

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

Cheshire



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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REPORT FORMAT

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

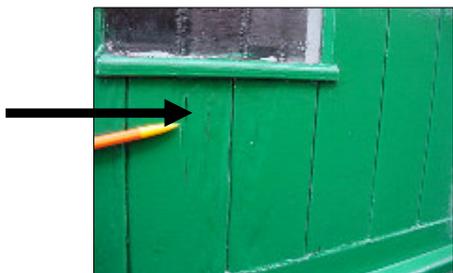
GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

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

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



We utilise photographs and sketches to illustrate issues or features. In some photographs a pencil, pen 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.

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two storey corner plot property that has been extended and amended over the years. Originally it was a shop and we believe it was last opened as an off-licence and was formerly a bakers (when it had a cellar – information from the next door property).

It has an outside amenity space / parking area.

We believe that the property was built in the late Victorian era; we were advised 1896. 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:

1863	The Opening of London Underground
1878	Electric Street Lights are installed in London
1896	First modern Olympic Games (Athens)
1901	Queen Victoria Died
1903	First flight by Wright Brothers

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Rear View



Street view



Right hand side
(from front)



Right hand view
(from rear)

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

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

This building is physically divided into two flats (we believe there are issues with regard to the Deeds etc which you are aware of).

Ground Floor Flat

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Corner access / reception room (one that you have to walk through to get to the rest of the property)
- 2) Rear Kitchen
- 3) Front bedroom
- 4) Rear far left hand bedroom
- 5) Rear bathroom

First Floor Flat

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Entrance
- 2) Front reception room
- 3) Front left bedroom
- 4) Kitchenette
- 5) Shower room

We believe there was once a cellar underneath the corner of the building which has now been concreted over.

Outside Areas

There is a rear back yard area that is currently being used to dump rubbish and furniture! It has a hard standing finish.

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

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.

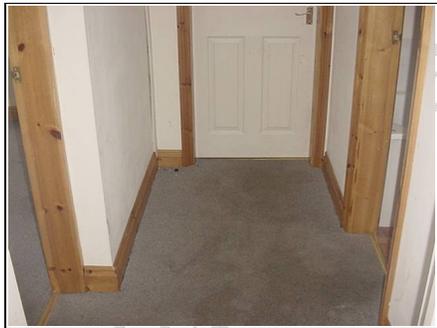
Ground Floor Flat



Corner access / reception room
(right)



Front left bedroom



Link corridor



Kitchen (rear)



Rear far left bedroom



Rear bathroom

First Floor Flat



Entrance door and steep steps



Front reception room



Front left bedroom



Kitchenette



Shower room

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Chimneys:	Two chimneys; one brick, one render finished (with sulphate attack)
Main Roof:	Pitched, clad concrete tiles (originally slate)
Main Roof Structure:	Cut timber roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic; some original cast iron remaining
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Painted render
Fascias and Soffits:	painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Mixture of timber casement windows in a sliding sash style look and plastic double glazed casement windows to rear

Internal

Ceilings:	Lath and plaster and/or plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Mixture of solid and studwork and lots of dry lined walls (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: Partly solid under foot (assumed concrete) and partly suspended timber floor (assumed)
	First Floor: Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)

Services

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (gas is to ground floor only) (all assumed). The electrics look to be split. The ground floor boiler is in the kitchen and heats radiators and looks to only serve the ground floor. The electrics are under the stairs and at the top of the stairs (ground floor and first floor) and are both from the 1960's. The first floor property is heated by electric heaters.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 200 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 been split in two, thereby increasing the potential rent and has been altered and amended already into this configuration, albeit that it needs new electrics and heating, amongst other things.
- 2.0) The back yard area gives the possibility of off road parking.

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

The Bad

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

1.0) Main Roof Rear

There is dampness coming down the render which we believe is due to the roof tiling that does not overhang properly. We feel also that the render may be defective as the amount of dampness is considerable.



Dampness on end gable probably due to way the roof tile is

1.1) Sulphate attack on chimney

The rear chimney which is rendered looks to have sulphate attack due to the dampness.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend a roofer investigates the roof. They are likely to have to do some re-roofing plus put a proper flashing around the chimney and possibly vent the chimney.



There is sulphate attack on chimney

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £2,500 to £5,000 as scaffolding is likely and this can be expensive. Please obtain quotations.

You will then have to allow the render to dry out which can take some time and check to see if it damaged or deteriorated and then finally redecorate in a masonry based paint. To some extent you will always have a problem where you have used a cement based render or pointing on an older property such as this which is meant to breathe. One final point, often in this age of property there is a timber lintel to the windows and these may have been damaged/deteriorated by the dampness in the wall over the years.

Please see the Roofs and Walls Sections of this Report.

2.0) Roofs

There are two roofs to the property; the main roof and the rear roof. Both of them have small access hatches and viewing is limited, particularly to the main roof.

From what we could see there looks to have been some woodworm at some point in time in the roof, we couldn't see sufficiently to be certain. We would comment that most woodworm is no longer active.

We would also comment that we cannot be 100% certain that the fire wall has been built properly between this property and the adjoining property.

Fire Walls Defined

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



Looking into main roof



Water getting in through flashing to rear single storey roof

2.1 Low level roof

With the low level rear roof we could see there looked to be some dampness getting in particularly around the flashing area.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend you widen both access hatches so you can get a proper view of the woodworm and the fire wall and the dampness. We would also ask a woodworm company to visit. Please be aware they are trying to sell woodworm products.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £100 to £200 for a new access hatch. It is normally free for the woodworm company to look

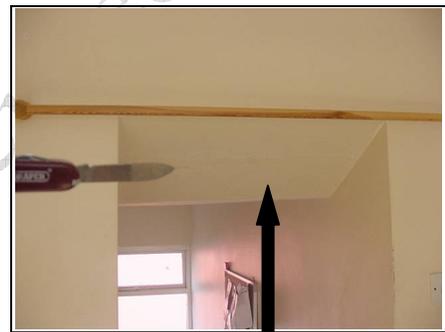
into the roof. Please be aware that often woodworm is no longer active and they need to show you frass (the chewed up sawdust) to prove that the woodworm is active. This may cost £1,000 to £2,000 in a best case scenario. Please obtain quotations for any works.

2.2 Roof change from slates to concrete tiles

It is likely as most Victorian roofs were slate that the original roof has now been changed for a concrete roof, which is much heavier than slate roofs. As such extra timbers should be added into the roof. We could not see these additional timbers although, as mentioned, our view of the main roof was limited.



Cracking at roof level – no supporting timbers in roof



Cracking at roof level – no supporting timbers in roof

ACTION REQUIRED: We suggest you that you add additional timbers. This is now a Building Regulations requirement to ensure a roof structure is structurally sound when heavier tiles are added to it and usually involves adding additional bracing timbers.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £500 to £1,000 for additional timbers; please obtain quotes.

Please see the Roof and Timber Defects Section of this Report.

3.0) Services

Electrics

Both the electric units have been switched off and both of them are from the 1960's/1970's.



Fuse Board in ground floor flat



Fuse Board in first floor flat



Electric unit in cupboard on first floor – not sure what this is for

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend that the whole system is replaced and an Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE) test and report carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

An electrician needs to check that the two kitchens are both on separate circuits, as is the electricity as a whole. We would also add additional socket points as there look to be very few around the kitchens, which is quite unusual and does indicate to us a project carried out to a price rather than a quality standard and we are aware you may come across other things with the electrics.

ANTICIPATED COST: Depends upon how much is replaced but we estimate in the region of £2,000 to approximately £4,000; please obtain quotations. The cost will very much depend upon how much re-wiring is required.

Fire alarm and security system

We would also recommend that whilst the electrics are being carried out a hard wired in fire alarm system is added and also a security system, ideally with a door entry camera system which is particularly handy for the first floor flat and is also a good selling point from a safety aspect and fire point of view.

4.0) Heating

As with all the services the boiler was condemned / not working at the time of our inspection. The ground floor heating is via a gas fired boiler. The make is one that we rarely come across.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend that the boiler is serviced. We would ultimately replace this boiler with a more well known make, such as Vaillant, Potterton or Worcester.

You must know if the heating is working

On a very basic level you do need to see this heating working before you purchase the property as it does mean a cost of several thousand pounds to you if you cannot get the heating system working.

ACTION REQUIRED: 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



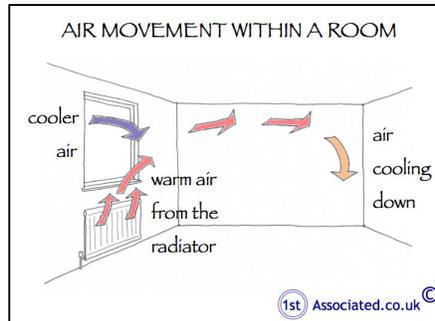
Microbore pipes

Also, we would suggest that the radiators are changed from a microbore pipe to a 13mm traditional pipe and that they are positioned under the windows as this minimises condensation.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £1,000 to £2,000; please obtain quotations.

Internal radiators

At the same time as you are changing the radiators from single panel to double panel radiators we also recommend they are re-positioned underneath the windows. This should not be hard with the suspended timber floor and joints and floorboards at first floor level.



Internal radiator

How is the first floor heated?

The first floor is heated by older style electric storage heaters. Generally gas is now used to a central heating system. We would suggest a second boiler is added.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend this is replaced by gas, at the very least the electric heating is modernised.



Electric heater on first floor

Shower Units

We would recommend that the existing shower units are changed and are fed with an electric shower or an instantaneous boiler if you decide to replace it.

Please see the Services and Other Matters Sections of this Report.

5.0) Condensation Likely

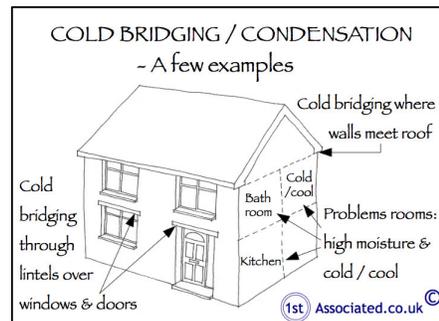
There is mixture of things which combined mean this property is more likely to have condensation than an average property. These things are:

1. Lack of good ventilation in the property.
2. The mixing of dry lined (false walls) construction and traditional Victorian construction
3. Cold bridging will occur in this age of property.



Condensation in first floor

ACTION REQUIRED: Whilst the problem is not 100% possible to stop it can be improved by adding humidity controlled extract fans to the bathrooms/shower rooms and kitchens. At the time of our inspection we noted the form of condensation within the cupboard in the bedroom in the first floor.



ANTICIPATED COST: We would expect costs in the region of £250 to £800 for extract fans; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

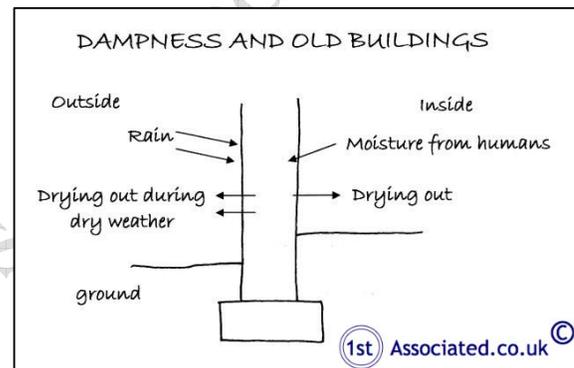
6.0) Lot of render to paint

The property has been rendered externally and you will need to paint this to keep the property watertight, with a masonry paint rather than a plastic based paint that looks to have been placed on it presently which simply stops the property from breathing, very much like a Cagoule, whereas what you need is a Gore-tex type finish.



Large area of render to paint

The sketch to the right shows how old buildings take on dampness and then breathe and let the water and dampness out again. This is why a damp proof course does not necessarily/usually work on an older property.



In addition to this, in a modern property often plastic based paints are used which can seal the surface up and stop it from breathing.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend redecoration by 2013. It is important that the correct paint is used.

ANTICIPATED COST: We would expect costs in the region of a few thousand pounds; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

7.0) Joinery

The timber windows have seen better days. Our knife test went into the soft timber in some areas.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend that for the time being they are filled and painted at cost of approximately £500 to £1,500, but in the long term you need to look at replacing them one way or another.

Please see the Windows Section of this Report.



Knife test of condition of timber windows

8.0) Rising Damp

You have rising damp. We can see that chemical injections have been inserted into this property before. We believe that a property of this age needs to breathe rather than having an injected damp proof course. The difficulty you have with the dampness to the floor of the property is that there is no proper air flow underneath the property.

We have discussed this further in the Ugly Section of this report.



Rising damp to stairs at bottom of entrance to first floor

The Ugly

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

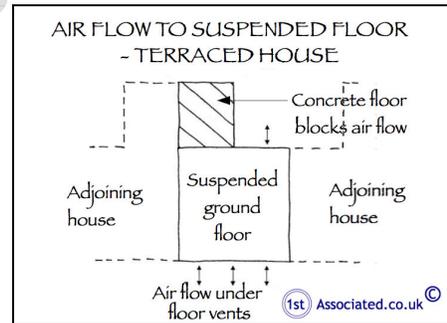
1.0) Floors

We believe the original suspended timber floor has been partially blocked by concrete in the corner section of the property where the old cellar used to be. This has blocked the ventilation to the timber floor which can cause deterioration. If you recall, we asked you to jump up and down on the front bedroom floor and there was quite a bit of flex/deflection to it.



Where cellar used to be

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend you open up the suspended floor and check the condition of the joists (timbers). It may well be possible to through vent the area with some timber repairs; alternatively, it may not! The only way to be certain is to open up the floor. Ideally, you need to open up the floor before you purchase the property as this would give you a better indication of the costs.



ANTICIPATED COST: A best case scenario would be costs for air bricks at a few hundred pounds, a worst case scenario would be replacement of the floors in timber which we would recommend. This is likely to be in the region of £2,000 to £5,000; please obtain quotations. As mentioned, we have actually carried out this type of work and propped up the floor which lasted for many years in a similar Victorian property.

Please see the Floors Section of this Report.

2.0) Roofs

(Yes we appreciate we are partially repeating ourselves but it is important to ensure this point is understood).

There are two items with regard to the roof:

1. To the rear there is not a sufficient overhang to the tiles. This means the water is discharging down the rear render of the property which is soaking into the cement render like blotting paper. This is also causing some sulphate attack to the rear chimney.



Insufficient overhang to the tiles

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to have a roofer for a few days to check the roof and the flashings and ensure that the overhang is correct. You may also need to carry out some re-rendering work. We have already mentioned this in the Bad Section but we do feel it warrants promoting to the Ugly Section.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £2,500 to £5,000; please obtain quotations. It is likely you will need either a tower scaffold or a good set of long ladders and crawler boards to sort the roof problems out.

2. In addition, you will need to possibly add additional timbers within the roof, the extra support being needed because of the concrete tiles adding extra weight. Costs in the region of £500 to £1,000 for additional timbers; please obtain quotes.

We would also add that we have not been able to see into the roof properly.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend that a wider access hatch is cut into the ceiling and that it is fully lit and boarded, together with a permanent ladder. We would be more than happy



Small loft hatch 22

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to comment upon any photos that you take.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £500 to £1,000; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roofs Section of this Report.

Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Services

Whilst we have carried out a visual inspection of the services within the property we also need to advise you of the following:

Drainage

The water was turned off so we were unable to run the taps. We have however lifted the manhole cover and it looked clear. There could however be blockages prior to getting to the manhole. The only way to be certain there is no problem is to put a closed circuit TV camera down the drains. Victorian drains are renowned for leaking which in many properties causes a characteristic cracking to the rear of the property.

Water Supply

The taps were turned off. 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 - SERVICES: We would reiterate that we recommend with regard to all services that you have an independent check by a specialist contractor.

DIY/Handyman Type Work

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as redecorating depending on the time you have available, inclination, etc. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

Purchase Price

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

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Estimates of 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.

SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



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

This property would put many people off. You need to obviously weigh it up with your requirements from it as a rental property and the price and also from the discussions we have had with regard to the saleability/capital growth of the property, bearing in mind the adjoining neighbour, for example, having to drop the price considerably and taking a year to two years to sell.

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.

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. You mentioned that there are some problems with regards to the Deeds/Lease as this property is still seen as one from what we recall. We assume you will get good legal advice on this.

ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

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

SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR

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

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS

This report is being carried out under our terms of engagement for 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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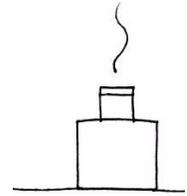
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**THE DETAILED PART OF THE REPORT
FOLLOWS, WORKING FROM THE TOP
OF THE PROPERTY DOWNWARDS**



EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS



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

There are two chimneys to this property they are located one to the front left hand side and one to the rear (all directions given as you face the property in Stanley Street).

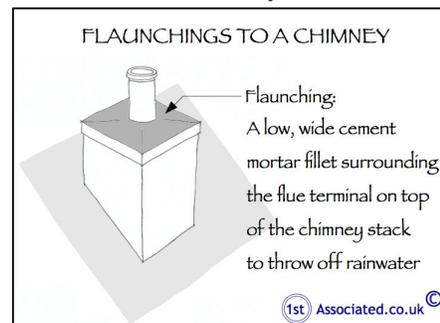
Chimney One, located front left hand side

This chimney is brick finished with part lead flashing and four number chimney pots, half of which are yours. From what we could see from ground level it looked in average condition needing some pointing considering its age, type and style.



Chimney

Unfortunately we were unable to see the flaunching, we therefore cannot comment upon them.



ACTION REQUIRED: We can see that some of the flashing was missing. You need to check this and ensure that there is flashing to the entirety of the chimney. We have recommended in the Executive Summary that you have a roofer for a few days and this is one of the jobs they should carry out.

Chimney Two, located to the rear

This chimney has been lowered and rendered and capped. We noted it had sulphate attack. This is where the soot from within is getting damp and seeping through.

ACTION REQUIRED: You can sweep the chimney and then vent it to resolve this problem and also check the flashings. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Rear chimney

Flashings Defined

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

Flaunchings Defined

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

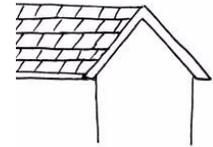
Render Defined

A sand and cement external coating applied in two or three coats or layers.

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

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

ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

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

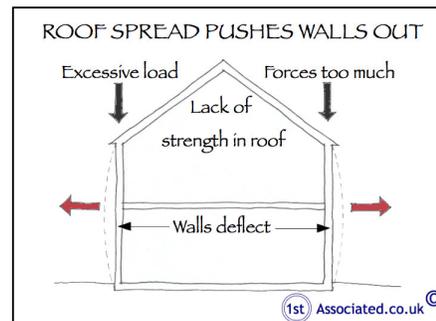
Main Roof

The main roof covering is concrete tiles. Due to the pitch of the roof we could not see them very well. They look to be a flat interlocking concrete tile. Originally the roof would have been a slate roof covering, as was popular in the majority of this type of Victorian property which would be much lighter.



The re-roofing of a slate roof with concrete tiles is relatively common. However, it has in some cases led to problems in the form of roof spread. A common one being roof spread. This occurs because the concrete tiles are much heavier than the original slate tiles (particularly when wet), which results in additional stress and strain being placed upon the roof structure and the walls, in some cases causing movement.

Concrete roof tiles



The Building Regulations now requires when a property is re-roofed in a different material, approval to be obtained. This will often require additional support being added to the roof structure and was brought in for the previously mentioned reasons.

From ground level the roof looks in average condition considering its age type and style but our view was limited due to the angle.



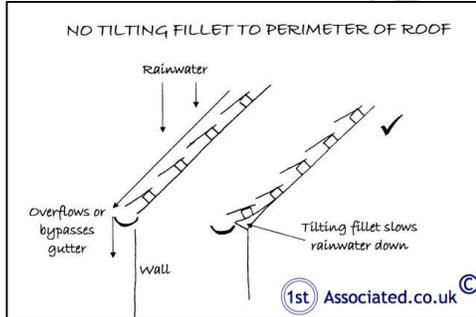
Tile on edge rather than lead flashing

ACTION REQUIRED: We had a very limited view of the roof. From what we could see there have been no extra timbers added and you should allow for adding extra timbers.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary. You do need to get a roofer for a few days to sort the roof out, particularly in relation to the chimney.

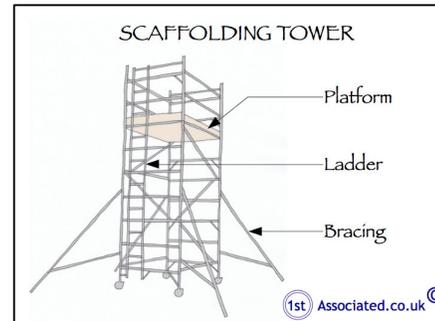
No Tilting Fillet

We suspect there is no tilting fillet to the last tile on this roof. It is very difficult to see due to the angle. The adjoining sketch shows you what a roof with no tilting fillet looks like.



No tilting fillet

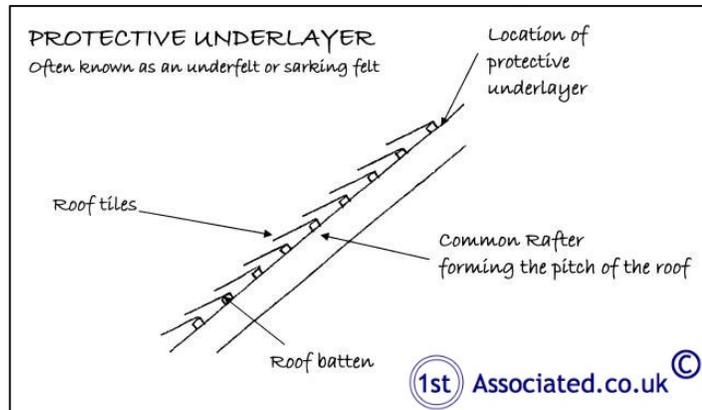
ACTION REQUIRED: We suggest that that when your roofer gets up on to the roof using a long ladder or a tower scaffold they check to see if there is a tilting fillet.



GENERAL ACTION REQUIRED: Carry out the initial maintenance recommended then have periodic inspections as required. Please see all our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

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



When we inspected the loft space we found an older style 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. Again we reiterate that our view was limited.



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

Low Level Roofs – Single Storey Roofs

Low Level Rear Pitched Roof

This roof also has a concrete tile that we believe to be interlocking. We were pleased to see a lead flashing where it meets the main building, although it does look like this is leaking from within the roof. With a shallow pitch such as this it can be subject to wind driven rain.



Low level pitched roof

Roof Windows

(Known as roof lights or Velux windows which is the trade or generic name)

The property has a purpose made roof light, which looked in average condition. The important factor with roof lights is the flashing around them.

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



Roof window

Party Wall

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

Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

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

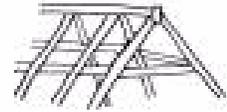
Any work to party structures, such as party walls or party chimney stacks, require agreement under the Party Wall Act. We would be more than happy to offer you help and advice in this matter.

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

Finally, we were only able to see approximately twenty five percent of the main roof from ground level via our ladder or via any other vantage point that we managed to gain but the angle was very difficult to confirm the exact condition. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see, however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

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

ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

Main Roof

Roof Access

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located in the first floor left hand bedroom. It is very small and we were looking up through the loft hatch from the top of our ladder; it really was that small.

There is no loft ladder, electric light or secured floorboards. We recommend that these be added, as well as a large loft hatch opening to make the roof space safer and easier to use.

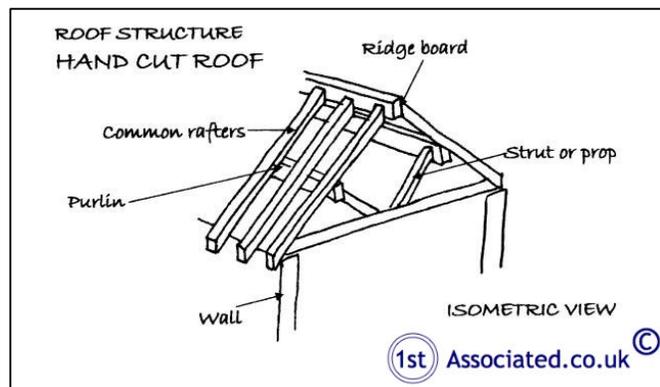


Roof access

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

Roof Structure

Whilst our view was limited we would comment that this property has what is known as a cut timber roof. This is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects; however it is in line with what we typically see



Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

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



General view of inside of roof - limited view

Our examination was very limited due to us not being able to get into the roof. What we could see was generally found to be in average to slightly below average condition for its age, type and style. We thought we saw some woodworm in the roof but it really is difficult to say with the loft hatch being so small.

ACTION REQUIRED: The only way to be 100 per cent certain is to have a larger loft hatch opening and the entire roof cleared and checked. We would be more than happy to comment on any photos.

Fire Walls

We were unable to see any fire walls due to the angle into the roof. This should be the dividing wall between your property and next door's property to stop the spread of fire.

Fire Walls Defined

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

Water Tanks

We were unable to see whether there was a 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!

Ventilation

We could see no ventilation externally. Roofs such as this need to have ventilation to reduce dampness

Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

Electrical Cables

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

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

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

GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

Gutters and Downpipes

The gutters and downpipes are replacement plastic; originally they would have been cast iron. They looked to have been put on with very little skill or thought.

There is likely to be some leaks but it was not raining at the time of our inspection so we cannot confirm this but we could see there was an overflowing gutter to the rear of the property for example, and it may need a realignment of the guttering and general clearing or may need a hopper head and a downpipe.

We could also see that one of the downpipes discharged on top of the soil and vent pipe, which we have not come across before.



Overflowing gutter



Rainwater pipe discharging on top of soil and vent pipe

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 would 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.

ANTICIPATED COST: We would set aside the sum of £1,000 to £2,000; please obtain quotes.

Soil and Vent Pipe

The property has plastic soil and vent pipes. We could see what we would describe as a tangle of pipes feeding into the soil and vent pipe. This is why we believe there may be some blockages to the property. As mentioned, the water was switched off at the time of our inspection so we could not check.



Top of soil and vent pipe

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.

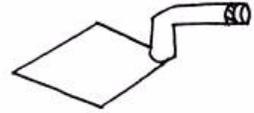


Bottom of soil and vent pipe



Tangle of pipes on the soil and vent pipe

WALLS



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

The walls are finished in painted render.

Render

The external walls are rendered. We are always wary when we see rendered properties as it usually means they have been rendered for a particular reason, for example, next door is brickwork. Render can certainly hide a lot of things.

This property looks to have had a cement based render added and in addition to this it looks to have a modern paint on it.



Lots of painted render



Brickwork to next door property

Sulphate Attack

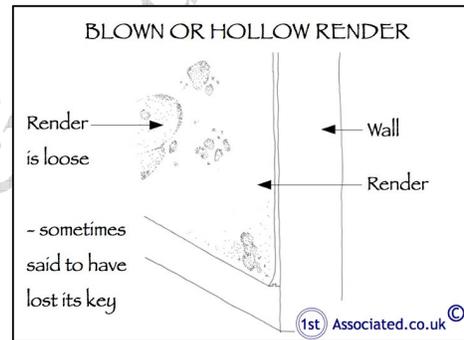
We have mentioned various problems to the rear, for example where we believe there is sulphate attack from the chimney and there certainly is dampness also to the rear. The problem with this type of deterioration is that it can cause blown or hollow section which can be hidden.



Dampness to rear of property

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

We have carried out a tap test (literally hitting the render with the back of a hammer). We found it to be in slightly below average condition for its age, type and style.

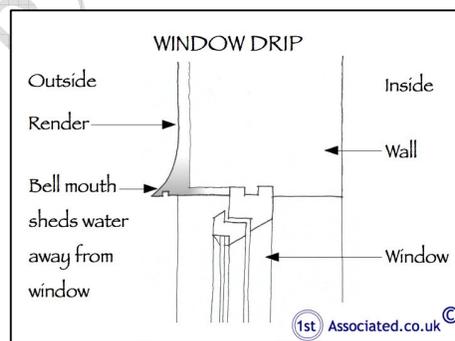


Render Detailing

You can normally tell whether the render is good or not by the drip detail over the window and the bell mouth to the base of the property.

Window drip detail

In this case we found no drip detail to the windows and this does give an indication as why the windows are deteriorating.

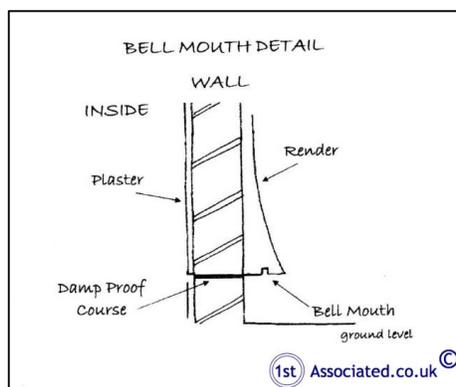


No drip detail above window

ACTION REQUIRED: Ideally a drip detail should be added.

Bell mouth to base of property

To the base of the render there was a bell mouth detail.

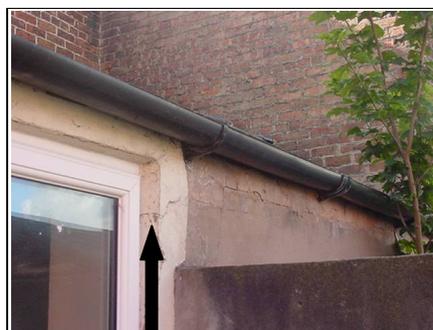


Bell mouth to base of property – with vegetation growing there

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.

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



Cracking to render

Painted render/painted walls

Do not underestimate the amount of time/cost it will take to repaint the property particularly as there is high level work which is likely to need scaffolding which can be expensive.

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

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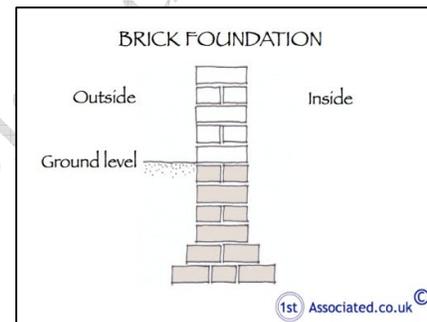
FOUNDATIONS



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

Given the age of the property you may find different depths of foundations. We would expect to find a stepped brick foundation possibly with a bedding of lime mortar and possibly a concrete foundation to the rear extension.



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

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

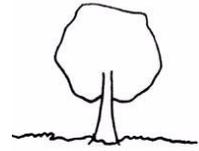
We would refer you to our comments with regard to building insurance throughout this report.

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.

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.

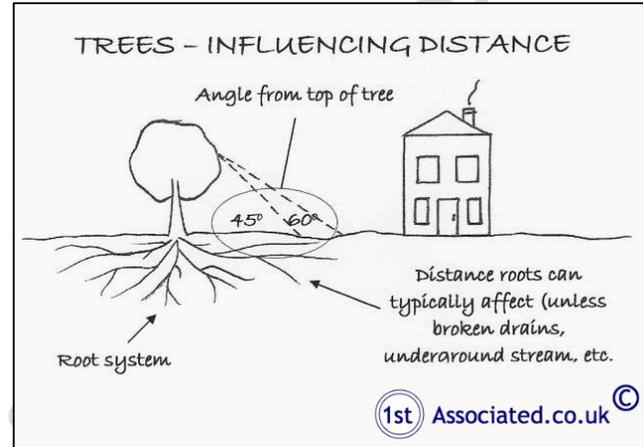
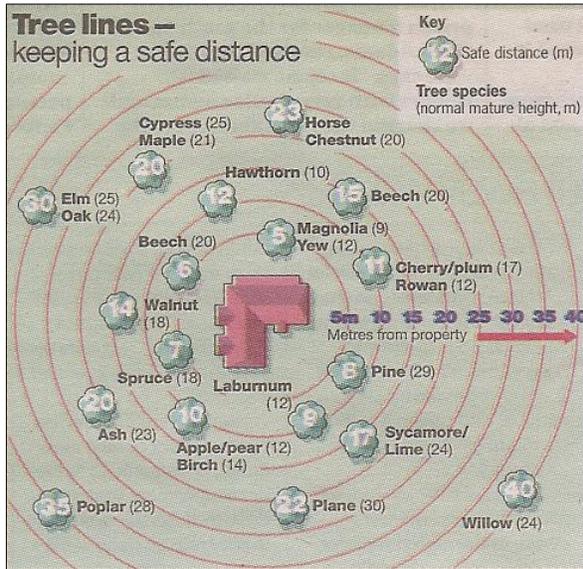
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TREES



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

There are no trees within what insurance companies would term as influencing distance of the 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.

DAMP PROOF COURSE



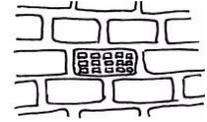
The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required various other basic standards. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout London and then the country as a whole, 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 we cannot see a DPC as it is hidden by the render.

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

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

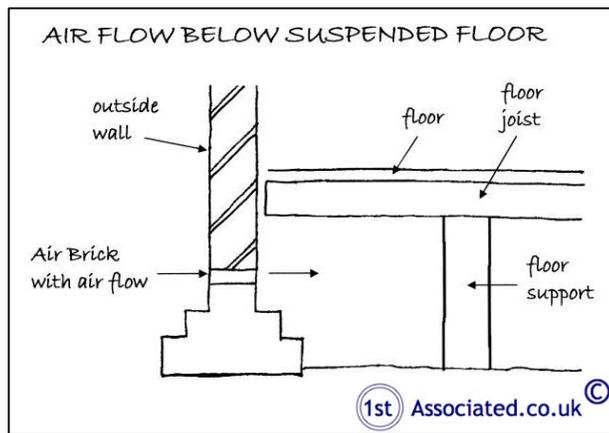
AIRBRICKS



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

Low Level Air Bricks

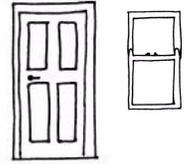
Air bricks are essential to have a through flow of air as this helps to reduce the chances of wet rot, dry rot and woodworm.



Air brick

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

FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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

Fascias and Soffits

The fascias and soffits are timber. They are painted / stained and we would comment that they are likely to need work with the gutters in the condition they are.

ACTION REQUIRED: When the gutters are being checked you can also check the condition of the fascias and soffits.



Timber fascias and soffits

Windows and Doors

The property has a mixture of timber casement windows in a sliding sash style/look and plastic double glazed casement windows to the rear without trickle vents, which generally look to be in below average condition, and which we believe are from the cheaper end of the market. We would comment that some of the double glazed units have failed. 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.



Timber casement sliding sash style window to front

We have tested the windows by pushing a knife into a random selection. We generally tend to do the lower windows as access is easier.

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

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £500 to £1,500; obtain quotes.



Knife test of condition of timber

Trickle Vents Defined

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

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

EXTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

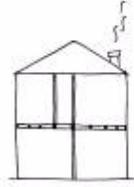
There is a lot of render to paint in due course. You need to stop the water getting into it to start off with and let it dry out and then carry out various alterations and amendments as we have mentioned and then re-paint it all properly.

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

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

INTERNAL



CEILING, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

Ceilings

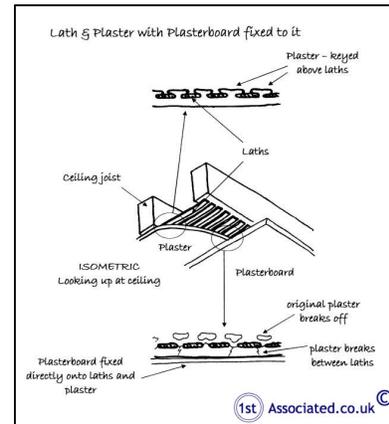
From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be lath and plaster and plasterboard. We know most developers/semi-builders will tack over the top of the original lath and plaster.

Lath and Plaster Defined

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

Plasterboard Defined

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

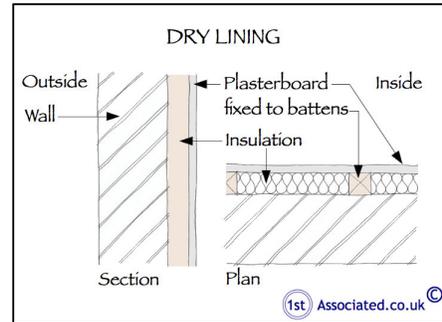


Internal Walls and Partitions

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

Perimeter Walls

Originally these would have been constructed with a wet plaster with a lime mix. It has now in lots of areas had dry lining added. It is very important that you realise the dry lining/hidden walls is hiding a considerable amount of dampness. We suspect that when you open up the floors the dampness will be such that it will have affected some of the floors joists, particularly where the timbers are embedded into the outer brickwork on the ground floor.

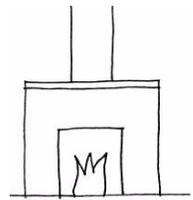


Again, we cannot be 100% certain of the wall construction without opening them up which goes beyond the scope of this report.

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

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

CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

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

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

Finally, we will comment on the condition of the chimney breast where we can see the chimney breast. If we can see a chimney breast has been removed we will inspect for signs of movement and advise. However, often the chimney breasts are hidden so we cannot comment. Also additional support can be concealed very well when chimney breasts are hidden particularly when plastered over.

Your Legal Advisor needs to specifically check with the Local Authority for removed chimneys and associated chimney breasts and Building Regulations Approvals and advise by e-mail immediately if chimney breasts are found to have been removed. We would recommend opening up the structure to check the condition. If we are not advised we will assume the relevant Building Regulations Approval has been obtained.

It is strongly recommended that flues be cleaned and checked for obstructions prior to use to minimise the risk of hazardous fumes entering the building.

Please also see the Chimney Stacks, Flues Section

FLOORS

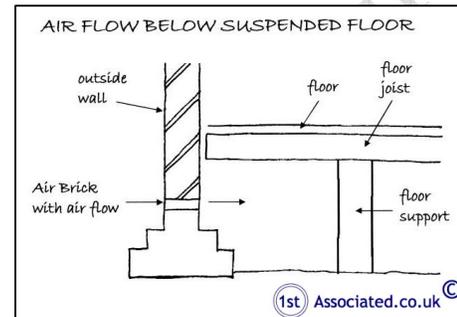


Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.

Ground Floor

Suspended Timber Floor

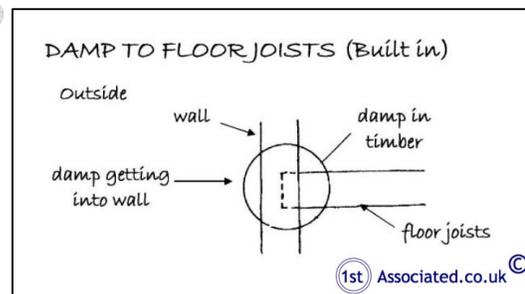
The floors felt partly solid underfoot so we have assumed that they are constructed in concrete. They were also partly suspended timber floors which require air movement underneath to minimise wet rot, dry rot and woodworm. However, we have not opened up the floors.



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

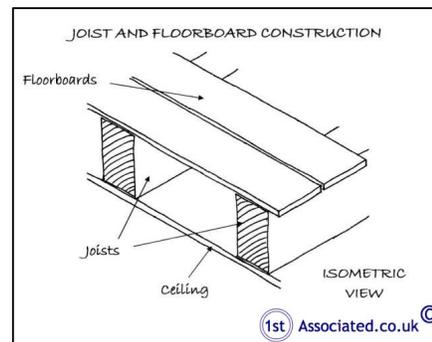
First Floor

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



Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

These are usually at first floor level consisting of a joist supported from the external walls, either built in or, in more modern times, sitting upon joist hangers, sometimes taking additional support from internal walls, with floorboards fixed down upon it.



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

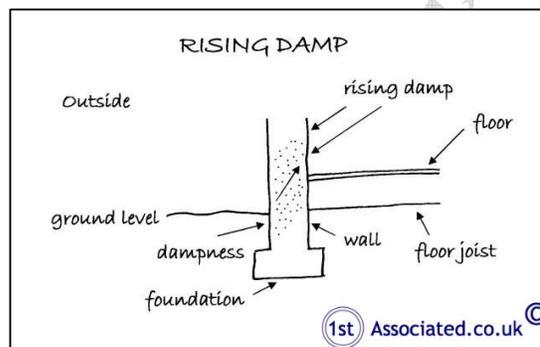


DAMPNESS

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

Rising Damp

Rising damp depends upon various components including the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation of the material, amongst other things. Rising damp can come from the ground, drawn by capillary action, to varying degrees of intensity and height into the materials above. There is a strong argument that true rising damp is very rarely found.



A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we have found rising damp. We believe this dampness comes from the concrete floor acting like blotting paper and then this being drawn into the building.

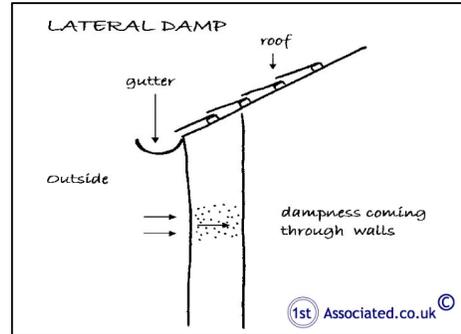


ACTION REQUIRED: Please see the Executive Summary. It may be a long drawn out process to get this property dry.

Rising damp to stairs at bottom of entrance

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.



We used a damp meter on the external walls. We have not found dampness; the walls are dry lined and we simply cannot get readings.



Taking lateral damp readings
– all in the mid 30s

Condensation

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

At the time of the inspection there was condensation visible within the cupboard of the left hand bedroom on the first floor, there are no other signs of condensation but the property has been empty for some time. We do feel that this property would suffer from cold bridging and condensation. Please see our article on cold bridging in the Appendices.



Condensation in cupboard left hand
side room

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

Extract fans in kitchens and bathrooms

A way of helping to reduce condensation is to have good large extract fans with humidity controlled thermostats within the kitchens and bathrooms which are moisture generating areas.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend humidity controlled extract fans be added to kitchens and bathrooms. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

ANTICIPATED COST: A few hundred pounds.

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.



Extract fan

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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 doors are panel doors. Some of them have had timber put on to them to make them flush which was a fashion in years gone by.



Panel fire doors



Fire doors

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.

Skirtings

Modern skirtings are stuck on (literally glued on without any nails) and are 100mm / 150mm / 250mm.



Kitchen

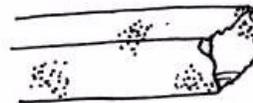
Stick on skirting

We found the kitchen in below average condition but it does depend what standards you have for your rental properties.

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

TIMBER DEFECTS



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

Dry Rot

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

We have not visually seen any 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 wet rot during the course of our inspection. We found some in the timber windows. We also believe there is likely to be some under the floor; if you recall the deflection of the front left hand bedroom when you jumped up and down.

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

Woodworm



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

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the roof we believe there may be some woodworm. It is unlikely to be active, however our view really was so limited in the roof.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend you call in a specialist woodworm company. Please be aware that they are selling woodworm chemical products. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary

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

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

INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

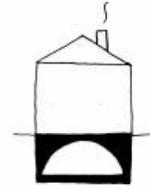
Internal decorations are in average condition. You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste. It is very difficult to advise on how frequently redecoration should take place. This very much depends upon the use and abuse the decoration gets, for example, within hallways this tends to be greater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



Marks on walls need redecoration

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.

CELLARS AND VAULTS



Cellars and vaults tend to be found in older properties and offer a useful space, although usually they are damp, unless some treatment has taken place such as the tanking of the walls, which is a lining process, or an external damp proofing membrane of some type has been added, or if internally the walls have been lined, therefore hiding the damp. Cellars are often susceptible to flooding from excessive rain, rising water table levels or even blocked drains.

As with many older properties we believe there was a cellar originally and we were advised (by the next door neighbours) that there was once a cellar. It very much depends upon how the cellar has been filled. We have only ever unearthed one cellar and that was literally filled with rubble and there were plenty of pockets for water to sit in.

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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.

HIPs

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

Roofs

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 300mm. The roofs would benefit from additional insulation but if you do this you must also ventilate.

Walls

The walls to this property are solid in the sense that they do not have a cavity as a modern property would have. Also they are unlikely to have any substantial insulation, however, unfortunately it is generally very difficult to improve the insulation without affecting the external or the internal appearance of the property.

Windows

The windows are a mixture of single and double glazed and therefore will have reasonable thermal properties.

Services

We would normally recommend you get service records but you are unlikely to get them in this case. We feel you are likely to have to start again with new boilers and new electrics.

Summary

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

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

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

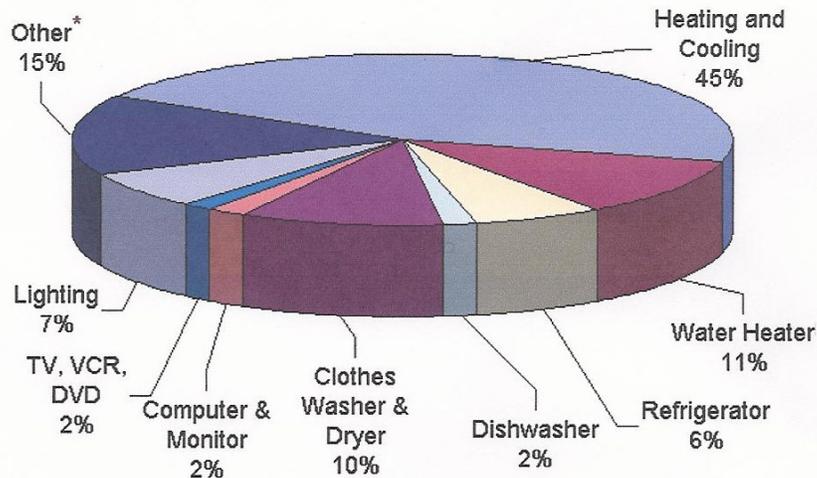
or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

HTTP//www.withouthotair.com/Videos.html to download or buy like we did.

It is worth watching the video How Many Light Bulbs? by David J C MacKay HTTP//www.youtube.com/watch?v=UR8wRSp21Xs

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.

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.

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. 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. It may help rent the property if you have a security system.

ACTION REQUIRED: Further information should be obtained from the vendor and the installer at a later date.

Fire Systems and Smoke Alarms

The fire alarms are battery operated. We are a strong believer that where properties are multi occupied, i.e. there are more than one resident or tenancy, that the fire alarm system should be interconnected alerting any of the properties if there is a fire anywhere within the building.



Fire alarm – needs hard wiring

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

Insurance

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

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

Asbestos

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. In this case we have not noted asbestos but it is of an era when asbestos could be used, for example lining doors, ductwork, fascias and soffits; it was used as commonly as wood.

Asbestos was commonly used post war until it was banned only in the last ten or so years, although it is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time.

Our insurance company requires us to advise that we are not asbestos surveyors.

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

SERVICES

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

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

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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 are dated and it is best to start again with new electrics. In multi occupied properties a defective fuse board can be particularly dangerous.



Fuse Board in ground floor flat



Fuse Board in first floor flat



Electric unit in cupboard on first floor – not sure what this is for

Earth Test

We tried to carry out an earth test in the kitchen areas on the ground and first floor that is normally used for the kettle, but the electrics were off and we did not feel it appropriate to switch them back on with the condemned stickers, etc.



Electric off on ground floor

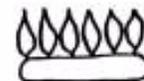


Electric off on ground floor

ACTION REQUIRED: As the property is changing occupancy an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test and report should be carried out by a NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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.



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 first floor bedroom.

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 unit

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.

PLUMBING AND HEATING



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

Water Supply

The controlling stopcock was not located.

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

ACTION REQUIRED: Ask the owners/estate agents to show you where it is.

Water Pressure

We were unable to turn on the taps to check the pressure as the water was turned off at the time of our inspection.

Cold Water Cistern

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

Plumbing

The plumbing, where visible, comprises copper piping where visible. We often find plastic is used in alterations on this type of property and find there are often problems where plastic and copper meet. No significant leakage was noted on the surface, although most of the pipework is concealed in floors, walls and ducts.

Heating

The ground floor boiler is located in the kitchen, it is a make we rarely come across and we recommend you replace it with a more well known make, such as Vaillant or Potterton or Worcester.

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.

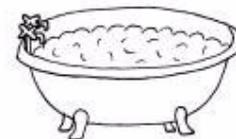
Ten Minute Heating Test

We were unable to test the heating as the boiler was condemned.

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

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

BATHROOM



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

Ground Floor Bathroom

The ground floor property has a three piece fairly old bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin and WC. Ideally you may wish to replace it.

First Floor Bathroom

The first floor property has a three piece bathroom suite, consisting of a shower, wash hand basin and WC, which again looks fairly old and you may wish to replace it.

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

MAIN DRAINS



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

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

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

Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We have identified one inspection chamber / manhole.

Inspection Chamber / Manhole One, located to the rear

We duly lifted the cover and found it to be free flowing at the time of our inspection.

From what we could see it is brick built.



Rear drain

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

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

Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

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

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

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

OUTSIDE AREAS

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 AND EXTERNAL AREAS



Rear Yard Area

The rear of the property may be used for a parking area. There is a double wooden gate that will need fixing beforehand.



Rear yard



Rubbish needs clearing



Rear double gates need re-fixing

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

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

Neighbours

Left Hand Neighbours

No-one answered the door when we knocked. We recommend you visit them and have a chat before you purchase the property.

Right Hand Neighbours

This neighbour was very helpful and advised us about the trials and tribulations they had had in the property.

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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) Double glazing or replacement windows.
 - iv) Roof and similar renewals.
 - v) Central heating installation.
 - vi) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
 - vii) Removal of any walls in part or whole.
 - viii) Removal of any chimneys in part or whole.
 - ix) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
- d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- e) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.
- f) Liabilities in connection with shared services.
- g) Adjoining roads and services.
- h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- i) General development proposals in the locality.

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

However, with regard to Envirosearch or similar general reports please see our article link on the www.1stAssociated.co.uk Home Page.

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

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

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

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

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

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

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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.

ONLY HUMAN!

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

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

WEATHER

It was a warmish summer's day with a slight breeze 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 that we are not local surveyors to this area and are carrying out the work without the benefits of local knowledge on such things as soil conditions, aeroplane flight paths, and common defects in materials used in the area etc.

EMPTY PROPERTY

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

INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited:

as we did not have full access to the roof, which we would be more than happy to comment on the roof if the access is opened up and send photos to us.

as we were not able to open up the ground floor or the first floor. We suspect there is wet rot under the ground floor due to the way the ventilation of it has been blocked and the deflection on it.

as the property was empty/in receivership we did not have the benefit of talking to the owners or them answering our usual question and answers

as the services were switched off.

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.

APPENDICES

1. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
2. Information on the Property Market
3. Condensation and Cold Bridging Article

THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

Work You Cannot do Yourself

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

INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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

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

www.hometrack.co.uk

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

www.motleyfool.co.uk

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

www.rightmove.co.uk

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

www.zoopla.co.uk

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

Condensation and Cold Bridging

What is Cold Bridging?

What is cold bridging and how does it work?

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



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

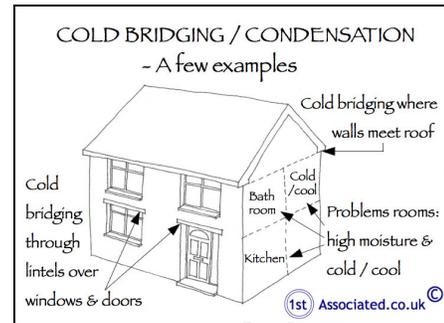
Cold Bridging

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

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

Here is our sketch on Cold Bridging

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



Cold Bridging isn't just about condensation on mirrors

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

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



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

To give you some examples of Cold Bridging

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



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



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

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

Commercial properties suffer from Cold Bridging too

Commercial buildings are often built using structural frames. These frames are usually constructed of concrete or metal or sometimes both. The structural frame forms the skeleton of the building as you can see in the adjoining photo. Sometimes the structural frames, particularly, the concrete ones can suffer from Cold Bridging which causes blackening of the concrete frame. This can look like the roof has leaked and can lead to wrongly diagnosing a problem as being a roof leak. This can result in great time and expense being wasted repairing a roof that was not leaking and indeed in some cases has led to a new roof being fitted which has costs tens of thousands of pounds. This happened because it wasn't understood what the problem was.



Cold Bridging in a commercial property with a concrete frame.

When is Cold Bridging Likely?

In our experience we have seen cold bridging occurring in

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

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



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



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

Problems with 1970/1980 era properties relating to Cold Bridging

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

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

For example with;

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

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

How to solve Cold Bridging

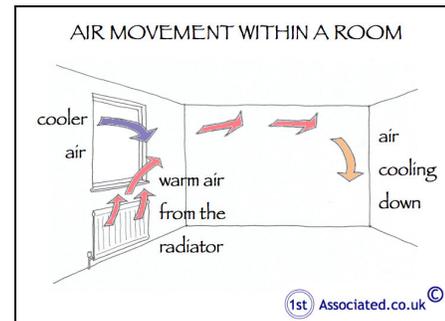
The difficulty is resolving cold bridging. Normally, where condensation is involved, if you get the balance of warm and coolness of the air, ventilation and movement you can reduce considerably the chances of condensation. Airing the room by opening the windows, which seems to have gone out of fashion,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



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



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



Where do we most commonly find Cold Bridging?

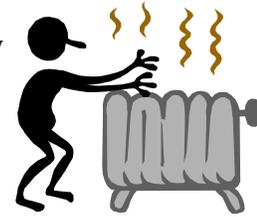
Our thoughts on this have very much changed as we used to say that cold bridging was typically found in properties from the 1960's/1970's. However we are increasingly finding it in a broader range of properties, particularly Victorian properties, where people are trying to live to modern standards of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



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

Is your life style a factor in Cold Bridging?

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



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

Expert witness case, what is an expert witness?

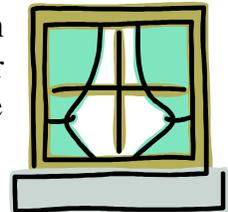
This is where you employ someone who is a specialist within a field, such as us as Chartered Building Surveyors, who comment on problems of condensation within the property. We have been involved in several court cases as expert witnesses where landlords are being taken to court over the condensation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



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

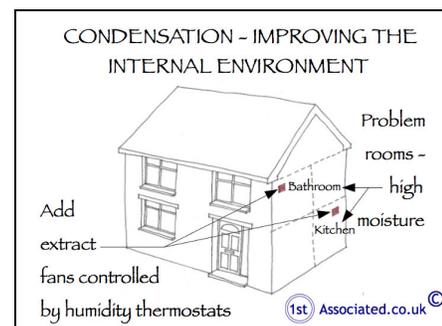
Is Cold Bridging and Condensation a design problem or a lifestyle problem?

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



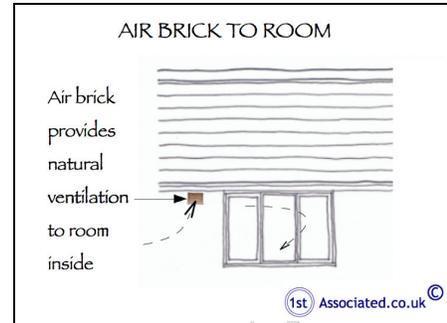
Design of the Building

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



Things to remember about an air brick

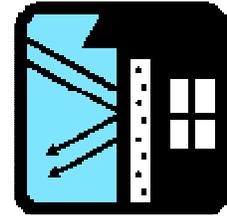
If you are thinking about adding an air brick then you need to be aware that airbricks don't actually allow that much air through. Although externally a nine by three air brick has a lot of gaps, as these gaps taper, it is generally considered that only about one inch square of air regularly passes through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



Air brick may not ventilate room enough

What's happening in brand new housing?

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



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

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

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

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



Sliding sash windows can swell in the winter months

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

Extensions and Cold Bridging

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

