

**RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY**  
**OF**  
**Newmarket, Cambridgeshire CB8**



**FOR**  
**Mr G**

**Prepared by:**

**INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS**

**Marketing by:**

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

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# **INTRODUCTION**

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

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.

# **REPORT FORMAT**

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

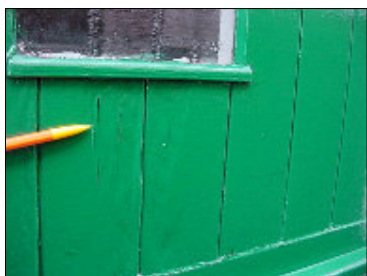
## ***GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION***

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

## **TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED**

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

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



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

## **ORIENTATION**

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

## **ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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

## **SYNOPSIS**

### **SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION**

This is a two-storey detached property with adjoining garage.

There is a small garden to the front and off road parking for one car. There is a footpath and grassed area and a Right of Way to the left hand side. There is a reasonable sized rear garden.

We believe that the property was built in the 1970s. If the exact age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

#### **Putting Life into Perspective!**

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

1971	Decimalisation
Early 1970s	British Property Boom
1973	Britain enters the European Economic Community
1977	Elvis Presley Dies
1977-1979	The Winter of Discontent
1979-1991	The Thatcher Years
1980	John Lennon Shot Dead

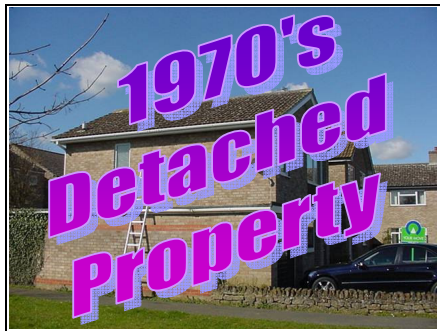
# EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front View



Rear View



Left Hand Side View



Right Hand Side View

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# **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

## **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Front Lounge
- Kitchen Dining Area
- Cloak Room under the Stairs
- Utilities Room to the back of the garage
- Garage (divided into Study and Bike Store)

## **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Single Bedroom
- Two Double Bedrooms
- Family Bathroom

## **Outside Areas**

The property sits in a cul-de-sac and therefore will benefit from not having passing traffic.



# 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



Lounge



Utility Room and boiler



Kitchen Area



Dining Area



Cloakroom under the Stairs



End of Garage



**First Floor**



Front Left Hand Bedroom



Front Right Hand Bedroom



Bathroom



Rear Right Hand Bedroom

# **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

## **EXTERNAL**

Chimneys:	One brick chimney
Roofs:	A shallow pitched main roof, clad with concrete tiles, and a flat roof over the garage
Gutters and Downpipes:	Profile plastic (square in shape)
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Internal
Walls:	Stretcher bond (assumed) construction with timber cladding
External Joinery:	Double glazed plastic windows. Plastic fascias and soffits at high level (possibly over-cladding the timber beneath) and painted timber fascias and soffits at lower level to the garage

## **INTERNAL**

Ceilings:	Plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Predominantly solid with gypsum plaster (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: Solid concrete floor (assumed) First Floor: Joist and floorboard sheets (assumed)

## **SERVICES**

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and oil (assumed).

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

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 50 plus photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if 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.

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

Generally we found the property to be in average condition externally and in good condition internally, as it has been redecorated (or painted to sell). We have divided the Executive Summary into 'The Good', 'The Bad' and 'The Ugly', to help distinguish what in our mind are the main issues.

### The Good

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

- Newly painted internally throughout, however on the negative side this could, of course, be hiding defects.
- The property has the space of an older newer property, before the sites became limited.
- The property benefits from a garage and off-road parking.

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

## **The Bad**

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

### 1) **Possible Over-cladding**

There is plastic cladding to the fascias and soffits at high level and we believe these have possibly over-clad the original timber. This can cause wet rot in these areas, particularly as it is normally carried out when the timbers are not in good condition.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Carry out a sample by drilling into the fascia to see if wood is below. If wood is present, strip off the over-cladding and check the condition of the timber beneath. Ideally you should add a vent to the soffit and repair and redecorate as necessary.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** To replace the fascias and soffits would mean removing the gutters and as this is high level work you may need scaffolding or special access equipment. We would therefore suggest in the region of £2,000 - £3,000, but you do need to obtain quotations.

Please see the External Joinery Section of this Report.

## 2) Condensation to Windows

Some of the units have failed to the double glazed windows and have condensation in them. This looks to be an old problem as we could see some DIY repairs.



Condensation



Repair to double glazing on front window

**ACTION REQUIRED** Replace double glazed units as required, price varies depending upon the size of the glass.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds per pane of glass, but you do need to obtain quotations.

Please see the External Joinery and Dampness Section of this Report.

## 3) Services

### Electrics

The electric fuse board is dated and from around the 1960s/1970s. We would recommend this is replaced with a more modern unit.

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

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £250 - £350 for the new fuse board plus the cost of the test and repairs.



### Micro-bore Pipes to the Central Heating

We are really not keen on micro-bore pipes as they do tend to block a lot easier than traditional larger pipes

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that the existing system is left in until it stops working or becomes very problematic and then we would suggest that you replace with a traditional system.



**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £2,500 - £5,000 and the radiators will need changing as well no doubt. Quotations to be obtained.

### Oil Tank

The oil tank is metal and rusting and coming to the end of its useful life. Although, having said that, it may still last a few years. We much prefer to see plastic oil tanks, as these are usually double lined, which means that if they do leak there is a second lining which catches the spillage.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Have the oil tank checked by an independent OFTEC registered heating engineer prior to committing to purchase the property. You may have to replace with a plastic tank.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £2,000 - £4,000, quotations required. It may also need repositioning.

### Water Leak to Bathroom Cold Tap

During the course of the survey we turned the taps on for approximately 15 – 30 minutes and noted a minor leak on the cold tap which left a puddle of water on the floor.





Leaking Tap



Puddle of water on the floor

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ask a plumber to come and have a look at the system as a whole and specifically about this issue.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

#### 4) **Lightweight Structure**

If you walk into the front right hand bedroom you can feel deflection to the floor. Whilst this deflection is typical of properties of this age, the construction is what we could term as 'lightweight' and we are well aware that some people are not happy with this level of construction.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** There is very little that can be done without major work. Return to the property to ensure you are happy to live with rooms with this deflection. If you are unhappy please contact us and we will advise you further.

Please see the Floors Section of this Report.

## 5) Garage

### Flat Roof to Garage

The flat roof over the garage is very flat and has moss present on it indicating that water is sitting on it. In addition to this the felt flashing (we would always recommend lead flashings) has come away and needs repair.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally completely re-roof in the next five years using an insulation cut to falls to ensure there is a definite fall on the roof. More immediately you need to replace the felt flashing with a lead flashing.



Moss sitting on flat roof



Flashing coming away

### Painted Timber Fascias and Soffits

There is some minor rot to the low level timber fascias and soffits.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that these are replaced when the roof is replaced. This is possibly a DIY-type job.



**ANTICIPATED COST:** £5,000 - £10,000 for the roof replacement and the various other repairs.

This is an expensive option and you may prefer to wait until you get permission for an extension, if that is what you intend to do, or a lean-to roof.

## Cracking

There are vertical cracks visible in the single skin of brick wall on the left hand side. This is hidden externally by a wall that has been built in front of it.



Single skin brick wall opening up - note the vertical cracks.



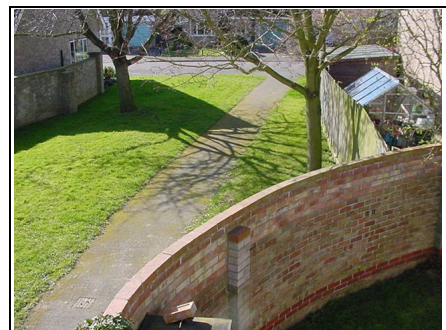
The right hand wall in this photo is the one with the cracking

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Advisor needs to confirm who owns the wall and we would suggest repair work / rebuilding work as necessary, depending upon what your future requirements are for the wall, i.e. if you do plan to rebuild in the next few years then we suggest you wait until then.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section, External Joinery Section and Walls Section of this Report.

### 6) Single Skin Garden Wall

We thought we would add this as you have a fairly high single skin brick wall that normally can be prone to cracking and minor movement. This wall adjoins a Right of Way public footpath that the public use and the wall is near enough, if it fell down, to land on someone.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to keep this wall well maintained on both sides of the wall and make a periodic inspection of the far side of the wall (the one that you cannot see by looking out of the window).

Please see the Outside Areas Section of this Report.

## **The Ugly**

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

There are no items that we feel should fall within this category.

## **Specific Questions**

### **Use of the Garage Area as an Office**

#### **Proposed Office too Cold**

We spoke about the use of Kingspan (trade name) insulation or similar on the walls and the ceiling to increase the thermal insulation in the area. Remember, the garage wall is only one brick thick (in the area we saw it, it wasn't particularly stable either!).

#### **Proposed Office too Dark**

We spoke about the area being too dark and we suggested using roof windows / skylights (often known by the trade name Velux windows). This would be perfectly possible on the flat roof above, just make sure that the flashings around the edge of them are good to stop water getting in, and we always recommend a domed roof window on a flat roof to make sure the water does not sit on it. Adding the roof windows will help avoid the area feeling like a cave!

You also mentioned the possibility of a lean-to roof; this would enhance the height of the ceiling if you allowed the ceiling to follow the line of the joists.

#### **Data Cables**

We spoke about how best to use data cables in the property. These can either be surface mounted on the wall or taken above the ceiling or externally; it really depends upon how much you like seeing wires.

## **Building on To of the Garage**

As the garage presently stands it would not be able to take the load of a building on top of it; this is because the walls are a single brick thick and it is more than likely (given the construction of the walls) that the foundations are shallow and less than the required depth, which would be at least 1.2 meters, possibly deeper. So, it is likely that you will need new foundations and new walls. If you do try to use the existing foundations then the Local Authority will normally require them to be opened up to check their depth.

## **Windows in the New Extension**

If you recall the windows on the left hand side of the property, and indeed the right hand side of the property, are frosted; so it is likely that any windows you have in the extension will also need to be frosted on the side, although it does look likely that you could have windows on both the front and rear of the extension. You could also use roof windows / skylights (also known by the trade name Velux).

## **Room Height**

In this age of property the room height is fairly typically about 2.2m – 2.5m, which is typical, as are the doors which are about 2m. We do take your point that you could bang your head on the doors if you are not careful.

## **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.

## **DIY/Handyman Type Work**

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as redecorating (you may not like magnolia) to make the house into your home. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

## **Purchase Price**

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

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

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

## **Estimates of Costs**

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

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



## SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



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

We have no further items to add other than to get the heating working in the building.

As a general comment for any work required we would always recommend that you obtain at least three quotations for any work from a qualified, time served tradesperson or a competent registered building contractor prior to legal completion.

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

Please call us when you have had the opportunity to read this report.

# **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

Just a few more comments about the Report format before you read the actual main body of the Report.

## **TENURE – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)**

We have assumed that the property is to be sold Freehold or Long leasehold, with no unusual or onerous clauses and that vacant possession will be available on completion. Your Legal Advisor should confirm that this is the case.

## **ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?**

It is important to remember that the estate agents are acting for the seller (usually known as the vendor) and not the purchaser and are therefore eager to sell the property (no sale – no fee!). We as your employed Independent Chartered Surveyor represent your interests only.

## **SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR**

To carry out your legal work you can use a solicitor or a legal advisor. We have used both terms within the report.

## **TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS**

This report is being carried out under our terms of engagement for Residential Building Surveys, as agreed to and signed by yourselves. If you have not seen and signed a copy of our terms of engagement please phone immediately.

## **OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION**

Our aim is for you to be completely happy with the service we provide, and we will try and help you in whatever way possible with your property purchase - just phone us.

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



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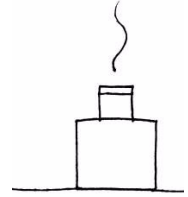
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## EXTERNAL

### CHIMNEY STACKS



#### Chimney Stacks

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

This property has one chimney, which is located on the right hand side. The chimney is brick finished with a lead flashing and no chimney pots. From what we could see the chimney is in average condition. Unfortunately we were unable to see the very top of the chimney, we therefore cannot comment upon it.



#### Flashings Defined

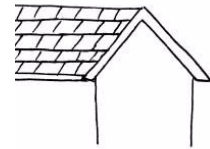
Flashings prevent dampness from entering the property, usually at junctions where materials change. Such a junction is the one between the chimney and the roof.



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

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

# ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

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

## Main Roof

The main roof has a shallow pitch and is clad with concrete tiles. This type of roof was popular in the 1960s/70s. Taking account of the roof's age we consider it to be in average condition.

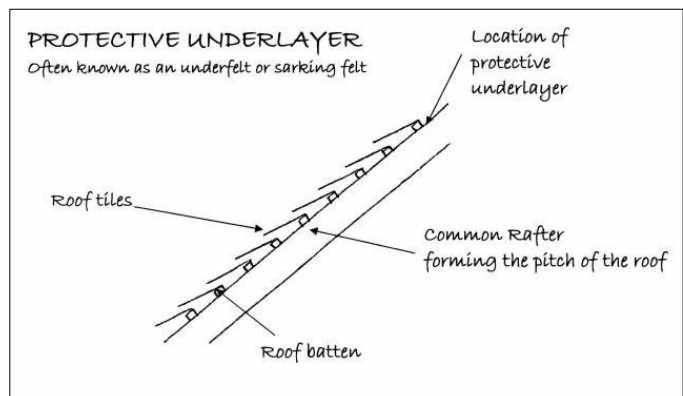


Typical problems are wind blown/driven rain getting under the tiles and rotting the battens. In this instance we were unable to lift the tiles to check.

Also moss can and has build up on the concrete tiles and needs clearing from time to time. If it is left it will block the gutters.

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

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





When we inspected the loft space we found a reinforced plastic sarking felt. This type of sarking felt was used in the 1970s/1980s and its use was generally stopped because it was susceptible to causing condensation unless the roofs are adequately vented, which they are usually not.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** In this case we would recommend vents are added.

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

## **Garage Flat Roof**

*Whilst these roofs are called "flat", present building regulations and good building practice presently requires a minimum fall of 12 degrees.*

*Flat roofs are formed in a variety of materials. Difficulties can arise when the water is not discharged from the roof but sits upon it, as this can soon lead to deterioration which flat roofs are renowned for.*

The property has an older style Bitumen flat roof that has a 'protective' chipping covering. This roof has passed its sell by date. We recommend replacement with a modern, high performance felt within the next five years. You also need to ensure the roof has a proper fall (flat roofs are not meant to be flat!) and we would recommend ventilation to reduce the risk of condensation, and insulation.



Flashing coming away.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## **Underside of Flat Roof**

We were able to see the underside of the flat roof and there were no obvious signs of roof leaks; although it would not surprise us if there were some leaks to the edges given the condition of the flashings.





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

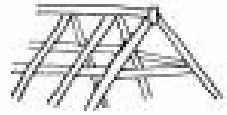
Also it could not be established if there is insulation within the roof or a vapour barrier, without the vapour barrier and combined with inadequate ventilation there will be an increase in the risk of wet or dry rot.

Finally, all the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. Flat roofs have been inspected from upper floor windows and/or ground level.

Unfortunately we were only able to see approximately 25 percent of the main roof from ground level via our ladder or via any other vantage point that we managed to gain. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see, however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

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

# **ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT**



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

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

### **Main Roof**

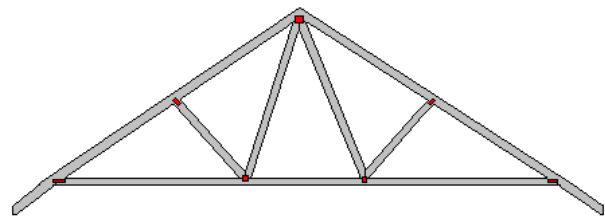
#### **Roof Access**

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing. There is no loft ladder, electric light or secured floorboards. We recommend that these be added, as it will make the loft space safer and easier to use (although it is a low roof height). The loft has been viewed by torchlight, which has limited our viewing slightly.



#### **Roof Structure**

When we inspected the roof space we found a pre-fabricated "W" 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 structure.



**PREFABRICATED ROOF TRUSS**

## Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

- Serious active woodworm
- Structurally significant defects to the timbers
- Dry rot
- Wet rot



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

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

## Water Tanks

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



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

## Ventilation

We did not see any vents to the roof to help prevent condensation.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add ventilation.

## **Insulation**

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

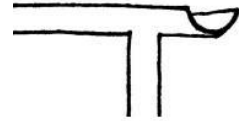
## **Electrical Cables**

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

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

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

# GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

## Gutters and Downpipes

From ground level the gutters and downpipes looked to be what is known as profile plastic, which means the gutters and downpipes are shaped. There may be some minor leaks, but we feel that most people could live with these.



High level guttering



Low level guttering blocked with moss



The gully is blocked with leaves and needs clearing.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We noted that some of the gutters had moss in; no doubt built up on the shallow pitched roof and also the flat roof. We would recommend that the roofs are cleared of moss.

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

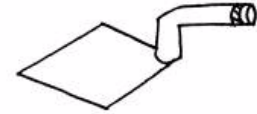
### **Soil and Vent Pipe**

The soil and vent pipe is internal. We could see the boxing in to it within the kitchen cupboard (which will restrict space in the cupboard) but we physically could not see the pipe itself.

Finally, gutters and downpipes and soil and vent pipes have been inspected from ground level. As it was not raining at the time of the inspection it is not possible to confirm 100 per cent that the rainwater installation is free from blockage, leakage etc. or that it is capable of coping with long periods of heavy rainfall. Our comments have therefore been based on our best assumptions.



# WALLS



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

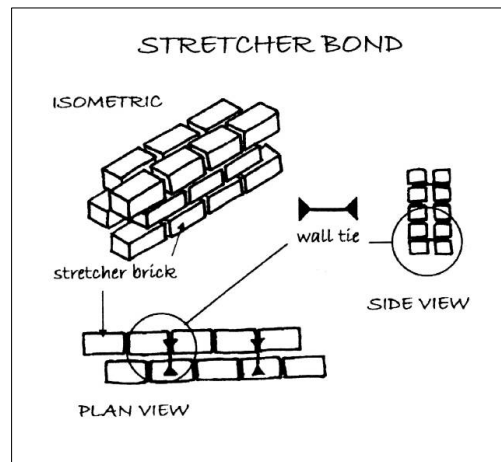
## Brickwork

The walls are built in brick and bedded in cement mortar in what is known as stretcher bond brickwork.



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

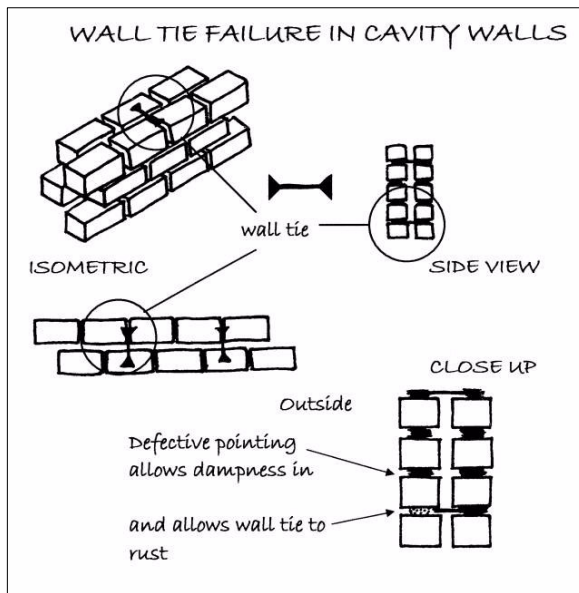
We generally found the brickwork and pointing in average condition.



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 heat insulation. The design of cavity walls makes them relatively unstable and they depend upon the wall ties.

Walls of cavity construction should incorporate ties to hold together the inner and outer leaves of masonry. 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.

In properties built before the early 1980s, possibly the 1970s, there can be problems with wall tie failure. At present there are no outward and visible signs of wall tie failure. As this is a progressive condition you should be aware that there is a risk that repairs/renewal might be required in the future.



### Garage

The garage is brick finished in a single skin of bricks. This type of wall is integrally unstable.

In this instance we noted hairline cracking. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



### Timber Cladding

There is timber cladding to the front of the property.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** This would benefit from redecoration.



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

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

# **FOUNDATIONS**



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

## **Foundations**

Typically with a property of this age the foundations will be 1m – 1.2m deep depending upon exactly when the property was built as there was an increase in depth required due to movement that occurred in the 1970s.

Since 1948 the Local Authority has been tasked to check that the property is built to Building Regulations standards, it is reasonable to expect Building Regulations approval to have been gained. Your legal adviser needs to check and confirm this.

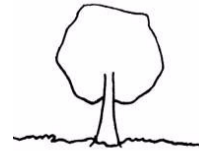
## **Building Insurance Policy**

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

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

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

# TREES

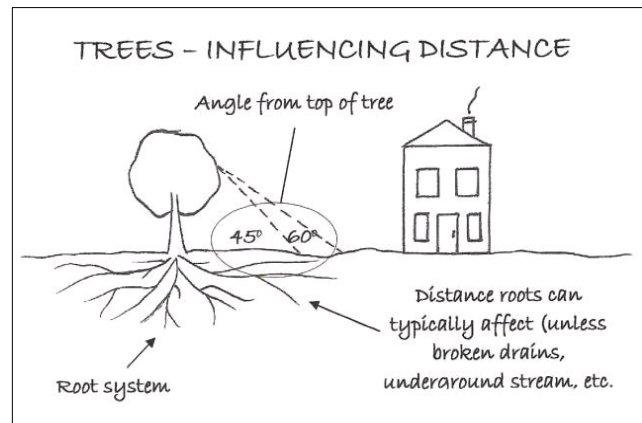
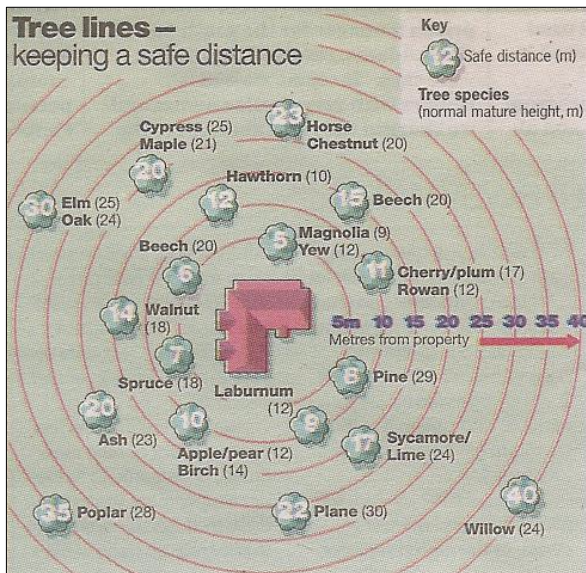


*Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.*

The property has a few small trees. We could see that a large tree has been removed to the rear by the stump that remains. It should be remembered that trees need regular maintenance.



Quite a large tree has been removed to the rear garden.



## Influencing Distance Defined

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

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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.

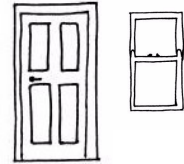
As we inspected the property we could see that the damp proof course was partly visible to the rear of the property, but it was difficult to confirm what type of damp proof course has been used from a visual inspection alone.

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

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



# **EXTERNAL JOINERY**



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

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

## **Fascias and Soffits**

We noted that the property has plastic fascias, soffits at high level and we think that these over-clad the original timber.

There are painted timber fascias and soffits at low level that has some wet rot and would benefit from repair and redecoration.



Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## **Windows and Doors**

The property has predominantly plastic, double glazed windows. We did not see any trickle vents.

### Trickle Vents Defined

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



There is one timber window to the rear, which is the access to the garage.

The rear patio door has been cut from an original window; our pen indicates where the cut bricks are.

We would draw your attention to the fact that sealed double glazed units can fail, particularly as a result of poor workmanship during installation. Failure of the seal leads to condensation between the two panes of glass and simply replacing the affected units may not provide a satisfactory long-term solution. In this case the timber window to the rear has wet rot and requires repair / replacement and some of the windows have condensation; this is usually caused by failure of the seal to the double glazing.



Rotten window to the rear next to the garage.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

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

## **EXTERNAL DECORATIONS**



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

There is some external decoration required within the next few years to the garage door, low level timber fascias and soffits and the fencing.

The timber cladding to the front of the property would benefit from being redecorated as soon as possible.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

# INTERNAL

## CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES



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

### Ceilings

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be plasterboard.

#### Plasterboard Defined

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



### Internal Walls and Partitions

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

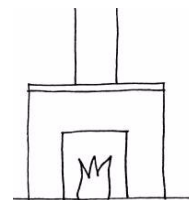
### Perimeter Walls

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

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

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

## CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

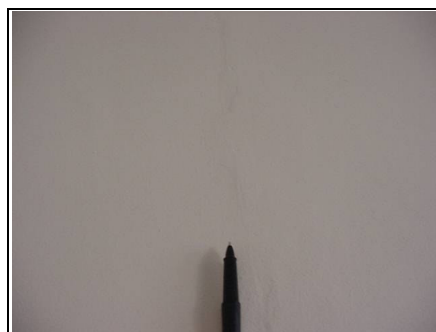
The property has a chimney situated on the right hand side.

There is hairline cracking around the chimney; we believe this may have been where some dampness got through or a decorative chimneybreast was in place. We checked the area for dampness and did not find anything.



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

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



Hairline cracking to the chimney

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



# FLOORS



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

## Ground Floor

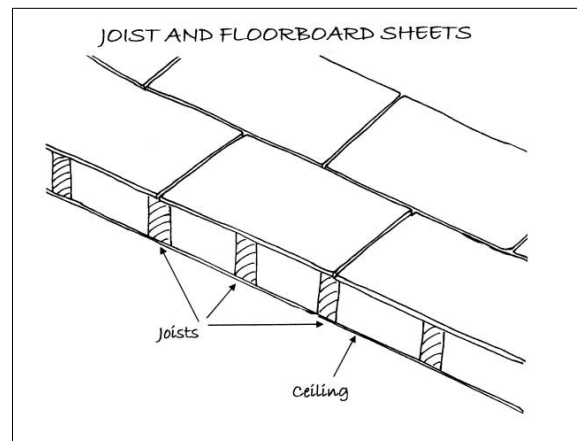
The floors felt solid and firm underfoot so we have assumed they are formed in concrete, as this would be typical for this age of property, however, we have not opened up the floors or lifted any of the floor coverings.

## First Floor

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

### Joist and Floorboard Sheet 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 floorboard sheets fixed down upon it.



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

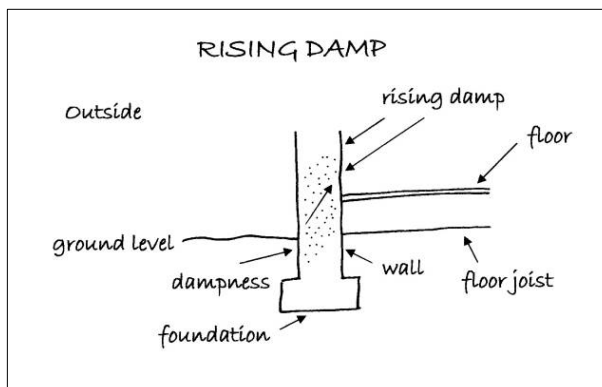
# DAMPNESS



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

## Rising Damp

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



No evidence of any significant rising dampness was detected in the random areas checked. It is not usual in a property of this type and age to have minor damp particularly to the rear around the French doors that have been added, as usually a damp proof course is not added at the same time. We believe most people will be happy to live with this.

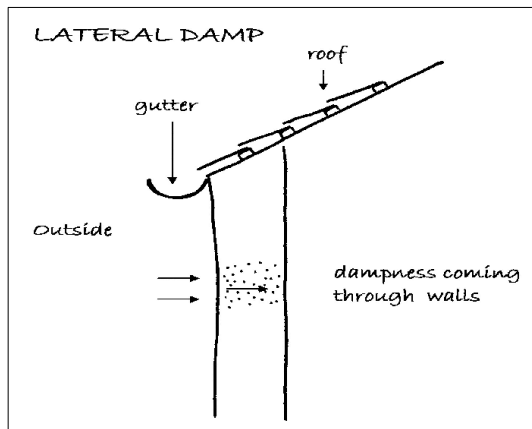


Checking for Rising Damp

## Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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

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



Checking for Lateral Damp

## **Condensation**

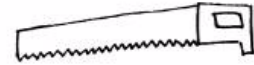
*This is where the humidity held within the air meets a cold surface causing condensation.*

Please see our comments regarding condensation to the windows in the Executive Summary and also our comments in the Roof Coverings Section where we recommend ventilation is added to the roof structure.

Generally condensation depends upon how you utilise the building. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating and ventilation of properties. Normally opening windows first thing in the morning resolves most condensation issues.

Finally, effective testing was prevented in areas concealed by heavy furniture, fixtures such as kitchen fittings with backboards, wall tiles and wall panelling. We have not carried out tests to BRE Digest 245, but only carried out a visual inspection.

# INTERNAL JOINERY



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

## Doors

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



## Staircase

We were unable to examine the underside of the stair timbers due to it being lined where we could see it and also part of it was hidden from view, which precluded our inspection, so we cannot comment further upon the stair structure. We can, however, say that a lining gives a resistance to the spread of fire if such circumstances were to occur.

## Kitchen

From our cursory visual inspection the kitchen looked in reasonable condition, although it has suffered from some minor day-to-day marks.

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

Quite unusually the full height cupboard at the rear also has the soil and ventilation pipe travelling through it, which does reduce the size of the cupboard.



Galley-style Kitchen

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

## **TIMBER DEFECTS**



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

### **Dry Rot**

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

Given the conditions found within this property it is unlikely that dry rot is present.

### **Wet Rot**

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

In the areas visually inspected no evidence was found of any significant wet rot, with the exception of the possible over cladding to the fascias and soffits and also the minor rot to the low level fascias and soffits.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

### **Woodworm**



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

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

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the roof we found no obvious visual signs of significant woodworm activity or, indeed, signs of past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage.

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, and roof configuration, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings.

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

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

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



## INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

The decoration is 'as new'; our concern here is what defects are being hidden by the paint work.

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

# THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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

## Roof Insulation

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

## Walls

Whilst the cavity wall construction allows the opportunity to put insulation in, in this age of property it was not originally common practice. Without opening up the wall we cannot confirm if insulation has been added or not.

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

## Windows

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

## Services

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

## Summary

Assuming the above is correct we would consider the thermal properties to be slightly below average for this property's age, type and style.

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

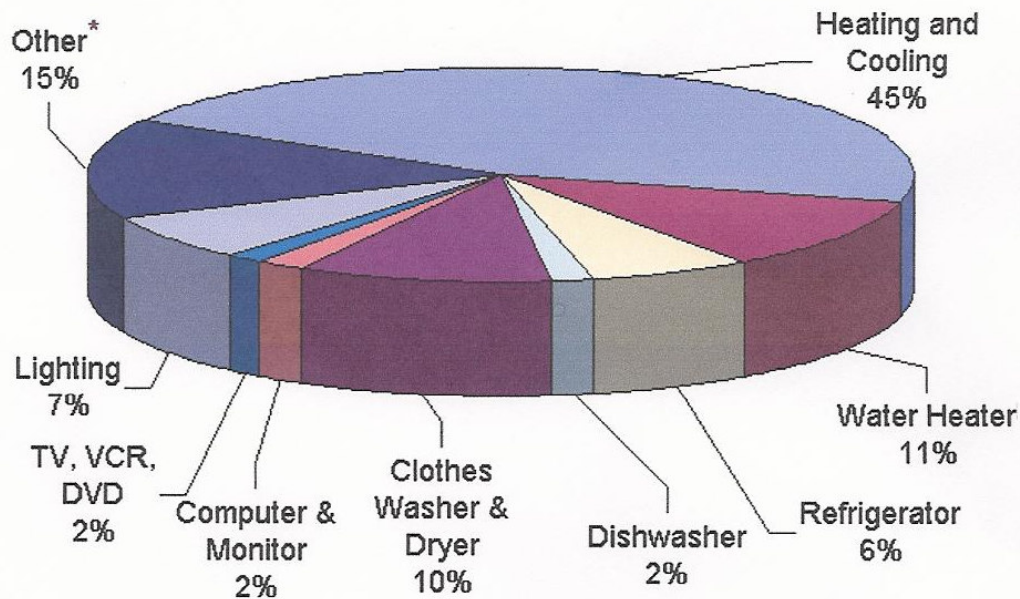
*[HTTP//www.est.org.uk](http://www.est.org.uk), which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.*

*or alternatively [www.cat.org.uk](http://www.cat.org.uk)*

*or [www.ecocentre.org.uk](http://www.ecocentre.org.uk) for an alternative technological view.*

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

### What does my energy bill pay for?



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

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## OTHER MATTERS



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

### Security System

We did not note a security system within the house. 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 Systems and Smoke Alarms

Some battery operated smoke detectors were noted. The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply.(which means you no longer have to remember to change the batteries). Obviously in a property of this age this is difficult, as it would mean having surface mounted wires or cutting wiring into the plaster.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend, for your own safety, that smoke detectors be installed. We have seen recently a smoke detector that fits within a light fitting (although we have not used these personally),which is charged when the light is switched on (providing it is switched on a certain number of times a year). We feel this is an excellent idea as it alleviates the problems of batteries running out. We also like the radio activated fire/smoke alarms. We would also advise that if you wish to have any general advice the local Fire Authority are usually happy to help.

### Insurance

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

## Asbestos

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

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

## **SERVICES**

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

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



# ELECTRICITY



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

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

## Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the garage. We would date the fuse board as being from the 1960s/1970s. Rewireable fuses are now superseded. Far better fuse boards are now available.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



## Earth Test

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

We would comment the electrics look to be to a DIY standard in some areas.

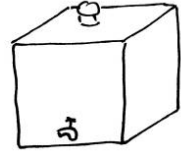


**ACTION REQUIRED:** As the property is changing occupancy an IEE report should be carried out by a NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor.

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

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

# OIL



The oil tank looks in below average condition with some minor rust. It really is not possible for us to establish if the oil tank is leaking from a one-off inspection, although there were no obvious visible signs of this.

## Bund Wall

Should the tank leak there is no bund wall around it to stop the oil escaping.

### Bund Wall Defined

A lined wall around oil tanks designed to catch all oil that leaks from it. It therefore should have the capacity to retain the volume of oil held within the oil tank and also be oil tight.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Have the oil tank checked by an independent OFTEC registered heating engineer prior to committing to purchase the property. You may have to replace with a plastic tank. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

# PLUMBING AND HEATING



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

## Water Supply

The controlling stopcock was not located. It is important that its presence be established in case of bursts or leaks. The stopcock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ask the owners where the stopcock is located.

## Water Pressure

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

## Cold Water Cistern

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

## Hot Water Cylinder

The hot water cylinder is factory lagged, which means it is relatively new (within the last 30 years in this case).



## Plumbing

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

## Heating

The boiler was located in the utility room; it is wall mounted and is made by Myson and the model type is Velaire, which is a make we do not come across very often.

The boiler was not on at the time of our inspection, so we were unable to see if the boiler or radiators were leaking and if the boiler is working.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The Boiler must be turned on and seen to be working before you commit to purchase, or the cost of a new boiler should be taken off the house price.

### Ten Minute Heating Test

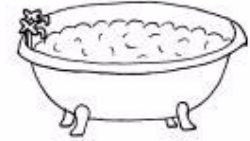
We would normally carry out a ten minute heating test to establish if the radiators get hot and whether the system is working. As the heating was turned off at the time of our inspection we were unable to carry out this test. We would therefore recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary. This system must be proved to be working before you take the property on.

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

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

## **BATHROOM**



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

The bathroom suite, looks in average condition.

We noted a leak to the wash basin tap. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

## MAIN DRAINS



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

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

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

### Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We have identified one inspection chambers / manholes located to the front of the property.

We duly lifted the man hole / inspection chamber cover and found the drain to be free flowing; we noted it was finished in brick.

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



### Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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



We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal. In this age of property it is likely to be into 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.

## OUTSIDE AREAS

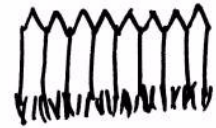
### GARAGES / PARKING



The property has an integral garage and off-road parking. We discussed the possibility of adding a further space to the front to allow two cars to park; we do not see any problem with this, other than when you come to sell the property some purchasers are not happy with cars parked in front of the lounge window.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

### EXTERNAL AREAS



#### Front Garden

The front garden consists of a small grassed area and driveway.



#### Right of Way

To the left hand side there is a right of way. You need to establish exactly where the boundary is.



Right of Way on the left hand side

## **Rear Garden**

The rear garden is laid mainly to lawn; it also includes a few trees, the oil tank and a shed.

The wall is relatively high for a single brick wall; you should therefore periodically check that it is stable, as it has a public footpath to the rear of it.



Rear Garden



Ivy needs cutting back

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

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

## **Neighbours**

### **Left Hand Neighbours**

You do not have a left hand neighbour as such.

### **Right Hand Neighbours**

There was no one in at the time of our inspection.

## **POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

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

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

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

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

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

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

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

Finally, an extract from the book “Sold”!

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

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

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

## **REFERENCES**

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

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

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

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



# APPENDICES

Independent Chartered Surveyors

—— Marketing by: ——

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

0800 298 5424

## **LIMITATIONS**

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

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

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

## **ENGLISH LAW**

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

## **SOLE USE**

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

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

## **WEATHER**

It was a pleasant sunny but cold spring day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

We would add that some defects only become apparent upon physical occupation or are only present as a result of the extremes of weather (which are becoming a more frequent occurrence). As you may be aware 2006 was the warmest year in Britain since records began, we believe, in the 1700s; with July 2006 being the hottest July on record in Britain. 2005 was the third driest year on record in Britain with 2003 being the driest. The year 2000 was the wettest year on record and August 2004 was the wettest August on record in Britain. This may have adverse effects on lots of buildings in years to come.

## **NOT LOCAL**

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

## **EMPTY PROPERTY**

The property was empty at the time of our survey; we were therefore not able to carry out our usual question and answer session or have our questionnaire filled out.

## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been limited due to the property being empty and not being able to carry out our usual question and answer session with the owner. We were also unable to check the heating as it was turned off and no one was present to turn it on.

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

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

## **Work You Cannot do Yourself**

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

## INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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