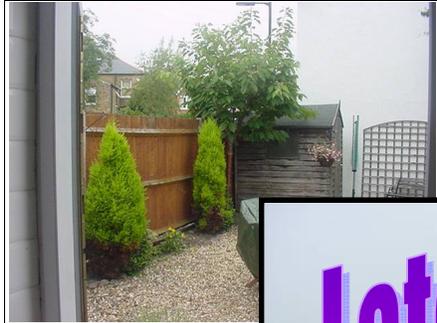


# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

Southwark,  
SE22



FOR

**Mr W**

Prepared by:

**INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS**

Marketing by:

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0800 298 5424

## **CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION  
REPORT FORMAT  
SYNOPSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

### **EXTERNAL**

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

### **INTERNAL**

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

### **SERVICES**

ELECTRICITY  
GAS  
PLUMBING AND HEATING  
BATHROOMS  
MAIN DRAINS

### **OUTSIDE AREAS**

PARKING  
EXTERNAL AREAS

POINTS FOR LEGAL ADVISOR

### **APPENDICES**

LIMITATIONS  
ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS  
GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# **REPORT FORMAT**

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

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

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

## **TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED**

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

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



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

## **ORIENTATION**

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

## **ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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

## **SYNOPSIS**

### **SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION**

A two storey corner property that sits in a residential area. There have been alterations and improvements to the property over the years.

There are small gardens to the front, side and rear which is often the case with a corner plot. Parking is on the roadside on a first come, first served basis.

We believed that the property was built in the late Victorian era 1870's - 1900'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:*

1863	The Opening of London Underground
1878	Electric Street Lights are installed in London
1896	First modern Olympic Games (Athens)
1899-1902	Boer War between Britain and Boers in Southern Africa
1901	Queen Victoria Died
1903	First flight by Wright Brothers
1914-1918	World War I

# EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view



Gable view



Rear view



Rear garden

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# **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

## **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Entrance hall
- 2) Through lounge
- 3) Kitchen
- 4) Dining area to the rear

## **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Front bedroom
- 2) Middle bedroom
- 3) Central bathroom
- 4) Rear bedroom
- 5) Landing with access to the roof space

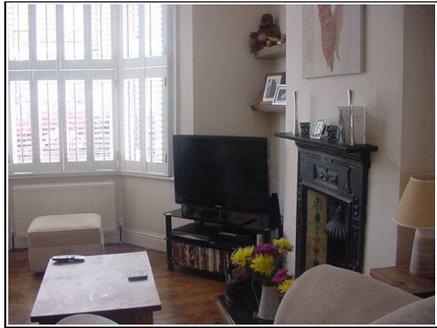
## **Outside Areas**

Roadside parking is on a first come first served basis. At the time of the survey there was plenty of parking available.

# INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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

## Ground Floor



Front of through lounge



Rear of through lounge



Kitchen



Dining area in kitchen

**First Floor**



Master bedroom



Middle bedroom used as a study



Rear bedroom



Bathroom



Landing area

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## SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

### External

Chimneys:	Two brick chimneys.
Main Roof:	Pitched roof clad with man made slates. Very limited view of rear pitched roof.
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Flemish Bond brickwork repointed in proud pointed cement (assumed)
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Plastic double glazed windows

### Internal

Ceilings:	Plasterboard where seen, there may be some Lath and plaster remaining (assumed)
Walls:	Mixture of predominantly solid with some studwork (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Suspended timber floor (assumed)
First Floor:	Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)

### Services

We are advised that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (assumed). The boiler is a Vaillant and is located in the kitchen. The electrics are 1990's and are located near the front door.

The above terms are explained in full in the main body of the Report.  
We have used the term 'assumed' as we have not opened up the structure.



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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

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

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

### **The Good**

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

- 1) The property is well presented particularly the interior decoration albeit that this is superficial.
- 2) Older properties typically have more space than newer properties, both in the actual size of the rooms and the height of the rooms.
- 3) The property also has some of the original features left, which add to the overall character of the property.

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

## The Bad

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

### 1) Roof truss configuration not as we would expect

The timbers in the roof particularly the purlins are not the size we would expect. We rarely come across such small supporting timbers in a Victorian property. We would recommend support although you did mention that you are looking at a loft conversion.



Thinner than expected purlins  
(horizontal timbers)

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you decide not to carry out your loft conversion then we would recommend additional strengthening work is carried out in the roof.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £500 - £1,000 adding additional struts; quotations required.

Please see the Roof Structure Section of this Report.

Purlin defined

Horizontal timbers which help give support to the common rafters which form the pitch of the roof.

### 2) Bowing to the property

We can see that the left hand side wall (all directions given as you face the front of the property) is bowing which is probably due to joist ends rotting. Many properties of this age have similar problems and have been tied back in place using tie bars. Some have had more recent invisible tying back to the structure; we can see neither in



Bowing wall

12

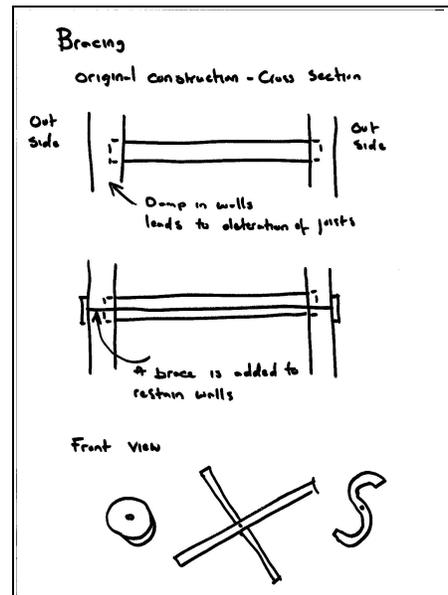
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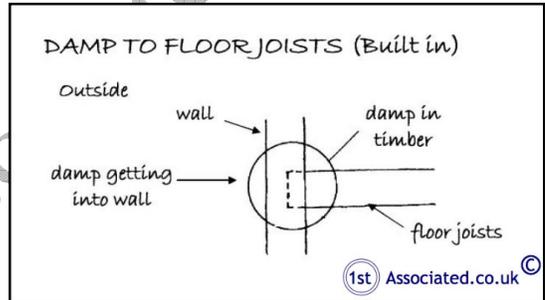
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this particular case. We can comment that the brickwork and the proud pointing doesn't look to have had any recent movement.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** As it is always better to be safe than sorry we would recommend opening up the first floor to check the joist ends against the wall and tie them back if necessary.



Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

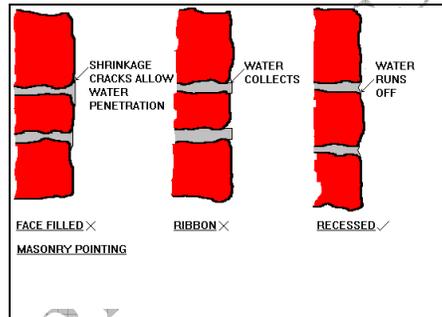
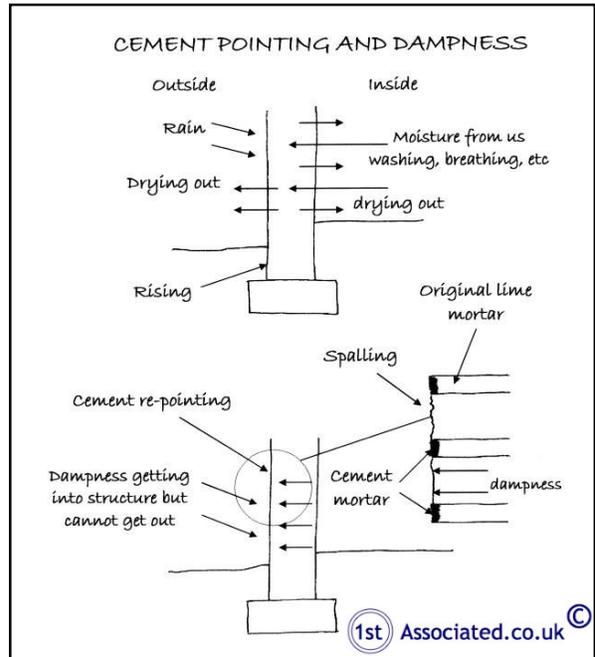
### 3) Repointed in proud cement mortar

Unfortunately the walls can no longer breathe as they should due to the mass of proud pointing cement.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally we would recommend that the cement pointing is removed over many years using a soft brush and repointed in an appropriate lime mortar.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds over many, many years; quotations required. We would add that it is almost as if the proud pointing has been carried out to take your eye away from the bowing of the wall.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.



Proud pointing

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#### 4) Rising damp found

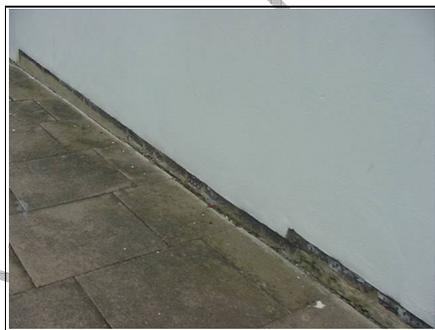
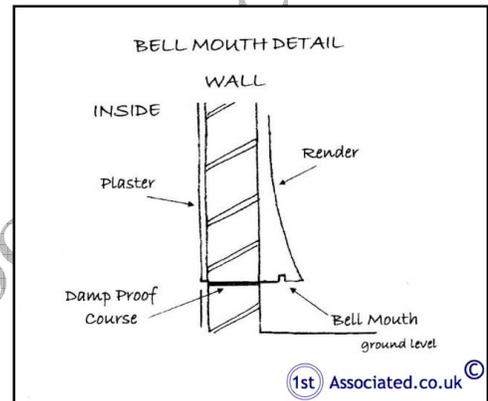
We found rising damp particularly to the reception room and it may well be in the kitchen as well, hidden by the kitchen cabinets.



Rising damp

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The detail to the render should have a bell mouth added to reduce the dampness. You also need to position yourself outside the property next time it rains heavily to see if the rainwater discharges against the property or away. If it discharges against it then you should speak to the Local Authority about altering the pavement.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £1,000 - £3,000; quotations required.



Base of rendered wall



Signs of water sitting at the base of the property

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

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## 5) Airbricks acting as gutters

The airbricks are acting as gutters whenever it rains and this means it is very damp under the floor which we feel contributes towards the cupping of the timber and the general soft feel of the timber. Unfortunately this makes it ideal for woodworm and wet rot and general deterioration.



Airbricks acting as gutters

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a section of the floor is lifted ideally before you proceed with the purchase to check the condition underneath and that there is no woodworm present or wet rot. We would be more than happy to comment on any photos taken.



Cupping of timber floor in kitchen

**ANTICIPATED COST:** To repair the woodworm or wet rot can range from a few hundred pounds to many thousands of pounds depending upon the extent of the problem; quotations required.

Please see the Airbricks Section of this Report.

## 6) Wall removed in front lounge without pier support

We can see due to a lack of pier support that the wall that has been removed has either not been removed to Building Regulations or was removed before Building Regulations generally came into force nationally in 1948; although having said that there were Building Acts in London for many years.



Wall that has been removed in front lounge without pier support

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would comment that it has stood the test of time. The area was decorated as new so it may well be hiding latent defects. If cracking does occur then a pier will need to be put in.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £1,000 - £2,000 if required, you will have to live in the property to establish this as it is not possible to confirm it from a one-off inspection; quotations to be obtained.

Please see the Ceilings and Walls 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.*

There are various items that fall into the high risk category which many people would be happy with. You do need to take a view as to whether you are happy to carry out further investigations or whether you wish to take on the risk of not carrying out further investigations. In our opinion we would not purchase the property without carrying out further investigations. Together we feel that the issues make the property higher risk than many purchases. With investigation this risk would be removed.

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## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

### **Electrics**

Whilst we have carried out a visual inspection of the electrics (this is commented upon in the Electrics Section of the report) we also need to advise you of the following:

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As the property is changing occupancy the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) recommend an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor carry out an inspection, test and report.

### **Maintenance**

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

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

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

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

### **Purchase Price**

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

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

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

## **Estimates of Costs**

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

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

## **SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION**



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

There is a high decorative standard to the property which could be hiding latent defects. You do need to carry out further investigations which we would be more than happy to re-attend and/or comment on photographs.

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

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

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# **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

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

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

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

## **ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?**

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

## **SOLICITOR/LLEGAL ADVISOR**

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

## **TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS**

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

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

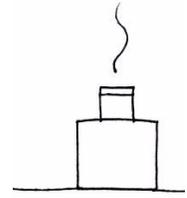
Our aim is for you to be completely happy with the service we provide, and we will try and help you in whatever way possible with your property purchase - just phone us.

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



## EXTERNAL

### CHIMNEY STACKS, PARAPET WALLS



#### Chimney Stacks

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

This property has two chimneys. The chimneys are located one to the front left hand side, and one to the rear (all directions given as you face the front of the property).

#### Chimney One - located to the front left hand side

This chimney is brick finished and rendered with four chimney pots and a large aerial (the wire can cut into chimneys like a cheese cutter into cheese). You do need to periodically inspect the chimneys. From what we could see the chimney looks in average condition. Unfortunately we were unable to see the top of the chimney known as the flaunchings, we therefore cannot comment upon them.



Front chimney

#### Chimney Two – located to the rear of the property

This chimney is brick finished with a rendered top and a lead flashing. We would prefer to see the lead flashing bedded in Plumbers Mate or a similar mastic. We do find that cement does become brittle over time and come out.



Rear chimney

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to periodically check the chimneys to ensure that the flashings have not come loose.

### Flaunchings Defined

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

### Flashings Defined

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

## **Parapet Walls**

*Parapet walls are usually walls that are above roof level and often sit on the boundary of the property.*

There is a front and rear parapet wall, both are rendered. We were pleased to see a coping stone to the front parapet wall and we would prefer to see one to the rear as we find that without them that water sooner or later gets into the property. Unfortunately we were not able to view the rear roof.



Parapet wall to right hand side



Rear parapet wall

Finally, we were only able to see approximately fifty percent of the parapet wall; therefore we have made our best assumptions based upon what we could see. A closer inspection may reveal more.

## **Party Wall**

Earlier we have used the term Party Wall in relation to the parapet walls and the chimneys, here is some general information on Party Walls.

Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

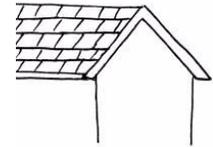
A structure that both parties enjoy the use of or benefit from. An example of this would be where both parties gain support from a wall or utilise a chimney or chimneys.

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

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

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

# ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

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

## Main Roof covering

The roof is pitched and clad in a man made slate. From what we could see the slates are lying level and true and look in reasonable condition considering their age. Sometimes we find with man made slates that they can be lifted very easily by the wind particularly at the perimeters and the ridges, so you should periodically check these areas.



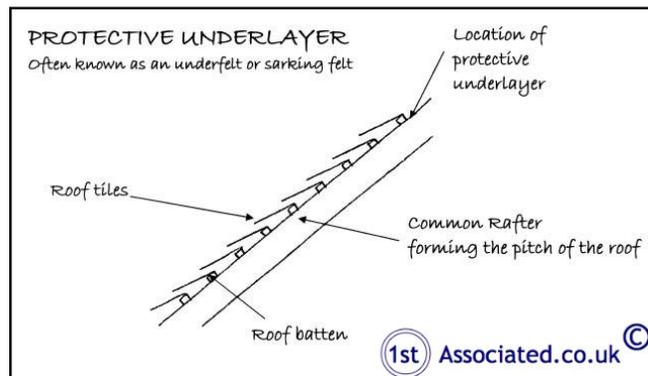
Main roof

We believe originally the roof would have had a natural slate finish.

We have had a very limited view of the roof, particularly the rear high level roof.

## Protective Underlayer

From the 1940s onwards felts were used underneath tiles/slates to stop wind damage and water penetration, which, in more recent years, have been replaced with plastic equivalents. These are commonly known as underfelts, although the name is no longer really appropriate, as felt is not the only material used.



When we inspected the loft space we found a Hessian base Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1940s. We generally found it to be in average condition, it's damaged in a few more places than we normally find.



Protective membrane

### **Bay window roof**

The flat roof has a slate finish with a lead flashing. From our limited view it looked to be in reasonable condition.



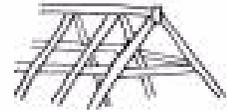
Bay window roof

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

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

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

# ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



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

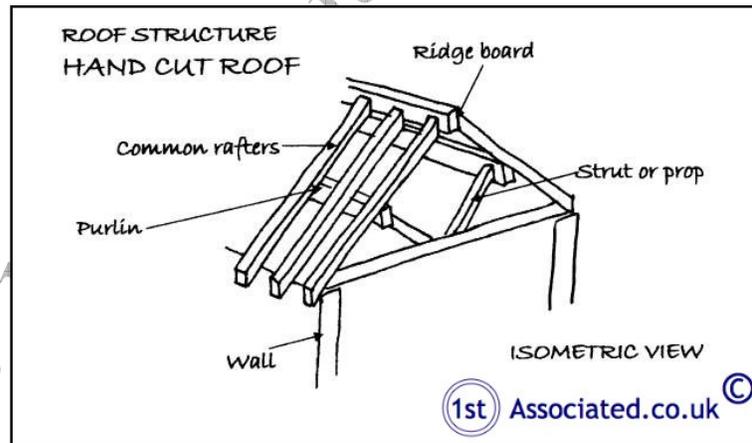
*The roof structure or framework must be built in a manner which is able to give adequate strength to carry its own weight together with that of the roof covering discussed in the previous section and any superimposed loads such as snow, wind, foot traffic etc.*

### Loft Access

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing. There is a loft ladder, electric light and partial floorboards. The loft perimeter has been viewed by torchlight, which has limited our viewing slightly.

### Roof structure

This type of roof structure has, what is known as, a cut timber roof, which is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site. It is in below average condition because the purlin timbers are smaller than we would normally expect.



Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm the suitability of the existing roof timbers.

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

Please also see our comments in the roof timbers section.

## Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

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



Thinner than expected purlins  
(horizontal timbers)

Where we could see, we found the supporting purlin timbers to be thinner than we would expect although they are supported with struts and it could be argued they have survived the test of time but do need to be checked from time to time. Our examination is usually limited by the general configuration of the roof, the insulation and stored items.

It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden. The only way to be 100 per cent certain is to have the roof cleared and checked.

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

## Fire Walls

The property has a brick firewall which is located to the right hand side (all directions given as you face the property).

### Fire Walls Defined

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

## **Ventilation**

We could see vents externally but we couldn't see them internally. There was a general lack of air movement in the roof on the day that we inspected.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that the air vents are checked and/or proper air vents are added.



External air vent

## **Insulation**

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

## **Electrical Cables**

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

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

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

# GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

## Gutters and Downpipes

From ground level the gutters and downpipes looked to be plastic and appeared in average condition. There are a few repairs which we feel that most people could live with.

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



Plastic gutters and downpipes

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

## Soil and Vent Pipe

We could see a plastic soil and vent pipe. Generally the waste pipes and soil stack appear to be satisfactory where a surface inspection is possible, although for the most part they run in ducts and cannot be inspected.



Soil and vent pipe

Finally, gutters and downpipes and soil and vent pipes have been inspected from ground level.

# WALLS



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

## Brickwork/Render

This majority of the walls are finished in brickwork with proud pointing (please see our comments in the Executive Summary) and there are some areas of painted render.

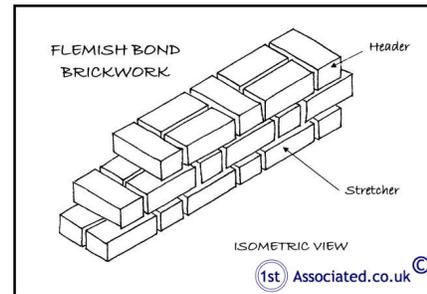
## Brickwork

The property is brick built in a London stock brick originally in a lime mortar in what's known as Flemish bond brickwork, which has been poorly repointed in a cement mortar in what we would term as proud pointing (please see the sketches and diagrams in the Executive Summary).



Proud pointing

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

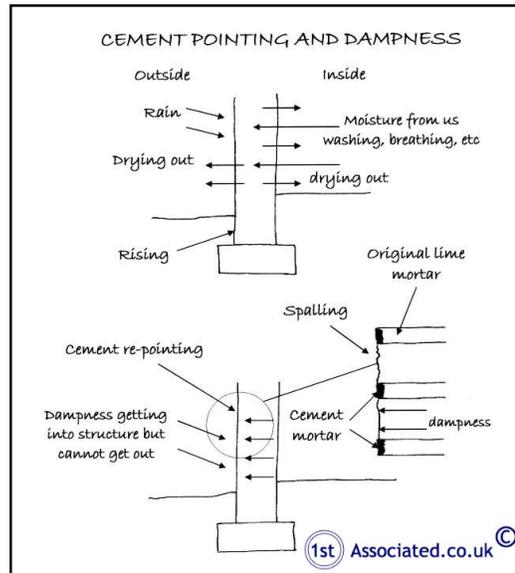


The solid external walls may be liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon their condition and their exposure to the weather. External faces should be kept in good condition.

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

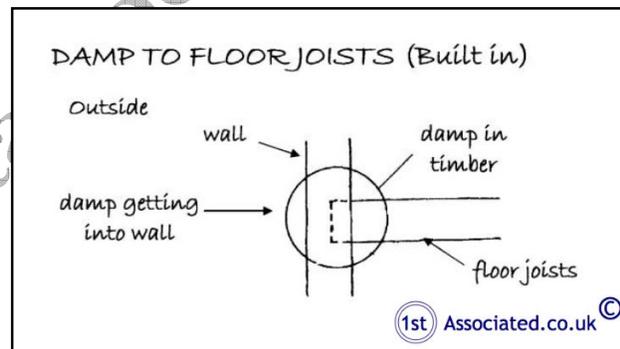
Generally Flemish Bond brickwork is liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon the condition of the brickwork and the exposure to the weather. In this case the cement pointing is stopping the property from breathing; we would recommend it is removed over time.

It is essential that external faces be kept in good condition.



### **Bowing**

We can see that the left hand side wall is bowing which is probably due to joist ends rotting. Many properties of this age have been tied back. Whilst from looking at the brickwork and pointing there doesn't look to be recent movement we would recommend that you open up the first floor to check the joist ends and tie back if needed.



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

### **Render**

The walls to this property are finished in a smooth faced painted render. We have carried out a tap test to the render at low level (literally hitting the render with the back of a hammer) to try to establish if there are any hollow areas. We have found some areas but this is typical for this age of property.

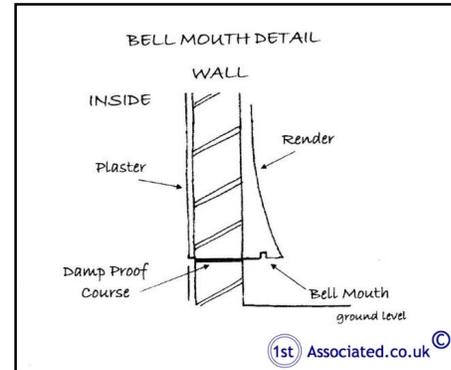
## Render detailing

A good indication of the quality of rendering, we have found over the years, is by the quality of detailing above the windows and to the base of the property. The detailing on this property has been carried out to a poor standard. Good detailing would have had drips to appropriate areas and a bell mouth to the base of the property.

In this case the render to the base just stops short of the ground and needs a bell mouth. Unfortunately this helps dampness getting into the structure.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Form a bell-mouth to the base of the render.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £1,000 - £3,000; quotations required



Side render that needs bell mouth

### Render Defined

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

### Bell-Mouths Defined

A bell-mouth is a curve at the base of a wall which throws the water away from the structure therefore preventing dampness.

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

Our comments have been based upon how the brickwork / painted render / plasterwork has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork / painted render / plasterwork 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 original property, we would expect to find a shallow stepped brick foundation possibly with a bedding of lime mortar to this area.

## **London Clay**

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

## **Building Insurance Policy**

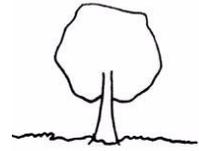
Given the bowing to the side of the property and the cupping to the timber, it is essential that you remain with the same building insurance policy.

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

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

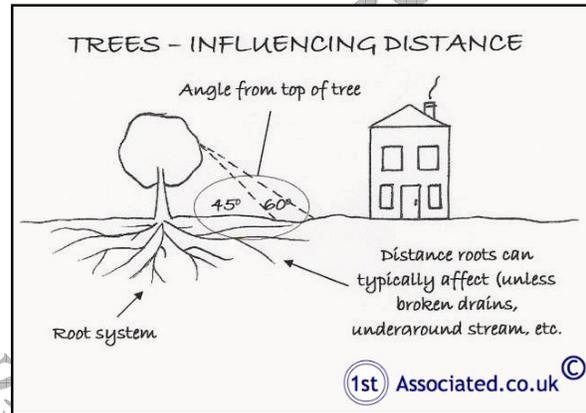
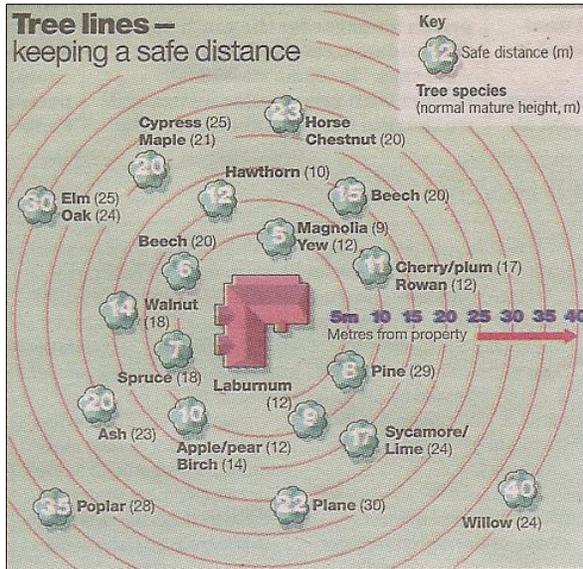
As no excavation has been carried out we cannot be 100 percent certain as to how the foundation has been constructed and we can only offer our best assumptions and an educated guess, which we have duly done.

# TREES



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

There are no trees within your garden that are within influencing distance of the main house.



## Influencing Distance Defined

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

# DAMP PROOF COURSE



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

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, the damp proof course wasn't visible due to the render to the side of the property, and to the brickwork it was difficult to see due to the proud pointing. 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.

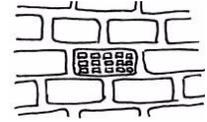


Difficult to see DPC due to render



Again, difficult to see due to the brickwork

# 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.*

Some airbricks are acting as gutters, this can cause dampness and rot to the floors, they need protecting.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend bricks are bedded around the airbricks to stop rainwater getting into them.

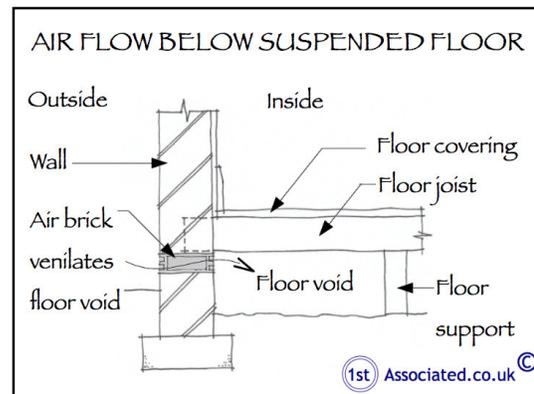


Airbricks too low

Without opening up the floor we cannot confirm its condition; we would be very surprised if the floor did not have some rot.

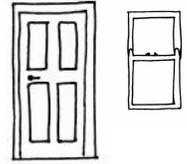
## Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

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



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

# FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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

## Fascias

The property has painted timber fascias. They are difficult to view as they are hidden by the guttering, what we could see we would term as being in average condition.

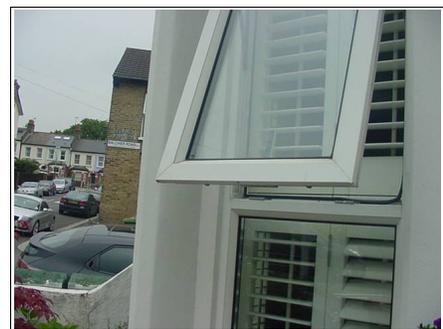


Fascias and soffits

## Windows and Doors

The property has plastic, double glazed windows, which generally look to be of an average quality for the year made. We did not see any trickle vents indicating the windows are pre 1990s. There are timber doors.

We would draw your attention to the fact that sealed double glazed units can fail, particularly as a result of poor workmanship during installation. Failure of the seal leads to condensation between the two panes of glass and simply replacing the affected units may not provide a satisfactory long-term solution. In this case they are in average condition.



Windows

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



Timber deterioration around rear doors

Trickle vents defined

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

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

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# **EXTERNAL DECORATIONS**



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

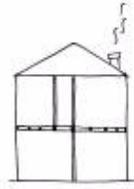
There is a fair bit of painted render to the property, both to the side and to the end. We would comment that the painted render acts as a protective coat to the property, when you redecorate in a few years time it will be fairly expensive, you should not underestimate the importance and cost of redecorating the render.

Also please see the Windows and Doors Section above where you can see that some redecoration is required to the frames.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

# INTERNAL



## CEILING, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

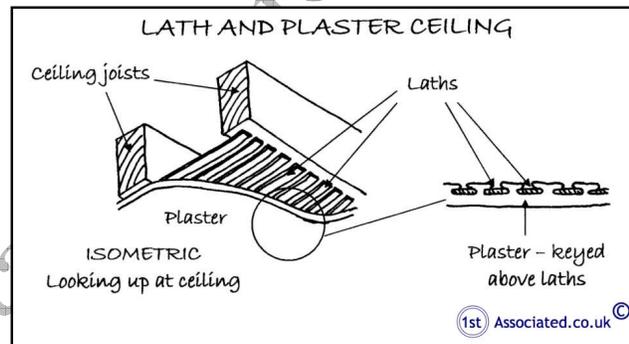
*In this section we look at the finish applied to the structural elements such as the plasterwork applied to the ceiling joists, walls or partitions, together with the construction of the internal walls and partitions.*

### Ceilings

As should be expected with a building of this age, the ceilings have been finished in a variety of ways, from the original lath and plaster to more modern plasterboard.

#### Lath and Plaster Defined

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



#### Plasterboard Defined

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

### Internal Walls and Partitions

Please see our comments within the Executive Summary about the internal walls being removed which should have had building control approval.

## **Perimeter Walls**

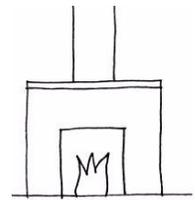
They have probably been skim coated with a gypsum plaster as they are relatively smooth. The original lime plaster may well remain behind them.

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 on the left hand side (all directions given as you face the front of the property).

The rear chimney breast has been removed as this would be visible from within the kitchen. In theory this should have had Building Regulations Approval although we generally find that they were often removed without approval. In this instance we were unable to see how it is supported which is not ideal however it has stood the test of time and there is no obvious visual deterioration to the ceiling area.



Area of kitchen where chimney would have once been

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

Finally, it is strongly recommended that flues be cleaned and checked for obstruction prior to use to minimise the risk of hazardous fumes entering the building.

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

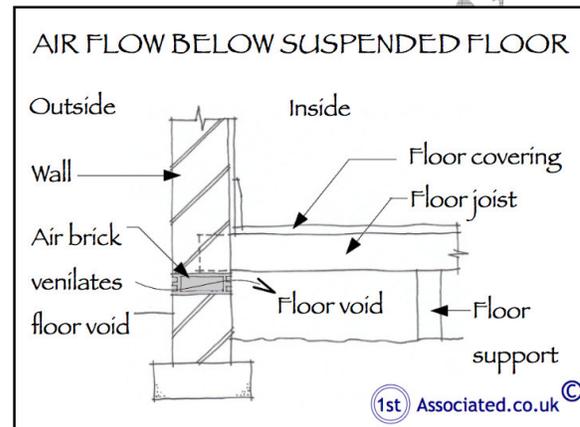
# FLOORS



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

## Ground Floor

Visible throughout much of the ground floor is the timber floor boarding. There is cupping within the kitchen area. The majority of this floor is likely to be a suspended timber floor. This type of floor needs air circulation under it to reduce deterioration from wet rot and dry rot; please see our comments in these sections.



We spoke to the owner of the property during our question and answer session about the cupping and he advised that he had left the door open when it rained heavily and after a period of time the floorboards do tend to flatten. We would comment that it is probably quite a damp environment under the floor given the airbricks allowing dampness under and the render detailing not having a bell mouth on it.



Flooring in lounge

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that the floor is opened up and viewed before you commit to purchase this property.

### Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

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

## First Floor

Again the floorboards are visible in some areas indicating that the joists run from the front to the rear of the property which is why the left hand gable wall has bowed as there is no tying in with rafter feet. This is why it is important to open up this area to check what has happened.

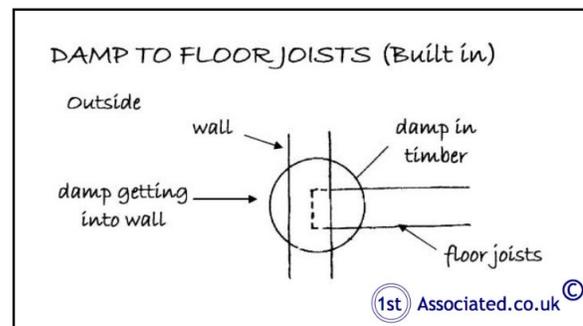
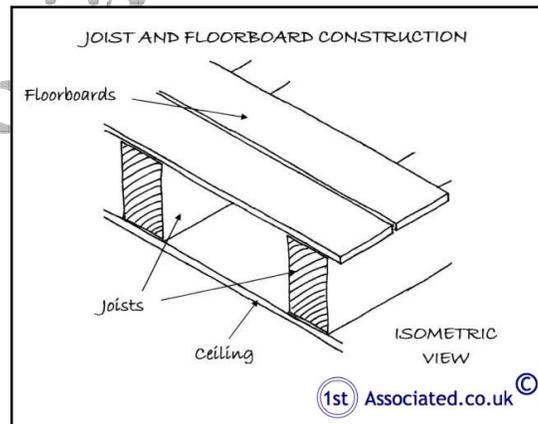


We can see that floorboards have been taken up in very consistent screw fixing points

### Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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

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



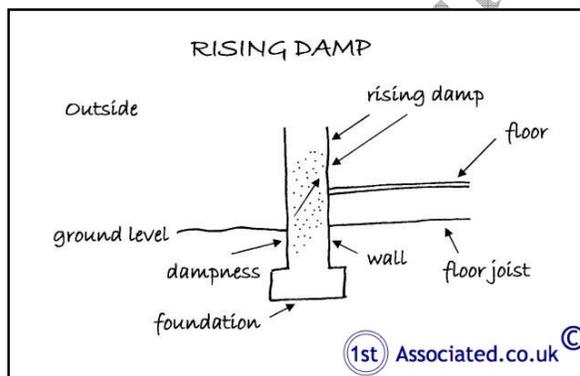


## DAMPNESS

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

### Rising Damp

*Rising damp depends upon various components including the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation of the material, amongst other things. Rising damp can come from the ground, drawn by capillary action, to varying degrees of intensity and height into the materials above.*



A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls and some internal walls.

The readings we obtained indicated that there is dampness in the property. This is likely to be due to the reasons we have stated in the Executive Summary.



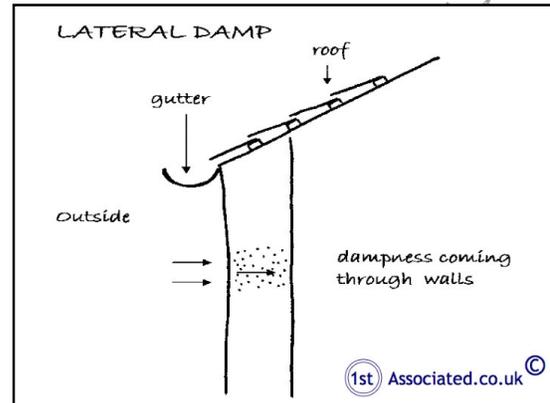
Checking for rising damp

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

## Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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

A visual inspection was carried out and tests were taken with an electronic conductivity meter at selected points to walls. No significant penetrating/lateral dampness was seen or detected considering the properties age, type and style.



## Condensation

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

We can see signs of condensation such as mould. The property has a relatively small bathroom, which do tend to promote condensation.

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

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

# **INTERNAL JOINERY**



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

## **Doors**

The property has stripped wood panel doors. They are generally in above average condition. We were advised by the owner during our question and answer session that they were a new addition to the property.



New internal doors throughout the property in an older style

## **Staircase**

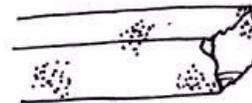
We were unable to examine the underside of the stair structure due to it being lined. We can advise that the lining gives a resistance to the spread of fire if such circumstances were to occur which is now typical construction and importantly allows you more time to escape from the first floor.

## **Kitchen**

From our cursory visual inspection the kitchen looked in average condition. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

## **TIMBER DEFECTS**



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

### **Dry Rot**

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

In the areas visually inspected no evidence was found of any significant dry rot. Please remember we have not opened up the ground floor or the first floor and had a limited view within the roof due to lack of access and the roof configuration.

### **Wet Rot**

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

In the areas inspected no evidence was found of any wet rot; however there is an outside chance that there is wet rot underneath the floors due to the dampness found. Again we would comment that we have not opened up the floors and had a limited view within the roof.

### **Woodworm**



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

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the roof we found no obvious visual signs of significant woodworm activity or, indeed, signs of past 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, and roof configuration, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings. If you wish to be 100 per cent certain that there is no woodworm the only way would be to check the property when it is empty of fixtures and fittings, etc.

**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.

## INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

The decoration is average to above average condition. If anything we would expect some latent defects hidden by the internal decoration.

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.*

## **HIPs**

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

## **Roofs**

Some roof insulation was present, although not to current Building Regulation requirements of 270mm. In this instance you have approximately 150mm.

## **Walls**

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

## **Windows**

The windows are double glazed and therefore have reasonable thermal properties.

## **Services**

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

## Summary

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

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

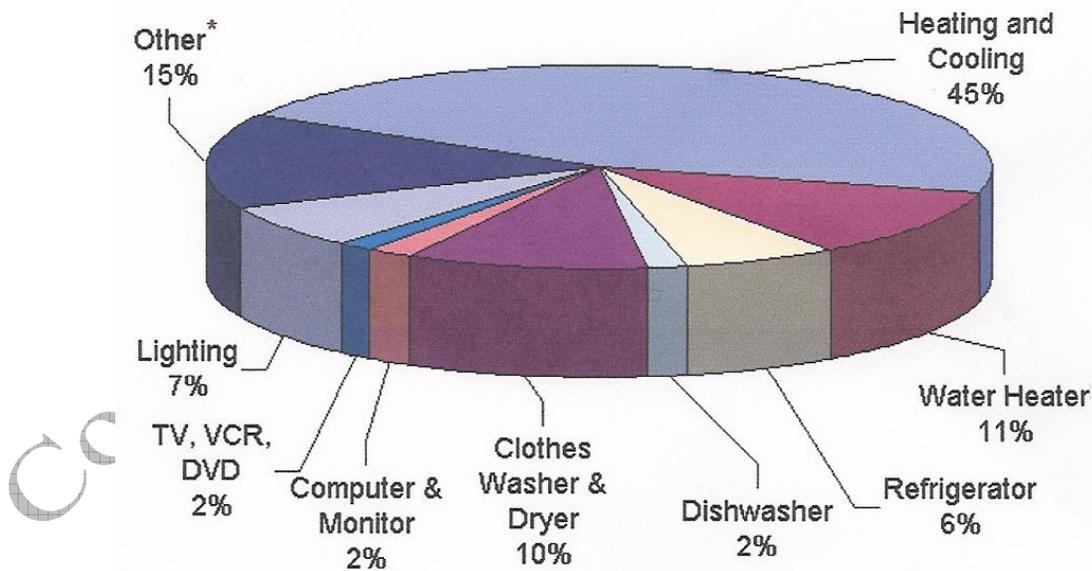
*HTTP//www.est.org.uk, which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.*

*or alternatively www.cat.org.uk*

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

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

### What does my energy bill pay for?



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

## OTHER MATTERS



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

### Loft conversion

When looking at loft conversions there are six elements that we believe are important:

1. Construction of the existing roof.
2. Precedents there are in the road.
3. Head height of the room.
4. Fire regulations.
5. Stair access.
6. Insulation.



Nearby loft conversion with front roof lights which is unusual

1. The first area that we would look at is how adaptable is the existing roof. In older properties such as this which were literally purpose made for the property, the most suitable type of roof is one that has a high ridge therefore giving head height and also limited obstructions in the form of timber braces. In this case with the exception of the timbers being thin looks appropriate. You will also need to consider other things in the roof such as the water tanks that may need to be moved.
2. It is always good with planning and building permissions not to be the first person to do something. In this case we can see that there are other nearby conversions and you may be able to use these as precedents for your particular loft conversion
3. As already mentioned the height of the ridge does dictate to some extent the main height however you can add dormer windows to add further height and usability to the loft space unlike roof windows (commonly known by the trade name of Velux windows) which follow the pitch of the roof.
4. It is very important to ensure that anyone who is living in the room can in a worst case scenario escape and fire regulations look into this. Typically they will require hard wired (into the mains) fire alarm systems.

57

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5. We find the best loft conversions have a proper staircase and therefore become part of the house. There is a ladder type staircase, these type of loft conversions never add that much value.
6. Insulation of the loft space is very important to ensure that it doesn't get too warm in the summer and too cold in the winter.

At the end of the day a loft conversion can come down to the practicalities of needing extra space and not wanting to move. As an investment for increasing the value of the house, unless the area is very sought after and land at a premium, only the best loft conversions will return the capital involved. These we normally find have a feature such as a balcony and also have attributes such as shower rooms and bathrooms.

### **Security**

An alarm box was visible. A good alarm system should not only help reduce break-ins but also your insurance. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further. Further information should be obtained from the vendor and the installer at a later date.

### **Fire / Smoke Alarms**

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

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

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

## Insurance

We would always recommend staying with the existing insurance company particularly in this instance where you have a bowing wall and possible issues with the floor. Then if there are any problems you should not have the difficulty of negotiating with two insurance companies passing the blame between each other.

## Asbestos

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

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

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## **SERVICES**

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

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

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# ELECTRICITY



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

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

## Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located near the front door. We would date the fuse board as being from the 1990s and, whilst not the best now available, it is reasonable.



Fuse board

## Earth Test

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

Neither of these indicators can give certainty as to the condition of the rest of the wiring



Earth test

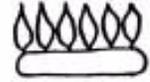
**ACTION REQUIRED:** If there is no record of an electrical test having been undertaken within the last five years, it is recommended that the installation be tested by a competent electrician (NICEIC registered) and all recommendations implemented. Thereafter, the installation should be re-tested every five years.

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

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

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

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

We are advised that the property has mains gas. The gas meter cupboard is located to the front left hand side. We are advised that there are two gas suppliers as this property was once split into two flats.



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

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

# PLUMBING AND HEATING



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

## Water Supply

We were advised that the controlling stopcock is located underneath the kitchen sink. It is important that its presence is established in case of bursts or leaks. The stopcock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness.

## Water Pressure

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

We have not used a listening stick to check for water leaks

## Cold Water Cistern

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

## Plumbing

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

## **Heating**

The boiler was located in the kitchen and is a Vaillant model which we are advised is a few years old.

Our limited inspection of the hot water and central heating system revealed no evidence to suggest any serious defects, however 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.

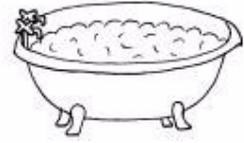
## **Ten Minute Heating Test**

We asked the occupier to turn the heating on for approximately ten minutes; we then checked the hall way radiators (ground floor and first floor) and found them to be 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.

## **BATHROOM**



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

The property has a three piece bathroom suite and is a good use of a relatively small space.

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

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## MAIN DRAINS



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

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

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

### Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

In this instance we have been unable to find any manholes. We have found that manholes started to be added from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards so if there haven't been any major problems then manholes have not been added. However in some cases the manholes can be covered over. We spoke with the present owner/occupier about this who said that he was not aware of any manholes.

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

## **Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage**

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

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

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

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

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

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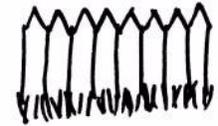
# OUTSIDE AREAS

## PARKING



Roadside parking is on a first come, first served basis.

## EXTERNAL AREAS



### Front Garden



Well presented small front garden – typical of this era of property

### Rear Garden



As is often the case with corner plots the garden is affected. In this case it is limited in size and is what we would term a low maintenance garden.

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

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**

### **Right Hand Neighbours**

We knocked but no-one answered.

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## OUTSIDE AREAS

### POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

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

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

However, with regard to Envirosearch or similar general reports please see our article link on the [www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk) Home Page.

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

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

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

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

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

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

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## **REFERENCES**

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

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

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

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

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# APPENDICES

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## **LIMITATIONS**

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

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

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

## **ENGLISH LAW**

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

## **SOLE USE**

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

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

## WEATHER

It was sunny, raining and stormy with thunder and lightning at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

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

2000	Wettest year on record at the time
2003	Driest year on record at the time
2004	Wettest August on record at the time
2004	Boscastle was the worst flash flood on record at the time
2005	Third driest year on record at the time
2006	Warmest year recorded on record at the time
July 2006	Hottest July on record at the time
2006	Hottest autumn on record at the time
2007	Warmest spring on record at the time
2007	Wettest June on record at the time
April '06-April '07	Hottest 12 months on record at the time
2008	
2009	Third wettest August since 1956
2010	Heaviest snowfall in march since 1991 Britain faces one of the coldest winters for 100 years

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

## NOT LOCAL

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

## OCCUPIED PROPERTY

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

## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited as we haven't opened up the ground floor or first floor and we have had limited access to some areas of the roof. We have had the benefit of speaking to the owner and going through the question and answer session and we have had the benefit of speaking to yourself for which we thank you for coming to meet us at the 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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# **THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS**

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

## **Work You Cannot do Yourself**

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

## INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

80

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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