanover Road car park. From discussions they had done so for many years.



Possible problems with parking in your parking area



Hanover Rd car park used by owner

ACTION REQUIRED: Speak to the existing owner. We would factor in the cost of a car parking permit or two.

Please see the Outside Areas Section of this Report.

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9.0) Communal saving/sinking fund

We are advised that there is a fund to be paid into with regard to general grounds maintenance and other shared items, such as the boundary wall that we were advised was repaired recently, which is Listed because the large building on the corner is Listed. You may also have shared costs such as drainage.

The owner advised that the system worked reasonably well (but then again you would expect them to).



Original building – these houses are effectively in its grounds



Boundary wall has been repaired

9.1) Large tree

We noted that you had a large tree which looks to be in need of maintenance; the owner advised it has a Tree Preservation Order on it. This is the type of thing that should be covered with your annual service charge, although often they do not have sufficient funds.



Tree preservation order on this large tree

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9.2) Path next to the boundary

There is also a footpath next to the boundary wall and you may have a responsibility for clearing the trees, etc on the side overlooking the footpath.



Overhanging foliage which we believe you are responsible for

10.0) Tenants in adjoining properties

We were advised there is a tenant next door to the right (all directions given as you face the property). We also noted other tenants in the building and some of the other flats were up to let. You need to be happy with a number of tenants in the nearby vicinity.



Surrounding properties

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend you knock on adjoining owners doors, as we did (unfortunately neither were at the time of our survey).

10.1) Small community

The great thing about being in a small community such as this is that it is indeed a small community as long as you all get on. The bad thing is there is a fair number of units to rent and you do not know who is going to rent them.

Please see the Neighbours Section of this Report.

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The Ugly

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

There is nothing which we feel falls within this section providing you are happy with the characteristics and associated costs of the property which we have mentioned throughout the report.

Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Maintenance

This type of property is relatively modern (i.e., less than one hundred years old) but nevertheless still requires ongoing maintenance and repair. A budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in a good condition. This will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration.

Services

Whilst we have carried out a visual inspection only of the services within the property and we would always recommend you have your own specific testing for each of the services. We also need to advise you of the following:

Electrics

The Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE) recommend a test and report whenever a property changes occupancy. This should be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

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Heating

We would recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

Drainage

Whilst we ran the tap for 15 minutes without any build up or blockages the only way to be 100% certain of the condition of the drains is to have a closed circuit TV camera report.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal adviser to check and confirm whether the drains are a shared responsibility with the community, or whether they are adopted by the statutory authority who will clear them and repair them.

ACTION REQUIRED - SERVICES: We would reiterate that we recommend with regard to all services that you have an independent check by a specialist contractor.

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.

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Estimates of Building 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 £125 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.

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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:

You need to stop the dampness from getting in the property. You also need to be happy with what you will and will not pay for underneath the service charge/sinking fund.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend you carry out further investigations with regard to the service charge/sinking fund.

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 in full and contact us on any issues that you require further clarification on.

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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 are employed as Independent Chartered Surveyors and offer an independent point of view.

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 Building Surveys, as agreed to and signed by yourselves. If you have not seen or are not happy with the terms of engagement please phone immediately 0800 298 5424 or email the secretary from which this survey came from.

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.

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



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EXTERNAL

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.

There is a dormer window to the front of the property. It is covered with a tile, as the main roof. The sides are in plastic cladding with a lead flashing and the windows are plastic double glazed windows. Generally we could comment for their age, type and style they are in average condition.



Dormer window

There is an awkward detail where the dormer window meets the main roof.

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

Finally, Dormer windows have been viewed from ground level and literally from the dormer windows themselves.



Close up of awkward roof detail

Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the dormer windows from the parts we would see above roof level. 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.

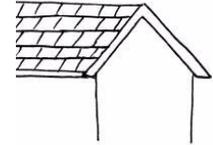
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ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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.

Dependent upon the age of your property and the type of construction it may or may not be present, please read on:

We will consider the roofs in two areas; the main roof and the rear conservatory roof.

Main Roof

The main roof is shallow pitched and clad with a concrete tile with a lead flashing and from ground level this looks in average condition considering the roofs age type and style. We were pleased to see a lead flashing.



Flashing

Verge Detail

However, it is the verge detail that we are concerned about as this seems to be letting in water. It is allowing water to drip down the side of the building causing deterioration to the paintwork, brickwork and hairline cracking.



Verge not large enough and is letting in water

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

Carry out periodic inspections and maintenance of the roof, as required.

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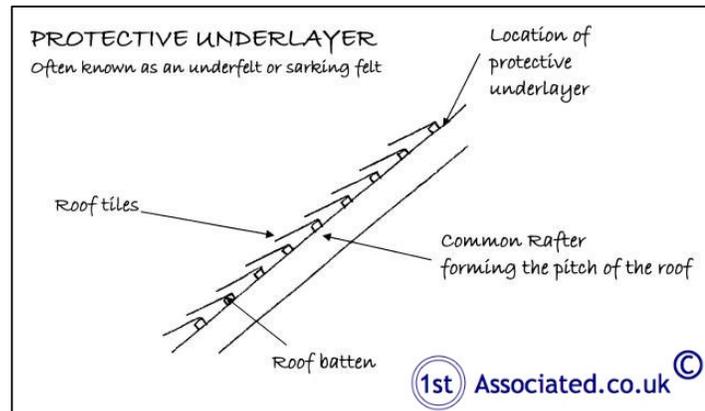
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Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)

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.



Protective Underlayer

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, with damage in some areas which is what we typically find.



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

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Conservatory Roof

The rear conservatory roof is a polycarbonate (plastic) roof. It has a good fall but we would comment that it is in slightly below average condition due to the moss on the right hand side and it would benefit from a good clean.



Polycarbonate conservatory roof



Moss on outside of roof

The gutter surrounding the conservatory is too small. We believe it will not catch the water properly and will overflow on to next door's wall.



Small gutter on conservatory

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

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Party Walls

The party wall relates to shared items, such as the blockwork fire walls. If you do any work on these you will need to deal with the Party Wall Act. Here is a brief explanation of it.

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.

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

Finally, we were only able to see approximately eighty percent of the main roof from ground level via our ladder. 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.



Blockwork party walls

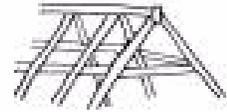
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ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



(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.

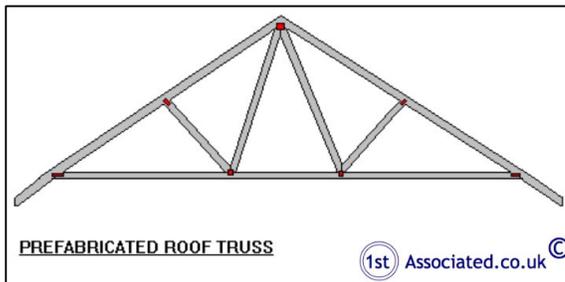
Main Roof

Roof Access

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located in the bathroom. There is no loft ladder and some unsecured floorboards. We recommend that these be added, as it will make the loft space safer and easier to use.

Roof Structure

The property has a pre-fabricated trussed roof rafter. These are made in a factory and transported to site and then lifted into place. Without the manufacturer's calculations and installation details we cannot comment categorically on the roof.



Pre-fabricated roof truss



Pre-fabricated roof truss

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Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

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

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 for its age, type and style. 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.



General view of inside of roof



Insulation

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Fire Walls

The property has two blockwork firewalls which are located one to the left hand side and one to the right hand side (all directions given as you face the property). The firewalls are also Party Walls.

Fire Walls Defined

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



Blockwork fire wall/party wall

Ventilation

No ventilation noted.

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 could not see it due to the mass of insulation.

We noted an unusual bit of wiring, which needs further investigation.



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

Mysterious bit if wiring – needs further investigation

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.

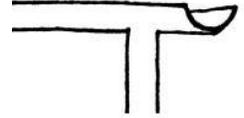
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GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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 plastic. They look to be in average condition.

We can see that repairs have been carried out to the downpipe to the left side of the property, which we believe to be a known problem area.



Repairs carried out to gutter front left side

There may be some minor leaks but most people would be happy to live with these providing repairs are carried out within the next six to twelve months.

Downpipes feed directly into the ground

Some of the downpipes feed directly into the ground. This is a practice we are not particularly keen on.



Downpipe feeding directly into ground

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Conservatory gutters

As mentioned, the gutters on the conservatory are miniscule. We suspect the water will discharge over them. See our earlier comments about checking whether next door's walls are getting damp.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would always recommend you stand outside the property next time it rains heavily and see how well the drains cope with the rainwater particularly looking at the guttering and the joints.



Miniscule gutters

We also 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.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Soil and Vent Pipe

The property has internal soil and vent pipes, where we could see it at roof level which we believe to be plastic. Sometimes these are asbestos; it is very hard to tell in this instance.



Flue and soil and vent pipes

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.

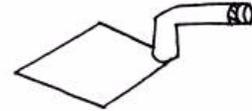
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WALLS



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.

The walls are constructed in brickwork.

Brickwork

The walls are constructed in Stretcher Bond brickwork and are painted.

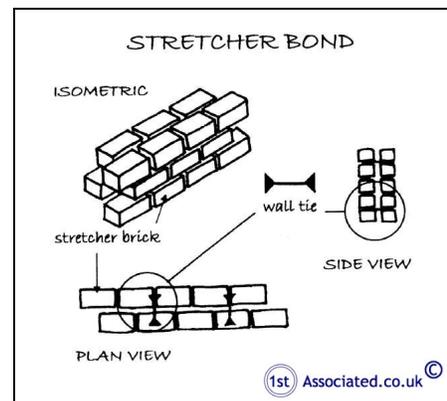
The term "Stretcher Bond" means that from the outside of the property, you can see a row of the sides of the bricks (known as "stretchers") followed by a course above of the same stretch of bricks set off so the joint is centrally above the "stretcher". This pattern would repeat throughout.



Painted brickwork to front

Cavity Walls

Cavity walls were first used in Victorian times. It originates from solid walls not always being waterproof against driving rain and not providing a good degree of thermal insulation. The design of cavity walls makes them relatively unstable and they depend upon the wall ties.



Stretcher Bond brickwork

Wall Ties

Walls of cavity construction should incorporate ties to hold together the inner and outer leaves of masonry. We would typically see horizontal cracking where there are problems. In this case we have not noted any cracking however wall tie failure is a progressive problem. We would add as there is no access to the cavity it has not been inspected and we cannot comment on the presence or condition of wall ties. As such we cannot be hundred per cent certain with regard to this problem unless we open up the structure.

From what we can see externally it appears not to have any problems.

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Cracking

We would remind you that any hairline cracks that appear need to be sealed as soon as possible to stop dampness and water getting in and causing blisters and hollow areas.

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 painted brickwork / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age metal lintels or concrete 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 painted brickwork / plaster has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the painted brickwork / 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.

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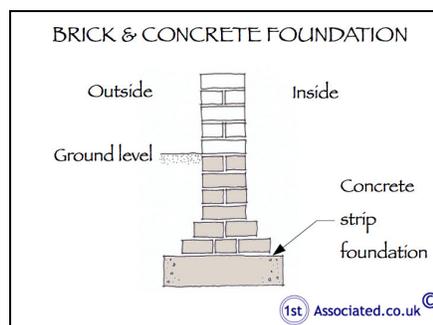
FOUNDATIONS



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

We would expect to find a concrete foundation typically known as a 'strip concrete' foundation going down to a meter or slightly deeper dependent upon the age of the property.



Strip concrete foundation

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.

It is your responsibility to check out prior to commitment to purchase that insurance is available on the property on the basis of the things we have reported in the survey. Much as we would like to we are unable to keep up with the changing insurance market and give you advice with regard to this.

Cracks

Please remember to talk about any cracks identified within the property. Often insurers will refer to progressive and non-progressive cracking. Unfortunately this is something we are unable to comment upon from a one-off inspection; the Building Research Establishment recommend a year of monitoring of any cracking.

We would refer you to our comments with regard to building insurance throughout this report.

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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.

We would always recommend that you remain with the existing insurance company of the 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.

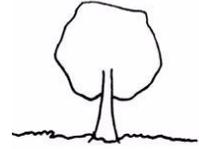
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TREES



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

There are shared items such as trees and boundary walls and possibly the drains. We are advised that this large tree is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). A TPO is where you cannot chop or amend a tree. You have a shared responsibility for this.



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

Tree preservation order on this large tree

Meet the people who organise and agree the planned maintenance and see what works they have proposed and what the associated costs are. A good management company would have a 10 year planned maintenance schedule identifying the problems and their solutions that will be dealt with in the next 10 years.

Finally, insurance requirements with regard to trees have varied over the years and in our opinion have got ever more onerous. We have seen the notifiable distance of a tree away from a property to have been reduced over the years and we reiterate our comments elsewhere within this report that you need to make enquiries with regard to the insurability of your property in relation to trees and other features when you purchase the property.

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

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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 there is no obvious visual sign of a DPC.

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



Tarred section to base of property

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.

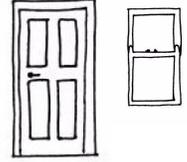
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FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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 fascias and soffits are painted timber. We would comment they are in average condition for their age, type and style but will be in need of some redecoration before the end of the summer of 2015.

ACTION REQUIRED: Make sure gutters and downpipes are watertight before carrying out any work on fascias and soffits.



Fascia board

See our comments in the Executive Summary.

Windows and Doors

The property has plastic double glazed windows without trickle vents, which generally look to be of a average 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.



Plastic windows – no trickle vents

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In this case they are dated and much better are now available.

From what we understand from talking to the owner, they sometimes do not shut that easily.

Trickle Vents Defined

Trickle vents allow a trickle of air through, therefore stopping/reducing the likelihood of condensation occurring within the property.

ACTION REQUIRED: You should budget ultimately for their replacement.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Transferable Guarantees

Although these windows are old enquiries should be made as to the existence of any transferable guarantees by your legal advisor. 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.

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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 fascias and soffits require work, as does the white painted wall. You should not under estimate the cost of this and you may end up completely re-painting white areas.



Fascia board to rear in need of redecoration



Areas to redecorate

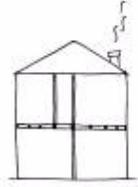
Finally, ideally external redecoration is recommended every four to five years dependent upon the original age of the paint, its exposure to the elements and the materials properties. Where painting takes place outside this maintenance cycle repairs should be expected. Ideally redecoration should be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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

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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

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be plasterboard or a proprietary boarding as this was fairly common in this era of property.

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.

Textured Paint

Some of the ceilings have a light textured paint, commonly known as Artex. You may not like this style as it is not very popular today. We recommend that you apply a coat of plaster over the top of it rather than rubbing it down.

Internal Walls and Partitions

The walls are, we believe a mixture of solid and studwork construction. It is of course impossible to determine the construction without opening up the walls and we have therefore taken an educated guess.

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Has a wall been knocked down?

There may have been a wall removed between the front lounge and the rear part of the lounge where the dining area is presently. It would be more usual to have a pier where a wall has been removed so it may be an original design, unfortunately we have no way of knowing for certain without original drawings, which we are more than happy to comment upon if you gain such information.



Elaborate pediment that divides the room up

Perimeter Walls

Again, we cannot be 100% certain of the wall construction without opening them up which goes beyond the scope of this report.

This comment has been based on the visual look of the wall which is relatively “smooth” and normally means a modern finish.



Hairline crack to left wall in front bedroom

We noted some hairline cracking to the front and left hand side. We believe this relates to dampness getting in the wall.

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

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.

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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

The floors felt solid under foot so we have assumed that they are constructed in concrete.

However, we have not opened up the floors or lifted the laminate.



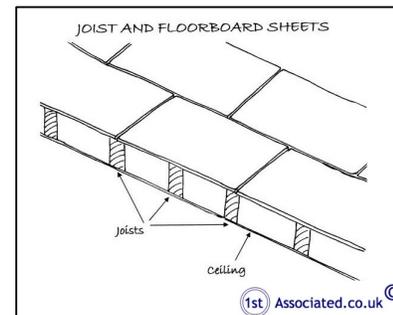
Laminate flooring

First Floor

We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboard sheets, as this is typical in this age of property.

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.



Joist and floorboard sheets

Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with fitted carpets, floor coverings, laminate 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.

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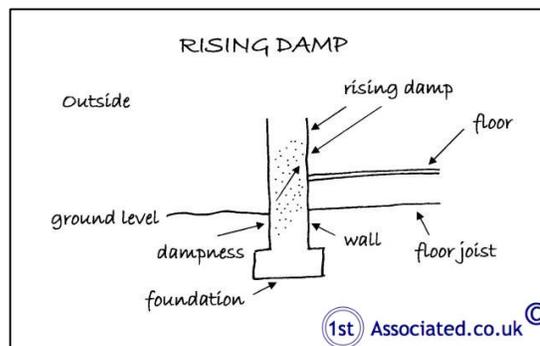


DAMPNESS

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. Much evidence points towards there being true rising damp in only very rare cases.



Rising damp

A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we have found no significant rising damp.



Testing for rising damp

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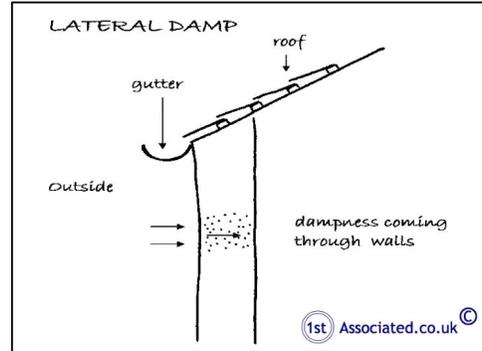
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Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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.



Lateral dampness

We used a resistance meter on the external walls. We have not found significant dampness, even in the areas where the hairline cracking was or the awkward roof detail.



Testing for lateral dampness

Condensation

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

At the time of the inspection there were no obvious signs of condensation.

However, it depends upon how you utilise the building. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating, cooling and ventilation of properties and opening windows to air the property regularly.



Checking for cold bridging
in front bedroom

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Extract fans in kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas

A way of helping to reduce condensation is to have good large extract fans with large humidity controlled thermostats within the kitchens and bathrooms and also in any areas where you intend to dry clothes which are moisture generating areas.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend large humidity controlled extract fans be added to kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas.



Small extract fan in bathroom

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.

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INTERNAL JOINERY



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

Doors

The property has egg box style panel doors. Some of the doors require work.



Egg box door



Door handle missing

Staircase

We were unable to examine most of the underside of the stair timbers due to it being lined.

We did note that part of the stairs are not lined within the under stairs cupboard.

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 here.



Lined stairs



Stairs unlined in cupboard

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Kitchen

We found the kitchen in average condition, subject to some wear and tear as one would expect.

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.

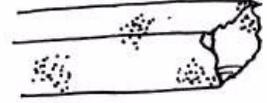
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TIMBER DEFECTS



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.*

We have not visually seen any significant dry rot during the course of our inspection. We would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had a limited view of 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.*

We have not visually seen any signs of significant wet rot during the course of our inspection. There may be minor elements in the fascias and soffits but not enough to worry about.

Again, we would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had a limited view of the roof.

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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 significant woodworm activity or indeed past signs of significant 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.

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.

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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.

Internal decorations are in average condition. 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.

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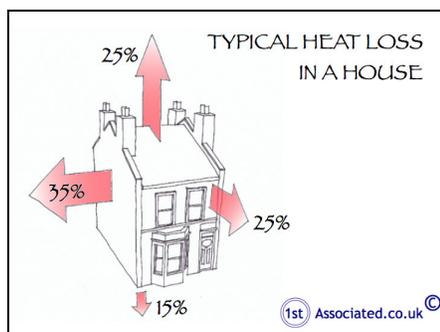
THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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 300mm. In this instance there is 200mm to 250mm. It is a mixture of an older style roof material and a modern fibreglass material.



Typical heat loss



Typical heat loss

Walls

The property has a stretcher bond construction. In this age of property there is usually insulation.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Adviser to check and confirm if there is insulation within the walls and whether it was installed originally or not.

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Windows

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

HIPs

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

Services

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

Summary

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

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

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

or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

*or Sustainable Energy Without the Hot Air by David J C MacKay
HTTP//www.withouthotair.com/Videos.html to download for free or buy a paper copy as we did.*

*It is worth watching the video on You Tube: How Many Light Bulbs?
by David J C MacKay*

Finally, we would comment that energy we feel will become a major consideration in years to come, particularly with the greater focus in modern buildings on energy efficiency.

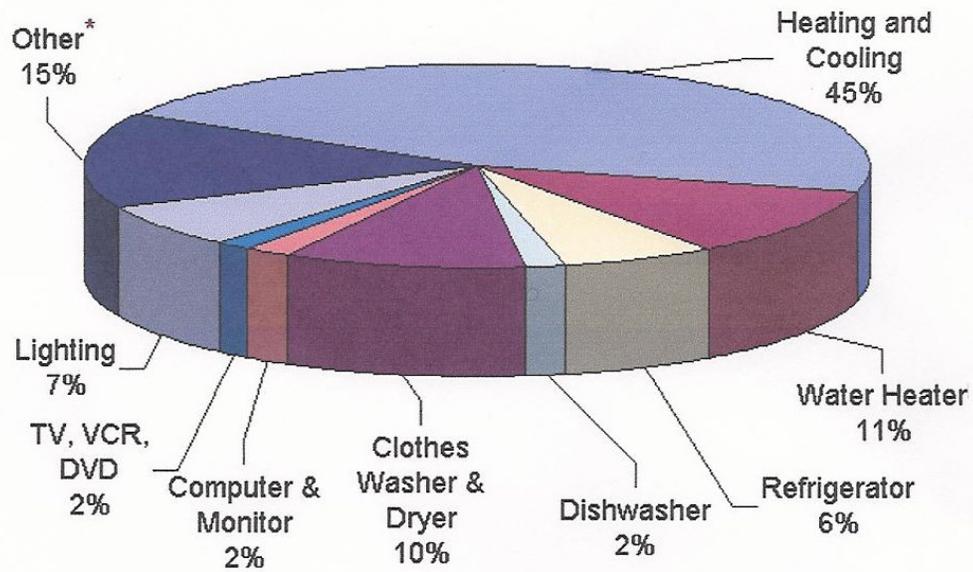
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What does my energy bill pay for?



* "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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OTHER MATTERS



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

Security

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

Fire / Smoke Alarms

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

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend, for your own safety, that smoke detectors be installed. We would always recommend a hard wired fire alarm system and are also aware that some now work from a wireless signal which may be worth investigating. Whilst fire is relatively rare it is in a worst case scenario obviously devastating.

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.

We would refer you to our comments with regard to building insurance throughout this report.

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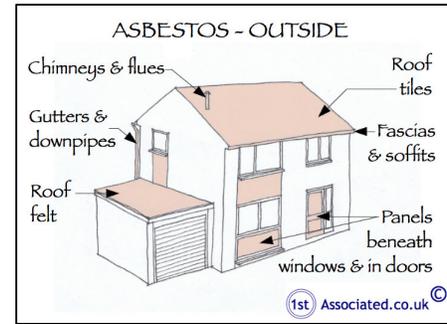
Asbestos

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. In this case we have not noted asbestos.

In years gone by asbestos was commonly used as wood and can be found in all sorts of places. Asbestos was used post war until it was banned only in the UK in the last ten years or so. It is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time where products were imported from countries where it is not banned.

We are Building Surveyors and not Asbestos Surveyors and as such the only way to be a hundred per cent certain with regards to Asbestos in a property is to have an Asbestos report carried out.

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



Asbestos externally

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SERVICES

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

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

ELECTRICITY



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

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

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Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the front left corner of hallway. The fuse board looked to be from the 1990's/2000's and better are now available.



Fuse Board

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: As the property is changing occupancy an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test and report should be carried out by a NICEIC registered, or equivalent, approved electrical contractor or similarly approved.

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

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

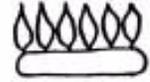
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GAS



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 consumer unit is located hallway, front left corner.

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



Gas meter under the stairs

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

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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 is in the cupboard near the front door on the left side (where the other services are). No external stopcock was known.

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

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

Hot Water Cylinder

This is an older style hot water cylinder that has had an insulation jacket added. This type of cylinder can deteriorate and go at any point in time.

ACTION REQUIRED: Budget for a replacement in the next few years.



Hot water cylinder

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Plumbing

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

Heating

The wall mounted Glow worm boiler was located in the kitchen. 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.



Wall mounted Glow worm boiler



Flue from boiler

Ten Minute Heating Test

The heating was on during the course of the survey and the property was pleasantly warm.

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



Mock fire in lounge

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.

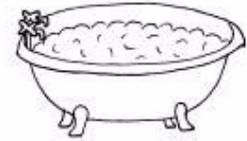
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BATHROOM



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

Bathroom

The property has a three piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin and WC, which looks in average condition, subject to some day-to-day wear and tear, as one would expect.

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.

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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.

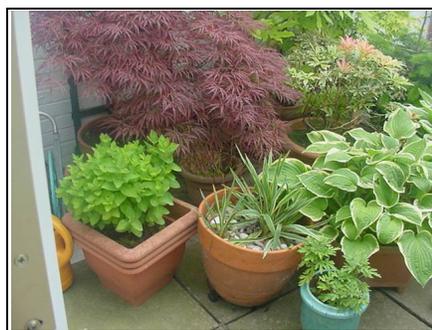
The cold taps have been run for approximately quarter of an hour in the bathroom. No build up or back up was noted.

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 were advised of one manhole cover to the rear under the patio, which was covered with plants at the time of our inspection.

We do not know whether this is a public or private sewerage system. This makes a big difference as to who pays for it.



Manholes Defined

Access areas which usually fit a man (or woman) into them and are put in where the drains change direction.

Manhole under slabs and pots

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

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We have only undertaken a visual inspection of the property's foul drains by 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. Normally in a property of this age the rainwater drains discharge into a soak away.

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.

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OUTSIDE AREAS

The main focus of this report has been on the main building. If you wish us to do a specific report on the other buildings then you need to instruct us for this separately. We are offering here a brief overview.

GARAGE/ PARKING



There is a garage to the rear of the property in a garage block, accessed via the rear of the property.



Garage to rear of property in garage block



Garage door open



Inside garage

The owner does not park in the garage but chooses to rent a parking space in the nearby Hanover Road Car Park.



Walkway to parking area



Hanover Road Car Park



Parking restrictions in the area

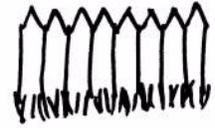
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EXTERNAL AREAS



Front Garden

There is a shared front garden area.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary regarding a shared sinking fund.



Shared front gardens

Rear Garden

There is a small rear garden. It will look larger once all the potted plants have been removed.



Rear Garden

This is the original building. You are effectively in the gardens of this house.



Original house

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Boundaries

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

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

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.



Fence needs re-staining

Neighbours

Left Hand Neighbours

No-one was in when we knocked.

Right Hand Neighbours

No-one was in when we knocked. We were advised they are French and are renting the property.

Other Neighbours

We did speak to two residents who were concerned about the fact that we parked in the visitors parking area, so there may be some difficulty with parking, but equally they were also concerned as to who I was, which does mean it is a good indicator to a safe environment.

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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) Removal of any walls in part or whole.
 - ix) Removal of any chimneys in part or whole.
 - x) 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.

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- 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 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.

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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**.

For and on Behalf of
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Independent Chartered Surveyors
XXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX

This Report is dated: XXXXXXXXXXXX

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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

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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 dated XXXXXXXXXX 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.

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WEATHER

It began as a warm day but then became cool/cold at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

In recent times our weather seems to be moving towards the extremities from its usual relatively mid range. Extremes of weather can affect the property.

NOT LOCAL

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

OCCUPIED PROPERTY

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

INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been limited as:

- 1) We did not have full access to the roof
- 2) We didn't open up the floors as we could not see a way of doing so without damaging the floor.
- 3) We didn't have the benefit of meeting you at the property.

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BUILDING INSURANCE

We do not advise with regard to building insurance. You need to make your own enquiries. Some areas may have a premium, some buildings may have a premium and some insurers may be unwilling to insure at all in certain areas. You need to make your own enquires prior to committing to purchase the property. Please be aware the fact a building is currently insured does not mean it can be re insured.

We would comment that non-insurability of a building we feel will affect value. It is therefore essential to make your own enquiries with regard to insurance before committing to purchase the property and incurring fees.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to contact an insurance company today to make enquiries with regard to insurance on this property.

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.

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APPENDICES

1. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
2. Information on the Property Market
3. Dry verges
4. French Drains
5. Cold Bridging

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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 - NICEIC Electrical Contractor or equivalent trades body.
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.

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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

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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

This gives information with regard to house sale and purchase prices.

www.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.

www.rightmove.co.uk

This is probably the largest Internet search engine for estate agency sales and also has useful information with regard to prices of property (but it is not the same as having a chartered surveyor value it).

www.zoopla.co.uk

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

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Dry Verge Technology Technical Article

INTRODUCTION

We have recently been contacted by a home owner who has had problems with fascia boards where these are being used as overcladding, a subject we have talked about previously in one of our articles. Whilst carrying out the work to replace the fascia and soffit boards he came across problems with the cement verge that is to the end of the roof allowing water in. Whilst this cement technique has been used for many years there are now other alternatives available. Dry Verges are considered in the following article.



Cement verge



If you look closely you can see cracks to the left hand side that have been filled in with cement mortar. It is only a matter of time before they open up again.



This is a cement verge which has been clipped which tends to happen in high wind areas. To be sure the tiles don't lift clips also tend to be in areas where cracking can occur to the verge.



Dry verge system. Interesting lack of skill to the fascia and soffit board with the hole opening in it.

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Dry verge at the ridge level



Cement verge with smaller tiles



Gaps left for the water to get in



Close up of gaps



Dry Verge

SYNOPSIS

For many years we have used cement at the verge of our roofs to fill in the gap at the end of the tile. The problem with this is that cement is traditionally being used which cracks over time and allows water in. The water can then cause deterioration to the adjoining baton which holds the roof tiles or slates in place. A way around this is to use dry verge technology which is a plastic shoe that fits on the edge of the verge and stops the dampness getting in. The solving of this problem when we researched it further seems to lead to other problems.

CONSTRUCTION SUMMARY

Cement verges have been used for many years and was almost the introduction of cement in the War Years. A typical house may look as follows:

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External

Chimneys:	One brick chimney
Main Roof:	Pitched and clad with a concrete tile
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Brick in stretcher bond (assumed)
External Joinery:	Plastic fascia and soffit boards and double glazed timber windows
Foundations:	Stripped concrete foundations

This is a fairly common construction for a new property on good quality ground and it is typical of the majority of houses subject to local variations such as slates rather than concrete tile roofs or pantile roofs in some areas are required such as Norfolk and Suffolk. We are going to look at the verge of where the tile is.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive summaries are always dangerous as they try and encapsulate relatively complex problems in a few precise and succinct words. Having said that here is our executive summary and recommendations:

Whilst dry verge technology initially sounds to be a good idea in that the cement verges are no longer exposed and subject to cracking and deterioration eventually allowing dampness in. A dry verge, or a plastic verge or shoe can resolve the problems that can occur with the deterioration of

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the cement however if no thought is given to the projection the rain dripping off it does or doesn't have a proper drip it can hit windowsills below and we are aware of several complaints that have occurred due to the drips hitting the windowsill below and therefore keeping the occupants awake at night. We have also equally heard of the drips all occurring in one area and causing pattern staining to the brickwork below. A solution therefore would be to have pre-defined drip areas as we do think the advantages of having a dry verge and a clip stopping the deterioration of the cement as well as holding the tile verge in place and stopping deterioration of any batons would be well worthwhile. The dry verges do give an alternative to the traditional waterbedded verges, they too have problems.

Time Line A brief history of verges

This is where we look at how verges have progressed over the years. This is a general look, there will be specific variations subject to each area which is why you do need a Surveyor to look at your property.

1460's	Thatched roofs. No verge problems as was formed in thatch or timber. Thatch was still the most common in the 17th century. They were banned in London after 1666, interestingly the ban was only lifted in 1994 when the new Globe Theatre was reconstructed in London.
1500's	Clay tiles were used up until the Victorian time 1860's. In both cases the verges would have been either left or a lime mortar would have been used which is self sealing.
War Years	Introduction of concrete tiles and cement mortar started to be used more and more commonly.
2000's	Dry verges appear, plastic solution?

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INSPECTION

On a building survey the Surveyor should inspect visually externally and internally. Externally to see if there is any cracking in the cement verge and internally to see if there is any dampness getting in.

SURVEY FINDINGS

The dry verges certainly reduce the risk of the batons getting damp and the cement cracking. They do in themselves seem to have a problem as they do drip onto the walls below which can be particularly annoying if you have a bedroom windowsill beneath it. We have seen several complaints where this has kept people awake at night.

SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

It is still very early days for plastic verges. Whilst no doubt the manufacturers will have carried out tests as to how well they last in our experience this is nothing like the same as testing in use ie, when they are actually on the properties. We have noticed an increasing use of them by developers. Only time will tell whether it has been successful.

We would also comment that every property is specific to its location whether it is an exposed area or not, of course the workmanship is very specific to how that particular dry verge has been fitted.

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French Drain

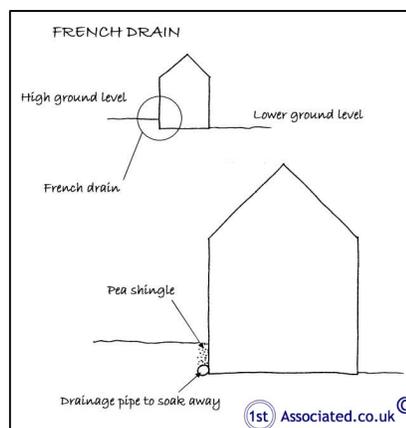
Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

We are finding where we are asked to look at damp walls and damp floors or damp problems in general that commonly it is because the external ground level is higher than the internal ground level, or airbricks have been blocked, or simply paving slabs, decking or briquettes have been used to form a patio area. This then discharges any rainwater against the building. Quite often the solution is to add a French drain.

Whilst French drains are quite simple and are basically nothing more than trenches filled with gravel, although there is a bit more to them, as we will explain, they are almost a D.I.Y. job for most people and they are relatively easy to install and are low cost. However, you do need some care and attention, otherwise you can install what we have heard referred to, as the French pond.

What use is a French drain?

A French drain is a trench, the width of approximately six inches or 300 millimetres wide, or the width of your spade, and is approximately twice the depth, i.e. 12 inches or 300 millimetres. In most cases this will suffice, however, where there is a great deal of ground water you may wish to make the trench wider and deeper.



The French drain acts as an area where water soaks away quickly. We often recommend them close to building, but not next to the building, as this helps reduce the ground level and/or take any water that is directed at that area away. For example, where a patio has been put in place which aims any rainwater at part of the wall. As mentioned, whilst a French drain is a D.I.Y. job, it does need some understanding of how it works.

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French drains must be on a slope

The piping that goes at the base of a French drain should be perforated or, as we did years ago for land drains, there should be gaps between each pipe. It should be set onto a bed of firm ground and the pipes should be on a fall to the drain. Whilst you should be able to ensure there is enough fall by sight, we also like the idea of rolling a marble from one end to the other.

You will then need to put the pipes down, fill the trench with half an inch, to an inch, of good sized gravel. You can leave it at that, or in addition you can cover with sand and then turf over. This is how a basic French drain is carried out.

The French drain system that we would recommend

This would be as described, although we would add to the base an inch or two of gravel on to which the perforated drainage pipe will rest. It will then wrap around that drainage pipe filter fabric. This is to stop the holes in the perforated pipe from blocking up. By the way, the drainage pipe should be four to six inches/100 millimetres to 250 millimetres. We would then fill with gravel. In addition to this, we would add a silt trap and this is added in the run of the pipe and is very similar to a road gully (not that's of much use if you don't understand how a road gully works). The silt trap is a rectangular box with a pipe opening at each end. The drained water passes onto this and any particles sink to the bottom of the box and then the water travels on to the other side of the box, enabling you to feed into a drain.

These are usually made of glass reinforced polyester and have been available in this form since the mid-1980's. They are normally reinforced with a steel frame for additional strength and re-bedded in concrete.

The French pond!

French drains will, over time, clog up, which is why we recommend using a filter fabric. However, even with this they will eventually clog up. Unfortunately, there is no dyno-rod equivalent, as it is normally fine sand, organic matter or clay that has clogged up the French drain. So, it is a case of digging it up and cleaning the pipework (or it may be quicker to just replace it), adding a filter fabric and re-filling the gravel.

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Condensation and Cold Bridging

What is Cold Bridging?

What is cold bridging and how does it work?

Cold bridging is a term and a problem we feel will become much more common in years to come. We are finding more and more examples of Cold Bridging. This happens in certain types of property and to some extent it could be argued that it is a characteristic of that type of property and quite a complex issue to resolve. Unfortunately it means condensation is more likely.



Post war / 1950's property that cold bridging can be a problem in.

Cold Bridging

Cold bridging is caused by a colder element in the structure or fabric of the building allowing coldness to pass through. When warm moist air is present in the property and it passes through the colder elements of the structure we have what is known as Cold Bridging. This is often caused by a combination of issues. It can occur from things such as having a shower or a bath, cooking or clothes washing, particularly if you are drying washing on the radiators. It could, in commercial properties, be a large gathering of people breathing (this can cause a lot of humidity) in a building that has stood cold and empty for some time such as a church, village hall, sports centre or a crèche. These human atmospheres create a climate which can result in condensation on the cold elements of the structure and fabric if the room is not ventilated properly.

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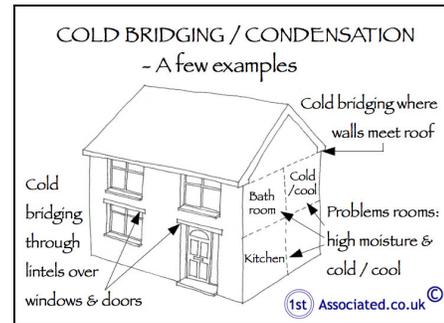
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Certain types of buildings are more susceptible to Condensation and Cold Bridging

Here is our sketch on Cold Bridging

This is a good indication of the typical things that cause Cold Bridging in a house and how extraction from humidity generating areas such as the kitchen and the bathroom can reduce problems. You do need to look at how you live in the house.



Cold Bridging isn't just about condensation on mirrors

Cold Bridging isn't just about condensation on mirrors. Not only can it be an original characteristic of the building it can be encouraged by all types of extension and alterations.

Cold bridging is far worse than condensation as it is caused by an element in the structure which you can do very little to change without great expense. If you buy a 1960's property for example, with concrete lintels that cause cold bridging, this is a characteristic of the property and it is very difficult to change. However not only could it be a characteristic of the building it could also be caused by alterations that you make to the building.



1960's properties built with concrete lintels that can cause Cold Bridging

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To give you some examples of Cold Bridging

As mentioned above typically Cold Bridging can be caused by lintels and also by beams (which effectively are big lintels). These were very commonly used in 1960's and 1970's buildings and can lead to condensation over doors and windows. We mentioned a 1960's building but here are some examples of concrete lintels that were commonly used in the 1970's and which today have caused cold bridging over the door and which in turn has led to condensation and deterioration of the paintwork.



A rear door to a 1970's building.
Can you tell where the cold bridging would be in this photo?



A close up view showing there is a concrete lintel over the door and window. This is where the cold bridging occurs causing condensation inside.

Cold Bridging can also occur on metal lintels. We note that some modern metal lintels now have insulation in them which we assume is to reduce cold bridging.

Commercial properties suffer from Cold Bridging too

Commercial buildings are often built using structural frames. These frames are usually constructed of concrete or metal or sometimes both. The structural frame forms the skeleton of the building as you can see in the adjoining photo. Sometimes the structural frames, particularly, the concrete ones can suffer from Cold Bridging which causes blackening of the concrete frame. This can look like the roof has leaked and can lead to wrongly diagnosing a problem as being a roof leak. This can result in great time and expense.



Cold Bridging in a commercial property with a concrete frame.

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being wasted repairing a roof that was not leaking and indeed in some cases has led to a new roof being fitted which has costs tens of thousands of pounds. This happened because it wasn't understood what the problem was.

When is Cold Bridging Likely?

In our experience we have seen cold bridging occurring in

1. Georgian and Regency properties
2. Victorian and Edwardian properties
3. Pre-war properties
4. War years construction properties
5. Post war construction properties up to the 1980's.
6. Commercial properties that use structural frames particularly concrete frames.

We find that cold bridging and condensation occur most commonly where a property has a relatively high heating level, a good level of insulation and where it has many occupants.



Georgian style properties can suffer from cold bridging and condensation. However in our experience it is more likely to be the new extensions or alterations that are added to them



Post war 1960's properties with plastic double glazing without trickle vents that have been added can cause condensation.

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Problems with 1970/1980 era properties relating to Cold Bridging

Let us take a look at the 1970's/1980's era of property to give an example of the problems we have come across with this era.

The 1970's is an era where we had just begun to think about insulating due to the oil crisis and where we added insulation into our structures
For example with;

1. cavity wall insulation or
2. double glazed windows.

This meant they were warmer which has meant the significance of a lintel, over a door or window, being colder and allowing the transfer of coldness becomes much more important. This results in condensation that we commonly see above windows in this age and era of property.

How to solve Cold Bridging

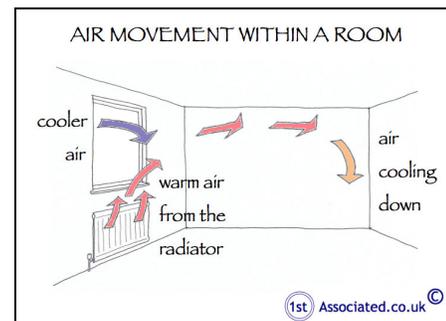
The difficulty is resolving cold bridging. Normally, where condensation is involved, if you get the balance of warm and coolness of the air, ventilation and movement you can reduce considerably the chances of condensation. Airing the room by opening the windows, which seems to have gone out of fashion, can help considerably.



1970's property with cold bridging to the roof beams and the lintels



1980's property, cold bridging was found in the lintels



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Where do we most commonly find Cold Bridging?

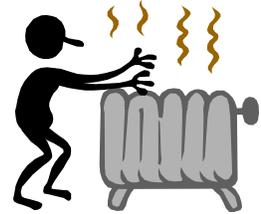
Our thoughts on this have very much changed as we used to say that cold bridging was typically found in properties from the 1960's/1970's. However we are increasingly finding it in a broader range of properties, particularly Victorian properties, where people are trying to live to modern standards of heating and insulation without understanding that the properties need to breathe as well. We have also found cold bridging in properties where extensions have been carried out and where the extension has been built to a different standard to the original property.



Victorian properties that have been extended and altered over the years with new thermal properties that can cause Cold Bridging because of the mix of old and new standards

Is your life style a factor in Cold Bridging?

This is often a contentious and difficult question, particularly where the occupier is a tenant and there is a disagreement between the landlord and the occupier as to why there is mould in the property. In our experience the major factor is the size of the family living in a property. This is especially the case with large families with young children and where in turn there is a lot of washing of clothes being done. This is particularly the case in the winter months, with the wet washed clothes being dried on radiators. Also general hygiene washing and not to mention cooking to feed everyone all lead toward a more humid atmosphere.



This is generally known as the lifestyle of occupants and can be a major factor particularly where there are legal cases as to the problems within a property.

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Expert witness case, what is an expert witness?

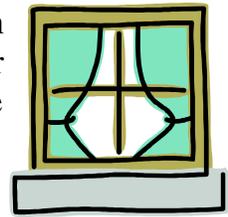
This is where you employ someone who is a specialist within a field, such as us as Chartered Building Surveyors, who comment on problems of condensation within the property. We have been involved in several court cases as expert witnesses where landlords are being taken to court over the condensation that is occurring in their property. The expert witness case looks at how this condensation is occurring and if it relates, for example, to the occupiers' lifestyle or whether it relates to the way the building was constructed and where there are, for example, cold bridging elements. When discussions of this nature take place in court they can be very expensive.



Older style London converted flats with property problems such as Condensation and Cold Bridging

Is Cold Bridging and Condensation a design problem or a lifestyle problem?

This really is a difficult question to answer. We have been involved in a number of cases as expert witnesses or advocates and the answer can vary. We would comment that there are factors that can be changed and factors that can't be changed. For example, the occupiers lifestyle can in most cases be amended. This may involve the occupier having an understanding of the problems they are causing. For example, drying lots of washing on a radiator inside may be causing excessive moisture in the atmosphere. Equally not opening the windows and closing or sealing up vents can be a problem.



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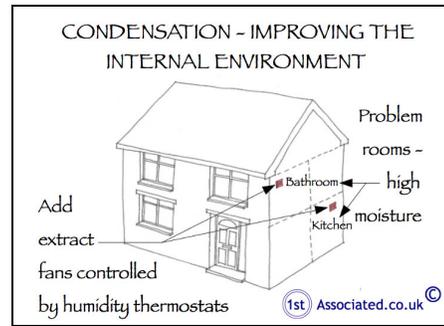
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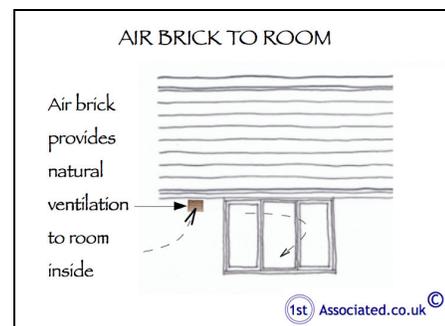
Design of the Building

Sometimes it really is down to the design of the property. Where there are cold elements in it, such as a concrete structural frame or concrete lintels, when these are in contact with moist air condensation occurs. Sometimes this is impossible to stop but often it is possible to reduce it by having a better circulation of air with a better heat and coolness balance and the removal of any moist air.



Things to remember about an air brick

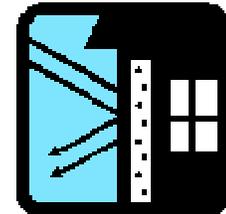
If you are thinking about adding an air brick then you need to be aware that airbricks don't actually allow that much air through. Although externally a nine by three air brick has a lot of gaps, as these gaps taper, it is generally considered that only about one inch square of air regularly passes through the grills.



Air brick may not ventilate room enough

What's happening in brand new housing?

It could be argued that we still do not know what is happening in brand new houses that are highly insulated. We have been involved in one legal case where a modern heat exchange system was being used where it was simply not possible to have a shower in the property without causing condensation, even with the windows open and taking other measures. Our concern is what is happening to this condensation? It was not visible on the surface so is it visible as interstitial condensation? We still think there will be problems to be found in modern properties.



As Chartered Surveyors we like to see things that have been in use for some time work before we would recommend them.

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In the winter we have condensation problems but in the summer we don't

The different seasons mean that the building reacts differently. Anyone who has lived in an old property will know that windows and doors particularly sliding sash windows will swell during the winter months.

There can be similar issues with a property where, regardless of your lifestyle, during some of the different seasons, for example the winter or a wet spring, taking a shower can relate in condensation even with extract fans running (although this is far less likely).

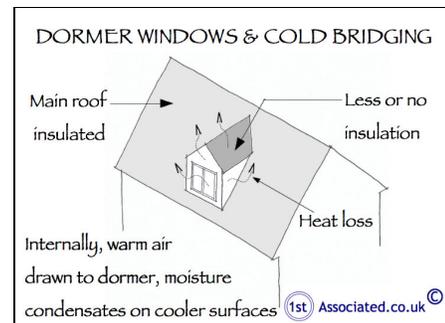


Sliding sash windows can swell in the winter months

It also depends on what the humidity level is outside as this can be greater than inside. The moisture/humidity will then seek out colder rooms such as spare bedrooms and the corners of cupboards. When you open these at a later date you will be surprised to find black mould.

Extensions and Cold Bridging

Increasingly we are coming across problems where properties have been extended and it has not been planned or thought through properly. We have come across dormer roofs that simply have no insulation so any heat in the property is going straight out of the dormer roof. We have also come across property problems where an extension has resulted in colder areas within the property and which although not problem areas, as such, our clients have found them not nice areas to be in. It is not a great outcome if you have just spent tens of thousands of pounds on a new extension that you are not happy with.



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