

**RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY  
OF  
Penzance, Cornwall TR19**



**FOR  
Mr A and Ms P**

**Prepared by:**

**INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS**

**Marketing by:**

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

**0800 298 5424**

## **CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION  
REPORT FORMAT  
SYNOPSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

### **EXTERNAL**

CHIMNEY STACKS, FLUES, DORMER WINDOWS  
ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS  
ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT SPACE  
GUTTERS AND DOWNPipes AND SOIL AND VENT PIPES  
EXTERNAL WALLS  
FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS  
EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

### **INTERNAL**

CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES  
CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES  
FLOORS  
DAMPNESS  
INTERNAL JOINERY  
TIMBER DEFECTS  
INTERNAL DECORATIONS  
THERMAL EFFICIENCY  
OTHER MATTERS

### **SERVICES**

ELECTRICITY  
GAS  
PLUMBING AND HEATING  
BATHROOMS  
MAIN DRAINS

### **OUTSIDE AREAS**

OUTBUILDINGS/OFF ROAD PARKING  
EXTERNAL AREAS

POINTS FOR LEGAL ADVISOR

### **APPENDICES**

LIMITATIONS  
ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS  
GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

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

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

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

# **REPORT FORMAT**

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

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

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

## **TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED**

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

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



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

## **ORIENTATION**

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

## **ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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

## **SYNOPSIS**

## **SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION**

This is a detached two storey property with rooms built in the roof. It is on a corner plot with gardens to the rear/side and also some outbuildings, as well as off road parking, all sitting on a sloping site.

We were advised by the present owner that in the past the property has been a general store and doctor's surgery and also many, many years ago it was a staging point for a horse drawn coach service, with the outbuildings believed to have been the toilet facilities. It will be interesting to research the history further.

We believe that the property is typical of what was built in the mid to late Victorian era/1800's. If the exact age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

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

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

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 1837 | Victoria becomes Queen of Great Britain.                   |
| 1840 | The First Postage Stamp                                    |
| 1851 | First World Exhibition held in London                      |
| 1854 | Florence Nightingale pioneers modern nursing in the Crimea |
| 1859 | Charles Darwin proposes the Theory of Evolution            |
| 1863 | The Opening of London Underground                          |
| 1878 | Electric Street Lights are installed in London             |
| 1896 | First modern Olympic Games (Athens)                        |

## EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front View



Rear View



Left Hand View



Right Hand View



Rear Garden

## **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

### **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Entrance Hall
- Front left hand corner shop/area
- Front Lounge
- Rear Dining Room
- Rear Kitchen
- Rear Utilities Room
- Rear left hand reception room
- Central link area with sinks (uncertain what to call this!)

### **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Three front bedrooms
- Two rear bedrooms
- Central rear bathroom

### **Top Floor**

The top floor accommodation consists of:

- Bedroom set within roof space

### **Outside Areas**

The property sites on a corner plot and has gardens, both to the side and the rear. There are outbuildings, as well as off road parking. Please note our comments with regard to the boundary issues/dispute.

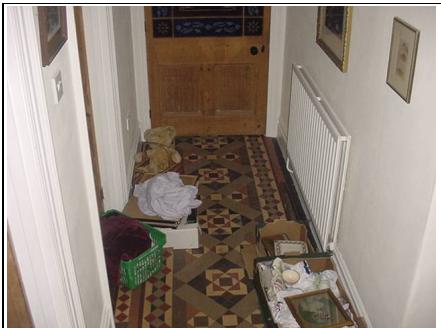
## **INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS**

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

### **Ground Floor**



Front shop/area



Entrance Hallway



Lounge



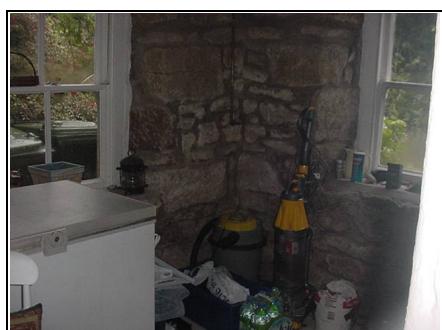
Rear left hand room



Rear right hand reception room



Kitchen



Utility Room

## **First Floor**



Front left hand bedroom



Front right hand bedroom



Bathroom



Left hand rear bedroom



Middle Bedroom

## **Top Floor**



Bedroom, looking towards window



Bedroom, looking away from window

## **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

### **External**

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Chimneys:              | One stone and brick chimney on right hand side<br>(originally a second one on left hand side) |
| Main Roof:             | Pitched and hipped, clad with a modern slate  |
| Gutters and Downpipes: | Plastic; a mixture of old and new   |
| Soil and Vent Pipe:    | Plastic   |
| Walls:                 | Coursed stonework (assumed)   |
| Fascias and Soffits:   | Painted/stained timber  |
| Windows and Doors:     | Predominantly painted timber sliding sash and fixed light windows to the shop frontage        |

### **Internal**

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Ceilings: | Lath and plaster (assumed)  |
| Walls:    | Skim coated (advised by present owner), partition walls predominantly solid (assumed) |
| Floors:   | Ground Floor: Embedded suspended timber floor (assumed)                               |
|           | First Floor: Embedded joist and floorboards (assumed)                                 |

### **Services**

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (assumed). The electrics are dated and the boiler is a Halstead Hero 60. The gas is via cylinders.

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

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



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

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

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

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

### **The Good**

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

- Older properties typically have more space than newer properties, both in the actual size of the rooms and the height of the rooms.
- The property also has good natural light.

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) Chimneys**

You once had two chimneys. We often find that where a chimney has been taken down the tiles are never put back quite correctly and there can be some leaks, although there are no obvious signs in this case.



Old left hand chimney

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would also comment with regard to the chimney on the right hand side, we would budget for work to be carried out within the next five years, as it is in an exposed location and partly built in brick.

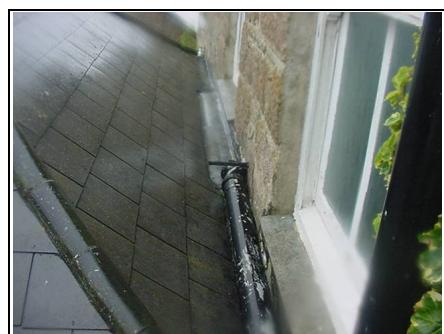
Please see our comments in the Chimneys Section of the Report.

### **2) Awkward box gutter between rear of property and rear roof and no access to roof void to check condition**

There is an awkward box gutter between the main building and the rear roof. We often find that these get blocked, although there is no obvious visual evidence internally. Unfortunately, we are unable to investigate further as we were unable to gain access to this roof area.

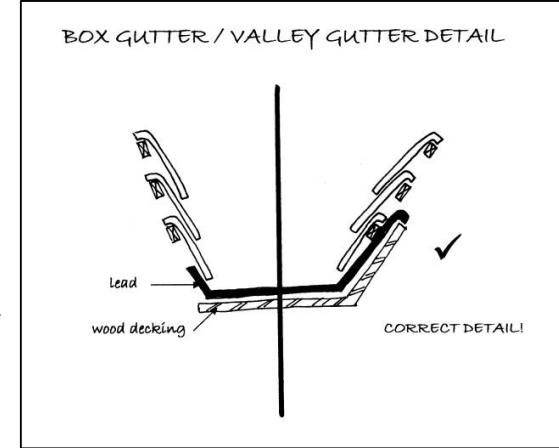


Box valley gutter between rear roof and the main building



Close up of box valley gutter

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that an access panel is made to this roof area and that the timbers are duly inspected. We would be more than happy to comment on any photos if you wish to forward these to us of inside the roof space once you have gained access.



**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £200 to £400 to have an access hatch formed, plus any associated costs. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

### 3) Ventilation and insulation within the roof

Part of the roof are insulated to modern standards, i.e. approximately 300mm. Unfortunately, in this age of property insulating to these modern standards can sometimes cause condensation. So, generally it is accepted that the roof has to be ventilated.



Mass of roof insulation

We have spoken about this with the owner and they were concerned that if vents were added to the slate areas, which we would normally recommend, that the high winds in the area could lift the slates. Taking this into consideration, we would recommend that ventilation is added to the soffits to help vent this roof. In turn, you will also need to ensure the insulation is pushed back at the perimeter of the roof to allow the air flow; this is a messy job.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Check if roof is vented, if not we would suggest that vents are added to the soffit boards.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report

#### 4) Deteriorating Joinery

We noticed areas where windows have been filled. We also noticed areas of flaking paint, all of which need making good.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Make good. To the ground floor windows, which we inspected, there was only one or two which had had plastic wood repair work, which does tend to deteriorate more rapidly than timber. We would anticipate work to be needed in the summer of 2010 to some of the windows and to the fascias and soffits.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would anticipate complete redecoration of the fascias and soffits and some repair work, bearing in mind this may need scaffolding (we would always recommend that you get your own tower scaffolding (see adjoining photo) in the long term as this will always save you money. Costs in the region of £1,000 to £2,000 for use of scaffolding; quotations required.



Filler to windows



An example of tower scaffolding  
on another property

Please see the Windows and Doors Section of this Report.

## 5) Air flow underneath the suspended timber floor

There is a suspended timber floor and this should have an air flow underneath it. We could find air bricks to the front, the rear, however, where air bricks should be, appears to have been blocked by the kitchen/utilities extension.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You do need to think about how to add air bricks in this area to allow a through flow of air. When we spoke to the present owner during the question and answer session she advised that she had had to replace many of the timbers. We would say this is as a direct result of not having a good air flow under the property.

Please see our comments in the Air Bricks Section of the Report.

## 6) Rising Damp

During the course of our survey we found minor rising damp, which we feel is acceptable for this age of property, providing the floors are suitably ventilated. However, some mortgage companies may find it excessive.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Monitor.



Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

Checking for rising damp

## 7) Woodworm

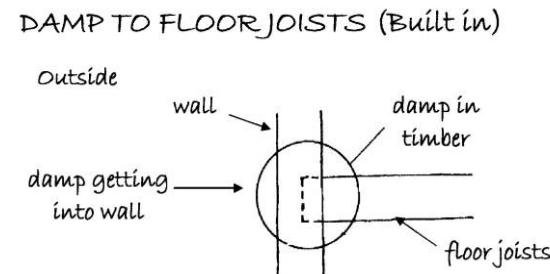
From our discussions with the owner during our question and answer session, she advises the property has been woodworm treated. In the areas inspected we did not see any significant outbreaks of woodworm.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would nevertheless like to see copies of the Woodworm Certificates, if these could be scanned and e-mailed to us for further comment.

Please see the Timber Defects Section of this Report.

## 8) Deflection in the floors

We noted on the first floor that there was deflection over and above what we would normally expect, even in this age of construction. This is likely to be because the floor joists are embedded into the walls.



In our experience of this type of flooring, we have often found herringbone strutting, this is a cross bracing system. However, as there is no ceiling on the shop area/front left hand side and the rear left hand side we can see that there is no herringbone strutting. Whilst we believe herringbone strutting would help we feel that the fundamental problem is that there is an element of wet rot within the joist ends, though we do not feel this is excessive.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Return to the property and check that you are happy to live with the amount of deflection at first floor level.

Please see our comments in the Ceilings Section of the Report.

## 9) Services

### Boiler

The owner was not aware how to switch the existing boiler on. When questioned further she advised that she had hardly used the boiler since it was installed, with the wood burner giving enough heat. We therefore feel we have to assume it is not working and may need replacement.



Halstead Hero 60 Boiler

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that you return and see the boiler in action, or budget for a replacement boiler system.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £2,000 to £3,000 for a replacement boiler, plus in addition the heating engineer may recommend that you have the radiators drained or replaced, which would add £2,000 to £3,000 more onto the price. Quotations should be obtained.

### Electrics

The electric fuseboards; one in the hallway and the one in the reception room on the left hand side, are from the 1960's and are dated.



Electrics in hallway



Electrics in rear left hand room

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would have these changed with the latest fuseboard. We would also, at the same time, get an NICEIC test and report on the property by a registered IEE (Institute of Electrical Engineers) recommended contractor and carry out the work recommended.

### Internal radiators

We did note some internal radiators. These are generally carried out to reduce the cost of the original installation, as there is less pipe run and therefore less effort. Unfortunately, it does mean that the warm air does not circulate as well if the radiator is not positioned underneath a window. We would also comment that the rooms are large and therefore may take some heating.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You may ultimately need to place the radiators under the windows or increase the size of the radiators, depending upon how warm you wish to have the property.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Budget for costs of £100 to £200 per radiator. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

10) **Asbestos in outbuildings roofs**

There is asbestos in the outbuilding roofs, which we recommend is removed as soon as possible. Please note we are not asbestos specialists.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Get an asbestos specialist to remove asbestos from roofs. You will need to obtain quotations, as this is specialist work.

**ANTICPATED COST:** We would expect costs in the thousands of pounds, but quotes should be obtained. The local Council can offer lists of approved contracts.

Please see our comments in the External Areas Section of this Report.

11) **Access to rear garden**

The property has a mature rear garden. The owner advised that there are problems with regard to a right of access over it.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your solicitor needs to investigate this, as the owner has led us to believe there are problems with the access.

Please see our comments in the External Areas of this Report.

## **The Ugly**

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

There is nothing which we feel falls within this category, but there are more than the usual number of things in the Bad Section which would put some people off.

## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

### **Maintenance**

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

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

### **DIY/Handyman Type Work**

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as redecorating to turn the house into your home. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

### **Purchase Price**

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

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

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

## **Estimates of Costs**

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

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

## **SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION**



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

We would recommend that you negotiate on price with regard to this property, but you do need to weigh up just how much you want to buy the property against how hard you negotiate.

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

We would ask that you read the Report and contact us on any issues that you require further clarification on.

## **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

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

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

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

### **ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?**

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

### **SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

### **TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS**

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

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

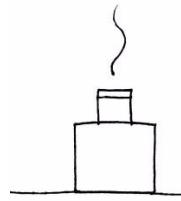
Our aim is for you to be completely happy with the service we provide, and we will try and help you in whatever way possible with your property purchase - just phone us.

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

From our investigations the property is within a Conservation Area (your Legal Advisor should confirm this and make their own enquiries) and as such it will require various permissions to be obtained before work is carried out, over and above that normally required and possibly the use of appropriate materials for the age, type and style of property.



## EXTERNAL



### CHIMNEY STACKS, FLUES AND DORMER WINDOWS

#### Chimney Stacks

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

This property has one chimney, which is located to the right hand side of the property and there was originally one on the left hand side (all directions given as you face the property).

#### Chimney one, located to the right hand side

This chimney is part stone and part brick finished with a lead flashing and four chimney pots. It is likely to have originally been in a lime mortar, although it is a thin joint line mortar. The chimney has been repaired / repointed over the years.

We cannot see the very top of the chimney known as the flaunching and therefore cant comment on it. However, the four chimney pots that we can see are very straight and true, which does indicate that the flaunching is probably in reasonable condition.



Top of chimney



Base of chimney

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend a close inspection within the next three years.

## **Chimney two, originally located to left hand side**

A chimney has been removed, we term it as an "invisible chimney", as the chimney breast is still present below. Often the tiles that cover the old chimney position never bed correctly and leak.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Carry out a check to make sure that the tiles are bedded correctly.



Old left hand chimney

### Flaunchings Defined

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

### Flashings Defined

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

## **Dormer Windows**

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

The property has a pitched dormer window, formed in slate, to match the main roof with slates to the side. It allows a room to be formed within the roof.

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

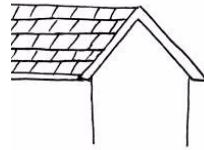


Dormer window

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

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

# ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

The property has one main roof which is hipped.

## Main Roof

The roof is pitched and clad with a manmade slate to the front. The slates sit fairly true and are generally in average condition considering the property's age, type and style.

Manmade slates are thin and light and the wind can catch them, so it is important that the slates are fixed at the perimeter and do sit flat and are checked from time to time, both here and at the perimeter.

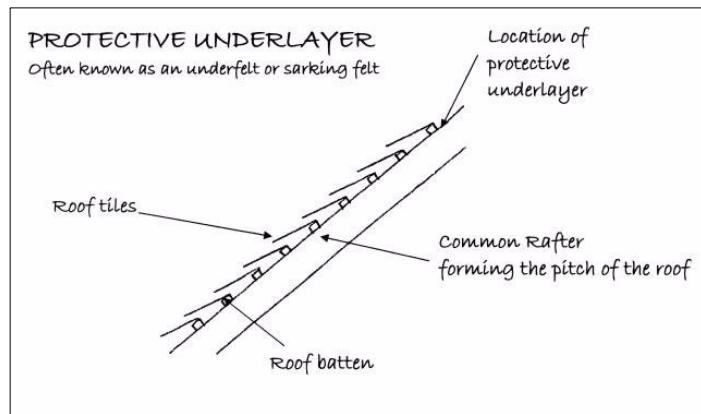


Close up of main roof

Where the dormer roof meets the main roof there are valley gutters. These can be weak areas.

## 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 two types of protective underlayer; and older Hessian based Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s. We also found a more modern plastic membrane, which was used in the 1970s. Both were found to be generally in average condition, although with some areas damaged.

We would comment that the plastic membrane can sometimes sweat and cause damage and deterioration. With a modern protective underlayer we have completely moved away from the sealed and smothering effect that plastic underlayers give to more of a gortex breathable underlayer.



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



The older areas of the roof have darker areas between the common rafters. This is the Hessian based underlayer.



Testing for dampness, caused by sweating beneath the plastic underlayer

## **Rear Low Level Roof**

This roof is constructed in a similar slate to the main roof. It is a small hipped roof. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary with regard to the awkward junction between the main building and this roof. Other than this we consider the roof to be in average condition.



Rear low level roof



Close up of manmade slates  
on rear roof

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

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

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



## ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT

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

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

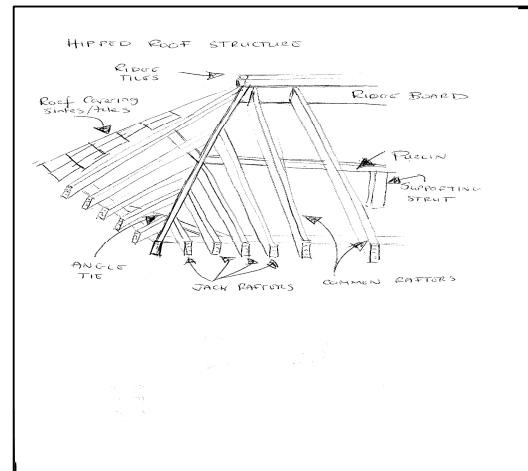
#### Main Roof

#### Roof Access

The right hand side of the roof is accessed via a walk in area from the room in the roof. There was a light present and it is part boarded. To the left hand side there is a door within the bedroom in the room in the roof, which gives access, although we have not been into the roof, as it literally had a high level of insulation, which hides the joists. Unfortunately, this means we cannot comment on these joists as well.

#### Roof Structure

This type of roof structure has what is known as a cut hipped 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.



Hipped roofs are known for slippage /movement which can occur in the structure. In this case, we feel it is within acceptable limits.



Looking towards the corner of the hip of the roof, with the horizontal timbers, known as purlins. Slippage can be seen in this case, in average condition

## Roof Timbers

We found the roof timbers generally in average condition considering their age. Our inspection was limited, as the left hand side of the roof is covered with insulation and we were unable to see some of the roof joists (please see adjoining photo). We have inspected the roof structure for:

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



Left hand roof space

Our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof, the insulation and stored items. As mentioned what we could see was generally found to be in average condition considering its age. It is feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.



Mass of stored items

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The only way to be 100 per cent certain is to have the roof to the left hand side cleared of insulation and checked, and the right hand side cleared of stored items and checked.

## Ventilation

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

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

## 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 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 DOWNPPIPES



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

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

## Gutters and Downpipes

From ground level the gutters and downpipes looked to be predominantly older style plastic, with some newer plastic, and appears to be in average condition, with a few repairs.

The older style plastic is affected by sunlight and loses its colour slightly and does become brittle over the years.

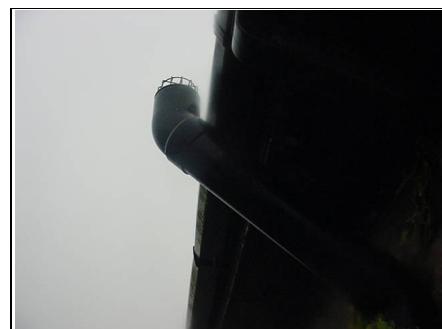


Downpipe, a mixture of old and new plastics

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

## Soil and Vent Pipe

The soil and vent pipes are plastic. They appear to be satisfactory where a surface inspection is possible.



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.



## 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.*

### Stonework

The walls are formed in coursed granite, within a thin lime mortar joint to the front, with semi-coursed stonework at the side and other areas of the property. Generally, from what we could see, the walling is in average condition for its age, type and style.

The pointing is in reasonable condition. To the sides and the rear, where a wider joint has been used, re-pointing will be needed from time to time.



Coursed stonework

#### STONE GENERAL INFORMATION

Stone has been used for many years, particularly where it's a local material. However the preparation is relatively expensive when compared with other building materials and, as such, was used initially for the most prestigious buildings. The use of stone in domestic structures became more general from the 15th Century and increased towards the end of the 16th century as timber became scarce but brick had not yet become established. By the end of the 17th century stone was very much the accepted building material, especially where it was a natural resource.



Semi-coursed stonework

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

# FOUNDATIONS



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

## Foundations

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

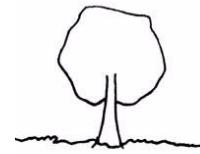
## Building Insurance Policy

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

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

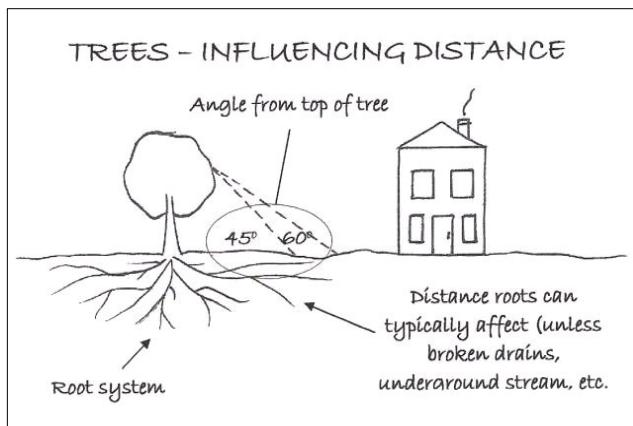
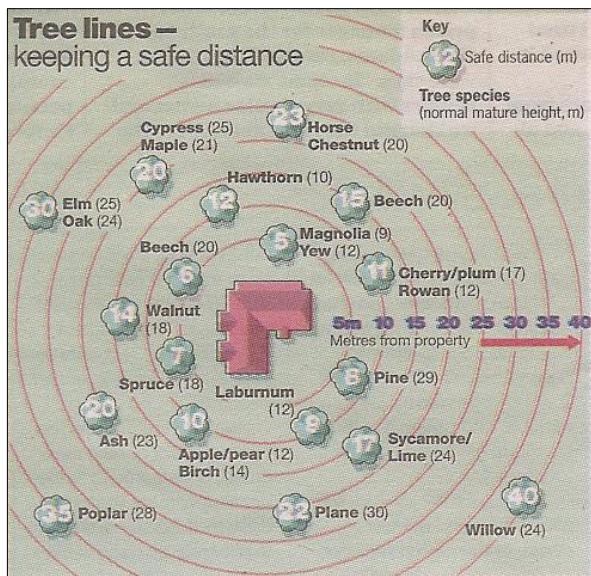
As no excavation has been carried out we cannot be 100 percent certain as to how the foundation has been constructed and we can only offer our best assumptions and an educated guess, which we have duly done.

TREES



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

There are no trees within your garden that are within influencing distance of the main house. We would remind you that all trees and general vegetation do need maintaining.

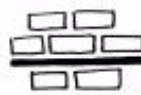


## Influencing Distance Defined

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

## **DAMP PROOF COURSE**



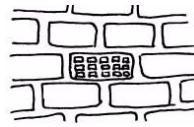
*The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required various other basic standards. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout London and then the country as a whole, although this took many 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, unfortunately, in this property we cannot see a DPC. Given its age it is possible it had a damp proof course built in originally; probably slate, although we were unable to physically see it. There was an element of dampness in the structure, which does indicate that there may well not have been any DPC at all.

Please see the Dampness Section of this report.

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

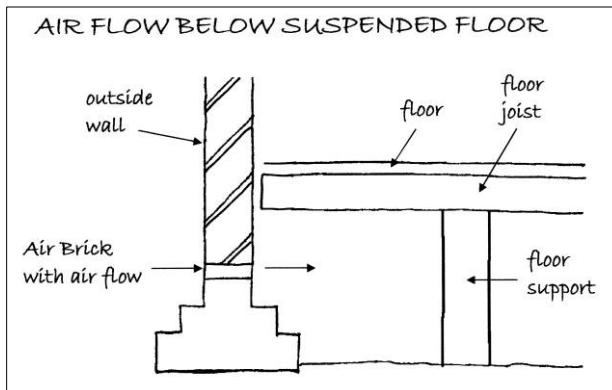
## AIRBRICKS



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

We noted air bricks at the front of the property, but there should also be airbricks to the rear of the property to allow a through flow of air underneath the suspended timber floor, which we could not see. Bearing in mind it was raining heavily we may have missed some, so we would recommend a re-inspection.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** There needs to be a through flow of air underneath the floor. We think the rear floor is a solid floor and therefore is effectively blocking the through flow of air. Thought needs to be put into how you do get a flow of air underneath the property. When we spoke to the present owner during the question and answer session she advised that she had had to replace many of the timbers. We would say this is as a direct result of not having a good air flow under the property.



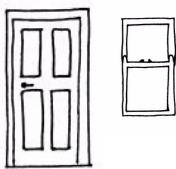
Air brick to front of property

### Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

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

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

# 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 property has painted/stained timber fascias and soffits; these are in below average condition and need redecoration.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Redecorate / repair fascias and soffits boards.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Fascias and soffits

## Windows and Doors

This property predominantly has sliding sash windows, which are single glazed and have a painted timber finish and are in average condition, considering their age, type and style.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As is common they will need some easing and adjusting from a carpenter who is used to dealing with this type of work.



Painted timber sliding sash window

### General Information on Sliding Sash Windows

If you have not lived in a property with sliding sash windows previously, you should be aware that typically they are draughty and rattle. There is no easy way to eliminate this problem. In our experience, a general ease and adjustment of the windows and the addition of a plastic tube draught sealer (available from most DIY stores) and regular redecoration is the best option to minimise the draughtiness of the windows in this case. Horizontal Sliding Sash Windows (sometimes known as York Windows)

We did note some areas where plastic wood and filling has been used.

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

Finally, we have carried out a general and random inspection of the fascias and soffits and windows and doors. 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 fascias and soffits and windows and doors. 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.*

We recommend an external re-decoration in the summer of 2010, particularly to the fascias and soffits, but also it would help protect the windows in the long term.

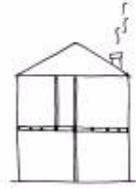
**ACTION REQUIRED:** The sooner redecoration is carried the better, as this will minimise repair work.

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 Fascias and Soffits and Windows and Doors section.

# INTERNAL

## CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES



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

### Ceilings

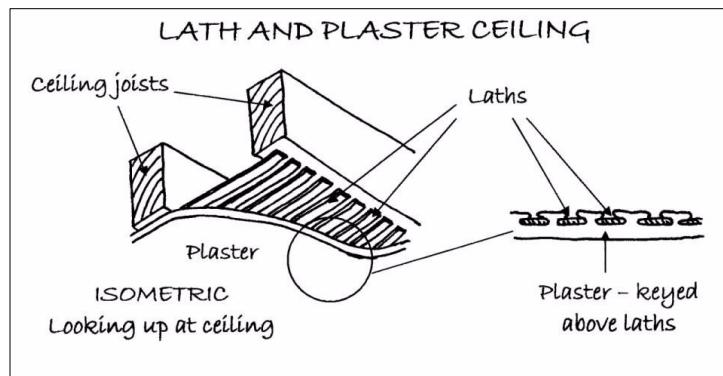
As should be expected with a building of this age, the ceilings have been finished in a variety of ways, from the original lath and plaster to more modern plasterboard. To the shop area, for example, no ceiling at all!



Shop ceiling

#### 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**

We have carried out a tap test to the internal walls (this is not rocket science, it is literally tapping the walls and listening for the sound made) and found them to be a mixture of solid walls and hollow/studwork walls.

Generally it is a reasonable assumption that the solid walls are likely to be made from stonework and will be the structural walls, with the studwork walls being purely to divide the rooms.

We noted that structural alterations have been carried out, although these are many years old. Such works should have been completed to the satisfaction of the Local Authority Building Inspector in accordance with the requirements of the Building Regulations. We generally find, however, that work was just carried out without Permissions.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Advisor should confirm the aforementioned. If no Consent has been granted, further investigation is necessary to establish whether the work has been carried out to a satisfactory standard.

## **Perimeter Walls**

We generally found the perimeter walls to have a smooth finish indicating, with this age of construction, that what is known as a skim coat of plaster has been added to the original plaster or the original plaster has been replaced completely. This is not usual as it is a very messy, difficult job unless the plaster is literally falling off the wall! Without the removal of the plaster or decorative finish we cannot be 100 per cent certain of the construction but we believe it to be brickwork.

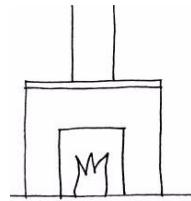
We did speak to the owner about this and they advised that they had had plastering work carried out, they referred to it as ‘tanking’. We do not, however, think it was what we would term as tanking, as this tends to be a waterproof lining.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would request invoices or further details from the owner with regard to what they did carry out on the plasterwork. We did note an above average number of areas of blown plaster, which does indicate that some dampness has come through the walls, but what we found we feel is acceptable, given the age of the property.

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

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

## **CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES**



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

The chimney breasts are located on the right 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, it is strongly recommended that flues be cleaned and checked for obstruction prior to use to minimise the risk of hazardous fumes entering the building.

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

# FLOORS



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

## Ground Floor

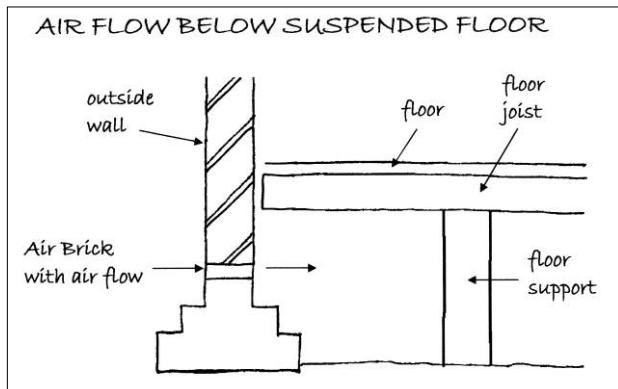
Based on our knowledge of this age of construction we believe that, predominately, the ground floor construction is a suspended timber floor. This type of floor needs air circulation under it to reduce deterioration from wet rot and dry rot; please see our comments in these sections.

The kitchen and utility part of the property are solid under foot and assumed to be concrete. Interestingly, in the hallway, which was tiled, we found when we have been able to get under the floors of this type of construction, that these are a suspended timber floor.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary about ventilating the floor.

### Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

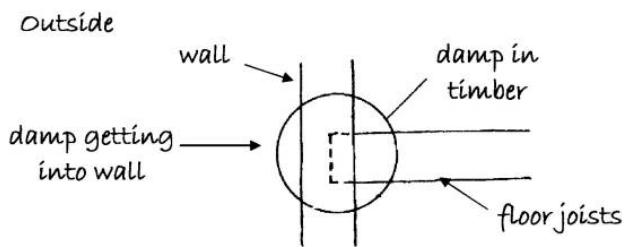
A suspended timber floor usually consists of timbers spanning the ground floor, supported on piers (usually brickwork), vented via air bricks within the walls.



## **First Floor**

We feel the first floor, construction is joist and floorboards as this is typical in this age of property. Given the age of the property the timbers are likely to be embedded in the walls, which means that some wet rot is likely without opening the floors up we cannot comment further.

### DAMP TO FLOOR JOISTS (Built in)

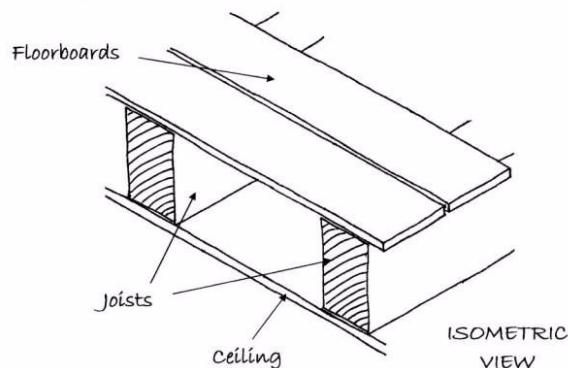


**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

### Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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

### JOIST AND FLOORBOARD CONSTRUCTION



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

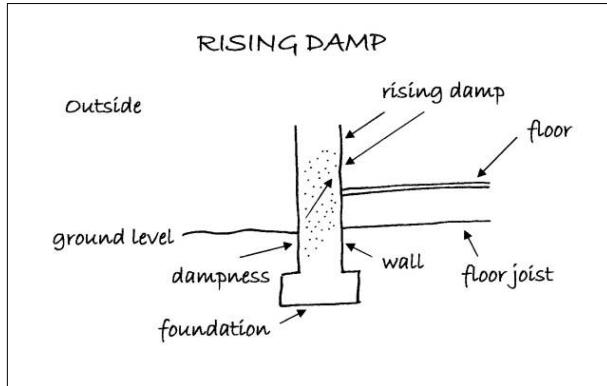
### Rising Damp

*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 now much debate over whether true rising damp does exist after research over a 10 year period.*

We have carried out tests with an electronic damp meter to a random selection of areas and we found rising damp.

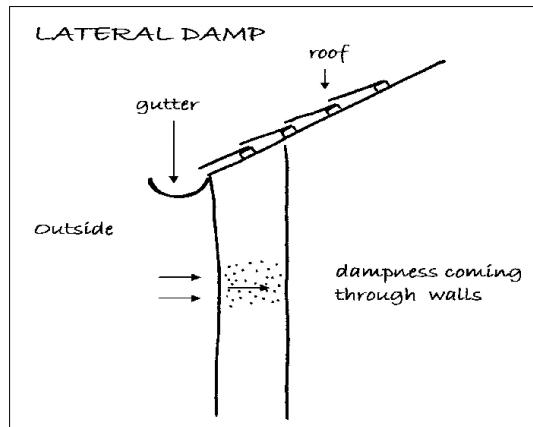
Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Finding minor rising damp

## Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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



A visual inspection was carried. No significant penetrating/lateral dampness was seen. We would, however, comment that there was an above average number of areas of hollow or blown plaster. Please see our earlier comments.



Checking for lateral dampness

## Condensation

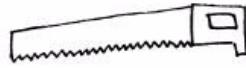
*This is where the humidity held within the air meets a cold surface causing condensation.*

We can see no obvious signs of condensation, however, it depends upon how you utilise the building.

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

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

## INTERNAL JOINERY



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

### Doors

The property has timber panel doors and, all things considered, they are in reasonable (although not ideal) condition and fit acceptably. The owner advised that she had hung some of the doors.



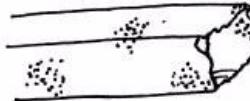
We like the margin lights around the main door

### Kitchen

From our cursory visual inspection the kitchen looked in average condition. 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 Fascias and Soffits and Windows and Doors 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.*

In the areas visually inspected no evidence was found of any significant dry rot. Please remember we have not lifted up/opened up the floors.

### **Wet Rot**

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

In the areas visually inspected no evidence was found of any significant wet rot. However, please see our earlier comments with regard to the timber joists.

### **Woodworm**



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

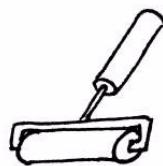
In many properties of this age, there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection is usually restricted in the roof by insulation covering some of the timbers and general stored items in the roof, and it is restricted throughout the property (for example the floors) by general fixtures and fittings.

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

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

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

## INTERNAL DECORATIONS

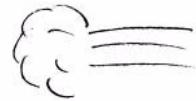


*With paints it should be remembered that up to 1992 lead could be used within paint and prior to this most textured paint (commonly known as Artex) contained an element of asbestos up to 1984, so care should be taken if the paintwork looks old and dated.*

The decoration is average to poor and the paintwork feels dated. You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste. It is very difficult to advise on how frequently redecoration should take place, as it very much depends upon the use and abuse the decoration gets, for example, hallways will need tending to more often than a spare bedroom.

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

## THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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

### HIPs (Home Information Packs) Report

We are making general comments. You will be provided with a HIP Report that should be more specific with regard to the thermal efficiency of the property. We have not seen the HIP Report on this property so cannot comment further.

### Roof Insulation

To the left hand side of the roof there is approximately 270mm to 300mm of insulation, which is what the current Building Regulations require. Please see our comments with regard to venting this area and being careful when insulating older properties.



A mass of roof insulation  
to the left hand roof

### Walls

The walls to this property are solid and will have a relatively poor thermal efficiency. It is very difficult to improve thermal efficiency in solid wall construction without major alterations, which will usually affect the external appearance or reduce the internal space.

## Windows

The windows are single glazed and sliding sash, so the thermal properties will be poor.

## Services

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

## Summary

Overall, provided our assumptions correct and considering the property's age, type and style, it has average thermal properties for what we see but refer to your HIPs report.

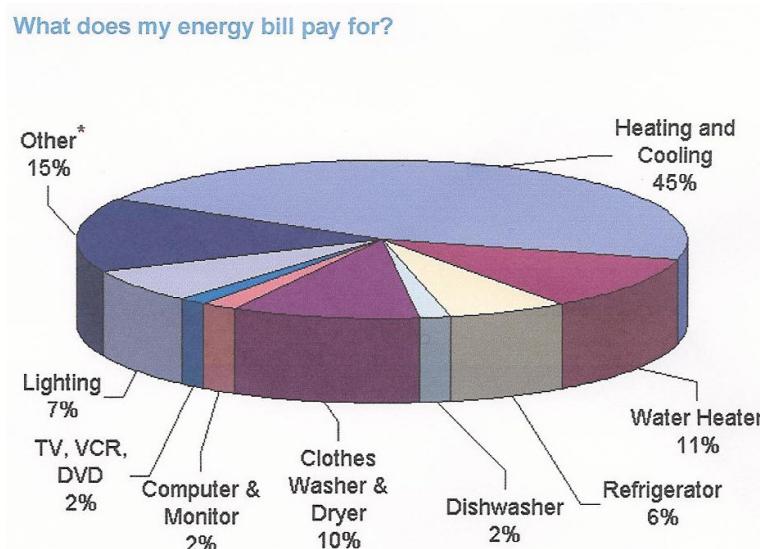
Further information can be obtained with regard to energy saving via the Internet on the following pages:

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

*or alternatively www.cat.org.uk*

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

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



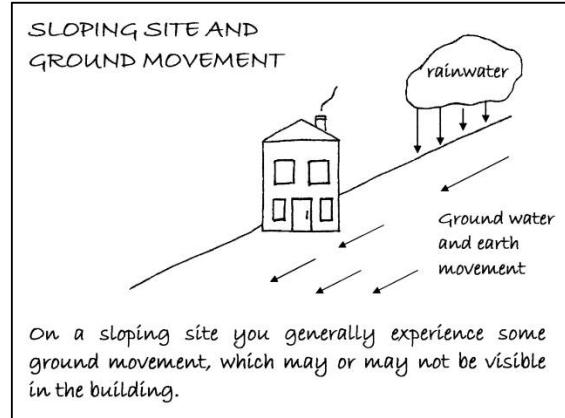
## OTHER MATTERS



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

### Slight Sloping Site!

Any property on a sloping site is more susceptible to movement than one on a flat site; it is simply the laws of gravity. Foundations normally allow for such occurrences, particularly in newer properties, although there can still be some minor movement.



### Security System

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

### Fire / Smoke Alarms

No smoke detectors were noted (other than one on the side that was not fitted). The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply. Obviously in a property of this age that is difficult, as it would mean having surface mounted wires or cutting wiring into the plaster.

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

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

## **Insurance**

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

## **Asbestos**

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

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

## **Radon**

The owner advised they had had radon testing carried out.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend you ask for details with regards to the radon test from the existing owner and have your own radon test carried out.

## **SERVICES**

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

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

# ELECTRICITY



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

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

## Fuse Board

The property has two fuse boards; one located in the hall and one located in the rear left hand room. We would date the fuse boards as being from the 1960s, possibly 1970s, when they used re-wirable fuses, which are now superseded. Far better fuse boards are now available.



Electrics in hallway



Electrics in rear left hand room

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Replace the fuseboard as soon as possible.  
Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## **Earth Test**

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

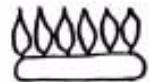
**ACTION REQUIRED:** It is recommended that the installation be tested by a competent electrician (NICEIC registered) and all recommendations implemented. Thereafter, the installation should be re-tested every five years.



Earth test

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

## GAS



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

All gas appliances, pipework and flues should be the subject of an annual service by a Gas Safe registered heating engineer; works to any gas appliance by an unregistered person 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.

The gas supply is from cylinders located in the rear garden; these supply the boiler, a very unusual arrangement. The owner advises that she has used very little gas over the years, so little, in fact, she was unable to switch the boiler on, which we found unusual! We therefore feel you have to assume that the boiler is not working. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Gas cylinders

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As a matter of course it is recommended that the entire gas installation is inspected and repaired or replaced, 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 located in the rear left hand room. It is important that its presence is established in case of bursts or leaks. The stopcock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness.

## Water Pressure

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

## Cold Water Cistern

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

## Plumbing

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

## Heating

The owner advised that the heating came from the wood burner. This seemed, in her opinion, to be satisfactory. However, we do not believe this heats the warm water. We therefore asked for the boiler to be tested. Please refer to ten minute heating test overleaf.

## **Ten Minute Heating Test**

We would normally ask the owner to turn the heating on for approximately ten minutes, but the owner advised that they did not know how the boiler worked! We therefore feel we have to assume it does not work and a replacement one is needed, unless the owner can show it in working order.

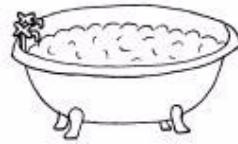
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Owner to show you the boiler working, or for you to negotiate the cost of a new boiler.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £2,000 to £3,000 for a new boiler. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

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

## **BATHROOM**



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

The family bathroom suite looks in average condition and is set within a good sized room and we noted that many of the rooms also had their own wash hand basins, almost as if the property had been let out as guest rooms at some point in time.

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

## MAIN DRAINS



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

It is assumed that the property has mains drainage and that the foul drains 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 not found any man holes/ inspection chambers or rodding eyes, this is unusual. Manholes are normally put within a property where there is a change in direction of the drainage. We can only assume that manholes are hidden, although we did ask the owner and she too had not seen any manholes.

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 many cases it simply discharges onto the floor, which is not ideal and can contribute to dampness within the structure.

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

### OUTBUILDINGS/ OFF ROAD PARKING



There is asbestos in the outbuilding roofs, which we recommend is removed as soon as possible. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Outbuilding one,  
with outbuilding two behind it



Inside outbuilding one



Rot to some of the roof  
timbers



Note asbestos to the roof



Outbuilding three



Inside outbuilding three



Again, note asbestos to roof

### **Outside Staircase**

There is both an inside and an outside staircase. In this instance, the outside staircase is stone and we were advised that these were once the stairs up to the doctor's surgery. We can see that some dampness is getting into it. The staircase, therefore, does need to be monitored to ensure it does not degrade.

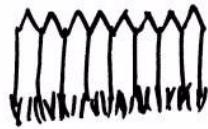


Outside staircase



Underneath outside staircase

## EXTERNAL AREAS



### Rear Garden

The property has a mature rear garden. The owner advised that there are problems with regard to a right of access over it.

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

**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

### Neighbours Across the Road

We met two of the neighbours during the course of the survey (even though it was a rainy day). They did enquire as to what we were doing and later came over to meet the owner of the property to check everything was alright.

### Rear Neighbour

We also spoke briefly to the rear neighbour, who is selling their property, we believe, to this vendor.

## **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) Roof and similar renewals.
  - iv) Central heating installation.
  - v) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
  - vi) 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](http://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**.

## **REFERENCES**

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

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

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

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

# APPENDICES

77

Independent Chartered Surveyors  
— Marketing by: —  
[www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk)  
0800 298 5424

# **LIMITATIONS**

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

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

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

## **ENGLISH LAW**

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

## **SOLE USE**

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

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

## **WEATHER**

It was a very rainy autumn day at the time of the inspection. This did hamper the survey, as we did not inspect the external of the property to the length that we normally would.

Our weather seems to be moving towards the extremities from relatively mid range. A few interesting facts in Britain over the years have been:

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| 2000                | Wettest year on record at the time                        |
| 2003                | Driest year on record at the time                         |
| 2004                | Wettest August on record at the time                      |
| 2004                | Boscastle was the worst flash flood on record at the time |
| 2005                | Third driest year on record at the time                   |
| 2006                | Warmest year recorded on record at the time               |
| July 2006           | Hottest July on record at the time                        |
| 2006                | Hottest autumn on record at the time                      |
| 2007                | Warmest spring on record at the time                      |
| 2007                | Wettest June on record at the time                        |
| April '06-April '07 | Hottest 12 months on record at the time                   |

This may have adverse effects on lots of buildings in years to come.

## **NOT LOCAL**

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

## **OCCUPIED PROPERTY**

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

## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited due to not opening up the ground floor or the first floor. There were stored items within the main roof and the mass insulation to the left hand roof stopped us from viewing of the joists.



Mass of stored items in roof

## **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.

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

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

### **Work You Cannot do Yourself**

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

## **INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### [www.globrix.com](http://www.globrix.com)

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