

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

Pinner



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Semi-detached



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Semi-detached



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## **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# **REPORT FORMAT**

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

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

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

## **TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED**

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

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



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

## **ORIENTATION**

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

## **ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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

## **SYNOPSIS**

### **SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION**

This is a two storey semi-detached property which has been extended to the rear and altered internally. The front garden has been given over to parking and the rear garden is mainly grassed.

We believe that the property was built in the 1900's pre-war, probably the Edwardian Era. If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

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

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

1901	Queen Victoria Died
1903	First flight by Wright Brothers
1903-1928	The Campaign for Women's Suffrage
1902	Boer War ends
1903	Edward VII is proclaimed as Emperor of India
1903-1928	The Campaign for Women's Suffrage
1904	Number plates introduced
1905	Einstein proposed his Theory of Relativity
1906	Suffragettes disrupted the state opening of Parliament
1907	Picasso introduced Cubism
1908	Olympics held in London
1909	Pension scheme came into force
1910	Death of King Edward VII

## EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view



Rear view



Rear extension



Street view



Rear garden

# **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

## **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Entrance lobby
- 2) Front lounge
- 3) Dining room (walk through)
- 4) Rear lounge
- 5) Kitchen to the right hand side with a W.C. accessed from it

## **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Two front bedrooms
- 2) Rear bedroom
- 3) Right hand side bathroom

## **Outside Areas**

The front area has been block paved and given over to parking; the rear garden is level, mainly grassed with a patio area and garden shed to the rear with large conifer trees which is adjacent to the garage that is behind the property. There is a train line nearby.

# 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 lounge



Dining room



Rear lounge/extension

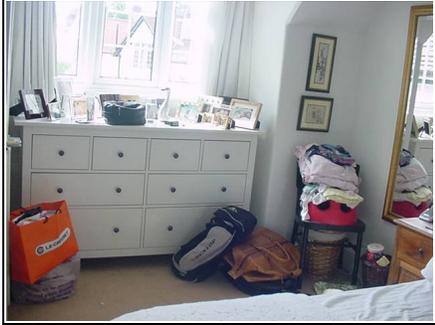


Kitchen



W.C. off the kitchen

**First Floor**



Front left hand bedroom



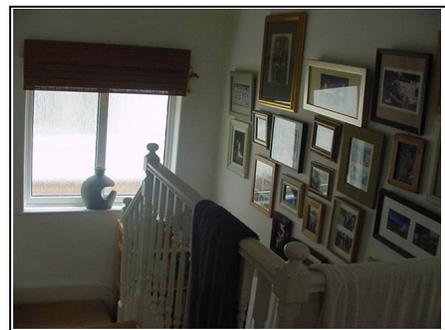
Front right hand bedroom



Rear right hand bedroom



Bathroom



Staircase and landing

# **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

## **External**

Chimneys:	One brick chimney on the right hand side (removed at lower level)
Roofs:	Main roof: Pitched roof clad with small nibbed concrete tiles Rear roof: Flat mineral felt roof Bow window: Lead
Gutters and Downpipes:	Predominantly plastic may be some cast iron remaining
Soil and Vent Pipes:	Rear: Predominantly cast iron may be some plastic remaining Right hand side: Predominantly plastic may be some cast iron remaining
Walls:	First Floor: Painted render Ground Floor: Flemish bond brickwork (assumed)
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Plastic double glazed

## **Internal**

Ceilings:	Older part of the property is Lath and plaster (assumed) Modern part of the property or any repaired areas is plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Mixed solid and studwork (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: Suspended timber floor (assumed) First Floor: Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)

## **Services**

We are advised by the owner that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (assumed). The electric fuse board is located to the left hand side as you enter the property. The boiler is a Combi and is located in the kitchen. There is a factory insulated hot water cylinder in the front bedroom.

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

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



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 200 during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if an issue has not been discussed that you are interested in or concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it; if we have not we will happily go back.

We have divided the Executive Summary into 'The Good', 'The Bad' and 'The Ugly', to help distinguish what in our mind are the main issues.

### **The Good**

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

- 1) The property benefits from having been extended, it therefore has three reception rooms on the ground floor which is quite unusual.
- 2) The property also has some of the original features left, which add to the overall character of the property.

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

## The Bad

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

### 1.0) Chimney removed within the house

We can see the chimney at high level outside on the right hand side as you can see in the adjoining photo however the chimney is missing at ground floor level as you can see in the bottom picture. We are unable to be absolutely certain whether it is still present within the cupboards due to the mass of clothing in there.



Close up of chimney (which needs re-pointing)

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Advisor to check and confirm what work has been carried out to support the chimney. It should have Building Regulations with regards to support for the chimney removal. We do find that a lot of chimneys have been taken out without support being added. It is often not a problem however in this case we would need the cupboard emptying out and the area opening up to be able to advise further. In the first instance your legal advisor needs to check and confirm whether there are any local authority approval and calculations with regards to the chimney being removed.



Architrave where you can see the chimney has been removed

**ANTICIPATED COST:** It should be at the present owners cost.

Please see the Chimney Stacks Section of this Report.

2.0) **Flat Roof to the dormer window**

We cannot see some of the flat roof to the dormer window at the front of the property. Whilst we can't see any visible signs of dampness getting in internally we would recommend the roof is checked by the autumn of 2012.



Unable to see dormer roof

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Check roof.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We cannot see the roof, so we can't comment.

Please see the Chimney Stacks Section of this Report.

3.0) **Fascias and Soffits are poorly painted**

A close inspection of the black fascia showed some blistering which doesn't look like it has been prepared that well however we would also say that black is never a particularly good colour to paint a fascia board as it does tend to absorb the heat and them blister.



Fascias painted black and starting to blister

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend re-checking the condition of the fascias and soffits in the summer of 2012 and redecorating if they have deteriorated considerably.

Please see the Fascias and Soffits and Windows and Doors Section of this Report.

#### 4.0) **Double glazing misting up**

We can see some misting up occurring on some of the windows. The photo shows the double glazed window to the front left hand bedroom.



Double glazed window

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We discussed about the existing owners replacing this.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £100 - £200; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Fascias and Soffits and Windows and Doors Section of this Report.

#### 5.0) **Concrete plinth to the base of the property**

We noticed a concrete plinth to the base of the property which the surrounding properties did not have. It may relate to underpinning work that has occurred at the property, we are aware that plinths were added to this age of property as a way of resisting dampness getting into them.



Concrete plinth

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Solicitor to specifically ask whether underpinning work or any other insurance type work has been undertaken at the property. If this is the case this information needs to be forwarded to us for further comment before you legally commit to purchase as this will affect the value and the resale-ability of the property.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** This could be major in a worst case scenario; please obtain quotations.

We comment further in the External Walls Section of this Report.

## 6.0) Noise

We noted that there was noise transfer between the garage and the rear garden area, although we could not hear it within the house. There was a train that went by whilst we were at the front of the property which literally made us jump.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** It really depends upon how quiet you wish an area to be and noise is very subjective. We would suggest that you re-visit the property during a time when you would expect to be at home, such as the weekends or the evenings. Or if you work from home then you need to consider this.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** This is a feature of the property, you need to decide whether you can live with it or not.

## 7.0) Dampness/condensation visible in the bathroom and outside adjoining the area

We noticed staining on the ceiling in the bathroom which we believe is condensation however there is a fan in that room. This led us to carry out further investigation within the roof above which is lined. Unfortunately we can't see how the roof is performing but we would say that we also noticed some staining to the ceiling just outside the bathroom so there could be a problem with the roof. We couldn't see the chimney side of the roof in this area particularly well. We can't be specific as to what the problem is in this particular case, it may well be condensation in a house that is occupied by a family with young children such as this. There is an outside chance it could be from the roof itself.



Staining in the bathroom

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend living in the property and redecorating the bathroom to see if the problem reoccurs. If it does we would in the first instance look to check the roof via a set of long ladders and in the second instance we would increase the fan size and add a humidity thermostat onto it to remove any moist air from this area as quickly as possible.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Likely to be in the region of a few hundred pounds unless it is a major roof issue; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness Section of this report.

8.0) **Conifer Trees to the rear**

There are a lot of conifer trees to the rear of the property which is shielding you from the garage but equally it will need at some point to be cut back.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Speak to the garage owners and see if they are happy with the conifers being so high but they will at some point need to be cut back as they may damage the adjoining garage. We noted just for the record that there is already cracking in the adjoining garage walls and around the lintels.

Mass of conifers

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £200 - £400 to have the trees cut back; please obtain quotations.

Please see the External Areas Section of this Report.

**The Ugly**

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

There is nothing which we feels falls within this category.

## Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

### Specific questions

- 1) We hope the meeting we had enabled you to get a better idea of the price of the property.
- 2) The only way you can be absolutely sure with regard to the train noise and whether it will disturb you is for you to spend more time at the property.
- 3) Yes we think the rear door will be amendable for a cat flap. We have seen this carried out where the actual glazing is cut to allow the cat flap.

### Services

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would always recommend that you have an independent check by a specialist contractor.

#### Electrics

For the electrics we would recommend an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent carries out an inspection, test and report to Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE).

#### Heating

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

#### Drainage

We would recommend a close camera TV report.

#### Water supply

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

## **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 property into your home. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

## **Purchase Price**

We have not been asked to provide a written comment on the purchase price/valuation 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 and estimates can of course vary from area to area when giving a general indication of costs. For unskilled labour we currently use between £75 and £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 usually be best to have work supervised if it is complex, both of which we can do if so required.

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## **SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION**



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

You need to ensure that you are purchasing the property at the correct price in this volatile property market and you need to make sure you are happy with the characteristics of the property particularly the train noise.

We would refer you to our comments in the Executive Summary, 'Good', 'Bad' and 'Ugly' Section and ask that you re-read these.

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.

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# **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

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

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

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

## **ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?**

It is important to remember that the estate agents are acting for the seller (usually known as the vendor) and not the purchaser and are therefore eager to sell the property (no sale – no fee!). We 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**

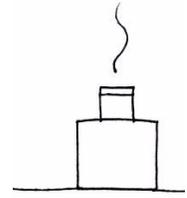
Our aim is for you to be completely happy with the service we provide, and we will try and help you in whatever way possible with your property purchase - just phone us.

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



## EXTERNAL

# CHIMNEY STACKS, DORMER WINDOWS AND ROOF 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.*

There is one chimney to this property which is located to the right hand side (all directions as you face the property)

### Chimney

This chimney is brick finished with a lead flashing and an aerial attached at high level. It could generally do with some repointing work to stop the dampness from getting in but our main concern is that the chimney seems to have been removed at ground level. Whilst we can't see any indication that there is any structural defect within the front room nevertheless it should have had approval to be carried out.



We would comment that the chimney may have been capped at the top but we couldn't see this from our various vantage points.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repoint and please see our comments with regards to your solicitors enquiries in the Executive Summary.



Close up of chimney (in need of re-pointing)

### Capping Defined

Capping is a practice used when chimneys are no longer in use to prevent moisture from entering the structure in the form of rainwater via the chimney. This usually involves the closing of the chimney with a tile or slab positioned across. It should include vents to allow air circulation.

### 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.

### Render Defined

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

## **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 dormer window has a flat roof which we can't see, the sides have vertical tiling and the front is plastic double glazed windows all in reasonable condition.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments about not being able to see the top roof.

Dormer window

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

## **Roof Windows**

*These are utilised on flat roofs where light is needed internally. They can be purpose made or made in situ*

There is a roof window to the rear extension. This roof window looks to be made on site. It is a single pitch and we think gives excellent light into the rear lounge however we did note that the insulation had become slightly displaced.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend someone repositions the insulation/sealer. This we believe is to stop wind from getting underneath the roof light glass and lifting it.

It seems inevitable with roof lights that they will sooner or later leak. If this doesn't occur then they seem prone to condensation particularly as this one is close to the kitchen. Keep a cloth handy!



Roof light

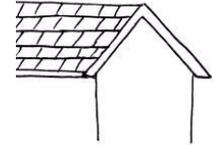


Insulation displaced

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

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

# ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

We will consider the roofs in three areas, the Main Roof, the rear extension and the bow window roof.

## High Level Roofs

### Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad with small nibbed concrete tiles. It looks in reasonable condition; we can see a few of the tiles have moved. It does look to have been re-roofed due to its lighter colour however during our question and answer session the owner advised that it hadn't been re-roofed in their time there.



Roof tiles (right hand side)

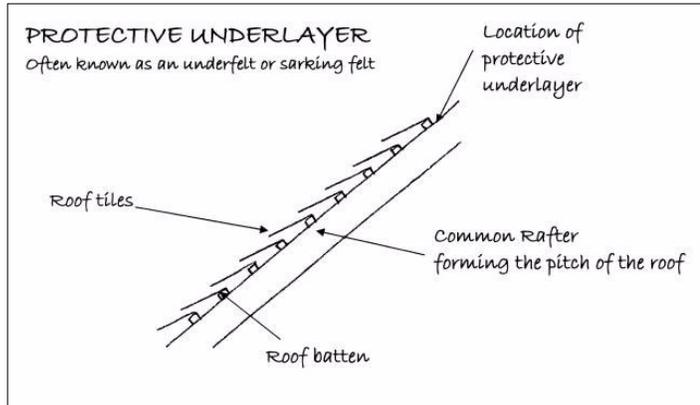
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your solicitor to specifically ask if the property has been re-roofed (because it could equally be the adjoining owner's property that has been re-roofed). If it has been re-roofed then is there some form of guarantee available.



Slipped tile

## 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.*



Unfortunately within the main roof the vast majority of it was lined therefore hiding the timbers and the sarking felt and we believe insulation. We did move back a small section of insulation to see a hessian based sarking felt beneath. We would add it is unusual to find the entirety of the roof lined.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments within the Executive Summary with regard to damp staining to the ceiling and the adjoining landing area.



An area of the insulation moved back where we can see the hessian based sarking felt



Roof space lined, this hides the common rafters (the ones that form the pitch of the roof) and also the sarking felt and the chimney

## **Rear Roof**

The felt is covered with a pea shingle. This felt is from the cheaper end of the market, generally we wouldn't recommend it as it is difficult to find any leaks in it when they occur. There is some moss sitting within the chippings indicating that the roof is flat as opposed to having a good fall on it which does tend to reduce the life of the roof.



Rear roof

## **Bow Window**

The front of the property has a bow window which is a nice feature; this has a small lead covered roof which looks in reasonable condition. The photo is taken looking down onto the lead roof from the window above.



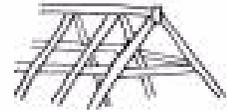
Lead roof to the front of the property over the bow bay window

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 main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing. There is a good quality staircase to enter it and there are some secured floorboards in it and most unusually it is completely lined. The loft has been viewed by torchlight; there is a lot of stored items which has limited our viewing slightly.



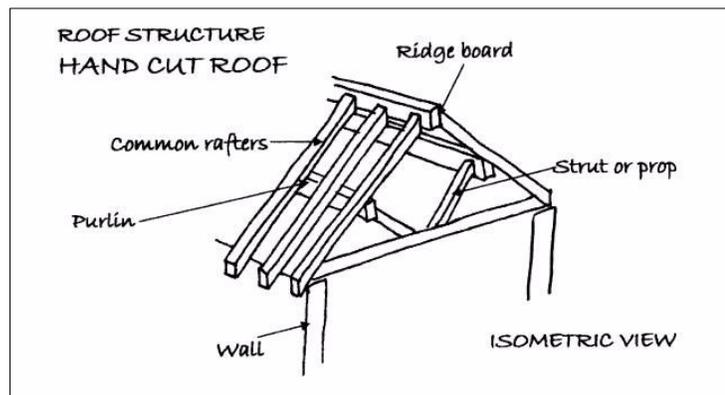
Loft access



Stored items

### Roof Structure

This type of roof structure has what is known as a cut timber roof. This is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site. Unfortunately as it is lined we cannot see the timbers properly with the exception of about five to ten per cent of the roof. In



this area the timbers looked to be a size that we would expect and the spacing we would expect of about 400-450 wide. We are basing the width of the timbers on the fixing of the lining.



### **Roof Timbers**

In this instance we have not been able to inspect the roof timbers. We would normally inspect the roof structure for:

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



Roof timbers

Our examination has been severely limited.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally the roof needs to be emptied and the boarding stripped in a selection of areas for us to be able to get a better view. We would be more than happy once this work has been carried out to come back and review the property. We cannot be conclusive from the small percentage of the roof that we could see. Externally the roof looks level and true which normally indicates that there aren't any major problems in the timbers, this isn't the same as opening up the structure to view the timbers.

### **Fire Walls**

We can see a brick fire wall is in place although we didn't have a close inspection of it.

#### Fire Walls Defined

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

## **Water Tanks**

There looks to be a water tank in the roof although there are lots of stored items in the roof so we cannot be absolutely certain.

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

## **Ventilation**

The roof would benefit from having ventilation added.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add vents.

## **Insulation**

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

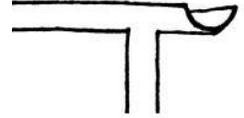
## **Electrical Cables**

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 due to the mass of stored items, the boarding out and the lining of the roof.

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

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

# GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

## Gutters and Downpipes

Originally this property would have had cast iron gutters and downpipes throughout. However, over the years, some/most of these have been replaced so we now have a mixture of the two different materials, which never mix particularly well and generally leak. There are some awkward runs of the plastic particularly on the rear elevation where we may have been tempted to have a diagonal downpipe. We believe the hopper head will overflow.

The reason it is in this convoluted manner is because the roof window is in the way of where it would have originally terminated.

**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.



Gutter and downpipe



Awkward run of downpipe



Stepped pipe from different angle

## Soil and Vent Pipe

The soil and vent pipe is located to the rear of the property. It is in the original cast iron and looks in reasonable condition although cast iron of this age can start to crack particularly to the rear and rust if not well maintained.



Soil and vent pipe



Close up of soil and vent pipe

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

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# WALLS



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

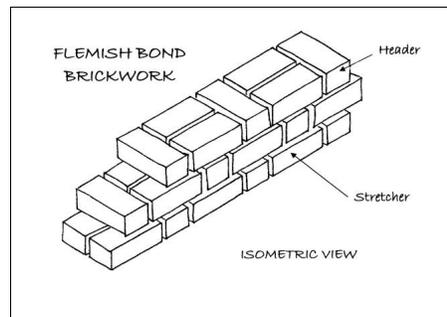
## Brickwork

The property is built in a brick in what is known as Flemish bond brickwork. Originally it would have been bedded in lime mortar; this has been repointed in cement mortar. We can also see some areas where doors and windows have been blocked up and altered over the years.



Brickwork with the blocked up door

The term Flemish Bond relates to the way the bricks are bonded together and have a pattern visible from the outside of the property that shows the end of the brick (header), then the side of the brick (stretcher), then the end of the brick, then the side of the brick, and this pattern repeats course after course, i.e. header-stretcher, header-stretcher.



The solid external walls may be liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon their condition and their exposure to the weather. External faces should be kept in good condition.

Before the 19th Century, the practice of building timbers into external walls was almost universal. These were known as bonding timbers. They are of course prone to rot as solid walls allow dampness through. Unfortunately, without opening up the structure, we are unable to confirm if this is the case.

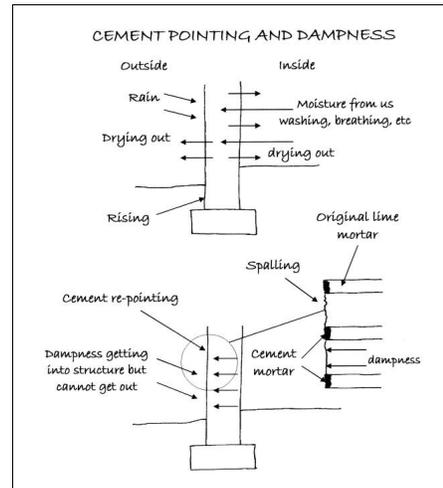
Generally Flemish Bond brickwork is liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon the condition of the brickwork and the exposure to the weather. In this case it is essential that external faces be kept in good condition.

## Lime every time

We would much prefer to see this property being repointed in a lime based mortar as this allows the wall to breathe better.



Here you can see that cement mortar is coming away. You should take the opportunity to repoint in a lime mortar which allows the property to breathe better.



## Bricking up the doorways and windows

We can see that windows and doorways have been bricked up. We feel there may be a weakness in the structure at the base where the damp proof course has not been added in properly. There is very little that can be done about this without major work. You need to accept it as part of the character of the property.



Base of a door that has been blocked up

## Render

*Render is a mixture of sand and cement and in older renders also lime. As a surveyor we are always concerned when we see render finished properties as the render can hide a multitude of sins, particularly if it has been recently repainted.*

The walls to this property in the upper levels are finished in a painted roughcast render. A good quality render is judged normally by the detailing. We were pleased to see a drip above the windows as you can see on the adjoining photo and it was detailed down to a brick course at first floor level.



Drip detail in the render



Brick course at first floor level

## Redecoration hiding repairs?

During our question and answer session we asked the owner who advised that it was last redecorated in 2009. If you look closely at the render you can see slightly different textures indicating to us that it has been repaired. We feel that more repairs will be needed in the future and we would emphasise the importance of keeping the paintwork in good decorative order.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a close up review of the render in the summer of 2012; you may need to carry out repair work.

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

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

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# FOUNDATIONS



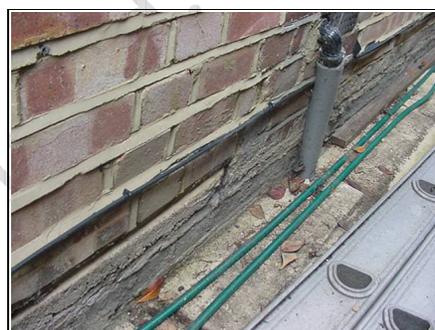
*The foundations function is, if suitably designed and constructed, to transfer the weight of the property through the soil. As a general comment, many properties prior to the 19th Century have little or no foundations, as we think of them today, and typically a two-storey property would have one metre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

## Foundations

Given the age of the property we would expect to find a shallow foundation of a stepped brick possibly with a bedding of lime mortar.

## Concrete visible at ground level

We noted a concrete plinth visible at ground level particularly on the right hand side. We are concerned that this may relate to underpinning work. We looked at the adjoining properties and none of these had a similar rendered plinth. Equally it may have been something the builders did when they were bricking up the doorways.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal advisor needs to specifically question with regard to underpinning.

## Building Insurance Policy

It is your responsibility to check out prior to commitment to purchase that insurance is available on the property on the basis of the things we have reported in the survey. Much as we would like to we are unable to keep up with the changing insurance market and give you advice with regard to this. Please remember to talk about any cracks identified within the property. Often insurers will refer to progressive and non-progressive cracking. Unfortunately this is something we are unable to comment upon from a one-off inspection – the Building Research Establishment recommend a year of monitoring of any cracking.

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

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

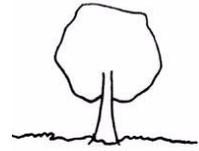
You should ensure that the Building Insurance Policy contains adequate provision against any possibility of damage arising through subsidence, landslip, heave etc.

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.

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# TREES

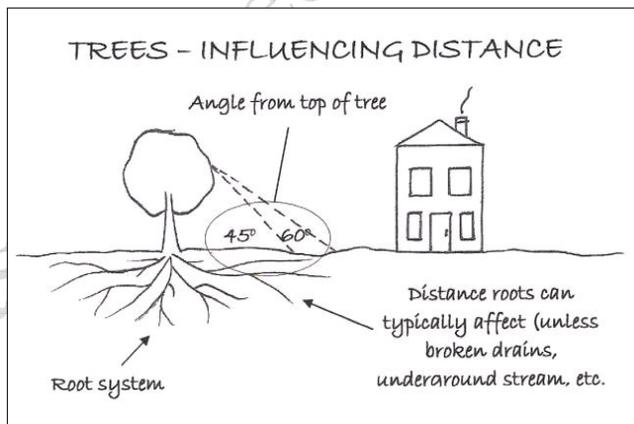
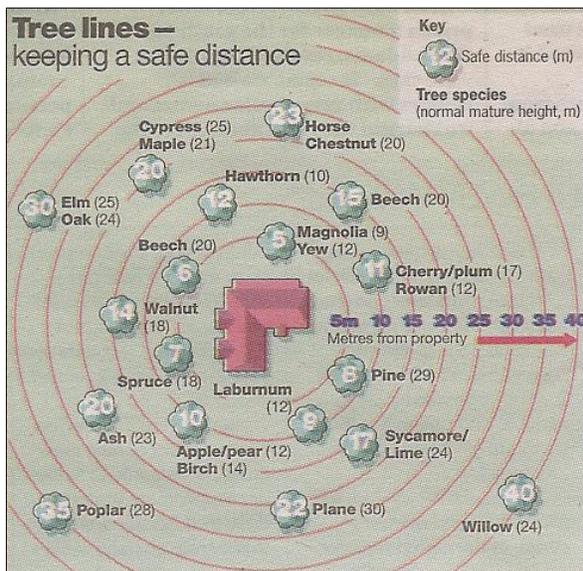


Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.

There are conifers to the rear of the garden. These are fast growing and can be problematic. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary. You do need to go and have a chat with the garage owner preferably before you purchase the property just to establish their views on it.



Mass of conifers



## Influencing Distance Defined

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

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

## DAMP PROOF COURSE

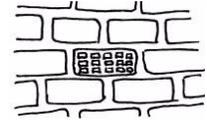


*The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required various other basic standards. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout London and then the country as a whole, although this took many years for it to become standard practice.*

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, we couldn't see a damp proof course however given the age of the property it should have had a damp proof course. Your attention is drawn to the section of the report specifically dealing with dampness.

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

# AIRBRICKS



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

The floors to this property are what is known as a suspended timber floor. This means there should be a throughflow of air beneath. Subfloor ventilation is essential in discouraging rot and on no account should the airbricks be obstructed. In this case the airbricks are not obstructed and are visible to the front and rear of the property although the rear extension has effectively blocked part of the airflow under the building.



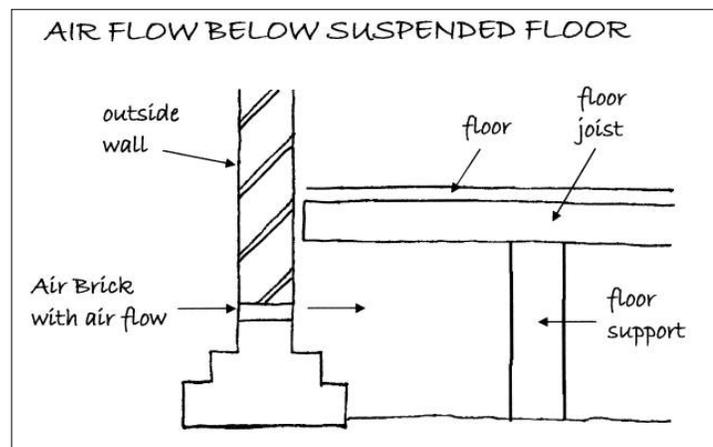
Airbrick to the front



Airbrick to the rear

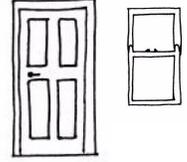
## Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

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 timber fascias, soffits and bargeboards; these are in below average condition, we noticed some blistering.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary about likely to need redecoration.



Bargeboard at the front of the property (poor quality paintwork)



Paintwork blistering to the bargeboard

## **Windows and Doors**

The property has plastic double glazed windows. In this case there was some misting up to some of the double glazing. We would draw your attention to the fact that sealed double glazed units can fail, particularly as a result of poor workmanship during installation. Failure of the seal leads to condensation between the two panes of glass and simply replacing the affected units may not provide a satisfactory long-term solution.



Double glazed window

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Replace misted double glazed units.

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

# **EXTERNAL DECORATIONS**



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

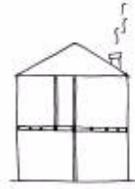
The external decorations are at present in above average condition. We can see that there have been some repairs to the render by the different pattern in it and we would expect with this age of render for you to be carrying out repairs each time you redecorate. Remember the paintwork acts as the raincoat to the render and needs to be kept in good order.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

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## INTERNAL



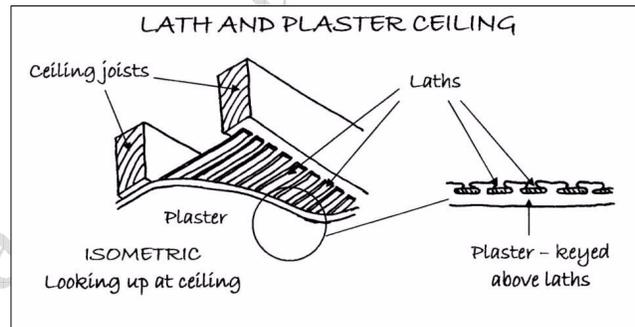
## CEILING, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be a mixture of lath and plaster / plasterboard. It is very difficult to tell in a property that has been modernised such as this where original lath and plaster has been covered with plasterboard.

### 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 brickwork and will be the structural walls with any studwork walls being purely to divide the rooms up.

## **Perimeter Walls**

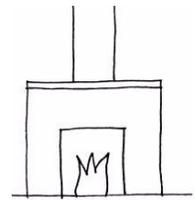
We think these are a lime based plaster; possibly they have been skimmed with a gypsum plaster to make them smoother as they are smoother than we would traditionally find lime based plaster work. The built in cupboards limited our view of the walls.

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

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

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## 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.*

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary. They are located on the right hand side of the property although no longer visible!

Finally, we will comment on the condition of the chimney breast where we can see the chimney breast. If we can see a chimney breast has been removed we will inspect for signs of movement and advise. However, often the chimney breasts are hidden and we don't comment. Your Legal Advisor needs to specifically check with the Local Authority for removed chimneys and associated chimney breasts and Building Regulations Approvals and advise by e-mail immediately if chimney breasts are found to have been removed. We would recommend opening up the structure to check the condition. If we are not advised we will assume the relevant Building Regulations Approval has been obtained.

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

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

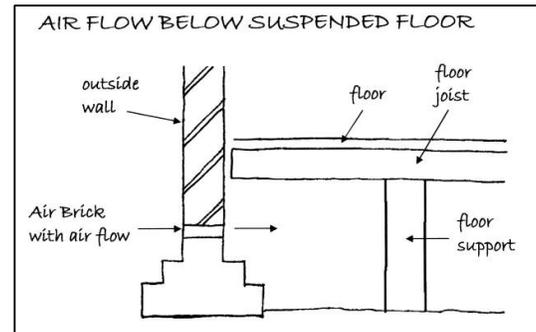
# FLOORS



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

## Ground Floor

The floors to the front of the property are suspended timber floors. The floor to the rear felt solid underfoot so we have assumed they are formed in concrete, however, we have not opened up the floors or lifted the carpets/floor coverings. We believe the rear extension has possibly blocked up the air ventilation of the floor. Additional airbricks or running vents should be fitted to allow an airflow underneath the suspended timber floor.



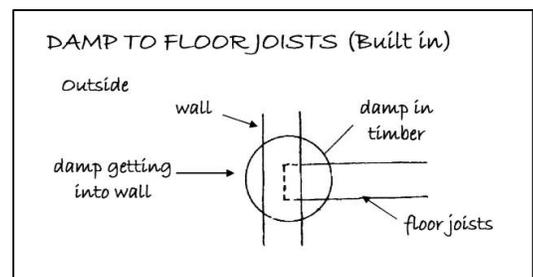
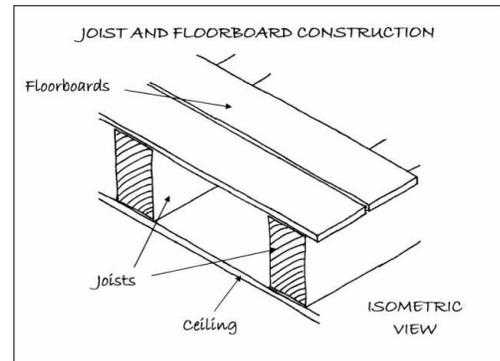
## First Floor

We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards, the timbers are likely to be embedded timbers, as this is typical in this age of property. There is a fraction more deflection than we would normally expect (vibration in the floor)

### Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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

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



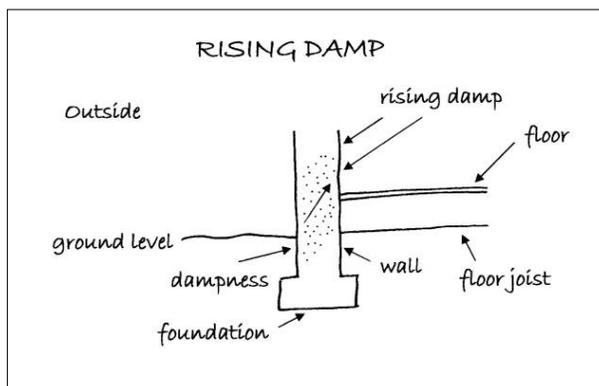


## DAMPNESS

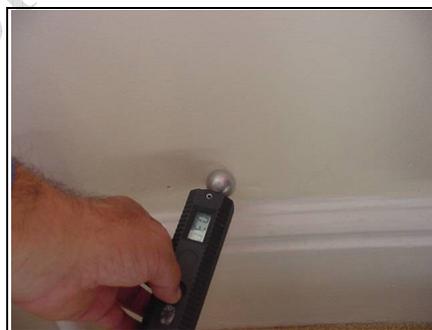
*In this section we look at any problems that are being caused by dampness. It is therefore essential to diagnose the source of the dampness and to treat the actual cause and not the effect of the dampness.*

### 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.*



A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls and some internal walls. We didn't find any excessive dampness although it has to be borne in mind that we are carrying out the test in the middle of summer therefore there may be some dampness that is prevalent in the middle of winter.

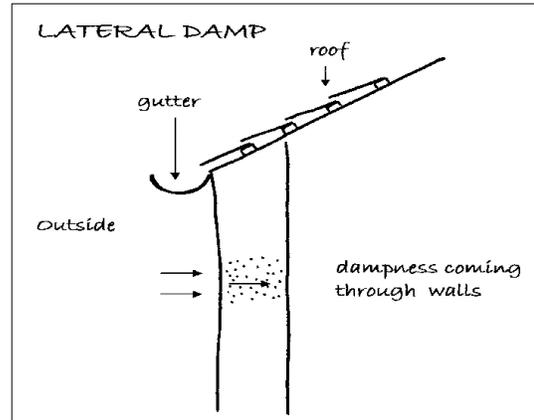


Testing for dampness

## **Lateral or Penetrating Dampness**

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

Tests were taken; we didn't find any actual damp in the selection of areas that we tested.



Testing for lateral dampness

## **Condensation**

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

We believe there is condensation from the bathroom, however condensation does depend 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. As mentioned earlier, in a family house with a young family there does tend to be more condensation.

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**

Modern pressed doors have been installed often known as egg box doors due to the construction internally.



Modern pressed doors

## **Staircase**

We noted that the underside of the staircase was exposed. It is more normal today to have a half hour fire barrier to stop fire spreading from the ground floor to the first floor in a worse case scenario. You may wish to take a view on whether you add this.



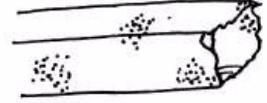
Underside of stairs

## **Kitchen**

The property has a relatively modern kitchen which looked in reasonable 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 Joinery/Detailing section.

## **TIMBER DEFECTS**



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

### **Dry Rot**

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

We didn't see any visual signs of dry rot in the areas we inspected. Please note we have not opened up the floors and we have had a limited view of the roof.

### **Wet Rot**

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

We didn't see any visual signs of wet rot in the areas we inspected although there may be some underneath the floor due to the lack of ventilation and some to the roof due to condensation. Please note we have not opened up the floors and we have had a limited view of the roof.

### **Woodworm**



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

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. As mentioned throughout this report we have had a very limited view in the roof as it has been lined; the five per cent of the timber that we did see there were no signs of active woodworm however we would say in many properties of this age there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection is usually restricted by insulation covering some of the timbers and general stored items in the roof, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to be 100 per cent certain that there is no woodworm the only way would be to remove the lining and also the floorboarding in the roof to allow us to have a good look.

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

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

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## INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

The property is all redecorated to a reasonable standard. From our discussions with the owner the majority has been carried out in 2010 (redecorated to sell?).

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

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

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# **THERMAL EFFICIENCY**



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

## **HIPs**

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

## **Roofs**

The roof was boarded out; we could see some insulation between the common rafters (the ones that form the pitch of the roof) directly behind the hessian based felt. We don't like this sort of insulation as it does tend to cause condensation however as mentioned the roof was full of stored items so we would need to see the roof empty for us to comment further. Generally we would recommend this is removed.

## **Walls**

The walls to this property are solid. It is very difficult to improve thermal efficiency in solid wall construction without major alterations. These will usually affect the external appearance or reduce the internal space – best left alone.

## **Windows**

The windows are double glazed and therefore will have average/good thermal properties although some of the windows have misted over therefore will not have the thermal properties.

## Services

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

## Summary

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

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

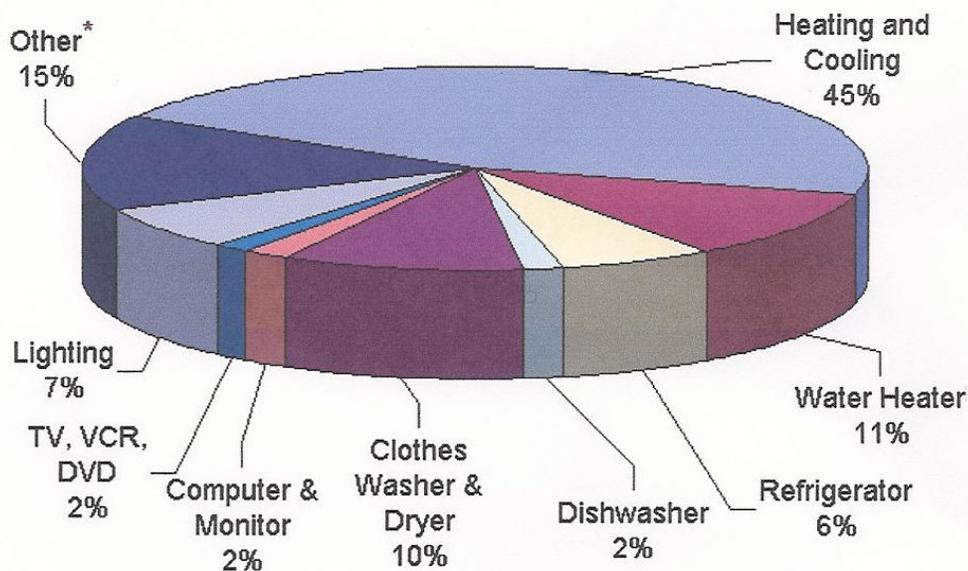
*[HTTP//www.est.org.uk](http://www.est.org.uk), which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.*

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

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

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

### What does my energy bill pay for?



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

## OTHER MATTERS



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

### Security

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

### Fire / Smoke Alarms

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

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

We 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.

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

## Asbestos

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. 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.

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## **SERVICES**

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

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

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# ELECTRICITY



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

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

## Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located to the left hand side as you enter the property. The fuse board looked newish.



Fuse board

## Earth Test

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



Earth test

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

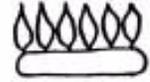
In addition to this your Legal Advisor is required to make full enquires with the owners to establish if any electrical installation work has been

carried out and to provide suitable certification for any works carried out after 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005. Any comments made within this report or verbally do not change this requirement.

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

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## GAS



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

We are advised that the property has mains gas. The consumer unit is located in a gas box outside the house (advised by customer we haven't actually seen this).

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

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

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# PLUMBING AND HEATING



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

## Water Supply

We were advised by Mrs Radburn that they don't know where the controlling stopcock is located.

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ask the owners again.

## Water Pressure

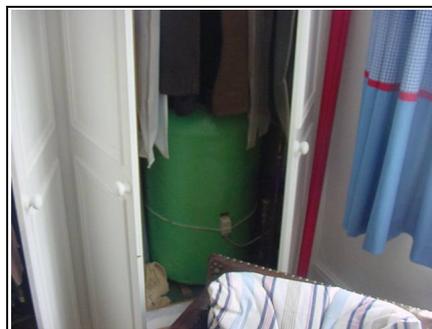
When the taps were run to carry out the drainage test we checked the pressure literally by putting a finger over the tap and this seemed average. The Water Board have to guarantee a certain pressure of water to ensure that things like boilers, particularly the instantaneous ones have a constant supply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

## Cold Water Cistern

We believe there was probably a cold water cistern in the roof although it is difficult to see with the amount of stored items.

## Hot Water Cylinder

The hot water cylinder was located in the front bedroom; it is factory insulated so should have good thermal efficiency.



Hot water cylinder located in the front right hand bedroom

## **Plumbing**

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

## **Heating**

The boiler was located in the kitchen.

Our limited inspection of the hot water and central heating system revealed no evidence to suggest any serious defects but we would nevertheless recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

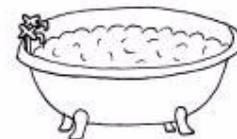
## **Ten Minute Heating Test**

The heating was turned on for ten minutes; we noted a warm radiator in the hallway and one in the front bedroom.

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 property has a three piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin and WC. The bathroom felt slightly dated and we are not that keen on tiles on the floor as we do find that when putting a tile onto a wood floor ultimately the joints go. Various aqua floors, laminates and linos offer a sealed waterproof floor which we feel is better than a tiled floor although you may like this style and be prepared to put up with the regrouting.



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

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## MAIN DRAINS



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

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

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

### Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We have identified two inspection chambers / manholes.

#### Inspection Chamber / Manhole One to the front of the property

We were unable to lift the manholes although we did run the taps for fifteen minutes to half an hour.



Manhole to the front of the property

## **Inspection Chamber / Manhole Two to the rear of the property**

As above.



Manhole to the front of the property

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

## **Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage**

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

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

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

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

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

## OUTSIDE AREAS

### PARKING

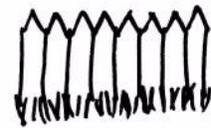


Property from the garage side



Parking at front of property although slightly tight if you have a larger car

### EXTERNAL AREAS



#### Front Garden

The whole of the front has been paved over with a brick paving.



Front garden/paved area



Block paving starting to unsettle

## **Rear Garden**

Mainly grassed but as we have mentioned a high conifer hedge to the rear where the garage is. There is a patio area that is hidden away to the side of the house outside of the kitchen.



View of rear garden from patio area

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

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

## **Neighbours**

### **Left/Right Hand Neighbours**

We knocked but no-one answered.

## **POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

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

### Designated Planning Area.

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

However, with regard to Envirosearch or similar general reports please see our article link on the [www.1stAssociated.co.uk](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**.

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## **REFERENCES**

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

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

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

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

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# APPENDICES

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## **LIMITATIONS**

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

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

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

## **ENGLISH LAW**

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

## **SOLE USE**

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

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

## **WEATHER**

It was a cloudy and overcast day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

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
2008	
2009	Third wettest August since 1956
2010	Heaviest snowfall in march since 1991
	Britain faces one of the coldest winters for 100 years

References                      BBC News [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

## **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 as we haven't opened up the floors, we were particularly interested in the ground floor. We have had a very limited view of the roof due in particular to the lining and the flooring that has been added. We haven't had the benefit of being able to lift up the drains.



Stored items

## **BUILDING INSURANCE**

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

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

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

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Our computer system sends two copies of our Terms and Conditions to the email address given to us when booking the survey; one has the terms attached and the other has links to the Terms and Conditions on our website (for a limited time). If you have not received these please phone your contact immediately.

# **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.