

JOB REFERENCE: XXXXXXXX

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

XXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXX
Shropshire SY6 XXX



**1950's/1960's
Detached Property**

FOR

Mr XXXXXXX

Prepared by:
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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REPORT FORMAT

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

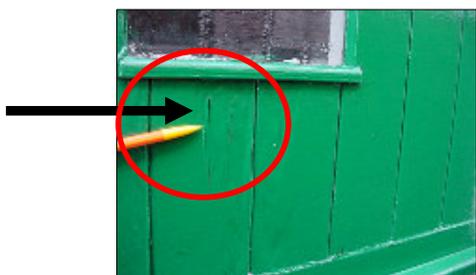
GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

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

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



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

ORIENTATION

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

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

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SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two storey detached property within large grounds on a steep sloping site.

There is a garage and off-road parking and large gardens to the front and rear and various greenhouses and sheds.

We believe that the property was built in the 1950's/1960's. If the exact age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

- 1952 Princess Elizabeth becomes Queen at the age of twenty five.
- 1954 Roger Bannister breaks the four minute mile barrier.
- 1956 The TV remote control is invented by Robert Adler
- 1959 UK postcodes introduced after a trial run in Norwich
- 1961 Space history, Yuri Gagarin becomes the first man in space.
- 1963 Martin Luther King's 'dream' inspires a nation
- 1966 England beat Germany to win the 1966 World Cup at Wembley

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EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front View



Rear View



Left View
(taken from rear of property)



Right View (taken from next door)



Front garden



Rear garden



Vegetable patch

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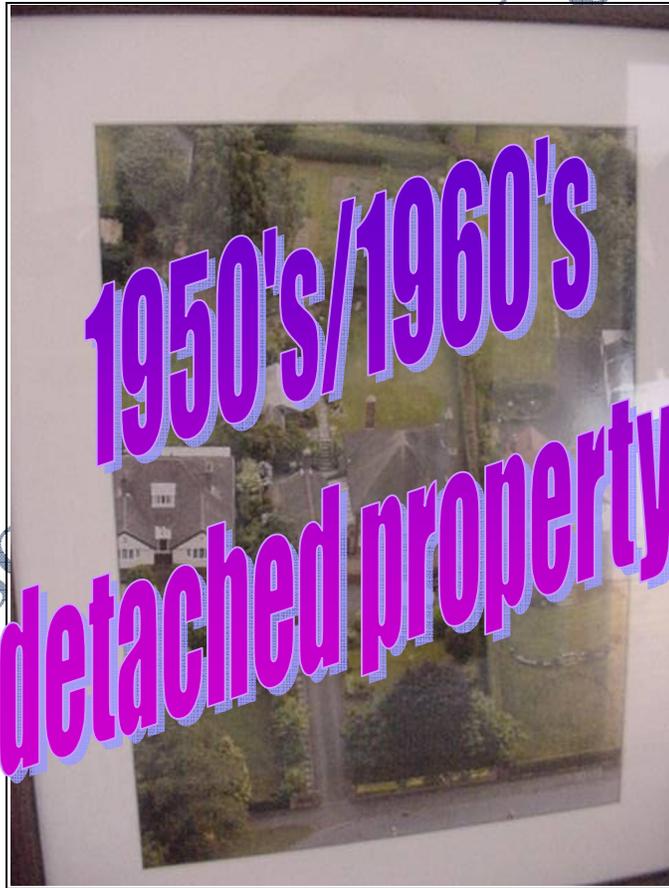




Street view



View from front right
bedroom window



Aerial view

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ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

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

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Entrance lobby
- 2) Hallway and staircase
- 3) Cloakroom to front
- 4) WC to front
- 5) Reception room to front right
- 6) Dining room to rear right
- 7) Kitchen to rear left
- 8) Covered corridor / utility area
- 9) Garage to far left – with room behind garage (old coal shed/store)

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Landing
- 2) Two bedrooms to front right
- 3) Bedroom to front left side
- 2) Bathroom/WC to rear left
- 3) Bedroom to rear right

Outside Areas

There are large gardens to the front and rear, all on a sloping site.

Off road parking is available and there is a detached garage to the left side.

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

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INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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

Ground Floor



Entrance lobby



Entrance hallway



WC



Lounge



Lounge

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Ground Floor
(continued)



Dining room



Dining room



Kitchen



Corridor / utility area

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First Floor



Bedroom to front left



Bedroom to front right



Bedroom to front right



Bedroom to rear right



Bathroom



WC

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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Chimneys:	Three large brick chimneys and one brick chimney on the garage
Main Roof:	Pitched and hipped, clad with nibbed clay tiles Building paper underlayer
Main Roof Structure:	Cut timber roof
Left Hand Roof over walkway:	Glass with box gutter
Gutters and Downpipes:	Painted Cast iron and Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Cast iron and Plastic
Walls:	Stretcher Bond Brickwork with older style cavity wall, but we have been advised that they have been recently insulated with cavity wall insulation Render and timber panels to front (all assumed)
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Single glazed metal windows with draught seals

Internal

Ceilings:	Plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Predominantly solid (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Suspended timber floor (assumed)
First Floor:	Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)

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Services

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

Heating:	There is a wall mounted Potterton Supreme boiler located in the kitchen.
Electrics:	The fuse boards are located in the kitchen (from 1990's/2000's) and in the garage.
Gas:	The consumer unit was located in the garage
Drainage:	The manholes are located to the front and rear.

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

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor needs to check and confirm the above and advise us of anything they require further clarification on before legal commitment to purchase the property.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 320 photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if an issue has not been discussed that you are interested in or concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it; if we have not we will happily go back.

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

Once you have read the report we would recommend that you revisit the property to review your thoughts on the building in light of the comments we have made in this survey.

The Good

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

- 1.0) The property is immaculately presented, although we appreciate this is only superficial and the existing occupier advises they are a self-employed painter and decorator.
- 2.0) Older properties typically have more space than newer properties, both in the actual size of the rooms and the height of the rooms.
- 3.0) The property has good natural light due to the bay windows.

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

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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) Movement

To the rear of the property on the right hand side we can see there has been some movement. We can see hairline stepped cracking around the windows, both above and below, and we can also see some cracking within the paved area.



Cracking



Cracking to rear



Stepped crack to rear

From the adjoining property (right hand side) we could also see there has been some movement in the ridge of the hipped roof.



Movement visible on roof tiles

Internally there are no cracks visible within the bedrooms, but these could of course have been filled and painted over, and within the roof structure (loft) we were not able to see any significant movement either, although our view was limited due to the mass of insulation.

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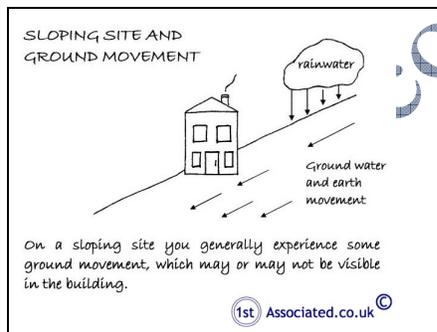


ACTION REQUIRED: This needs monitoring. Ideally to be 100% certain you need the existing owner to place an insurance claim, which will not cost them anything (other than the time it takes to write the letter). This will then mean the insurance company will monitor the problem and it will limit your future liability to the excess.

Your legal adviser needs to check and confirm that this is legally agreed before you commit to purchase.

1.0) Sloping site

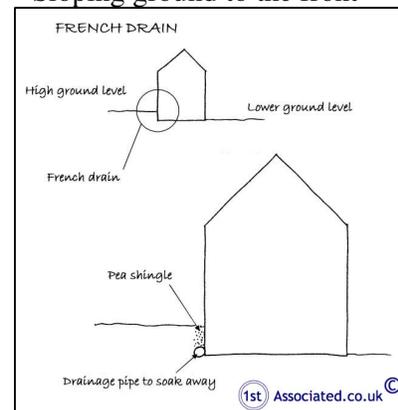
Any property on a sloping site is more susceptible than one on a flat site; it is simply the laws of gravity. Foundations normally allow for such occurrences, particularly in new properties. There can still be some minor movement. Rainwater and ground water will travel from the top to the bottom of the property, also discharging water on to the highway, which you will be liable for should there be any problems.



Sloping site

We much prefer to see a French drain or running gully around the property to give any rainwater a definite route. We also prefer to see where there are retaining walls that they have weep holes in, here we are particularly referring to the brick wall to the front of the property and the one adjacent to the rear, neither of which have weep holes in them and we were surprised they were in such good condition. Have they been rebuilt?

Sloping ground to the front



French drain

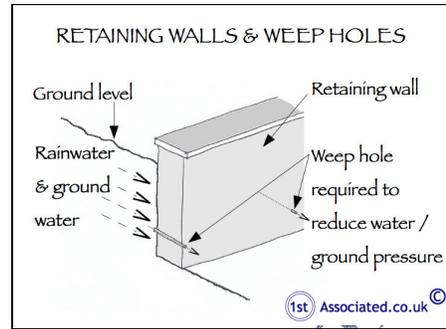
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Retaining wall to front needs weep holes



Weep holes in a retaining wall

ACTION REQUIRED: Add a French drain around the property at high level and add weep holes to the retaining walls at low level.

We were surprised that there were no signs of seepage in the front walls.

ANTICIPATE COSTS: In the region of £2,500 to £5,000; obtain quotes.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

3.0) Painting over problems

As you may or may not know, the owner is a self-employed painter and decorator. We can see that the painting is of a very high standard, but problems have also been painted over rather than repaired.

For example, we can see bandaging on some of the gutters and downpipes to the right hand side and wet rot has been painted over again on the right hand side windows. When we spoke directly to the occupier during our question and answer session they advised that they had painted over this area and was aware of this fact.



Bandaged and painted cast iron downpipe

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We are concerned there is other high level areas that have been painted over so well it is difficult to see them without physically putting a knife in them, or tapping them.

ACTION REQUIRED: We feel you have to allow for the repair of some of the cast iron gutters and downpipes and also the repair/replacement of the windows. Please see our further comments in the windows.



Knife test to painted over wood

Please see the Decoration Section of this Report.

4.0) Single glazed metal windows

You have metal windows, some of which are set within a timber frame (please see our comments about the rot to the timber frames). Metal windows are often known by their generic name of Crittle windows.

As part of our survey we opened a random selection of the windows; some of the windows we found were unopenable as they had been painted shut.



Metal window

Generally whilst these windows are best kept from a painting point of view, with the metal windows we have seen over the years of surveying we do have to highlight how problematic this type of metal window is, i.e. they warp and rust almost no matter how much you do to them.

Having said that, these windows were in as good a condition as we would expect to find metal windows of this age.

ACTION REQUIRED: You will need have these windows regularly redecorated, as they are immaculately redecorated presently (apart from we would not paint over rotten timber and rusting metal!). It is important you repair rather than paint over problem areas.

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ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £3,000 to £5,000 as this needs to be high quality gloss work, which will have to be carried out extremely carefully and gloss work generally needs a lot of care and attention.

It may be more economical to replace the windows and we would expect costs in the region of £5,000 to £10,000 depending upon the quality of windows. Please obtain quotations.

We would also add that single glazed metal windows can be draughty, even where draught seal has been added. We were advised that this draught seal was added before the present owners moved in to the house and you may need to secondary glaze.

Secondary glazing defined

An internal window glazing (as opposed to double glazing).

Please see the Windows Section of this Report.

6.0) Building paper and over insulation in the roof

The roof is one of the original roof's where a protective underlayer was used in the form of building paper. We since then moved on to sarking felt and more recently on to breathable membranes.

Unfortunately the building papers are now generally coming to the end of their natural life and starting to deteriorate, as in this case; approximately ten per cent deterioration. We have found that this can be accelerated by insulating or over insulating the roof, as we believe has happened in this case, without any ventilation.



Deteriorating building paper
– battens visible

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ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend that the roof is ventilated to reduce the chance of condensation and slow the deterioration down to the building paper.

It is a Catch 22 that wind driven rain may well get into the roof, although there are no obvious visual signs but as mentioned the decoration is immaculate.

An alternative is to board out the roof. This acts in two ways:

1. As a protective layer if any rainwater does get through to the roof.
2. It leaves staining where the dampness comes through and marks are left.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £300 to £750; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

7.0) Glazed corridor roof

There is a glass roof, with box gutter, to the left hand side of the property. We would comment most of the glass roof panes have had repairs to them and we feel this area will be a problem area due to the difficulty of keeping the box gutter clear.



Glass roof



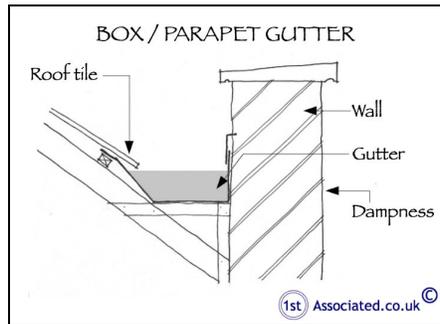
Underside of glass roof

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Box gutter



Box gutter

ACTION REQUIRED: We would expect rain to get in through the glass panes and for them to need repair, which will be difficult due to access. You may wish to look at a more traditional roof or replacing of the ceiling joists, which would be expensive.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £500 to £5,000, depending upon whether you are repairing or replacing. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

8.0) Air bricks acting as gutters

We can also see that the air bricks, that are meant to allow air flow underneath the suspended timber floor, are acting as gutters. We are surprised that we did not have high damp readings at ground level, this may well be because we have had good weather of late, or it may be that the air bricks are allowing the rainwater to go under the floor causing wet rot to the timber floor.



Airbrick acting as a gutter

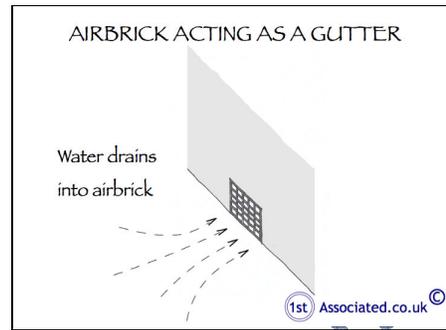
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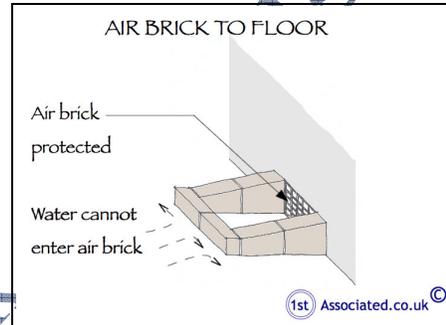


Unfortunately we have not been able to open up a section of the floor, as we do not think we could have carried this out without damaging, but we do feel a section needs to be opened up.



Airbrick acting as a gutter

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend you open up part of the floor near to the perimeter of the property to check the condition of the timbers beneath. If the existing owners will not allow this then you will have to take on the risk and as such we would expect a reduction in the purchase price.



Protected airbrick

We would add a brick surround to the air bricks where possible.

ANTICIPATED COST: A few hundred pounds to add a surround to the air bricks; obtain quotes. The problem will be if there is damage under the floor. Please see our comments about adding a French drain to take the rainwater around the property as this property sits on a sloping site.

Please see the Air Bricks and Floors Sections of this Report.

9.0) Trees and insurance

There is a tree to the left side of the property (all directions given as you face the property) adjacent to the garage, that is closer than most insurance companies would like. Whilst this may not affect the main house it may affect your premium.



Large tree

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ACTION REQUIRED: Obtain quotes for insurance before you commit to purchase. We would recommend an arboriculturalist (not a tree surgeon) is asked to view the property and give a ten year plan for maintenance.

Ideally continue with the insurance that the existing occupiers have, as this will tie in with any monitoring of movement work to the rear of the property.

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.

10.0) Services

Heating

The property has an older style wall mounted Potterton Supreme boiler in the kitchen which is coming to the end of its natural life, although many say that older style boilers do last longer than more modern 'energy efficient' boilers.

We were advised that there is a British Gas contact in place and that they have replaced most of the inside of the boiler.



Potterton Supreme boiler

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal adviser to request documentation and invoices in relation to this work, otherwise we feel that you will have to accept it is an older style boiler with older internal sections and you should budget for a replacement boiler.

ANTICIPATED COST: Costs in the region of £2,500 to £3,500, plus possibly the replacement of radiators due the increase in the pressure that modern boilers have. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

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The Ugly

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

We have found more than the average number of things that we would classify as bad. There is no one specific thing that we would put in the Ugly Section, however when putting all the items in the Bad Section together we do feel this makes this a slightly higher risk purchase than we would have expected for this age, type and style of property.

Please feel free to contact us and we would be more than happy to discuss this further.

Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Maintenance

This type of property is relatively modern (i.e., less than one hundred years old) but nevertheless still requires ongoing maintenance and repair. A budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in a good condition. This will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration.

Services

Whilst we have carried out a visual inspection only of the services within the property and we would always recommend you have your own specific testing for each of the services.

Electrics

The Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE) recommend a test and report whenever a property changes occupancy. This should be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

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Heating

We 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

Whilst we have lifted the manhole covers to the front and rear of the property the only true way to find out the condition of the drains is to have a closed circuit TV camera report to establish the condition of the drains. In this age of property there have often been leaks over the years.

Water Supply

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

ACTION REQUIRED – SERVICES: We would reiterate that we recommend with regard to all services that you have an independent check by a specialist contractor.

DIY/Handyman Type Work

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work, we would normally say such as redecorating to turn the property into your home, but the present redecoration is immaculate although it may not be to your taste.

Purchase Price

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

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Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Estimates of Building Costs

Where we have offered an estimate of building costs please remember we are not experts in this area. We always recommend you obtain quotations for the large jobs before purchasing the property (preferably three quotes). The cost of building work has many variables such as the cost of labour and estimates can of course vary from area to area when giving a general indication of costs. For unskilled labour we currently use between £75 and £125 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

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

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SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



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

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

You should consider the amount of upkeep this property will need, both from the house point of view and the garden point of view and be happy to carry out the works recommended before you commit to purchase.

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

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

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MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT

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

TENURE – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)

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

ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

It is important to remember that the estate agents are acting for the seller (usually known as the vendor) and not the purchaser and are therefore eager to sell the property (no sale – no fee!). We are employed as Independent Chartered Surveyors and offer an independent point of view.

SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR

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

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS

This report is being carried out under our terms of engagement for Building Surveys, as agreed to and signed by yourselves. If you have not seen or are not happy with the terms of engagement please phone immediately 0800 298 5424 or email the secretary from which this survey came from.

OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION

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

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



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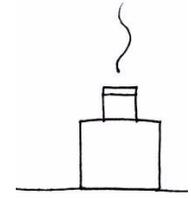
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EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS

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



There are three large chimneys to this property they are located two to the right hand side and one to the rear left (all directions given as you face the property).

There is also a chimney to the detached garage (see outside areas section).

Chimney One, located to the right side (front)

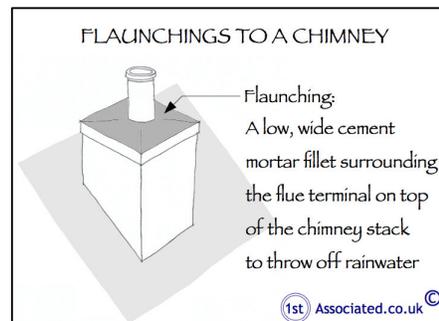
This large chimney is brick finished with a lead flashing and one chimney pot. From what we could see from ground level it looked in average condition considering its age, type and style although we have not been able to see the back of it during our inspection.



Front right chimney (front)

Unfortunately we were unable to see the top of the chimney properly known as the flaunching, we therefore cannot comment upon them.

ACTION REQUIRED: Periodically inspect the chimney.



Flaunching

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Chimney Two, located to right side (rear)

This large chimney is also brick built with a lead flashing and one chimney pot and is in average condition. Again, we have not been able to view the back of the chimney.

ACTION REQUIRED: Periodically inspect the chimney.



Right chimney

Chimney Three, located to the rear left

Again, this large chimney is brick built with one pot and a lead flashing and is also in average condition. Please note our comments with regard to movement in the structure; the slightest movement can affect the chimneys and roof coverings.

ACTION REQUIRED: Periodically inspect the chimney.



Rear left chimney

Flashings Defined

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

Flaunchings Defined

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

Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall 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.

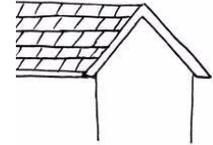
Please also see Chimney Breasts, Flues and Fireplaces Section of this Report.

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ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

We will consider the roofs in three areas; the main roof, low level porch roof and the low level glazed corridor roof.

Main Roof

The main roof is pitched, hipped and clad with nibbed clay tiles, from ground level this looks in slightly below average condition considering the roof's age type and style. This is even bearing in mind that this is a hipped roof which does tend to have some movement and give in it.

There is a tile guard to the left side, indicating there may have been some problems, although we do appreciate there is a glass roof below and you really do not want any tiles falling off.

We feel there will be work needed in the next few years, particularly for example to the ridge tiles as this is a very exposed location.



Ridge tiles working their way loose



Rear right hand hip of roof where the building has settled



Tile guard on left side of roof

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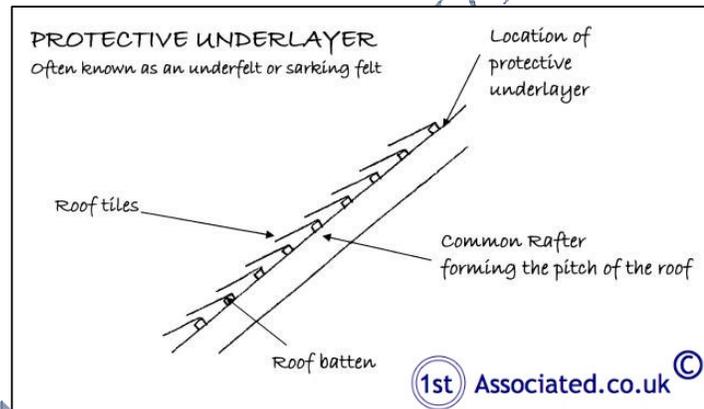


We are always in a Catch- 22 with regard to this type of roof as to what to recommend, as although it is letting in some rain water it is not letting in that much.

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

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

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



Protective Underlayer

When we inspected the loft space we found it has a building paper underlayer, which is in poor condition.

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



Building paper is deteriorating and we can see battens behind

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Low Level Roofs

Pitched Porch Roof

There is a pitched porch roof to the front of the property, clad with nibbed clay tiles which are in average condition.

ACTION REQUIRED: Periodic check of tiles.



Porch roof

Glass roof to corridor

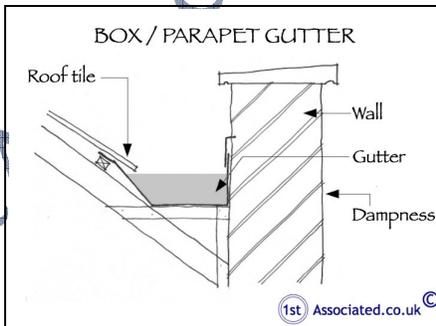
There is a glass roof, with box gutter, to the side of the property.



Glass roof



Underside of glass roof



Box gutter



Box gutter

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

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

Finally, we were only able to see approximately 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.

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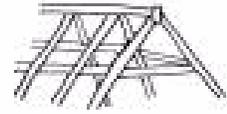
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ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

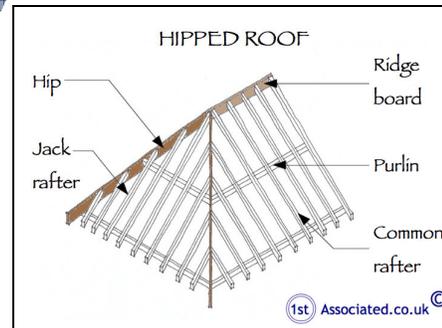
Main Roof

Roof Access

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located landing. There is no loft ladder but there is an electric light and some floor boarding.

Roof Structure

This type of roof structure has what is known as a hipped roof. This is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects; however it is in line with what we typically see.



Hipped roof

Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

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



General view of roof

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Our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof and the mass of insulation and stored items. What we could see was generally found to be in average condition for its age, type and style. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.



Close up purlin

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

Ventilation

Ventilation is currently through the deterioration of the building paper.

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 we could not see it due to the mass of insulation.

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

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

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GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES AND HOPPER HEADS

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

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

Gutters and Downpipes

The property has a mixture of painted cast iron and plastic gutters and downpipes which are in average to below average condition for their age, type and style. We are in a very difficult situation with regards to the condition of the gutters, downpipes and hopper heads as we can see at low level that some bandaging has been painted over and fortunately (or unfortunately) the painting is so good that we feel it would be disguised at high level.

We do appreciate the amount of work that has been taken in redecoration, but we would have appreciated it more if we could have seen that all the cast iron needing repair had been repaired properly or replaced, particularly as we would always recommending keep with cast iron rather than plastic as it lasts far longer, although cast iron of this age will need maintenance.



Painted cast iron and plastic gutters and downpipes



Painted hopper head from box gutter on left side

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Gutter needs cleaning



Bandaged cast iron downpipe

These have been some problems painted over, which we can see to the front right hand side and there may be other problems that have been painted over at high level.

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

We would always recommend you stand outside the property next time it rains heavily and see how well the drains cope with the rainwater particularly looking at the guttering and the joints.

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

Soil and Vent Pipe

The property has soil and vent pipes to the left side of the property which are cast iron with some plastic sections.

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.

The walls are constructed of brickwork, with painted render and decorative timber boarding to the front at high level.

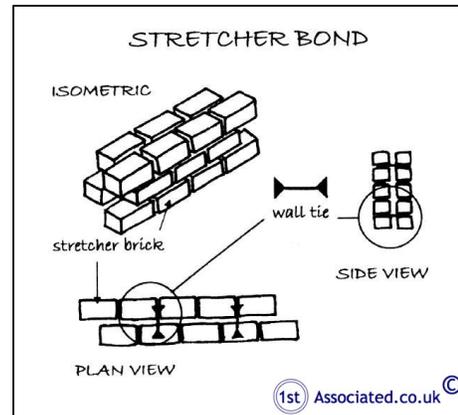


Brickwork, decorative render and timber boarding

Brickwork

The property is built in a Stretcher bond brickwork.

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



Stretcher Bond brickwork

Movement

In this case we noted stepped cracking to the rear. We believe there may be movement to the property, we have also noted cracking to the rear pathway.

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Cracking



Stepped crack to rear



Crack to rear

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend the cracking is monitored. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Cavity Walls

Older style cavity walls like these were first used in Victorian times. It originates from solid walls not always being waterproof against driving rain and not providing a good degree of thermal insulation. The design of cavity walls makes them relatively unstable and they depend upon the wall ties.

Cavity wall insulation

We are also aware that if cavity wall insulation is added on an older style cavity wall such as this it may accelerate the deterioration of the wall ties.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would like information with regard to what inspection was carried out of the cavities (via endoscopes, any photos that have been taken) and for these to be forwarded on to us to comment further.



Cavity wall insulation has been added

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Wall Ties

Walls of cavity construction should incorporate ties to hold together the inner and outer leaves of masonry. We would typically see horizontal cracking where there are problems. In this case we have not noted any cracking however wall tie failure is a progressive problem. We would add as there is no access to the cavity it has not been inspected and we cannot comment on the presence or condition of wall ties. As such we cannot be hundred per cent certain with regard to this problem unless we open up the structure.

Render and Timber Panels

There is an area of painted render to the front of the property at high level, with decorative timber boarding in a box frame look.

We have not had a close inspection of this area but bear in mind our comments with regard to the gutters, downpipes and windows.

There is a similar area to the top of the garage.



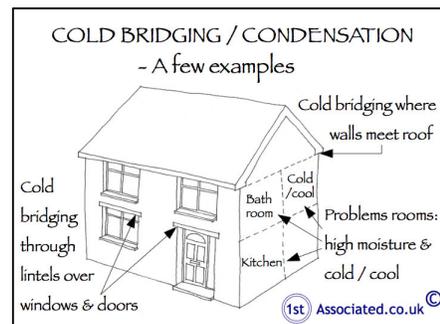
Render with timber panels

Concrete Lintels

These may cause cold bridging. Please see our article in the Appendices at the back of the report.

Cold Bridging Defined

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



Cold bridging / thermal bridging

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

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

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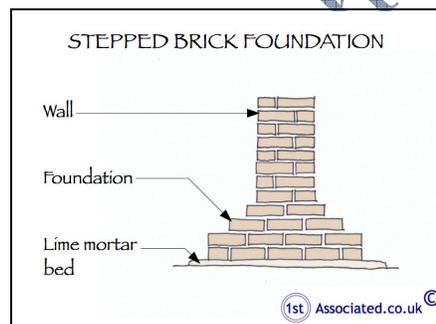
FOUNDATIONS



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

Foundations

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



Stepped brick foundation

Building Insurance Policy

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

It is your responsibility to check out prior to commitment to purchase that insurance is available on the property on the basis of the things we have reported in the survey. Much as we would like to we are unable to keep up with the changing insurance market and give you advice with regard to this.

Cracks

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

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

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

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

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

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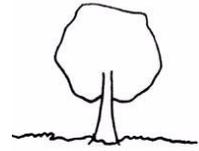
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TREES



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

There are trees to the front and rear within what insurance companies would term as influencing distance but you do need to speak to your insurance company as they may have a different interpretation for insurance reasons.

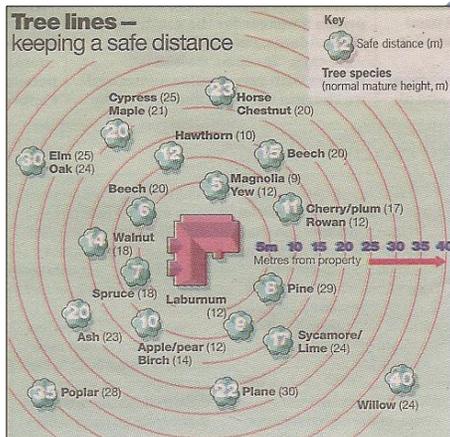


ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

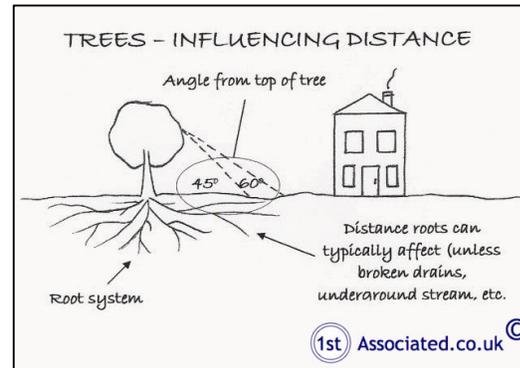
Large tree to left near to garage

We would recommend an arboriculturalist (not a tree surgeon) is asked to view the property and give a ten year plan for maintenance. This should help with any insurance premiums that you may be charged.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Influencing Distance Defined



Influencing distance of trees to a property

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

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DAMP PROOF COURSE



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

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case we can see a DPC.



DPC

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

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

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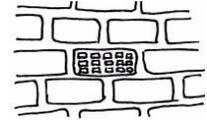
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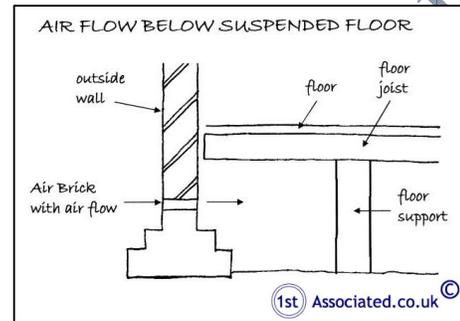


AIRBRICKS

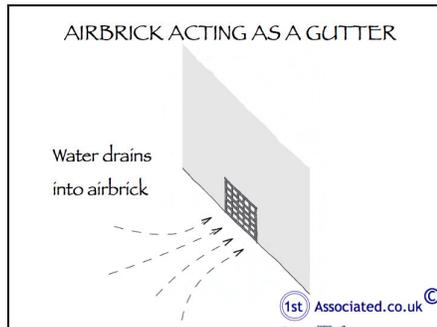


In properties with suspended floors you need to have an airflow beneath to stop deterioration. The air is allowed to pass under the property by the use of airbricks. Generally the rule of thumb is that airbricks are spaced every metre and a half approximately, but this depends upon the specific circumstances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

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



Suspended timber floor



Air brick acting as a gutter

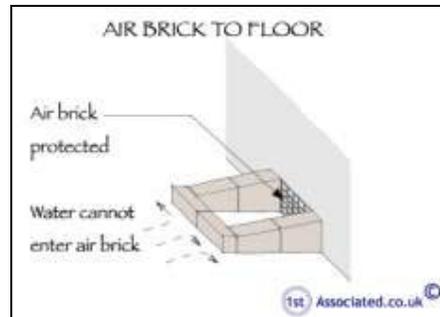


Air brick to front acting as a gutter

ACTION REQUIRED:

Protect air bricks. Ensure the airbricks are clear. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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 walls/floor, unless we have specifically stated so in this section.



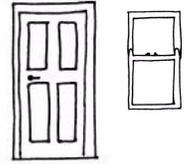
Protected air brick

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FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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

Fascias and Soffits

The fascias and soffits are timber. In this era of property they were often asbestos and we cannot be certain in this instance. They are painted and we would comment they are in average condition for their age, type and style.



Fascias and soffits

ACTION REQUIRED: Ask the existing owner. We assume they will have painted them many times, whether they are asbestos or not.

If there is any suggestion whatsoever that they may be asbestos then you need to have an asbestos test carried out. We would always recommend removal of asbestos as it can affect the value of the property.

Please note we are not asbestos specialists.

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Windows and Doors

The property has single glazed metal windows, with draught seals.



Single glazed metal window



Draught excluder

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

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

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EXTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

The property has been painted by the owner, who is a professional painter and decorator, however he has painted over potential problems, i.e. cast iron gutters and timber windows which may have wet rot underneath.

These may be isolated areas on the right hand side but you will need a very detailed high level inspection to check and confirm this and during our question and answer session the owner was not forthcoming with the information, it was only when we asked them directly, although having said that they then openly spoke about the problems we have identified.

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

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

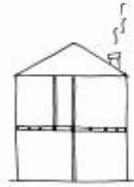
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INTERNAL



CEILING, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

Ceilings

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be plasterboard from what we could see, although we would have expected there to have been lath and plaster originally in this age of property.



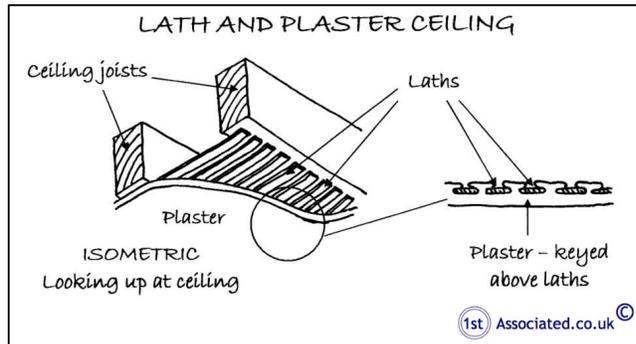
Plasterboard to ceiling

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.

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.



Lath and plaster ceiling

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Internal Walls and Partitions

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



Minor hairline cracking over door

Perimeter Walls

Originally these would have been constructed with a wet plaster, possibly a lime plaster. They are very smooth so we now anticipate they have been skim coated with gypsum plaster.

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

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

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

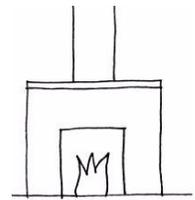
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CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

The chimney breasts are located to the left hand side (all directions given as you face the front of the property), with a feature fireplace to the right side. There was a large chimney in the garage which we assume relates to a boiler.



Fireplace in lounge



Fireplace in dining room

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

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

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

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

Please also see the Chimney Stacks, Flues Section of this report.

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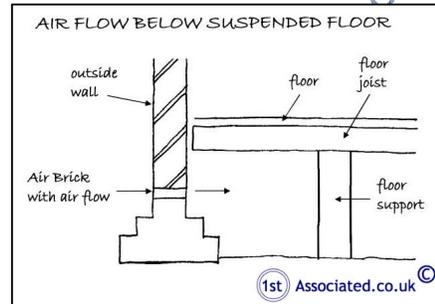
FLOORS



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

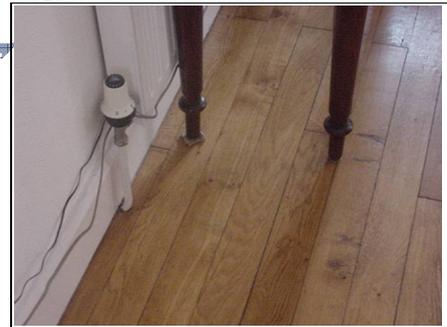
Ground Floor

The ground floors of the property are suspended timber floors which require air movement underneath to minimise wet rot, dry rot and woodworm.



Suspended timber floor

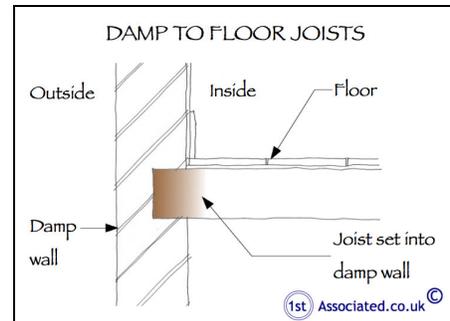
Our investigation has been restricted due to us not opening up the floor or lifted the exposed floorboards/fitted carpets/floor coverings. Please see our comments about air bricks acting as gutters.



Uneven floor

First Floor

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



Embedded timbers

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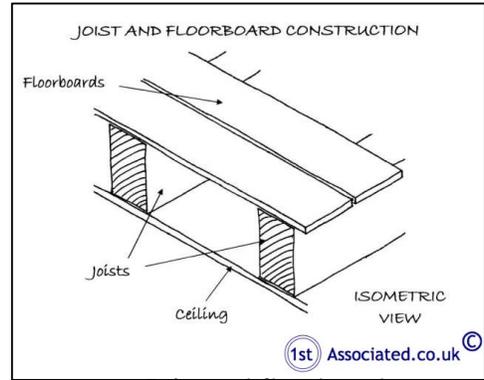
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Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



Joist and floorboards

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

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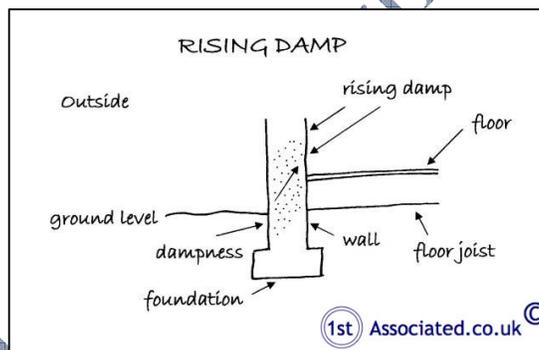


DAMPNESS

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

Rising Damp

Rising damp depends upon various components including the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation of the material, amongst other things. Rising damp can come from the ground, drawn by capillary action, to varying degrees of intensity and height into the materials above. Much evidence points towards there being true rising damp in only very rare cases.



Rising damp

A visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we have found no significant rising damp, which we were slightly surprised about as we thought we would find some, particularly to the rear.



Testing for rising damp

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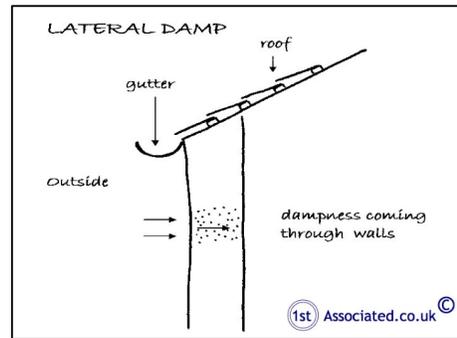
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Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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



Lateral dampness

We used a resistance meter on the external walls. Again, we have not found significant dampness and again we thought we would find some around the windows, although we did find slightly higher readings in this area.



Testing for lateral dampness

Condensation

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

At the time of the inspection there were no signs of condensation.

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

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Extract fans in kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas

A way of helping to reduce condensation is to have good large extract fans with humidity controlled thermostats within the kitchens and bathrooms and also in any areas where you intend to dry clothes which are moisture generating areas.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend large humidity controlled extract fans be added to kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas.

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

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INTERNAL JOINERY



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

Doors

The doors are painted panel doors.

Staircase

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

Kitchen

We found the kitchen in average to above average condition.

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

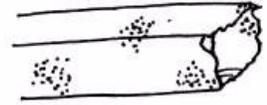
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TIMBER DEFECTS



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

Dry Rot

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

We have not visually seen any significant dry rot during the course of our inspection. We would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had a limited view of the roof.

Wet Rot

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

We have seen signs of wet rot to the windows and we think there may be some under the floor.

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

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

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Woodworm



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

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the roof we found no obvious visual signs of significant woodworm activity or indeed past signs of significant woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage. In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection is usually restricted by insulation covering some of the timbers and general stored items in the roof, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings.

ACTION REQUIRED: If you wish to be 100 per cent certain that there is no woodworm the only way would be to check the property when is emptied of fixtures and fittings etc.

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

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

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INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

Internal decorations are in above average condition. You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste.

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

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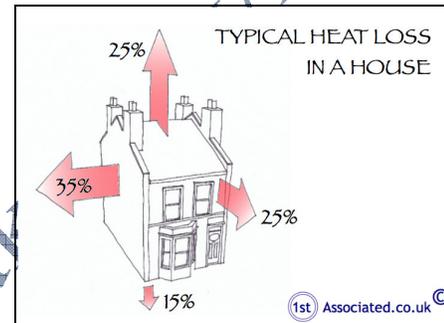
THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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

Roofs

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 300mm. In this instance there is at least 300mm.



Typical heat loss

Walls

The property has a stretcher bond construction. In this age of property they were often built without insulation but have been advised that insulation has been added at a later date.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Adviser to check and confirm if there is insulation within the walls and advise us by return before the legal completion of the purchase to comment further, as often where insulation has been added at a later date it can cause damage to the wall ties.

Windows

The windows are single glazed and therefore will have poor thermal properties.

Services

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

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Summary

Assuming the above is correct, this property is average to above average compared with what we typically see, with a risk of problems in the cavity wall unless proper investigation has been carried out.

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

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

or alternatively www.cat.org.uk (Centre for Alternative Technology)

*or Sustainable Energy Without the Hot Air by David J C MacKay
HTTP//www.withouthotair.com/Videos.html to download for free or buy a paper copy as we did.*

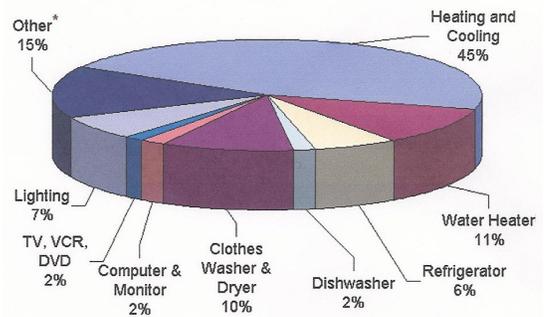
It is worth watching the video How Many Light Bulbs? by David J C MacKay – can be viewed on YouTube

HIPs

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

Finally, we would comment that energy we feel will become a major consideration in years to come, particularly with the greater focus in modern buildings on energy efficiency.

What does my energy bill pay for?



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

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OTHER MATTERS



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

Security

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, we believe these to be battery operated. The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply.

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



Smoke alarm

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

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £250 to £750; please obtain quotes.

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.

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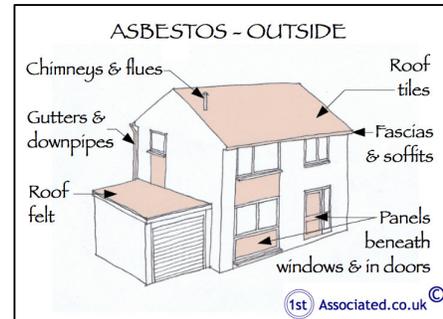
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We would refer you to our comments with regard to building insurance throughout this report.

Asbestos

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. In this case we have noted a small amount of asbestos to the rear of the garage where there is an old boiler flue and this does highlight how asbestos was used very commonly. It may also be to the fascias and soffits and ductwork (please see adjoining sketch).



Asbestos externally

In years gone by asbestos was commonly used as wood and can be found in all sorts of places. Asbestos was used post war until it was banned only in the UK in the last ten years or so. It is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time where products were imported from countries where it is not banned.



Asbestos flue on garage

We are Building Surveyors and not Asbestos Surveyors and as such the only way to be a hundred per cent certain with regards to Asbestos in a property is to have an Asbestos report carried out.

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

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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.

ELECTRICITY



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

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

Fuse Boards

The electric fuses and consumer units were located under the stairs and in the garage. The fuse boards looked dated and better are now available.

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Fuse board under the stairs



Fuse board in garage

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.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ideally replace with a modern fuseboard. As the property is changing occupancy an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test and report should be carried out by a NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.



Earth Test

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

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

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £500 to £1,000 for a new fuseboard and there may be some upgraded needed of the electrics. Please obtain quotes.

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More sockets required

As we often find with this era of property, more sockets are generally required.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add more sockets.

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.

The property has mains gas. The consumer unit is located in the garage.

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



Gas meter

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

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PLUMBING AND HEATING



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

Water Supply

The controlling stopcock is located under the sink in the kitchen. 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.



Stopcock

Water Pressure

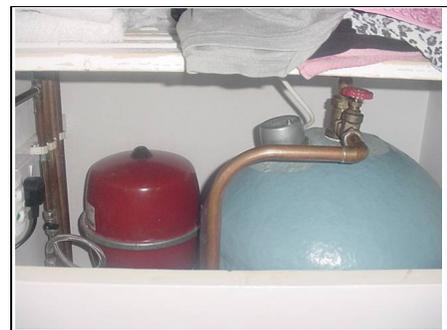
When the taps were run to carry out the drainage test we checked the pressure literally by putting a finger over the tap and this seemed average. The Water Board have to guarantee a certain pressure of water to ensure that things like boilers, particularly the instantaneous ones have a constant supply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

Cold Water Cistern

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

Hot Water Cylinder

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



Hot water cylinder

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Plumbing

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

Heating

The wall mounted Potterton Supreme 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 owner / occupier at our request turned on the heating for approximately ten minutes. We checked the radiators and these were warm.

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

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

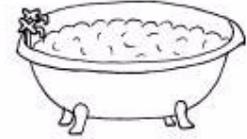
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BATHROOM



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

Bathroom

The property has a four piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, shower, wash hand basin and WC, which looks in average condition, subject to some day-to-day wear and tear, as one would expect.



Shower

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 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.

Manholes Defined

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

Inspection Chamber / Manhole One, located to the front

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

From what we could see it is concrete built. It is rather unusual to have a concrete manhole as they would have been originally built in brick.



Manhole to front

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Inspection Chamber / Manhole Two, located to the rear

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

Again from what we could see it is concrete and we were slightly concerned as it looked newer than the property as a whole with regard to the brickwork and concrete.



ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal adviser to specifically ask the existing owners if there have been any problems in relation to the drains, or any work in relation to the drains.

Manhole to rear

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

Drains are normally shared in a property of this age as this was common practice in this era of 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.

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Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

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

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

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

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OUTSIDE AREAS

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

GARAGES/OUTBUILDINGS/ PARKING



There is off road parking to the front of the property and a good sized detached garage. The garage has a brick chimney to the rear. Internally there is a old coal room to the rear.



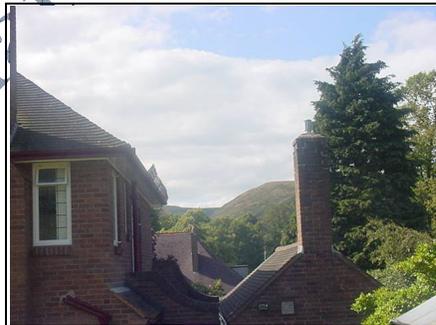
Driveway



Detached garage



Chimney on garage



Rear view of garage and chimney



Soffit

We cannot imagine how difficult it will be coming out of this garage on an icy or snowy day as the driveway is so steep.

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Asbestos

There is an old asbestos flue to the rear of the garage where an old boiler once was. There is possibly asbestos to the back of the door in what was the boiler room, but we were not certain as it was hard visually to confirm.



Asbestos flue

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Asbestos Section of the report.

Please note we are not asbestos surveyors.

Internal of garage

The walls have wall plates.



Garage roof



Wall plates



Old coal room to back of garage

Wall Plates Defined

Wall plates are the horizontal members normally timber, although they sometimes can be metal RSJ's, fixed to the top of the wall within the roof space. They hold the common rafters from the roof in place but can be susceptible to dampness.

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EXTERNAL AREAS

Front Garden

There is a large front garden, sloping down towards the road.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary about the lack of weep holes to the front retaining wall.



Front Garden

Rear Garden

There is a large, well established garden to the rear, with a patio area and vegetables patches.



Rear garden



Patio area



Vegetable patch

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There are various sheds, including a polycarbonate built greenhouse.



Greenhouse

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

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

Neighbours

Left Hand Neighbours

We were advised that this neighbour had Alzheimer's so we did not knock on the door.

Right Hand Neighbours

This was very friendly and talkative neighbour, who advised that they had been in the property since the late 1940's and have photos of before this property was built.

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POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

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

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

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

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

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

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

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

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

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

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

For and on Behalf of
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Independent Chartered Surveyors
XXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX

This Report is dated: XXXXXXXXXXXX

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REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses
Published by Estates Gazette Limited

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

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

House Builders Bible
By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

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LIMITATIONS

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

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

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

ENGLISH LAW

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

SOLE USE

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

APPROVALS/GUARANTEES

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

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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 mild summer's day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

In recent times our weather seems to be moving towards the extremities from its usual relatively mid range. Extremes of weather can affect the property.

NOT LOCAL

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

OCCUPIED PROPERTY

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

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INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been limited as:

- 1) Our view of the roof was limited due to the mass of insulation.
- 2) We did not open up the ground floor or the first floor as we could not see a way to do it without causing damage.
- 3) We didn't have the benefit of meeting you at the property to talk about your specific requirements.



Mass of insulation

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.

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APPENDICES

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

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THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

Work You Cannot do Yourself

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

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INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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

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

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www.hometrack.co.uk

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

www.motleyfool.co.uk

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

www.rightmove.co.uk

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

www.zoopla.co.uk

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

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French Drain

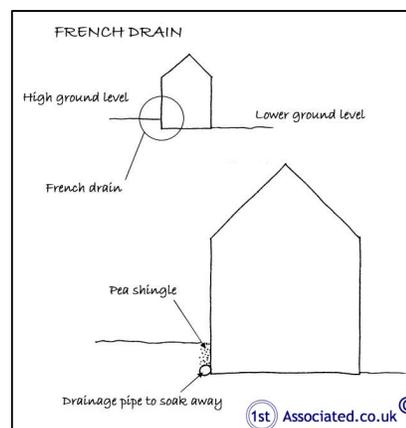
Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

We are finding where we are asked to look at damp walls and damp floors or damp problems in general that commonly it is because the external ground level is higher than the internal ground level, or airbricks have been blocked, or simply paving slabs, decking or briquettes have been used to form a patio area. This then discharges any rainwater against the building. Quite often the solution is to add a French drain.

Whilst French drains are quite simple and are basically nothing more than trenches filled with gravel, although there is a bit more to them, as we will explain, they are almost a D.I.Y. job for most people and they are relatively easy to install and are low cost. However, you do need some care and attention, otherwise you can install what we have heard referred to, as the French pond.

What use is a French drain?

A French drain is a trench, the width of approximately six inches or 300 millimetres wide, or the width of your spade, and is approximately twice the depth, i.e. 12 inches or 300 millimetres. In most cases this will suffice, however, where there is a great deal of ground water you may wish to make the trench wider and deeper.



The French drain acts as an area where water soaks away quickly. We often recommend them close to building, but not next to the building, as this helps reduce the ground level and/or take any water that is directed at that area away. For example, where a patio has been put in place which aims any rainwater at part of the wall. As mentioned, whilst a French drain is a D.I.Y. job, it does need some understanding of how it works.

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French drains must be on a slope

The piping that goes at the base of a French drain should be perforated or, as we did years ago for land drains, there should be gaps between each pipe. It should be set onto a bed of firm ground and the pipes should be on a fall to the drain. Whilst you should be able to ensure there is enough fall by sight, we also like the idea of rolling a marble from one end to the other.

You will then need to put the pipes down, fill the trench with half an inch, to an inch, of good sized gravel. You can leave it at that, or in addition you can cover with sand and then turf over. This is how a basic French drain is carried out.

The French drain system that we would recommend

This would be as described, although we would add to the base an inch or two of gravel on to which the perforated drainage pipe will rest. It will then wrap around that drainage pipe filter fabric. This is to stop the holes in the perforated pipe from blocking up. By the way, the drainage pipe should be four to six inches/100 millimetres to 250 millimetres. We would then fill with gravel. In addition to this, we would add a silt trap and this is added in the run of the pipe and is very similar to a road gully (not that's of much use if you don't understand how a road gully works). The silt trap is a rectangular box with a pipe opening at each end. The drained water passes onto this and any particles sink to the bottom of the box and then the water travels on to the other side of the box, enabling you to feed into a drain.

These are usually made of glass reinforced polyester and have been available in this form since the mid-1980's. They are normally reinforced with a steel frame for additional strength and re-bedded in concrete.

The French pond!

French drains will, over time, clog up, which is why we recommend using a filter fabric. However, even with this they will eventually clog up. Unfortunately, there is no dyno-rod equivalent, as it is normally fine sand, organic matter or clay that has clogged up the French drain. So, it is a case of digging it up and cleaning the pipework (or it may be quicker to just replace it), adding a filter fabric and re-filling the gravel.

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Condensation and Cold Bridging in Post War 1950s properties

Cold Bridging explained

What is cold bridging?

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



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

Cold Bridging

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

Drying clothes indoors or not adequately ventilating a room

It can occur from things such as having a shower or a bath, cooking or clothes washing, particularly if you are drying washing on the radiators. It could, in commercial properties, be a large gathering of people breathing (this can cause a lot of humidity) in a building that has stood cold and empty for some time such as a church, village hall, sports centre or a crèche. These human atmospheres create a climate, which can result in condensation on the cold elements of the structure and fabric if the room is not ventilated properly.



Washing drying on radiators creates moisture

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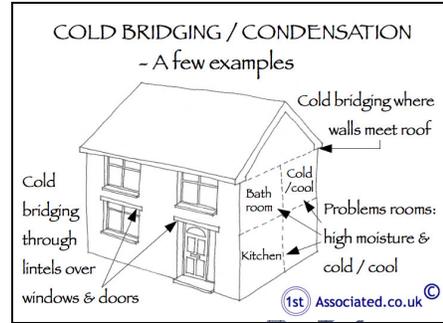
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Certain types of buildings are more susceptible to Condensation and Cold Bridging

Here is our sketch on Cold Bridging

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



Cold bridging/condensation

Cold Bridging isn't just about condensation on mirrors

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

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



Bay windows with large areas of glazing

When is Cold Bridging Likely?

In our experience we have seen cold bridging occurring in:

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



Post War 1950s properties with bay windows

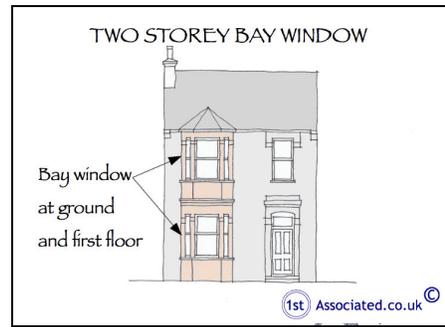
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For example: Lounges and main bedrooms tend to be warmer than guest or spare bedrooms most of the time. Also sometimes rooms can warm up due to large areas of glass and thermal heat gain, which is very true in some conservatories also.

3) Humidity internally is high

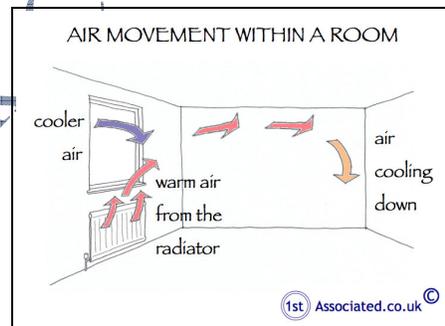
4) Where it is colder but by no means very cold outside



Bay windows

How to solve Cold Bridging

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



Air movement within a room

Lifestyle is a factor in Cold Bridging?

This is often a contentious and difficult question, particularly where the occupier is a tenant and there is a disagreement between the landlord and the occupier as to why there is mould in the property. In our experience the major factor is the size of the family living in a property.



Mould caused by cold bridging

Winter months and cold bridging

This is especially the case with large families with young children and where in turn there is a lot of washing of clothes being done. This is particularly the case in the winter months, with the wet washed clothes being dried



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on radiators. Also general hygiene washing and not to mention cooking to feed everyone all lead toward a more humid atmosphere.

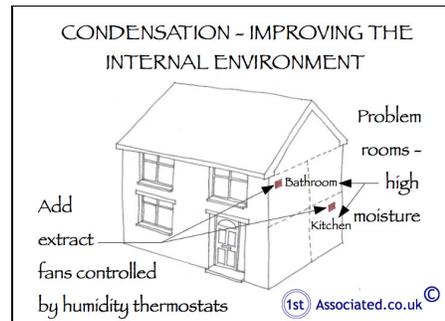
This is generally known as the lifestyle of occupants and can be a major factor particularly where there are legal cases as to the problems within a property.

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

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

Design of the Building

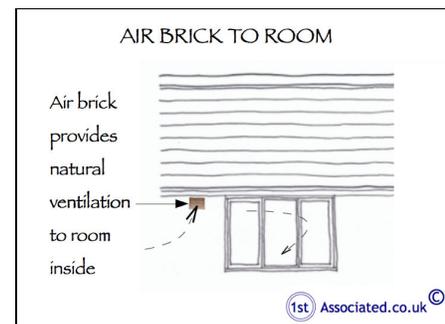
Sometimes it really is down to the original design of the property. Where there are cold elements in it, such as a concrete structural frame or concrete lintels, when these are in contact with moist air condensation occurs. Sometimes this is impossible to stop but often it is possible to reduce it by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



Condensation

Things to remember about an air brick

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



Air brick may not ventilate room enough

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

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

Lifestyle can affect your issues with condensation

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



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

Metal windows

Metal windows were very popular during the War Years / Post War era and were more commonly known by the name of one of the big manufacturers, Crittal windows.

Anyone who has lived in properties with these windows will understand that they have to be regularly maintained otherwise they rust and do not fit properly and in addition to this the glass cracks. One of the other main problems that they all have is cold bridging where warm air from the inside hits the cold air outside via the window and pools of water are often found on window sills.

We remember one episode of rising damp where there was actually ice on the inside of the windows which was caused by condensation.



Metal Crittal windows



Metal Crittal can suffer from cold bridging

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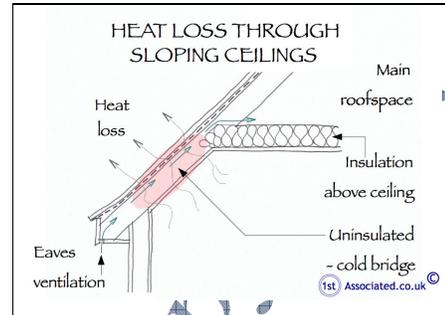


Room partly in the roof

When rooms are formed partly in the roof it allows an area where the cold can get through and often black mould occurs bringing with it dust particles etc.



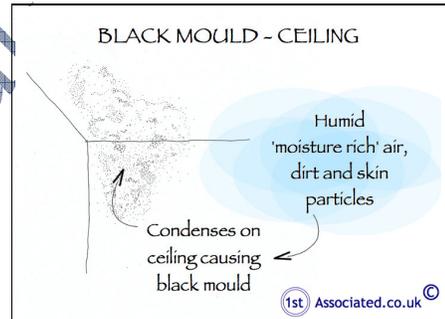
Area of heat loss through a sloping ceiling



Heat is lost where ceilings are sloping and partly in the roof



Ceiling covered in black mould



Black mould on ceiling

Cold bridging what can we do?

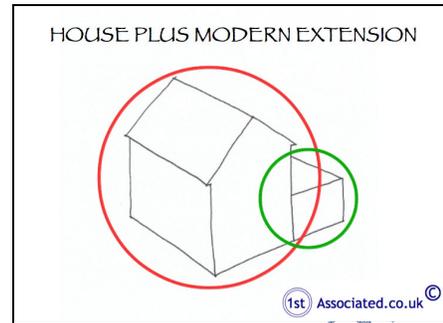
There are limited things you can do with regards to cold bridging as it is about the original design of the property and needs to be considered as a characteristic. However, we do always recommend large humidity controlled extract fans are added into the bathrooms, kitchens and any areas that you intend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

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we also recommend that there is background heat in most rooms as this will stop cold air being drawn into these rooms. If you have an extension carried out then you need to make sure the designer is aware of cold bridging as unfortunately by adding a modern, highly insulated extension it can create further cold bridging.



Original house with modern extension

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