

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

**Barking,
IG11**



FOR

Miss X

Prepared by:

XXXX

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS



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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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:

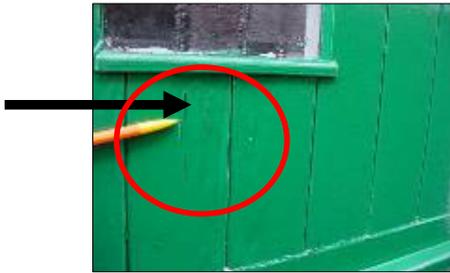
GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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 two storey, mid-terraced property, situated in a residential area, with a grassed area to the front and trees (believed to be Local Authority owned).

The property has a small front garden, including concrete front fence (everything was made in concrete in this Era!) and a rear garden, with a covered area and a large summer house, currently being used as an office/storage area.

Type of non-traditional building

This is a pre-cast concrete building. There were 100's of different types of houses built in pre-cast concrete. We believe this particular one was manufactured by Concrete Ltd and known as Carlton, during the period 1965 onwards.

The designers are Pianca of Carlton Contractors Ltd. This is a relatively specialist non-traditional building and from our investigations we believe that only 350 of these houses have ever been built.

Our sources of investigation are highlighted in the Appendices. There is further information within this report.

As mentioned, we believe the property was built in the mid-1960'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:

1960	The average house price in England is only £2,500, wish we had bought a few!
1961	Space history, Yuri Gagarin becomes the first man in space.
1963	Martin Luther King's 'dream' inspires a nation
1966	England beat Germany to win the 1966 World Cup at Wembley
1969	Neil Armstrong takes a giant leap for mankind with his small steps on the moon
1971	Decimalisation is introduced throughout the UK

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EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front View



Rear View



Street View



Front grassed area



Front garden



Rear garden with summer house

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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) Entrance hallway and staircase
- 2) WC to left
- 3) Through lounge, with dining room to rear
- 4) Reception room to front right
- 5) Kitchen to rear left
- 6) Cupboard area to rear

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Small bedroom to front left
- 2) Double bedroom front right
- 3) Double bedroom to rear right
- 4) Bathroom to rear left
- 5) Airing cupboard

Outside Areas

There are gardens to the front and rear, and also a grassed area to the front, which we assume is Local Authority owned and maintained, as we hope are the nearby trees.

Parking is on the roadside a short walk away, on a first come first service basis. There did not look to be a permit system in place.

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

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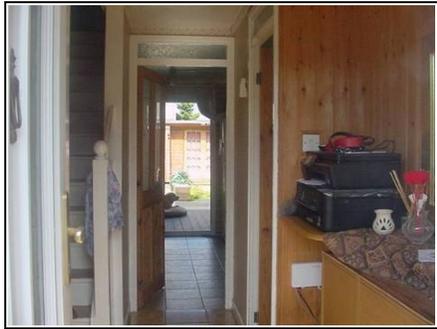
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INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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



Entrance hall and stairs



WC



Kitchen



Through lounge looking to front



Through lounge looking towards rear dining area

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First Floor



Small bedroom front left



Double bedroom front right



Double bedroom rear right



Bathroom

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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Main Roof:	Shallow pitched (very limited view), we believe clad with either concrete or asbestos tiles
Main Roof Structure:	Pre-fabricated truss roof with protective underlayer
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Internal, asbestos where visible at roof level
Walls:	Finished in concrete, render at high level and plastic panels and brickwork to rear, on a large panel construction (all assumed)
Fascias and Soffits:	Concrete
Windows and Doors:	Plastic double glazed windows

Internal

Ceilings:	Plasterboard / proprietary board (assumed)
Walls:	Solid, assumed brickwork or blockwork
Floors: Ground Floor:	Solid underfoot, assumed concrete
First Floor:	Solid underfoot, assumed concrete

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Services

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

Heating: There is a warm air heating Johnson and Starley system located on the first floor

Electrics: The electrics are from the 1980's/1990's and fuseboard is located in front reception room in the left corner

Gas: The consumer unit was located in front reception room – left corner

Drainage: The manhole is located to the front, which we were unable to lift

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

ACTION REQUIRED: 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 240 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 has potential and could be redecorated and generally upgraded.
- 2.0) This is a non-traditional pre-cast concrete building. Generally, non-traditional buildings can be purchased at a lower price than traditionally built houses in similar areas, albeit that they more difficult to sell and certainly more difficult to get a mortgage on.

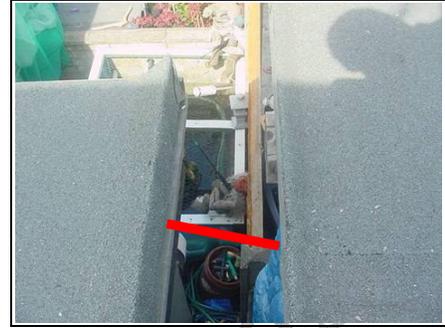
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- 3.0) For you, you advised us that the shed will be very handy in the garden, subject to your legal adviser checking and confirming it does not need Planning Permission, Building Regulations and Local Authority Approval. Likewise, the covered area to the rear of the property.



Gap between roofs of covered area
(red line)

Full Planning Permission would require a metre's gap between you and your neighbour for allowing for maintenance, unless there is prior agreement with your neighbour to form a party wall.

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.

1.0) Non-Traditional Construction

This house is of a non traditional construction of which there were many built after the second world war to meet the needs and demands of the population at the time and also there have been second and third waves of non-traditional construction, generally during property boom years and high demand times.

During the post-war years, when this building is believed to be built the immediate need for a large number of houses meant that we looked at how we constructed houses and moved towards more factory type processes. Indeed some of the factories that carried out the work, it is said, had been making aeroplanes and bombs for the war one week and then changed to building houses the next week.

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2.0) Types of non-traditional building and mortgages

There are many different types of non traditional buildings. These are generally split into categories of:

1. Metal frame – a metal frame supporting the structure.
2. Pre-cast concrete - cast in a factory and then brought to the site.
3. In-situ concrete - cast at the site.
4. Timber frame – a timber frame supporting the structure.

Each of these main categories then has many, many different types.

One of the interesting facts is that many mortgage companies won't lend on them. We would add further that their lending criteria changes from time to time which does mean they will lend on them some of the time and then not lend on them. Much of the buying population seems to be put off by non-traditional buildings (as opposed to a traditional brick or stone and tile or slate building).

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to be absolutely certain that you understand the risks of buying a non-traditional construction house, particularly in this house where there appears to have been a very limited number of them ever built.

3.0) Pre-cast concrete houses

This house has been built using a pre-cast concrete method. We would term this as large panel construction, using large panels of pre-cast concrete (concrete made in a factory and then brought to the location to be built), lifted in to place forming the right and left hand walls and the floors.

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Concrete walls – red lines indicate where the concrete walls start



Large panel const – gable end of the end of this group of terraces

To the front and rear you have cladding which in theory could be replaced as it is non-structural. We showed you some houses nearby that have brick fronts and other alterations; examples of which are in the photos below.



Pebble dash finish



Render and brick (at low level) finish

4.0) Identify the location of the type of construction

Our identification of the type of construction was not conclusive. We have carried out two searches on our database; one was using type of construction, the other was based on local authorities and construction type, plus visual searches in our literature that we have available, searches of the Internet and have spoken to other surveyors who have specialist knowledge in this area.

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5.0) Non-traditional house – Carlton?

We have identified eight matches to this type of construction based upon local authority and construction class (construction class means the way it is constructed that we can see). Of the eight properties that came up in the searches the Carlton is believed to be the most likely.

We also carried out a visual search of the type of construction and again found Carlton what we believe to be the most likely.

We have carried out a further search on the Carlton house type where it has been built in the UK and there are four matches for this, including Barking and Dagenham.

Please remember when we were trying to identify which type of non-traditional building this is there are at least 100 metal frame non-traditional buildings, approximately 140 pre-cast concrete buildings of which at least 62 are in-situ concrete houses and there are 143 timber frame houses, that have been identified as being built between 1918 and 1975. Many of the designs also had one off experimental buildings before they went into the main production stages.

ACTION REQUIRED: If you want more specific comments then your legal advisers need to approach the Local Authority to establish/find out what original construction type was and who built it, together with any contact details they may have.

5.1) Known problems with Carlton construction

We have been able to find the known following problems with Carlton pre-cast construction. This list is not definitive and new problems are occurring with age and are being found.

The problems identified on this type of construction by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) are:

1. Vertical cracking of the pre-cast columns.
2. Cracking and spalling of gable and spandrel pre-cast panels

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3. Carbonation of pre-cast panels
4. Low concrete cover to reinforcement in pre-cast reinforced columns.

It needs to be understood there are limitations to a visual inspection.

The BRE documentation states that they are the pre-eminent research facility for buildings, who were government owned.

6.0) Is the structural frame sound?

The risk with buying any non-traditional building, such as a pre-cast concrete house, is whether the fixings that hold it together, such as the reinforcement and the metal brackets are sound or not.

6.1) Opening up the structure

The only way to see this is by opening up the structure which we would be happy to do, but you do need to get permission from the existing owners.

6.2) Pre-cast concrete buildings

In our experience key areas are generally at ground level, first floor level and roof level where the pre-cast concrete building is joined together which should be checked for rusting. This could be caused by water discharging onto the base of the property or condensation.

7.0) Dangers with Non-Traditional Construction

Most non-traditional buildings have known weak areas but we are still in the investigation stage/finding out stage with non-traditional buildings.

For example, in this case it tends to be (from our experience and investigations) deterioration caused by



How front and rear are held in place with brackets

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the poor quality original pre-cast concrete, the rusting of reinforcements, the metal brackets, together with general workmanship standards.

We would add that this construction was relatively new so there was a lack of experience and knowledge of putting together this type of building.

We can see at this property that the anchor brackets are rusting and whilst you can use, and we recommend, a rust stop agent and redecoration, this is only part of the story as your neighbours also need to be carrying out the same work.

We would add that with increased insulation levels and the use of showers condensation has been occurring more in these properties, which can promote this, so you need to add in ventilation.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

8.0) Our comments on the pre-cast concrete that we could see it

We examined the pre-cast concrete that we can see vertical and horizontal cracks within the concrete panels externally and internally on the right side and on the left side adjacent to the staircase and this looks to be in average condition for its age.



Vertical cracks within concrete panels externally



Horizontal external crack



Vertical cracks on right side

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ACTION REQUIRED: The only way to be 100% certain as to the condition of this reinforcement within this property is to cut back the concrete to check the condition of the reinforcement.

Monitor how its condition continues.

ANTICIPATED COST: This varies; please obtain quotations.

9.0) Condensation and ventilation

Most types of concrete property are generally prone to condensation and need to be appropriately heated, cooled and ventilated.

All concrete constructed buildings suffer from condensation to some extent. There are two types that we wish to look at here:



Wallpaper coming on stairway

9.1) Surface condensation

Probably the normal type that most people are aware of is surface condensation. This can lead on a basic level to mirrors steaming up in bathrooms, to wallpaper coming off the walls. For example in this case, to the staircase wallpaper and the flaking paint to the ceiling in the bathroom.

9.2) Interstitial condensation

This is where deterioration occurs to the steel frame within the building and visible signs are cracking, as we have noted internally and externally.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add large humidity controlled extract fans.

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10.0) Steel frame to front and rear of property

There looks to be a steel frame to the front and rear of the property. This has not been identified as an element with the construction of the Carlton pre-cast concrete house, however from what we can see there looks to be metal beams to the front and rear of the property and there also looks to be some rust, for example, within the bathroom area.

Rust is never a good sign within a building.



Metal beam



Metal beam



Rusting visible on metal beam in bathroom

ACTION REQUIRED: Install large humidity controlled extract fans to the humidity generating areas, the bathroom and kitchen and also areas where you will carry out drying. We spoke about this and you mentioned you are likely to use the front left hand room for this type of activity, we therefore recommend you also have an extract fan there.

If you recall, there is a plastic panel there, please see our later comments on plastic panels.

ANTICIPATED COST: Depending upon how the electrics are – from approximately £250 to £750; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

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11.0) Is there Asbestos?

The information we have for the Carlton pre-cast concrete house does not identify asbestos as being a known product that was used. However, we would say that in many properties of this Era asbestos was used as commonly as wood and could have been added by a specific contractor. One of the problems with non-traditional buildings is that the contractors tended in some cases to not follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

We did find asbestos in the form of a water tank in the roof and also the soil and vent pipe, and also possibly an asbestos paint, often known as textured paint or Artex (its trade name). The older type did have an element of asbestos.

We also noted some thermo-plastic floor tiles to the front right hand bedroom, again these are known to contain asbestos.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would always recommend all asbestos is removed from a property by an asbestos specialist as not only can it cause health problems, it also, we believe, affects value as there are perceived problems with it.

Any Artex should be skim coated over and not rubbed down.



Asbestos water tank



Possible asbestos infill panels



Thermo-plastic floor tiles



Artex ceiling – do not rub down

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Our insurance company require us to advise we are not asbestos specialists and recommend you have an asbestos survey carried out by a specialist asbestos company.

ANTICIPATED COST: Very difficult to say due to the specialist nature of this work and we would recommend quotations. The first stage is to establish how much asbestos is in the property.

You mentioned that your father would do most alterations, however from a costing point of view we would expects costs in the region of a few hundred pounds to about £500, depending on the quality of construction – we would expect a product such as Kingspan solid insulation to be used.

An alternative would be to contact the Local Authority to see if they have records with regard to asbestos in this building.

We would expect a quote for the removal of asbestos to be in the hundreds to thousands of pounds, subject to quotes. You should only use a registered asbestos removal company.

Please speak to the owners as they mentioned they would be prepared to discuss and negotiate on any asbestos related items.

Please see the Asbestos Section of this Report.

12.0) Plastic panels and cladding

To the front and rear of the property you effectively have a cladding panel, which means there is relatively little insulation in these areas.

At first floor level you have rendered panels to the front and rear, but the areas we are most concerned about is where you have plastic panels, such as adjacent to the doors and windows.



Plastic panel – add an extract in this room if it is used for drying clothes

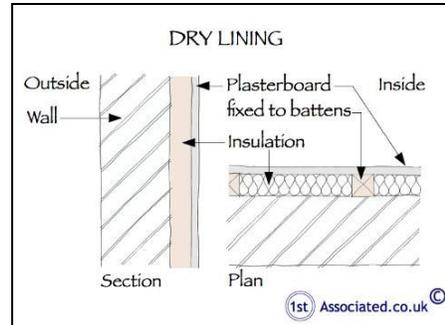
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ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend improving these by having a traditional brick in these areas on the ground floor to the front and rear of the property (some work has already taken place to the rear of the property) and at high level we would recommend you add in an inner wall, effectively forming what is known as a dry lined construction or false wall construction, to improve the insulation value.



Dry lining

12.1) Front left hand bedroom

We would specifically mention the front left bedroom as this small room is the room you mentioned you may be drying clothes in and accordingly it would also benefit with the adding of an extract fan, which would be far easier to add with a thicker wall construction to help support it.

12.2) Dry lining option

A dry lining option may be an easier way of carrying out and adding insulation throughout the property than brickwork in the short term and it would be cheaper.

Please see the Walls and Dampness Sections of this Report.

13.0) Ventilation to the roof

We have increased requirements for warmth in properties, we have also increased the possibilities of condensation occurring, particularly in the shallow pitched roof.

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ACTION REQUIRED: We are always concerned about creating a situation where there can be condensation in reinforced concrete buildings and as such we would recommend that the roof is vented, particularly as there is an increasing view that roofs should be well ventilated, which in turn increases the possibility of condensation occurring. You need to check the construction of the tiles first.

ANTICIPATED COST: A few hundred pounds, please obtain quotes.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

14.0) Polystyrene ceiling tiles

There are polystyrene ceiling tiles in the through lounge. These are generally not accepted by mortgage companies as in a worst case scenario of a fire they would drip liquid plastic on to you and are therefore best removed or over clad.



When we spoke to the owner about this he said he may be able to help out with this.

Polystyrene tiles in front lounge

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend removing the polystyrene tiles and redecorate, or alternatively over-clad the existing ceiling with a plasterboard.

We suggest you negotiate with the owners as they may be able to carry out the work, or reduce the price of the property appropriately.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £750 to £1,5000 as the redecoration of the ceiling and possibly the room may also be needed. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Ceiling Section of this Report.

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15.0) General lack of cleaning and poor decoration

There was a general lack of cleaning and a lack of redecoration throughout the property. The only room that looked to have been redecorated was the rear right hand bedroom, but here there were signs that they were literally papering over cracks.



Door frame around borrowed light in bathroom in need of redecoration



Window sill need cleaning



Signs of cracking in rear right hand bedroom which have been papered over

ACTION REQUIRED: Redecorate throughout.

ANTICIPATED COST: Again you mentioned that your father would be carrying out this work, but we would expect costs in the region of £2,000 for internal decorations.

Please see the Internal Decoration Section of this Report.

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16.0) Planning and Building Regulations for covered over area and summer house

There is a covered over area and summer house to the rear.



Rear covered over area



Summer house in rear garden

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal adviser to check and confirm Local Authority Approval has been obtained or that the Local Authority is in agreement that it is not needed, as the owners advised during our question and answer sessions.

Please see the Outside Areas Section of this Report.

17.0) Trees

You do have some substantial trees nearby that look to be on Local Authority common land and as such they should maintain them.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend that you or your legal adviser speak with the Local Authority to confirm they do maintain these trees.

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.



Trees on Local Authority land

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18.0) Services

18.1) Warm air heating

The property has warm air heating; some consider it to be the best type, as you have warm feet and a cool heat, but many consider it a problem as it passes dust around the property, we have heard it can be problematic if you are asthmatic.



Warm air heating

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend you live in it if at all possible for at least a year before you make a decision. It is more traditional in England to have a boiler and water fed radiators but many people prefer these just because they are familiar with them.

ANTICIPATED COST: A new heating system would be anything from £5,000 to £7,000, the problem here is you have hard concrete floors and walls that are very difficult to fix to, let alone cut pipes in, in particular the first floor concrete floor will be very difficult. Please obtain quotations.

18.2) Manholes not opened

Manholes are used where there is a change in direction of pipes or new pipes join the main run. It is therefore a good location for clearing any blockages. In this case we were unable to lift any manholes. We did run the water in the upstairs bathroom for about 15 minutes to half an hour but it is not the same as lifting the manholes for us to inspect.



Manhole

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend a closed circuit TV camera report of the drains.

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Manholes Defined

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

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

The Ugly

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

We consider this property to be a high risk purchase as it may be difficult to mortgage depending upon how the mortgage market is looking at property at the time. If you do proceed you need to be happy with the characteristics and associated costs of the property issues. In some cases there is very little you can do to change the basic framework of this property.

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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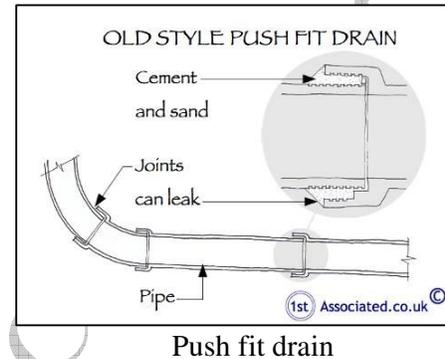
Heating

We did not ask for the heating to be turned on. 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

In older properties, such as this, drainage was often push fitted together rather than bonded together which means that they may leak over the years.

We were unable to open the manholes and whilst we ran the tap for 15 minutes plus 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.



Water Supply

There is danger in older properties of having a lead water supply; we would recommend that you speak to the water company to ask them if they have carried out such replacement, as you will be re-piping much of the water used in the building it gives an ideal opportunity to also check for any remaining lead pipes.

ACTION REQUIRED: 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.

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Too much DIY

We reiterate the need to check with the Local Authority if the shed and the rear lean-to need Planning Permission.

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 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 writing 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 understand the benefits of buying this type of property from a price point of view as typically they are 10%, 20% or 30% lower than the market average for a similar metre squared (or foot squared). You do need to understand that there is a relatively limited number of people that would buy this type of property and there is a limited number of companies that will give mortgages on them.

This type of property also has certain characteristics that you can do little about, for example the pre-cast concrete construction and also be aware that this is a non-traditional building that, from what we understand, if it is a Carlton pre-cast construction that there are only a relatively few number ever made.

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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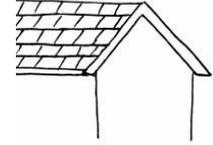
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EXTERNAL

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 a protective underlayer may or may not be present, please read on:

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

Main Roof

We were unable to view the main roof very well from ground level. We believe it to be a shallow pitched concrete or possibly an asbestos tile, which look to be covered with moss.



Main roof

The main roof is pitched and clad with a concrete tile and, from ground level, this looks in average condition considering the roofs age type and style. This is mainly based on the fact that we cannot see any significant water staining from within the roof.

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

It is worth using a soft brush on the roof to remove the moss (do not use chemicals) as the moss can build up and block the drains.

Condensation is more likely in shallow roofs – please see our recommendations regarding adding vents.

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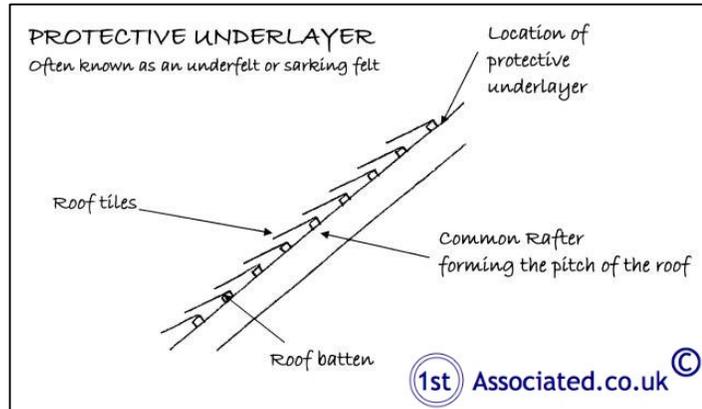
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Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)

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 protective underlayer.

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Party Walls

The party wall relates to shared items, such as the firewalls. 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.

Rear covered area roof

We have included this within the main report but please see our notes about checking whether it needs Planning Permission or not.

This low level roof, with a fairly modern mineral felt. We can see it has been repaired to the rear and has a Flashband flashing, which we generally consider to be a temporary material and not of good quality.

Interestingly, you can also see moss coming down off the roof.



Repairs to flat roof (with moss that has come down from main roof)



Flashband flashing

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This rear roof is literally an open roof construction which has the timber frame structure. On to this is a boarding (also known as a decking) and on to that it has felt.

We can see staining to the timbers, indicating a roof leak.



Staining to timbers

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 20% percent of the main roof from ground level via our ladder or via any other vantage point that we managed to gain using a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see, however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

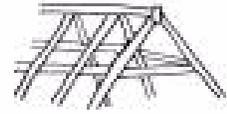
For further comments with regard to ventilation please see the Roof Structure and Loft Section.

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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

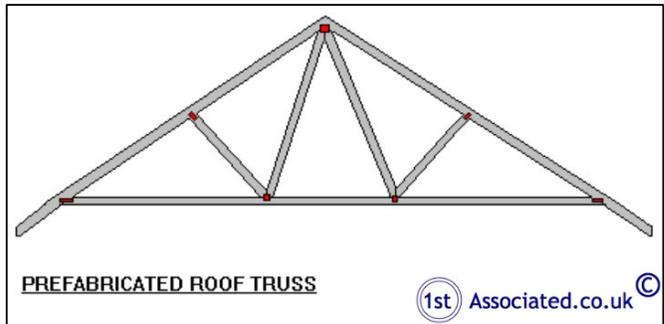
Roof Access

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located 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, which is particularly important as it is quite a shallow roof.

The loft has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly.

Roof Structure

The property has a pre-fabricated timber 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 timber roof

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Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

- 1) Serious active woodworm
- 2) Structurally significant defects to the timbers
- 3) Structurally significant dry rot
- 4) Structurally significant wet rot



General view of inside of roof

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 for its age, type and style. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.



Looking at metal joint to front



General pre-fabricated truss rafters

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

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Fire Walls

The property has two concrete 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.



Concrete fire wall

Water Tanks

There is an asbestos water tank.

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 often cleaning your teeth with this water it is best that it is as clean as possible!



Asbestos water tank

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

Please note, we are not asbestos surveyors.

Ventilation

There is no ventilation in the roof.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add vents.

Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

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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.

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.

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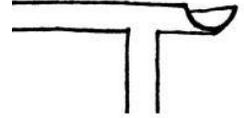
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GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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 property has grey plastic gutters and downpipes and are in average condition for their age, type and style. There may be a slight weakness where it abuts next door's black plastic gutter.



Plastic gutter

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.

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. 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.

Soil and Vent Pipe

The property has internal asbestos soil and vent pipe, where we could see it at roof level.

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

Again, please note we are not asbestos surveyors.



Asbestos soil and vent pipe

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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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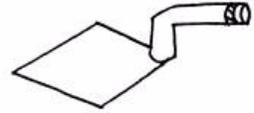
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WALLS



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.

Pre-cast concrete walls

The walls are pre-cast concrete. This is where the concrete is pre-cast in a factory and then driven to the area of construction and lifted into place on to the foundations.

In this case we believe the walls and the floors are pre-cast. We can see this within the roof where we noted lifting eyes, which lift the pre-cast concrete into place.



Lifting eyes – bringing the concrete in



Close up of lifting eye, which also shows the reinforcement bars that are within the concrete

Non traditional building (sorry to repeat ourselves)

Sorry to repeat ourselves but this really is so important, this house is of a non traditional construction. There are generally considered to be four different types of non-traditional houses:

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1. Metal frame – a metal frame supporting the structure.
2. Pre-cast concrete - cast in a factory and then brought to the site.
3. In-situ concrete - cast at the site.
4. Timber frame – a timber frame supporting the structure.

In this case we believe it to be a pre-cast concrete construction and from our searches via various data bases that we have we believe it to be a Carlton style of which we have been advised there were only approximately 350 built, so this is a very specialist non-traditional building.

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

Concrete walls

The two side walls, that you cannot see apart from within the roof, are pre-cast concrete slabs. These have literally been lifted into place, together with the ground floor and a first floor. The rest of the building has been built from these.

Render

There are areas of render to the upper floors to the front and back in smooth faced render.

There are areas of render to the rear that need redecoration and repair.



Deterioration to render to rear



Vertical concrete (red oval) and horizontal concrete (green oval)

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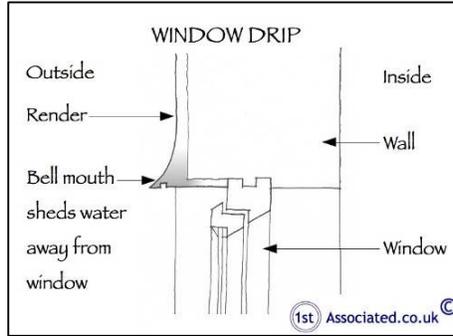
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ACTION REQUIRED: Redecorate and repair render to rear, and at the same time redecorate the render to the front – in the summer of 2015.

Render Detailing

On a traditional property there would tend to be a bell mouth detail, as shown in our sketch below. In this case there is no bell mouth detail but there is a drip detail, which we were pleased to see.



Window drip



Drip detail to bottom of render

In-Fill Panels at high and low level

There are plastic in fill panels at high and low level.



Plastic in fill panel,
with render below window



Plastic in fill panels

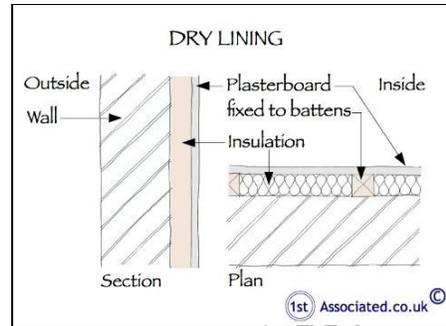
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ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend these improved by the adding of an internal wall, often known as dry lining



Dry lining

What work others have had carried out to the property

We noticed within walking distance of your property that there is a rendered and pebbledash finished property across the way and a property where brick has been used.



Pebble dash finish



Render and brick finish

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Brickwork

There is a small area of brickwork to the rear. A brick wall throughout is a good way of insulating the property.

The bricks are in a Stretcher Bond pattern but we do not know if it is a true cavity wall.

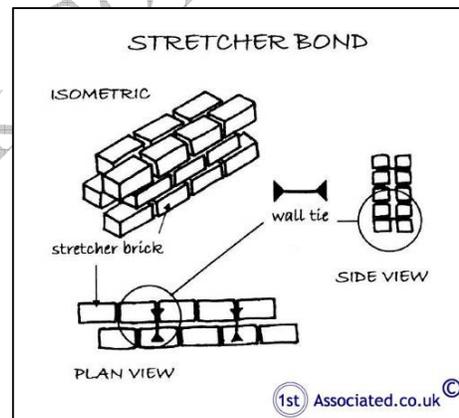
The term "Stretcher Bond" means that from the outside of the property, you can see a row of the sides of the bricks (known as "stretchers") followed by a course above of the same stretch of bricks set off so the joint is centrally above the "stretcher". This pattern would repeat throughout.



Small area of brick to rear kitchen

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.

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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.



Small amount of cracking
to rear left hand corner



Cracking to front of property

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

Metal Lintels

The unusual thing we have found here is that there looks to be metal lintels, both at ground and first floor level, spanning the entire width of the property, which we have not been able to establish in any of the information that we have available to us or in talking to other experts in this field.

Metal lintels do often cause problems with cold bridging. Please see our article in the Appendices at the back of the report.

Cold Bridging Defined

Cold bridging is caused by a colder element in the structure allowing coldness to pass through the structure much quicker when warm moist air is present in the property, often caused by things like having a shower or a bath, cooking or washing, particularly if you are drying washing on the radiators. This is also caused by the general climate which results in condensation on the element.

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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 concrete / render / in-fill panels / brickwork / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age concrete lintels or metal lintels are common, which can be susceptible to deterioration that is unseen, particularly if in contact with dampness.

Our comments have been based upon how the concrete / render / in-fill panels / brickwork / plaster has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the concrete / render / in-fill panels / 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 pad foundation. These are squares of concrete underneath the walls.

London Clay

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

Building Insurance Policy

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

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.

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

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.

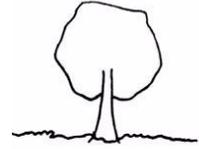
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TREES

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

There are trees within what we would term as influencing distance but you do need to speak to your insurance company as they may have a different interpretation for insurance reasons. We believe these trees to be Local Authority maintained.



Nearby trees on Local Authority land



Tree root

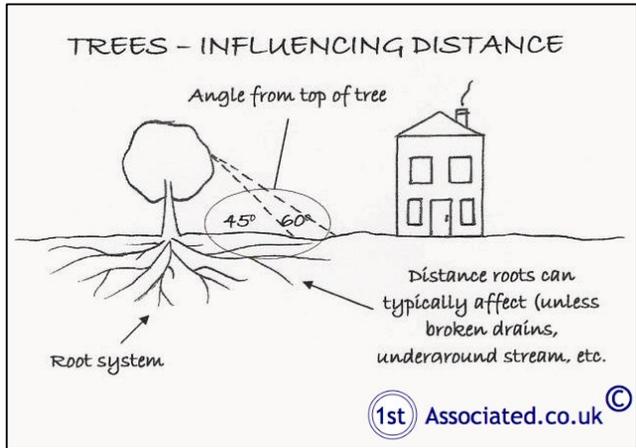
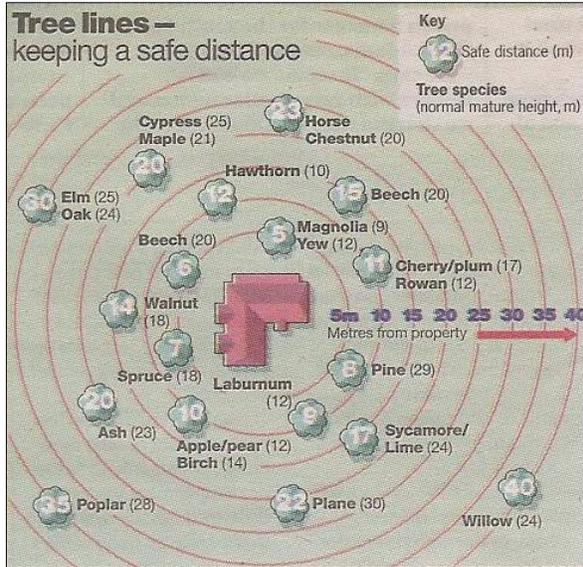
ACTION REQUIRED: See our comments in the Executive Summary.

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Influencing distance of trees to a property

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.

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 this would have been designed in given the age of this property, unfortunately we cannot physically see it.

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.

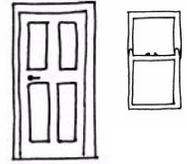
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FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

We had a close up inspection of the fascias and soffits and they look to be concrete, however interestingly on the literature that was available to us it identifies the fascias as being aluminium. We believe if this was the case that they have been removed when the new(ish) grey gutters and downpipes were added. We would comment that they are in average condition for their age, type and style.



Concrete fascias and soffits



Close up

Our concern with the way the guttering is now, is that if the gutters leak they will soak into the concrete and cause deterioration.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend some protection is added between the gutters and the concrete.

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Windows and Doors

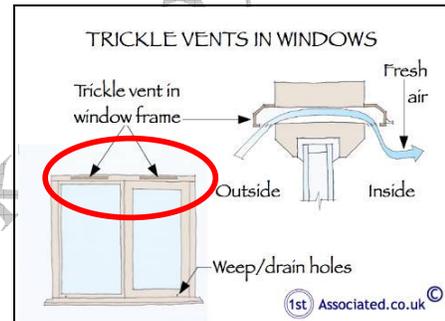
The property has plastic double glazed windows without trickle vents, which generally look to be of below average quality, and would comment they look to be from the cheaper end of the market, with the misting up of the window in the rear bedroom.



Windows without trickle vents

Trickle Vents Defined

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



Trickle vents

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.



Seal has gone to double glazing

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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.

The owners advised they believed the windows were still in warranty but they had not carried out any action with regard to sorting out problems relating to them.

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.

There is very little external redecoration, even the front fence is in concrete. There is a wooden fence to the rear left side and a large shed and covered areas that will ultimately need staining.

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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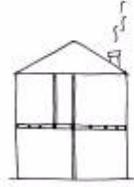
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INTERNAL



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 there may be 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.

There are polystyrene tiles in the through lounge and the ceilings are insulated; we do know with how much.

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



Polystyrene ceiling tiles

Artex finish to ceilings

There is an Artex finish to some of the ceilings. The Artex may contain asbestos.

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

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Internal Walls and Partitions

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



Timber dado and boarding

One thing that did throw us was this insulation that was visible on one of the internal walls. It may be that here was a plastic panel in this area that was exposed when a fuse box was put in place. Unfortunately, this is one part that we have not been able to establish, the only way would be to open up the walls.



Cut out panel within electric cupboard showing insulation

Perimeter Walls

The perimeter walls are solid concrete, in the form of pre-cast concrete construction, which means they will be hard to fix to.

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 and our knowledge of this type of non-traditional construction.

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.

The laminate has a quadrant bead around it and is opening up in places and we would say that it is poor quality and from the cheaper end of the market.



Quadrant beading

First Floor

Again, we have assumed that the first floor construction is concrete.

There are thermo-plastic floor tiles to the front right hand bedroom which may contain asbestos.

ACTION REQUIRED: See our comments in the Executive Summary.

Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with laminated flooring, thermo-plastic floor tiles, 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.



Laminate starting to open up



Thermo-plastic floor tiles

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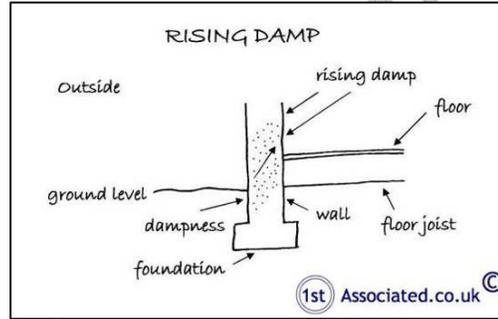
DAMPNESS



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, but please see our comments in the Executive Summary about condensation.



Testing for rising damp

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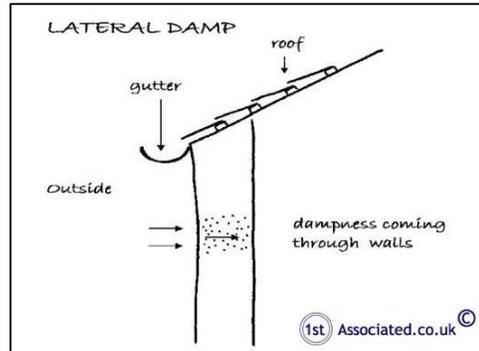
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Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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, but please see our comments on condensation.



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 signs of condensation to the ceilings. We also believe there are signs of condensation to the walls on the staircase, for example.

We have spoken to other people who have lived in this type of property and often they find it best just to redecorate more frequently.



Condensation in bathroom

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Condensation to some extent depends upon how you utilise the building. However, with a concrete property there are problems and characteristics with this type of building. Please remember 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.

Extract fans in kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas

A way of helping to reduce condensation is to have good large extract fans with 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.



Bathroom – large humidity controlled extract fan needed as close to the shower as possible

Dampness getting into fascias and soffits

Please see our comments with regard to the gutters and the possibility of them overflowing and bringing dampness into the property at high level, where the fascias and soffits should be, and our recommendation with regard to the protection of these areas.

Also, as you have a high level of moss on the roof you do need to clear this to make sure the gutters do not leak into the structure, as the concrete will act very much like blotting paper absorbing the water and then it coming out within the property.

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 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), they have a paint finish and are slightly marked but nothing unusual. This can be seen in the cupboard where the door has been cut in half.



Bathroom door – needs redecorating



Cupboard door cut in half to reveal egg box door

We noticed that some of the doors do not fit properly, sometimes indicating slight movement in the property.



Door does not fit



Door does not shut very easily

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Staircase

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



Lined stairs

Kitchen

We found the kitchen in average 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.

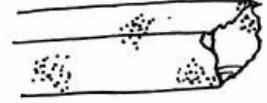
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TIMBER DEFECTS



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.

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 below average condition, with wallpaper coming off in some areas and other areas where the decoration has not been carried out, for example the bathroom doors. We would go as far as to say the only room that is in a good decorative state was the rear right hand bedroom, however we did not a crack to the right hand wall and we wondered whether this was literally papering over the cracks.

You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste. It may be best to paint the walls with an appropriate paint that allows the walls to breathe, normally a water based emulsion, rather than wallpapering.

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

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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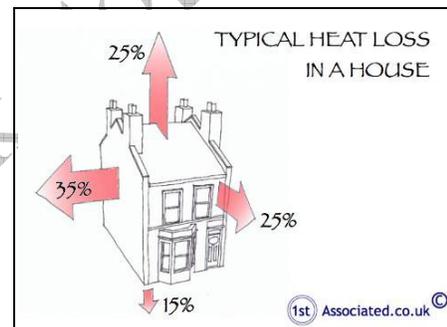
THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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 about 200mm to 300mm.



Typical heat loss

Walls

The walls to this property are solid in the sense that they do not have a cavity as a modern property would have. There will be minimum insulation to the front and rear; we have not been able to open this up to inspect.

Windows

The windows are double glazed. There is deterioration to the glazing with misting occurring so the thermal properties which would normally be good have accordingly been reduced.

Services

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

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Summary

Assuming the above is correct, this property is below average compared with what we typically see. There are fundamental characteristics that to be accepted with a concrete building as it is difficult to change them without major costs.

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 (Centre for Alternative Technology)

*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 How Many Light Bulbs? by David J C MacKay – can be viewed on YouTube

HIPs

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

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.

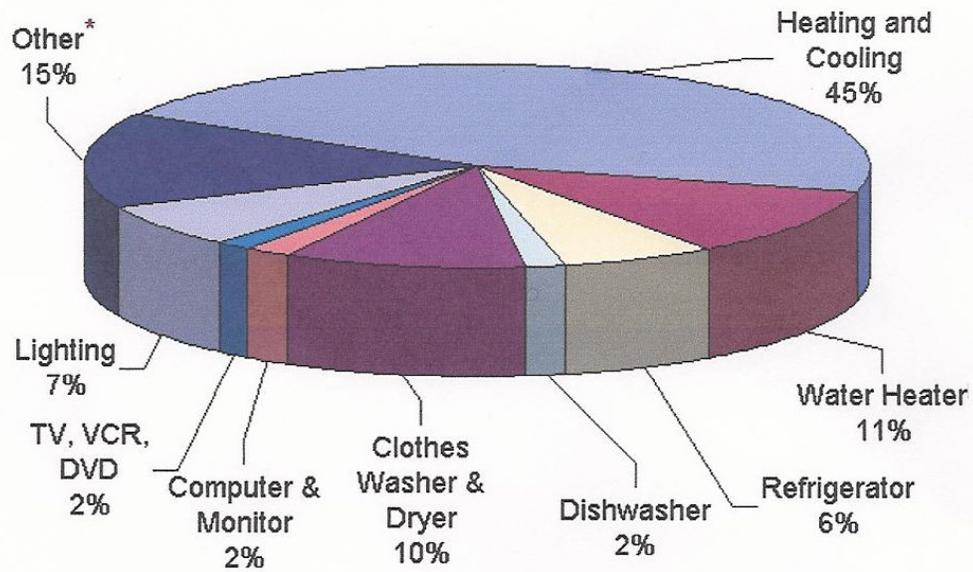
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What does my energy bill pay for?



* "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

A security system has been installed, however it does not work and is just there for show.

A good alarm system should not only help reduce break-ins but also your insurance. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further.



Security system does not work



Security system there for show

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; we believe these to be battery operated. The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply, which do not appear to be working in some cases.



Smoke alarm not working

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ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend, for your own safety, that additional smoke detectors are 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.

Asbestos

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. In this case we have noted asbestos throughout the property:

1. Soil and vent pipe
2. Possible asbestos to the water tank
3. Possible asbestos to the Artex ceilings
4. Thermo-plastic tiles

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.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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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.

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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.

Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the left hand corner of the front reception room. The fuse board looked as though it was from the 1980's/1990'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

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ACTION REQUIRED: As the property is changing occupancy an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test and report should be carried out by an 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.

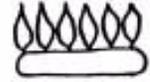
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GAS

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 in the front reception room, left hand 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

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

Water Pressure

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

Cold Water Cistern

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

Hot Water Cylinder

There is a hot water cylinder located in the airing cupboard. It has is factory insulated, which indicates that it is relatively new (in this case we mean in the last 30 years). This cylinder will therefore have a good thermal efficiency, although not as good as the more modern hot water cylinders.



Factory lagged hot water cylinder

Plumbing

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

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Heating

The property has a Johnson and Starley warm air heating system, located on the first floor in the bedroom.

The warm air system had a metal flue. Flues are sometimes lined with asbestos, but we were unable to see whether it was or was not in this instance.

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.



Johnson and Starley
warm air system



Flue to boiler in roof space

Ten Minute Heating Test

We did not carry out the heating test in this instance. We recommend that you return and see the heating working.

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.

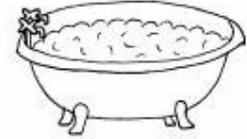
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BATHROOM



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.



Hot water heating in bathroom

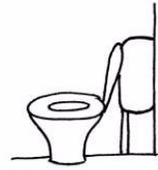
Finally, although we may have already mentioned it above we would reiterate that it is important to ensure that seals are properly made and maintained at the junctions between wall surfaces and baths and showers etc. We normally recommend that it is one of the first jobs that you carry out as part of 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 15 minutes plus 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 have identified one inspection chamber / manhole.

Manholes Defined

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

Inspection Chamber / Manhole One, located to front

We were unable to lift the manhole during the course of our inspection.

ACTION REQUIRED: Have a closed circuit TV camera report of the drains. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Manhole to front

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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.

In this era of property they are likely to be combined/shared drains which are where the foul water and the surface water combines. These can be a problem during heavy rainfall and peak periods, such as the 9 o'clock rush to work.

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

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

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OUTSIDE AREAS

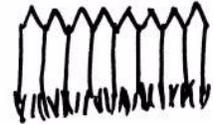
The main focus of this report has been on the main building. If you wish us to do a specific report on the other buildings then you need to instruct us for this separately. We are offering here a brief overview.

PARKING



Parking is on the roadside a short walk away on a first come first serve basis. There did not look to be a parking permit system in place.

EXTERNAL AREAS



Front Garden

There is a small front garden area, which has been concreted over and, as was popular in those days when everything was done in concrete, it even had a front concrete fence.



Concrete fence to front – concrete and asbestos were common materials during this Era of construction



Front Garden

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Rear Garden

There is a garden to the rear, It has a small patio and an area of plastic grass.

There are two sheds; one to right side (directions given as you face the property) which we did not enter and one large summer house to the rear of the garden, which looks to be being used as an office and store.



Rear Garden



Shed to right side of garden

The summer house to the rear of the garden is currently being used as an office. It has a felt roof.



summer house



Felt roof



Inside

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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.



Fence to right side

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

No-one was in when we knocked during our inspection.

Right Hand Neighbours

No-one was in when we knocked during our inspection.

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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.

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Your legal adviser needs to make direct contact in writing to the Local Authority to establish if they have records on these properties which they look to have built, and any known problems associated with them. Ask them to confirm that it is a Carlton construction, if it is not then we will gladly review the survey.

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

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

If you would like any further advice on any of the issues discussed or indeed any that have not been discussed!

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

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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 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.

APPROVALS/GUARANTEES

Where work has been carried out to the property in the past, the surveyor cannot guarantee that this work has been carried out in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations, British/European Standards and Codes of Practice, Agreement Certificates and statutory regulations.

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.

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

WEATHER

It was a warm summer's day 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; the mass of insulation limited our view.
- 2) The property was full of stored items which limited our view.

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Stored items in cupboard



Stored items in bedroom

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. Non Traditional Housing
4. Sources of Information - Carlton Housing
5. Sources of Information - Searches
6. Condensation and Cold Bridging Article

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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 information offered. That said they do try to adjust for this, the success or otherwise of this is hard to establish.

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

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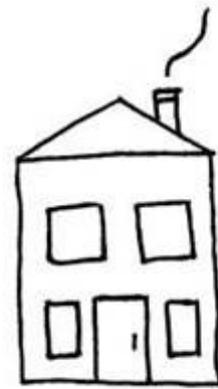


Non-Traditional Housing

If you need help and advice with regard to independent valuations, property surveys, building surveys, structural reports, engineers reports, defects surveys and structural surveys matters please free phone 0800 298 5424 for a friendly chat with one of our chartered surveyors.

Non-traditional housing, what is it?

We have recently had a phone call asking what non-traditional housing is, as it had been referred to in a valuation that they had had carried out on their property and the lender had decided not to lend on the property because of this. Yet, from what they could see the property was in good order and they knew the person who had lived in it for the past thirty years, with no problems whatsoever. They went and had a look at the property again and it still looked to them like a traditional house and to be in good order. What was more they liked it and it had a big garden too and they were mystified why they couldn't get a mortgage on it.



What do Valuers, chartered surveyors and chartered building surveyors mean when they say non-traditional construction?

It would probably be a better term if the term non-typical construction was used. If you think of a house or a flat and think how they are traditionally built, from the Victorian era it is of brick and tile, or brick and slate, or stone and slate, or possibly render and tile, or render and slate depending upon which part of the country you are from this will be the traditional construction in the area of England, Wales, Scotland



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or Ireland that you live in. Often traditional construction is as local as the county or Town you live in. Nevertheless it is known as traditional construction.

What is traditional construction? Because equally we could argue that timber frame construction is the traditional type of construction in most areas of the country, but we will leave that argument up for another day.

Where did the term non-traditional construction and traditional construction come from?

We believe it came originally from the mortgage companies as a chartered building surveyor would certainly be more specific with regard to what the construction type is. We believe it was generated by the mortgage companies because they wanted to establish how the vast majority of properties were built and so appeared the terms traditional construction and non-traditional construction.

Non-Traditional construction

Non-traditional construction can really be classed as construction techniques that utilise systems of building, focused on speed and economy of construction. It is the sort of construction that is used where a great deal of housing is required quickly, so it is often used by local authorities to mass build (although today it is also used by commercial construction companies and developers). We have carried out surveys on many different types of non-traditional construction.

This resulted in some one-off designs but the majority of them fall into the category of:

1. Metal frame
2. Concrete frame
3. Timber frame
4. Concrete panel construction
5. Structural insulation panels
6. In situ concrete
7. One-offs

We know we are cheating really with the last category but it is the best way we can think of explaining it.

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The absolute bible for this, although it is getting slightly dated is:

Non Traditional Houses – Identifying Non-Traditional Houses in the UK 1918
to 1975 BR469

Compiled and Edited by

Harry Harrison, Stephen Mullin, Barry Reeves and Alan Stevens.

Published by BRE Press (Building Research Establishment).

Many years ago the Building Research Establishment (known as BRE) were part of a Government organisation with the Property Services Agency (PSA) which we would say were the undisputed experts on construction and building problems along with a few Universities such as Reading and Salford Universities who looked on the more academic side. However we would also say that things have changed with commercialism.

We cannot recommend this book highly enough although it will set you back several hundreds of pounds, possibly worth using a search engine to see if you can pick up a second hand copy somewhere.

After the Great Wars we needed houses and homes

In the UK after World War I and World War II our housing stock had been bombed and made safe by being demolished so there were fewer houses. There had also been a lack of maintenance over the war years, as the workforce had been at war, and then the armed forces men were returning and they needed houses quickly. Various methods of non-traditional construction were proposed and built in the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's.

Also, this type of construction has been used during boom years, such as the early 1970's and the late 1980's, where it was hard to build quickly enough for supply and demand. Our comments relate to the UK, there are even variations in the UK.

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Non-traditional construction by another name

After the war years we had to build fast and we used many new forms of construction techniques. We will name a few here; these names may have been given to you when you looked at buying a house. We will carry out a brief description of them or you could telephone us on 0800 298 5424:

Airey Houses

These have a concrete plank externally supported on a pre-cast concrete frame with steel tube reinforcements.



Airey houses were made up of concrete planks and are now generally being knocked down and rebuilt as they are not habitable



Street view.

They were named Airey houses after the Member of Parliament that was involved with them rather than the fact that the wind blew through them and they suffered badly from condensation.

Boot

Believed to be named after the contractor of that name. Built on a concrete frame with more traditional brickwork or render typically found externally.

Cornish Unit

Although they are called Cornish Units, we have found them all over the country. They come in various makes and models as do the other houses that we mention. They were traditionally constructed with a concrete frame. The unusual thing was the mansard roofs that ran all the way down to the first floor level.

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Dorran

These were pre-cast concrete panel buildings with a concrete ring beam at first floor level with a timber frame internally.

Dye Construction

This was concrete panels which were a storey height secured by metal angle brackets (believed to be steel) with concrete beams forming the first floor.

Gregory

This is pre-cast concrete, storey height columns with ring beams. These have mansard roofs to first floor level.

Myton

These are concrete panels.

Newland

Steel frame.

Orlit

A feature of these is that they may have a flat roof with an asphalt finish.

Parkinson

These are concrete column construction with a render or pebbledash finish externally.

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Reema

Hollow panel. These are structural concrete columns and beams cast in situ.

Stonecret

This is pre-cast reinforced concrete frame with concrete panels, two storeys in height.

Tarran

Pre-cast concrete panels with first floor ring beam. The panels are very wide.

Unity and Butterly

Pre-cast concrete column, metal plated beams. An unusual external finish of a small looking concrete panel.

Wates

Believed to be named after the contractor of that name. Pre-cast reinforced concrete panels with ring beams at first floor level.

Wessex

Pre-cast reinforced panels.

Wimpey No Fines

In situ mould type no fines concrete with a variety of different thickness of walls depending upon the age and type.

Laing Easyform

Comes in both solid and cavity wall forms built from a no fines concrete.

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Arrowhead

Steel structural frame albeit that it is lightweight. They tend to have cladding to the front of them.

British Iron and Steel Federation House known as a BISF

These are relatively common although they are now very well disguised with brickwork being built around them. They are a lightweight structural steel frame.



British Iron and Steel Federation House (BISF)



Asbestos roof on BISF house

Dorlonco

They have a very well hidden structural metal frame.

Hawthorn Leslie

This is a mixture of both a metal frame and a timber frame.

Howard

We have come across quite a number of these in our surveys. This uses a lattice work of metal beams.

Lowton Cubit

Possibly named after the contractor. Again this is a steel framed building.

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Thorncliffe

Cast iron panels bolted together.

Swedish timber dwelling

Built with a timber frame.

Reema conclad

This is a good example of a large panel concrete house.

This is but a brief run-through of some of the non-traditional houses. There are many, many different types. We have surveyed ones where there are only a few thousand ever produced and we have also surveyed other types of non-traditional houses where there are many thousands produced. In our experience as chartered surveyors they all need their own individual survey as they have their own unique problems.

It may look traditional construction even though it is non-traditional

With the purchasing of these houses over the years and the need to get a mortgage there have been many ingenious ways of making these houses mortgageable as per the following photographs of houses where we have carried out surveys; these are the ones that have been spotted by mortgage company valuers:



Modified non-traditional house



Brick clad modified non traditional house



Brick cladding and other alterations make a non traditional house mortgageable

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A mortgage company surveyor may miss a non-traditional house construction

We have now been called in several times to do a Building Surveyor where the owners have not known that the type of construction is non-traditional construction even though they have had a mortgage company valuation. Unfortunately this is due to a lack of knowledge and experience with mortgage Valuers. After all, valuation experts are not building construction experts. We have come across the issue, if it looks traditional construction even though it is constructed in a non-traditional way it may be counted as traditional construction! This tends to be the case where a Valuer has failed to notice the construction type and when we come to carry out a building survey we then identify it. Unfortunately this then means that whoever is purchasing has a very limited mortgage market available to them.

Who lends on a non-traditional construction building?

The answer is the companies interested in lending in this market vary depending on many factors. What is also true is that lenders do vary their lending policies and they may be lending on it one minute and then not lending on it the next.

Modern timber frame houses – are they non-traditional construction?

It could be argued that the houses being built, in what is known as modern timber frame, are as far away from traditional construction as houses that have been classed as non-traditional construction! They have, for example, been built out of concrete.

And this is where non-traditional construction gets really confusing

However, this is where non-traditional construction really is confusing as some non-traditional construction techniques look very similar to traditional construction techniques and can only be identified by the trained experienced eye (we are more than happy to chat about this, please free phone us on 0800 298 5424). As mentioned, even more confusing is there are some non-traditional constructions that are accepted by the banks, building societies and mortgage lenders and others that are not, assuming that the bank valuation surveyor spots them. It is so important to know whether banks, building societies and mortgage lenders will lend on this type of construction if you are considering purchasing.

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Is it the way the structure works that makes a building traditional or non-traditional construction

To expand on this, a traditional old style timber frame property is built of oak to a one-off design. It certainly could be classed as the original traditional construction, as most houses were built in this form. However, in more recent times traditional construction has been thought of as brick and tile, or brick and slate, or stone and tile, stone and slate, etc, as we mentioned earlier.



When the original non-traditional housing was built there wasn't too much thought given to making it look externally like a traditional building. Therefore, some complained that they seem to have concrete finishes, be it painted concrete, which looks similar to render, or concrete planks, as in the Airey buildings. We would argue as these were easily identifiable and stood out they were more a target for mortgage lenders not lending on non-traditional construction that looks like traditional construction.

Modern timber frame construction that is non-traditional but will be lent on

Let us first of all explain what modern timber frame construction is. They are very much an engineered timber frame that is an absolute minimum of timber and maximum strength characteristics. The majority are factory made and factory assembled and are built in mass, rather than being a one-off design and they have an external cladding for protection, often brickwork, although in more recent years we have noticed in our surveys that render has been used, or cladding panels of timber and also plastic lookalike timber. Modern timber frame properties are also finished with a membrane to stop any dampness from the external walls getting through (we have seen in our surveys where it does happen it can distort or rot), as it can be in a traditional timber frame property.

The whole idea behind a modern timber frame construction is completely different; we would term a water construction. This is completely different to the traditional timber frame property that was built to breathe. However, the modern timber frame

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property is then clad with brickwork or stone or cladding, such as vertical tiling, and looks very much like a traditional property.

The whole construction is based around the economics of cheap construction and fast construction, and this type of construction is very much assembled, rather than built by tradesmen, the de-skilling being another element in the economics of the construction. However when all is said and done the mortgage companies, such as the banks and building societies do lend against it.

We have seen during our surveys other more recent innovations within the modern timber frame market, such as using composite wood products for floor joists and also for the flooring, together with an increased use of external cladding, as it is more economical and faster to put up than brickwork.

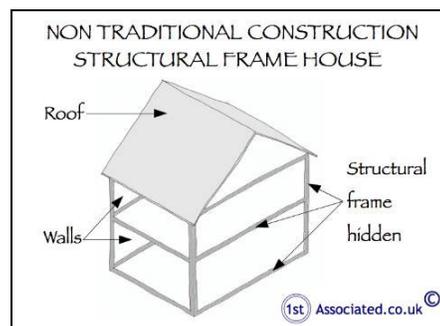
Not lending against non-traditional construction

Interestingly, the techniques utilised for non-traditional construction after the war years tended to use more robust materials and more innovation. They fall into three categories:-

- Structural frame
- Large panel construction
- Innovatory construction

Structural frame

This was very much where a structural frame was erected. The walls were then hung off it. The structural frames can be metal, concrete or wood. The danger factor for a mortgage company lending on this is if there is deterioration within the structural frame that is hidden, we would pick this up during a survey therefore it is critical that a Building Survey is carried out prior to purchasing a non-traditional property. A lot of Local Authority housing was built in this manner, and other



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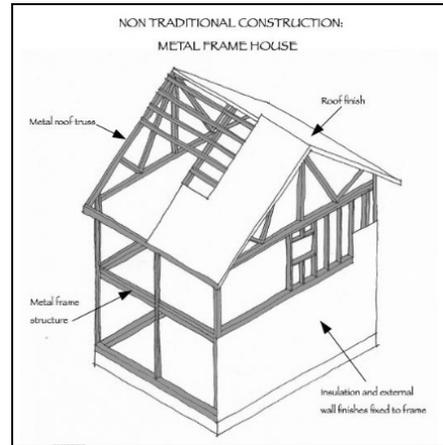
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National companies requiring housing, such as the Coal Board, and utilising mass production techniques lowered the cost of the housing. These types of houses also tended to use techniques that we hadn't used before in the housing market, although often we would use them in the commercial market.

Metal Frame Structure

Below are photographs of a metal frame house that we have recently surveyed.



Original condition of non-traditional house with roof replacement



Close up of cladding on non-traditional house



Non-traditional metal frame house



Painted cladding to non-traditional property



Close up of old metal windows in a non-traditional house

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Features to look out for in non-traditional houses

We thought we would give you some tips on the sort of things to look out for:

Chimneys

Asbestos was a very popular material (yes really) when non-traditional houses were being built.



Asbestos original chimney non traditional house



New chimney on a non-traditional house

Soil and vent pipe



Original asbestos soil and vent pipe on a non-traditional house



New plastic soil and vent pipe on a non-traditional house

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Roof Construction

It is important to get in the roof and have a close look or for you to employ a chartered building surveyor that will get in the roof and have a close look (Valuers no longer need to view roofs when carrying out valuations – did you know that?). The below photos are what our surveyor saw on a recent survey:



Rusting to a lightweight metal frame or damage or deterioration to the metal frame of a non-traditional house



Some fixings replacements/repairs to a non-traditional house

The adding of modern things can affect the building

It is very common these days to have a shower/bathroom with an extract system. Does that extract system discharge into the roof or does it discharge out of the building? If it discharges into the roof then there can be problems with rusting and corroding of metal and dampness to timber.



Extract vent to outside often discharges into roof which is essential that they do not in this type of roof

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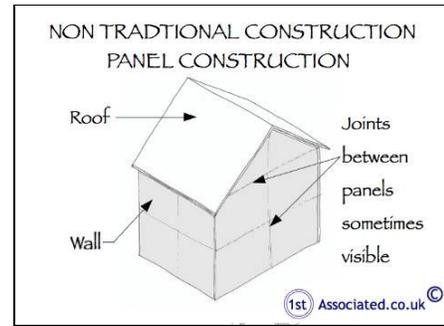
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Large panel construction

This, as the name suggests, is where rather than building small brick after small brick we used large panels, usually of concrete, which in themselves were a storey height and similar width, about two and a half metres square, and they literally interlocked. There have been problems with the reinforcement used in these and the connections of them, but we haven't come across these problems in the many years that we have been surveying.



Large panel concrete non-traditional house



Jointing to a non-traditional house



General view of a development of non-traditional houses

Innovatory construction

We couldn't think of a better title for this section, but we basically mean constructions that used innovation to look at building houses in a completely new way. An example is the Wimpey no fines concrete system, which is popular and, as far as we know, mortgage companies will lend upon it. It utilises almost a moulding system using form work. There is also pod construction, which is drilling pre-fabricated units, craned and positioned into place and then an outer protective shell put around them. Lots of this type of construction was originally carried out by local authorities, as they had the pressure on them to build a large number of houses, and more recently by commercial companies, which had the pressure on them to make profits or returns for their investors.

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Non-traditional houses becoming traditional houses?

We have seen during our surveys over the years there has been a need to convert non-traditional housing into traditional housing. It could be argued that the right to buy Council Housing stock made this an important factor, as it is those people who required a mortgage that required the amendments, as in many cases there was nothing physically wrong with the properties.

Also, large companies holding a large amount of housing stock, such as Council Housing and Housing Associations requiring the housing to be brought up to more modern standards for thermal efficiency, etc, have utilised innovative ways of upgrading (although we are not sure whether that's the right term). Their housing techniques normally involve a cladding system to improve thermal efficiency, along with the check on the structural elements. We have surveyed some of them where they practically re-build the original buildings, which ironically can be very difficult. Whilst we don't know the exact figures we imagine it would be almost as costly as building the property from scratch.

Whistle-stop tour of the non-traditional housing market

There are whole books dedicated to this area, so an article such as this can hardly present the subject of non-traditional housing in detail, but we hope this has given you a flavour and an interest for the subject.

If you truly do want an independent expert opinion from a chartered surveyor, or a chartered building surveyor and are particularly interested in carrying out work on modern timber frame properties and if you are buying such a property please look at our survey examples. We feel our surveys are quite unique, as they are written to your level of knowledge. The surveys include photos and sketches and definitions. The survey will also include an action required section and an estimate of costs in the executive summary. We are more than happy to meet you at the property whilst carrying out the survey to discuss any specific issues you may have or have a general chat about what we have found at the end of the survey. Please contact 0800 298 5424 for a chartered surveyor to give you a call back.

We hope you found the article on Non-Traditional Housing of use and if you have any experiences that you feel should be added to this article that would benefit others, or you feel that some of the information that we have put is wrong then please do not hesitate to contact us (we are only human).

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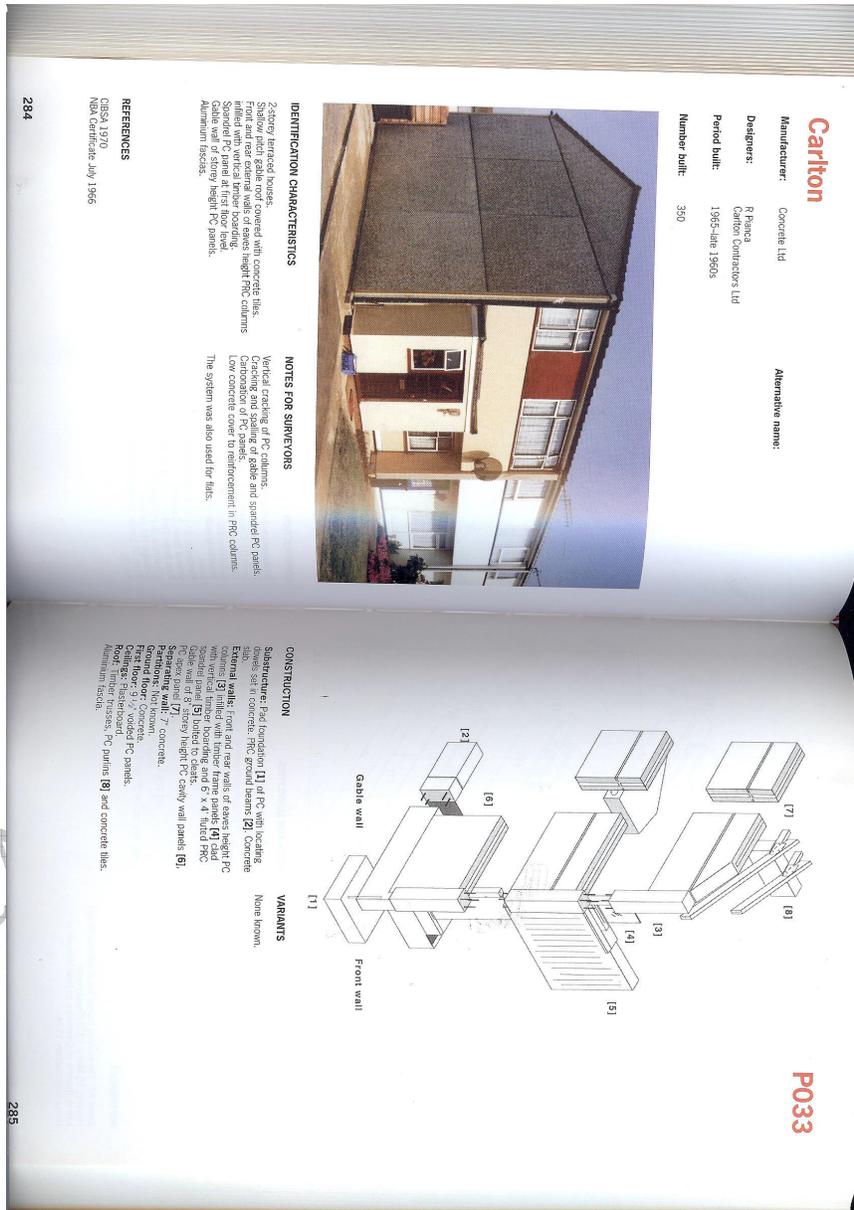
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Sources of information

Our source of this investigation of non-traditional houses has been produced from our data base, by examination of Building Research Establishment (BRE) material on traditional houses and a visual inspection.

Carlton Houses



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Searches we have carried out

The Non-Trad Search Engine

Search at: 10:01 08-Jul-14

by local authority
by construction class

matches so far: 8

P013	Bates 4L
P018	Belfry
P020	Bison Crosswall
P033	Carlton
P047	Dyke CCC
P091	Orlit Type I
P092	Orlit Type II
P130	Wates

The Non-Trad Search Engine

Search at: 10:05 08-Jul-14

England
by house type

matches so far: 4

P033	Barking & Dagenham
P033	Enfield
P033	Runnymede
P033	Slough

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Condensation and Cold Bridging in Non Traditional houses

What is cold bridging, how does it work?

Cold bridging is a term and a problem we believe will become 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.



Non traditional house mainly
asbestos

Cold Bridging

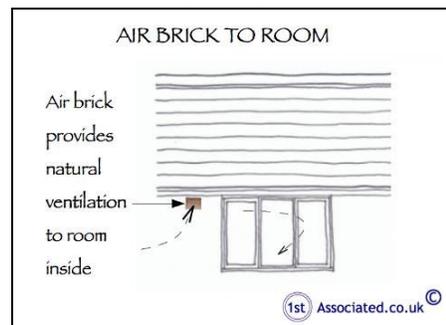
Cold bridging is caused by a colder element in the structure or fabric of the building allowing coldness to pass through. When warm moist air is present in the property and it passes through the colder elements of the structure we have what is known as Cold Bridging. This is often caused by a combination 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.



British Steel frame house
(BISF)

Ventilation is important

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.



Airbrick provides ventilation

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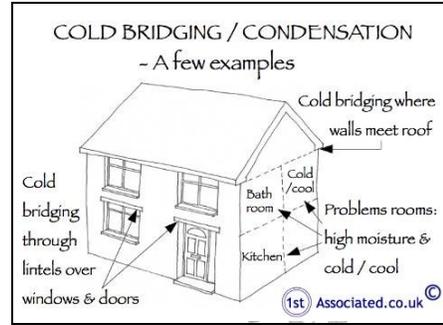
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Condensation and Cold Bridging in certain susceptible constructed properties

Survey 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/condensation

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.

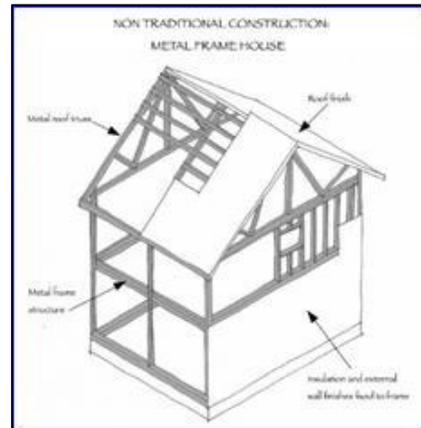
Cold bridging is far worse than condensation as it is caused by an element in the structure, which you can do very little to change without great expense.



Rusting within the roof between the insulation and plastic protective underlayer

Buying a modern building

If you buy a 1980'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.



Metal frame non traditional construction

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When is Cold Bridging Likely?

In our experience we have seen cold bridging occurring in:

- 1) Eras of properties where there are warm elements and colder elements to the building.
- 2) Where you have a mixture of warm rooms and cold rooms.

For example: Lounges and main bedrooms tend to be warmer than guest or spare bedrooms most of the time. Also sometimes rooms can warm up due to large areas of glass and thermal heat gain, which is very true in some conservatories also.



Black mould and high damp meter readings

- 3) Humidity internally is high
- 4) Where it is colder but by no means very cold outside

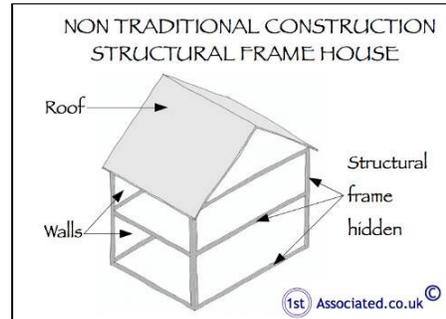
Problems with 1970/1980 era properties relating to Cold Bridging

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.



Non traditional structural frame house

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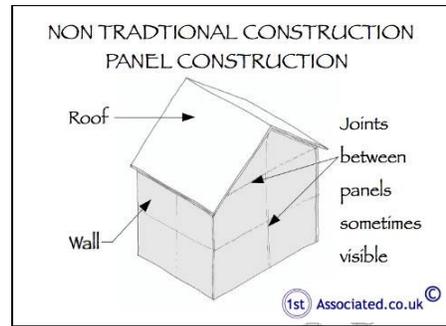
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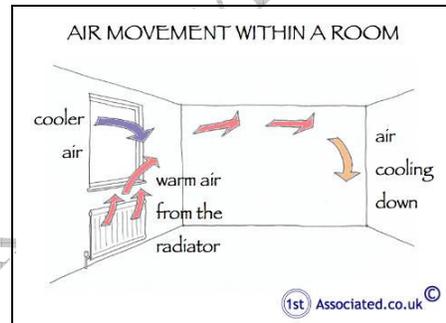
This meant they were warmer which has meant the significance of a lintel, over a door or window, being colder and allowing the transfer of coldness becomes much more important. This results in condensation that we commonly see above windows in this age and era of property.

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.



Non traditional panel construction



Air movement within a room

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.



Metal cladding roofs

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Can lifestyle be 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.

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.



Cooking produces steam and requires ventilation



Non traditional BISF property

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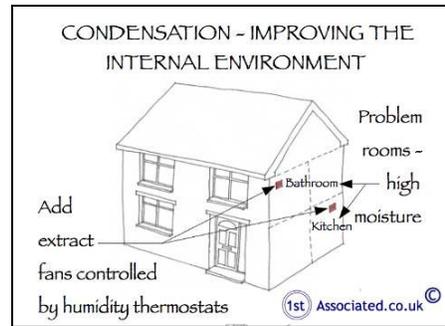
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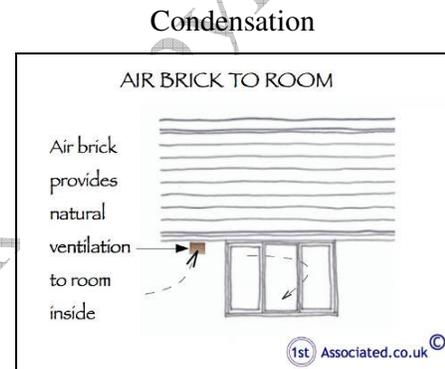
Design of the Building

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 inch 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

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).



Removing electric points to view construction

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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.

Cold bridging what can we do?

There are limited things you can do with regards to cold bridging as it is about the original design of the property and needs to be considered as a characteristic. However, we do always recommend large humidity controlled extract fans are added into the bathrooms, kitchens and any areas that you intend to carry out drying of clothes to ensure moisture is removed as quickly as possible.

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