

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

**Studham,  
Near Dunstable,  
Bedfordshire LU6**



**FOR**

**Mr W**

**Prepared by:**

**INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS**

**Marketing by:**

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

**0800 298 5424**

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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**

This is a two storey semi-detached property with adjacent garage.

There are large gardens to the front and the rear, with the front garden also giving off road parking.

We believe that the property was built in the 1950's. As this property was built around the War Years there was a rationing of materials and limited skilled labour available which can mean that sometimes there are unusual constructions hidden beneath what appears to be a typical construction. If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

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

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

1950	The concept of artificial intelligence for computers was developed by Alan Turing (MOD)
1951	Truman signs Peace Treaty with Japan which ended WWII
1952	Princess Elizabeth became Queen at age 52
1953	DNA discovered
1954	First Atomic Submarine was launched
1955	The Queen opened a new terminal at London Airport
1956	TV remote control invented
1957	Ghana became independent of the UK
1958	The first time ultrasound was available to examine unborn babies
1959	UK postcodes introduced

## EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Rear View



Front Garden



Rear Garden

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# **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

## **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Through lounge
- 2) Kitchen / Breakfast room
- 3) Utility room
- 4) Cloakroom

## **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Bedroom to right hand side
- 4) Two bedrooms to the left hand side
- 2) WC (without wash hand basin)
- 3) Bathroom to front

## **Outside Areas**

There are large gardens to the front, with off road parking and larger gardens to the rear. The gardens have some mature tree which we are advised are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Some trees have been recently cut down.



## 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



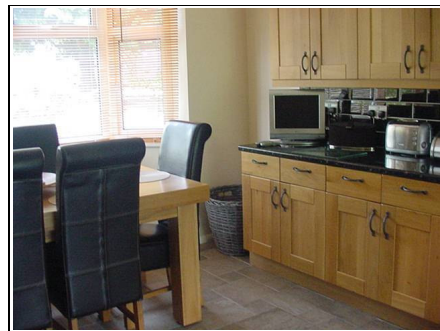
Through lounge to front



Through lounge to rear



Kitchen



Breakfast/dining area



Utility Room



Cloakroom

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## **First Floor**



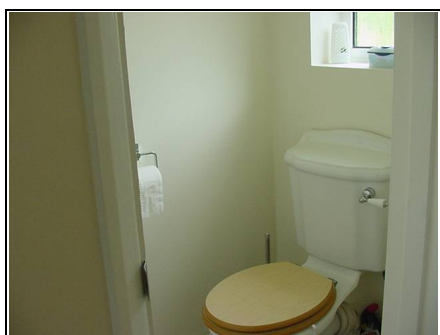
Front left hand bedroom



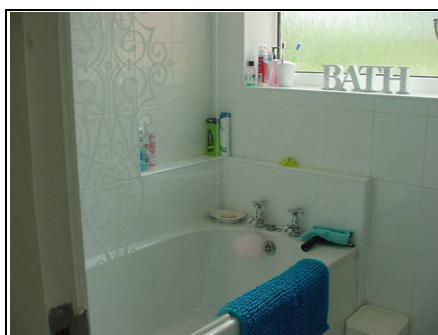
Right hand bedroom



Rear left hand bedroom



WC



Bathroom

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# **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

## **External**

Chimneys:	Two brick chimneys
Main Roof:	Hipped and pitched, clad with nibbed concrete tiles
Garage Roof:	Asbestos sheets
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Cast iron
Walls:	Stretcher Bond brickwork, which we have been shown information which identifies it as being insulated, although unusually is not dated.
Fascias and Soffits:	Timber, overlaid with plastic
Windows and Doors:	Plastic double glazed windows, without trickle vents

## **Internal**

Ceilings:	Plasterboard	
Walls:	Solid	
Floors:	Ground Floor:	Solid under foot, assumed concrete
	First Floor:	Joist and floorboards, assumed embedded timbers

## **Services**

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and oil (assumed). The electrics are in the garage and are dated and the Potterton boiler is located in a cupboard within the garage and is wall mounted and is dated.

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 100 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 slightly below average condition considering the property's age, type and style with a few exceptions. We have divided the Executive Summary into 'The Good', 'The Bad' and 'The Ugly', to help distinguish what in our mind are the main issues.

### **The Good**

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

- 1) The property has a modern decorative finish, although we appreciate this is superficial and may not be to your liking.
- 2) The property has off road parking and large gardens, which will no doubt take up some time to keep in a good condition.

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) Front left hand chimney**

We can see that this is in a poor condition and in need of repair and re-pointing. If the work is not carried out it will ultimately allow dampness into the structure and/or collapse.



Chimney needs repair/repointing

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repair and repoint and check overall condition, including the flaunchings and the flashings.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** The repointing of the chimney is likely to be in the region of a few hundred pounds to £500, if further work is required perhaps up to £1,000. The expense will be in getting to the chimney, as it is likely to be via scaffolding which we feel will double the cost. Please obtain quotations.

At the same time as carrying out the inspection you should take the opportunity to check the other chimney, the roof tiles, the gutters and downpipes and fascias and soffits.

Please see the Chimneys Section of this Report.

## 2) Asbestos Roof

There is an asbestos garage roof that is starting to degrade.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We always recommend removal of any asbestos as we feel, whether it is dangerous or not, it does put people off buying a property and the regulations are becoming stricter as to its removal. If you do remove it you will need an approved asbestos contractor and the local authority has lists of these. You could also encapsulate the asbestos using an appropriate paint and lining.



Asbestos garage roof

Our insurance company requires us to advise that we are not asbestos surveyors and have made our comments based upon a restricted visual inspection. The only way to be certain of its true condition is to obtain a survey by a specialist asbestos surveyor.

Please see the Roofs Section of this Report.

## 3) Rear Flat Roof

The rear flat roof has equalled or exceeded its life expectancy. You can see it is very flat by the amount of moss sitting on it and there also seem to have been problems with the parapet wall which is why it is covered in felt.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would budget for major repairs and/or replacement within the next five to ten years.



Parapet wall to flat roof

Please see the Roofs Section of this Report.

#### 4) **Overcladding**

The fascias and soffits have been overclad. This can lead to problems in future years with the degrading of the timber cladding behind. We normally find that the timber cladding was already in a poor state which is why the overcladding has been used. Unfortunately further problems are caused by overcladding.



Overcladding

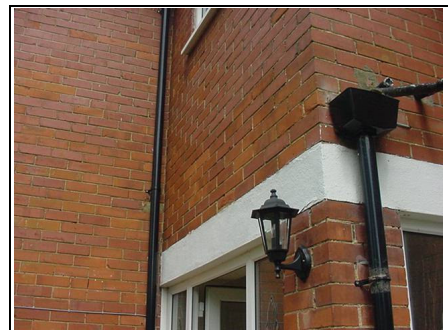
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Remove overcladding, checking the condition of the fascia and repair as necessary. Then either replace with a solid plastic fascia and soffit or with a repaired or new timber fascia and soffit. We also recommend adding vents for the roof.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £1,000 plus. Please obtain quotes.

Please see the Fascias and Soffits Section of this Report.

#### 5) **1950's houses prone to condensation**

The construction of a typical 1950's house combined with modern insulation levels tend to lead to condensation. The original houses were prone, to some extent, to condensation, which is why they have high level air vents to aid air flow in the house.



Concrete lintel can cause cold bridging

However, we noted concrete lintels which can cause cold bridging (please see the article in the Appendices of this report) and we can see the double glazed plastic windows do not have trickle vents and this can add to problems. In addition to this, there is no extract fan in the bathroom. All of these mean that an occupied property could suffer from condensation, depending upon how you use the property.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to add an extract fan to the bathroom and ensure the property is well vented. If problems occur then we would recommend adding trickle vents to the windows.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds; please obtain quotes.

Trickle Vents Defined

Small vents to the windows to allow air movement inside the property to stop a build up of fumes or humidity.

Cold Bridging Defined

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

As an aside, some deterioration to the double glazed units has occurred in that we can see that some of the sealed units are misting over and in our opinion need replacing.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Replace misted over windows.

Front windows misting over

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds per window; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness and Windows and Doors Sections of this Report.

## 6) Possible Woodworm to Roof Area

We would term this as possible woodworm as we can only see a very small amount of frass that would normally come from woodworm. It could equally be strong cut timber but we can see no reason for this to be present in the roof.

We did not manage to identify a significant source of flight holes that looked relatively new and this is why we would comment that there is a slight possibility of woodworm.



Frass just visible

With many older properties there are often old and redundant flight holes and this does not mean that there is woodworm.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Once the roof has been cleared of the existing owners contents we would suggest that you add further lights to the roof and good floor decking. We would be more than happy to re-visit and/or you could instruct a timber treatment company to inspect, but be aware that they are selling you their timber treatment chemicals.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Likely to be free of charge.

Please see the Timber Defects Section of this Report.

## 7) Trees and Tree Preservation Order

The owner advised that he has had the trees in the garden cut down without seeking any professional advice. We are aware that owners can be unhappy with trees where they block the light to the property, however they do also serve a purpose of helping to drain land. The present owner advises these trees were cut down approximately two years ago by himself.



Cut down tree stump

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Bearing in mind there is a large tree to the front of the property, we would recommend you seek professional advice from an arboriculturist (not a tree surgeon).

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £100 to £250, depending upon what advice and what services are given and used. Please obtain quotations.



Lifting being caused by tree to front

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.

## 8) Services

### Electrics

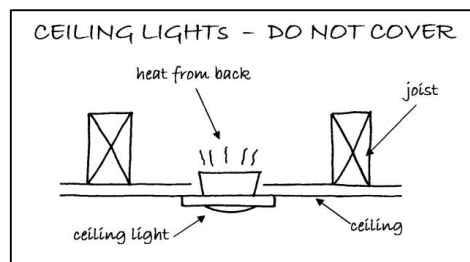
The electrics are dated. We recommend an Institute of Electrical Engineers test and report on the property and we believe that a new fuseboard will be required. The property may also benefit from some additional socket points.



Old electrics

We would also get the electrician to specifically check the lights in the roof as they do not have any covers on them.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As the fuseboard is old we would recommend a check to the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) standards by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor.



Please see the Services Section of this Report.

## **The Ugly**

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

There is nothing which we feels falls within this category.

## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

## **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:

We feel that a discount should be negotiated based upon the items mentioned. We would, if at all possible, ask an electrician to view the property before you purchase it.

The house is presented to show home standard, almost as a “professionally dressed house” that we have come across before. It will look very different with the various fixtures and fittings removed.

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

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



# **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

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

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

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

## **ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?**

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

## **SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

## **TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS**

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

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

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

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



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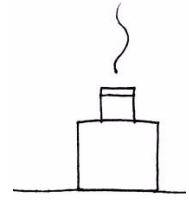
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# EXTERNAL

## 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.*

### Intro Chimneys/ Overview

This property has two chimneys, which are located one to the left and one to centre of the property (all directions given as you face the property).

### Main Roof Chimney One, located to the left hand side

This chimney is brick finished and is in a poor condition. Please see our comments about the repairs in the Executive Summary.

Unfortunately we were unable to see the top of the chimney known as the flaunchings and we therefore cannot comment upon them.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see Executive Summary.



Chimney needs repair

## **Main Roof Chimney Two, located to the middle of the property**

This is a brick built chimney, with pots and a lead flashing. It looks to be in average condition but we would take the opportunity to view it when the work is being carried out to the side chimney. We can see there are various aerials on it which may be causing damage as well as it being in an exposed location.



Central chimney

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend this chimney is checked when the work is carried out to the left hand chimney.

### 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.

## **Party Walls**

The front central chimney looks to be a party structure. Here is some information relating to party structures and the Party Wall Act.

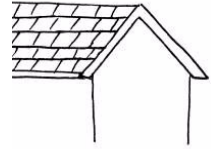
### Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

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, flues, 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:*

## **Roof Intro/ Overview**

We will consider the roofs in three areas; the main roof and side asbestos roof and the rear felt roof.

### **Main Roof**

The main roof is pitched and clad in a small nibbed concrete tile. From what we could see the concrete tiles are lying level and true and look in reasonable condition.

Sometimes we find that deterioration occurs to the ridge and exposed areas such as the perimeter and so you should periodically check these areas.



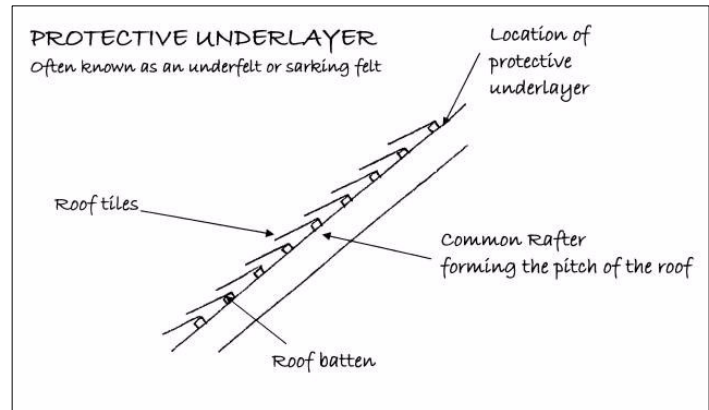
Nibbed concrete tile

### **Moss**

As is often the case with older concrete tiles there is a covering of moss. Ideally this should be removed with a soft brush as it can cause damage to the concrete tile surface and also block the gutters up.

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

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



In the main roof we found a Hessian base Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s. We generally found it to be in average condition, although it is damaged in a few places but this is not unusual considering its age.



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



## **Garage Roof**

This garage has an asbestos sheets roof.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

We are generally finding that any asbestos, whether considered dangerous or not, makes a house more difficult to sell.



Asbestos roof

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that all asbestos is removed from the house. This work must be carried out by an approved expert and so we recommend contacting the Local Authority for a list of approved contractors. Disposal certificates should be obtained to ensure the asbestos is disposed of safely.

Our insurance company requires that we specifically are not asbestos surveyors, and recommend an asbestos survey.

## **Rear Flat Roof**

*Whilst these roofs are called "flat", present building regulations and good building practice presently requires a minimum fall of 12 degrees.*

*Flat roofs are formed in a variety of materials. Difficulties can arise when the water is not discharged from the roof but sits upon it, as this can soon lead to deterioration which flat roofs are renowned for.*

The roof has a felt roof, whilst the felt is in a poor condition and is also predominately flat. We can see it has had repairs, we suspect due to dampness coming in around the parapet wall area in particular.



Rear flat roof

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see the comments in the Executive Summary. Ideally insulation cut to falls and new performance felt would be recommended on this roof, the sooner the better. Please note our comments about the possibility of leaks to the roof and latent defects.

#### FLAT ROOFS GENERAL INFORMATION

Flat roofs typically have a life between 20 and 30 years, depending upon the quality of workmanship, materials and decking, although some roof manufacturers do claim longer.

#### **Additional information in relation to flat roofs**

The latest Building Regulations require flat roofs to be ventilated. Building Regulations are not retrospective but the reason for the requirement is to make sure that any moisture that enters the roof construction is dispelled by way of ventilation. We would suggest that if the opportunity arises ventilation should be provided. This will stop the possibility of fungal growth above the ceiling in the flat roof area.

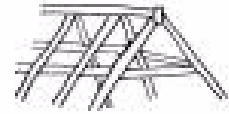
Also it could not be established if there is insulation within the roof or a vapour barrier, without the vapour barrier and combined with inadequate ventilation there will be an increase in the risk of wet or dry rot.

Finally, all the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. Flat roofs have been inspected from upper floor windows and/or ground level.

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

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

# **ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT**



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

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

### **Roof Intros/ Overview**

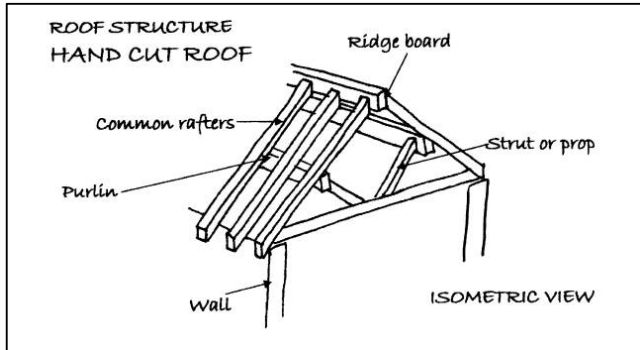
The main roof is the only accessible roof.

### **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; it would benefit from secured floor boarding throughout. The loft perimeter has been viewed by torchlight, which has limited our viewing slightly.

### **Roof Structure**

This type of roof is purpose made and hand built on site and is known as a cut roof. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects, however it is in line with what we typically see. We can see some minor movement in the roof however the roof is hipped and we would expect some movement.



The sketch above shows a typical example of the central section of the roof. It should be noted there has been movement to the purlins.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Movement to the structure  
within the purlin

## **Roof Timbers**

We have inspected the roof structure for:

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



General view of roof

Whilst our examination is restricted by the general configuration of the roof, the insulation and stored items, what we could see we found in generally average condition, with the exception of minor splits and some movement to the roof. Please also see our comments on the possibility of woodworm.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend ventilation is added as we suspect condensation is occurring in this roof.

## **Fire Walls**

In this instance the firewall is built in brickwork.

### Fire Walls Defined

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

## **Water Tanks**

The water tanks are insulated and, from what we could see, they looked to be formed in plastic. We therefore assume they are relatively new (in surveying terms in this instance, that is the last 30 years). Care has to be taken with roofs and water tanks to allow some warm air so that they don't freeze.



Looking into water tank debris can be seen on the base of it

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

### **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. We could see the exposed backs of lights which is not ideal. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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.

The plastic used is a mixture of modern and older style with is affected by sunlight and loses its colour slightly and does become brittle over the years.



Leaking gutter

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

## Soil and Vent Pipe

The soil and vent pipes are cast iron. They appear to be satisfactory where a surface inspection is possible. We cannot see the back that well or high up.

Cast iron will need regular maintenance such as repair to any rusting or cracks and painting.

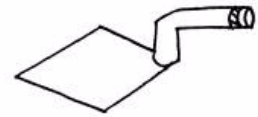


Cast iron soil and vent pipe

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



# WALLS



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

## Brickwork

This property is brick finished and laid in a lime mortar originally and repointed in cement mortar (which causes spalling to the brickwork). This is all bedded in what is known as Stretcher Bond.

In this property we have the original cavity brickwork built before insulation was commonly added.

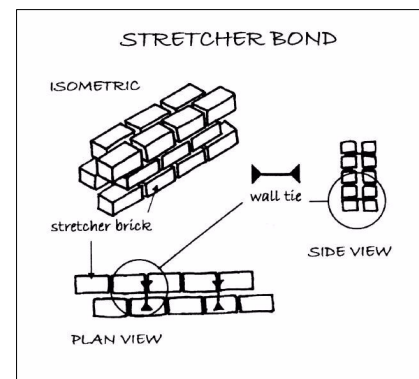


Spalling brickwork

## How cavity walls work

Cavity walls were first used in Victorian times. It originates from solid walls not always being waterproof against driving rain and not providing a good degree of heat insulation.

The design of cavity walls makes them relatively unstable and they depend upon the wall ties.



## Wall Ties

Walls of cavity construction should incorporate ties to hold together the inner and outer leaves of masonry. As there is no access to the cavity it has not been inspected and we cannot comment on the presence or condition of wall ties.

### WALL TIE FAILURE

Wall tie failure occurs on pre 1970s properties, the wall ties used can rust. It is possible to replace defective ties and a specialist contractor should be engaged to investigate further to establish the extent of the problem and the cost of replacement.



Tying in of the garage to the front of property

## **Insulation**

We were advised that insulation has been added. We saw the paperwork but this was not dated.

We find that old cavity insulation compresses the only way to check is to thermal image the property.

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



Insulation added

## **Render**

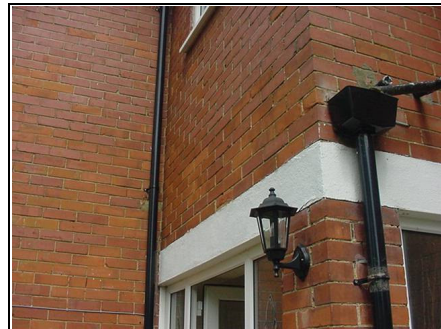
There is an area of render at high level to the front of the property. It is in reasonable condition and is marked at the very top.



Render at high level

## **Cold Bridging and Concrete Lintels**

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary in relation to this and also the article in the Appendices.



Concrete lintel

## **Movement**

There are some signs that there has been movement in the property from the movement we could see in the roof structure to the hairline raking crack between the main building and the garage and there is a slight undulation in some of the brickwork. This could relate to trees growing nearby, trees being removed, leaking gutters, etc.



Hairline cracking between main building and garage

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

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

# **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.*

## **Foundation Material**

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

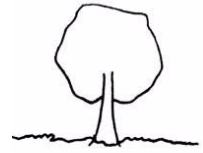
## **Building Insurance Policy**

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 various trees surrounding the property, for example a large tree to the front of the property, which is causing some damage to the front wall. There are large trees to the rear of the property and also several trees that have been removed.



Tree to front



Damage being caused by tree  
to front

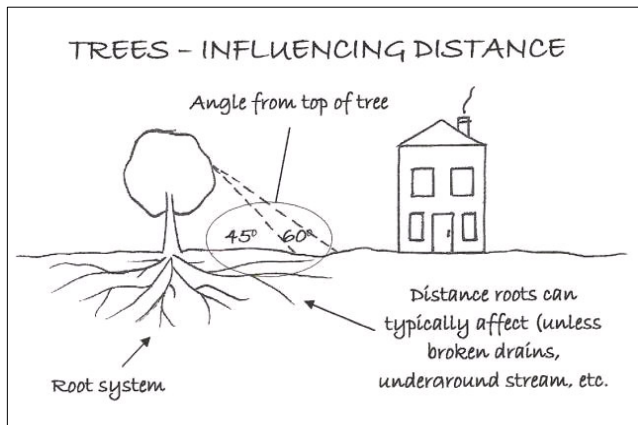
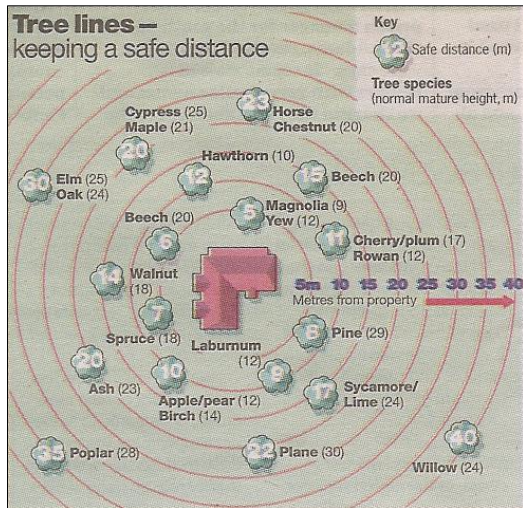


Tree stump to rear  
- they look to have been quite  
substantial trees

Damage to foundations and underground services can be caused by trees and shrubs. There are a number of these in the vicinity of the building, what we term within influencing distance, and we believe that these trees may be affecting the property. Properties with trees nearby will always be susceptible to movement.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend you instruct an arboriculturist to comment (not a tree surgeon). Please see our comments within the Executive Summary.





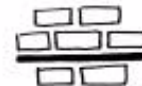
### Influencing Distance Defined

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.*

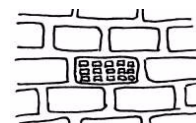
All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, we could see a DPC to the property in a number of places. Your attention is drawn to the section of the report specifically dealing with dampness.



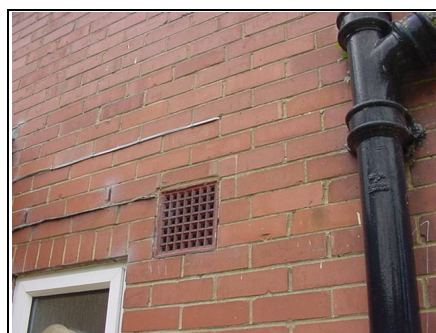
Damp proof course

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

## AIRBRICKS

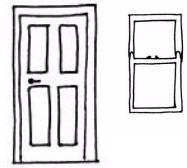


High level air bricks were introduced originally to help manage condensation in this age of property. You need to ensure that they are open for them to be able to help with condensation problems.



High level air brick

# **FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS**



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

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

## **Fascias and Soffits**

We noted that the property has plastic fascias and soffits, we think that these over clad the original timber fascias and soffits.

This is a poor system used to look as if the fascias and soffits have been replaced / repaired. The plastic is usually stuck on and, as there is no ventilation in this area, rot can occur.



Plastic fascia and soffit



Overcladding

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Strip off the over cladding and check the condition of the timber beneath. Ideally you should add a vent to the soffit and repair and redecorate as necessary.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## **Windows and Doors**

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



Some of the glazed units are misting over and you may wish to replace them.

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

No trickle vents

**ANCIPATED COSTS:** A few hundred pounds per window to replace misted over units; please obtain quotes.

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.

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.

### Trickle Vents Defined

Small vents to the windows to allow air movement inside the property to stop a build up of fumes or humidity.

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

## **EXTERNAL DECORATIONS**



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

There is next to no external redecoration required.

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**

### **CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES**



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

#### **Ceilings**

We believe the ceilings to be plasterboard due to their smooth finish.

##### Plasterboard Defined

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

#### **Internal Walls and Partitions**

These are predominantly solid.

#### **Perimeter Walls**

These are predominantly solid; we assume brickwork.

#### **Hairline cracking**

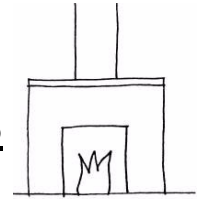
It was interesting that there was hairline cracking internally. The owner advised when we questioned him on this, that there had been re-plastering throughout. It is unusual to see such hairline cracking. We would comment that the plaster is also new and therefore could be hiding latent defects.



Hairline cracking in plaster

Finally, ceilings, walls and partitions have been inspected from floor level and no opening up has been undertaken (unless permission has been obtained by yourselves). In some cases the materials employed cannot be ascertained without samples being taken and damage being caused. We cannot comment upon the condition of the structure hidden behind plaster, dry lining, other applied finishes, heavy furniture, fittings and kitchen units with fitted back panels.

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



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

The chimney breasts are located on the right hand side (all directions given as you face the front of the property) and form a feature within the lounge up into the bedroom above.

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**

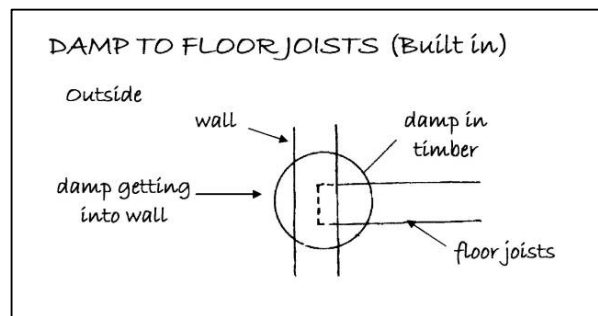
The floors felt solid underfoot so we have assumed they are formed in concrete, however, we have not opened up the floors or lifted the laminate or floor tiles. We would comment that the laminate is starting to degrade, particularly in the hallway.



Deteriorating poor quality timber floor in hallway

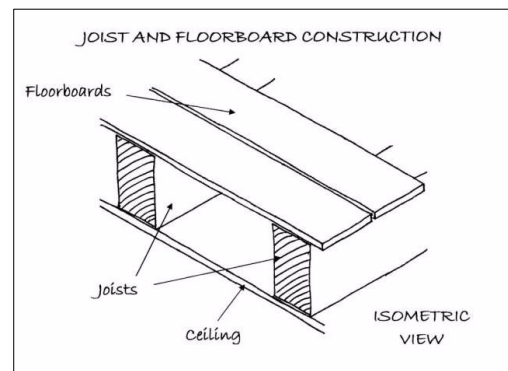
### **First Floor**

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



#### 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.



### **Deflection**

We noted what we would term as excessive deflection within the right hand bedroom. We suggest you re-visit and check you are happy to live with this level of deflection.

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

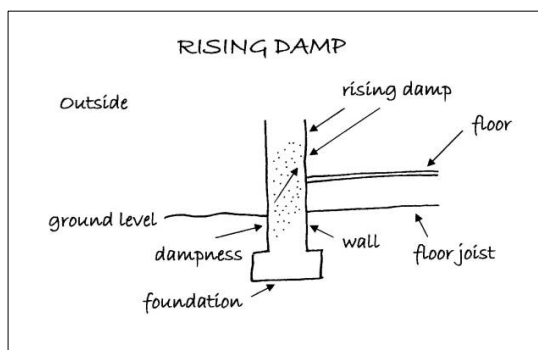


## **DAMPNESS**

*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.*



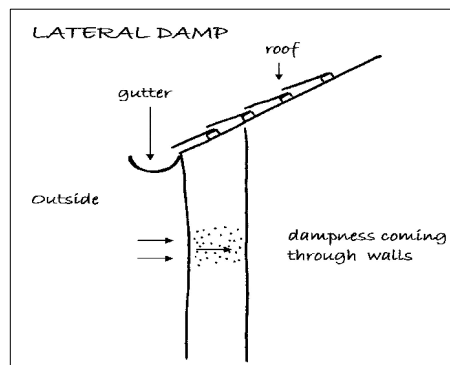
No evidence of any significant rising dampness was detected in the random areas checked. It is not usual in a property of this type and age to have minor damp/condensation.



Checking for rising damp

### **Lateral or Penetrating Dampness**

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



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

Please note our specific comments with regard to the flat roof and parapet walls and latent defects due to the new decoration.



Checking for lateral dampness

## **Condensation**

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

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

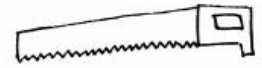
We have concerns that no extract fans in the bathroom/ cloakroom will not be able to cope with the high level of humidity in these areas and condensation will be caused. If this is a problem, we recommend adding an extract fan.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

It really does depend upon how you use the building. If you do your washing and then dry it without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating and ventilation of properties. Often opening windows to air the building, particularly 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 hollow core doors (sometimes referred to as egg box doors, as this is what the internal of them looks like when they are opened up), which have a pressed and painted finish.



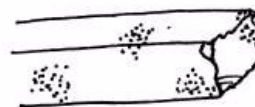
Painted hollow core door

### **Kitchen**

The kitchen is modern, complete with an Aga. 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 note we have not had access to the floors.

### **Wet Rot**

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

Generally no evidence was found of any wet rot, with the exception of the garage roof rafters which we found some darker/soft areas caused probably by the asbestos sheet displacement.

### **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 this roof we did not find any significant active woodworm, causing what we would term 'structurally significant' damage. However we did see some frass and further investigation is required.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Further investigation is 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.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

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



## **INTERNAL DECORATIONS**



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

### **Decoration condition**

The internal decoration is average to good and as mentioned elsewhere within this report it looks to show home standard. We can see some hairline cracking in it which does surprise us. As mentioned, this may relate to dampness getting in the property. Having said all that, 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.

# **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 300mm. . In this instance you have approximately 150mm to 200mm.

## **Walls Insulation**

Whilst the cavity wall construction allows the opportunity to put insulation in, in this age of property it was not originally common practice. Without opening up the wall we cannot confirm if insulation has been added or not. The owner advised insulation has been added. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal adviser should make full enquires and investigation to see if insulation has been added and report any findings to us immediately. Problems can occur where insulation has been added at a later date.

## **Windows Insulation**

The windows are double glazed some are defective and ultimately need replacement. The thermal properties should be generally reasonable; the defective double glazing will not be as good as it should be.

## Services

Typically we are finding that the wall mounted boilers, often known as combination boilers or 'combi' boilers, are lasting up to 15 years from new, assuming regularly serviced.

## Summary

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

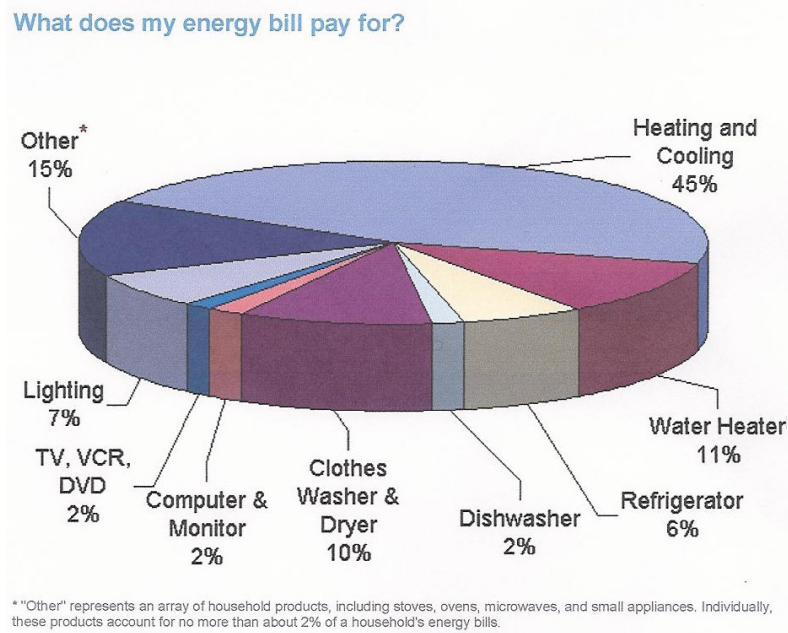
Further information can be obtained with regard to energy saving via the Internet on the following pages:

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

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

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

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



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## OTHER MATTERS



### Security

It is a personal decision as to whether you feel security is necessary. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further. We suggest you contact a member of NACOSS (National Approval Council for Security Services), obtainable through directory enquiries, or your local Police Force for advice on a security system.

### Fire / Smoke Alarms

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

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

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

### Insurance

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

### Asbestos

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

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

## **SERVICES**

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

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

# ELECTRICITY



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

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

## Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the garage. The fuseboard is old and needs replacing.

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

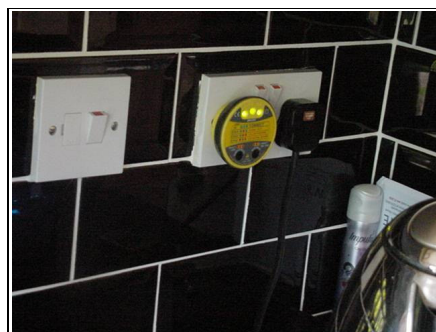


Dated electrics

## Earth Test

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend an NICEIC approved contractor carry out an IEE inspection test and all recommendations to be actioned.

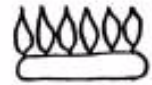


Earth test

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



# OIL



## Mains Oil

The oil tank looks in reasonable condition with minimal rust. It really is not possible for us to establish if the oil tank is leaking from a one-off inspection, although there were no obvious visible signs of this.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Have the oil tank checked by an independent OFTEC registered heating engineer prior to committing to purchase the property. You may have to replace with a plastic tank.

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

## Water Pressure

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

## Cold Water Cistern

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

### **Hot Water Cylinder**

The hot water cylinder is relatively new (in this case we mean in the past 30 years) as it is factory lagged and located in the cupboard in the front left hand bedroom (all directions given as you face the property).



Hot water cylinder

### **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 wall mounted boiler was located in the garage, it is manufactured by Potterton.

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



Dated Potterton boiler

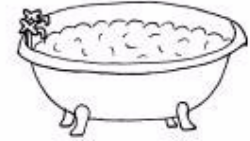
### **Ten Minute Heating Test**

We have not seen the heating switched on. You need to check and confirm with the owners that it is working.

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.*

## **Family Bathroom**

The family bathroom suite looks in average condition.

## **Cloakroom**

The cloakroom fixtures and fittings are average and we feel it is useful to have a cloakroom of any sort.

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

## **MAIN DRAINS**



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

We assume that the property has the benefit of mains drainage, from the manholes we have seen the drainage run is to the front of the property, although this should be confirmed by your legal advisor's enquiries. We noted there are also drains to the rear of the property, although these were dry when we inspected them.

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

### **Inspection Chambers / Manholes**

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

We have identified five inspection chambers / manholes.

#### **Inspection Chamber / Manhole One, located to the front, nearest the hedge**

We duly lifted the manhole/ inspection chamber cover and found the drain to be free flowing, we noted it was finished in concrete.



Manhole to front near hedge

### **Inspection Chamber / Manhole Two, located to front centre of lawn**

This manhole was lifted and found to be free flow and built as previously described.



Manhole centre of front lawn

### **Inspection Chamber / Manhole Three, located to rear, Adjacent to extension**

We duly lifted the manhole/ inspection chamber cover and found the drain to be free flowing, we noted it was finished in concrete.



Rear manhole next to extension

### **Inspection Chamber / Manhole Four, located to rear, Centre of garden**

We duly lifted the manhole/ inspection chamber cover and found the drain to be free flowing.



Rear manhole centre of rear garden



**Inspection Chamber / Manhole Five, located to rear,  
Nearest the garage**

We duly lifted the manhole/ inspection chamber cover and found the drain to be free flowing, we noted it was finished in brick.



Rear manhole near garage

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. Normally in a property of this age it would have been into a shared drainage system and this can cause problems during peak periods.

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

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



## **OUTSIDE AREAS**

### **GARAGE/ OUTBUILDINGS / PARKING**



With regard to the garage roof please see our comments in the Executive Summary and also our comments in the Walls Section of the report.

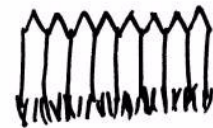


Inside garage



Garden shed

### **EXTERNAL AREAS**



#### **Front Garden**

This is a reasonable sized garden, part of which has been given over to parking.



Front garden (with two manholes)

## **Rear Garden**

This is a large garden. Please note our comments with regard to the trees.



Rear garden

**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.

## **POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

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

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

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

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

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

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

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

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

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

## **REFERENCES**

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

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

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

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



# APPENDICES

Independent Chartered Surveyors

—— Marketing by: ——

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

0800 298 5424

# **LIMITATIONS**

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

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

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

## **ENGLISH LAW**

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

## **SOLE USE**

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

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

## **WEATHER**

It was a warm summer's day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

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

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

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

## **OCCUPIED PROPERTY**

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

## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited due to not having the benefit of opening up the floors and some of the storage cupboards were full of stored items. Also we could not lift the concrete slab to the rear of the property!



We did not pick up things  
such as this large slab

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

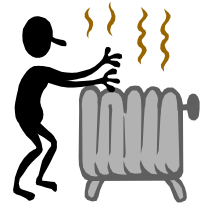
Our computer system sends two copies of our Terms and Conditions to the email address given to us when booking the survey; one has the terms attached and the other has links to the Terms and Conditions on our website (for a limited time). If you have not received these please phone your contact immediately.

# **Condensation and Cold Bridging**

## **What is Cold Bridging?**

### **What is cold bridging and does it always cause condensation?**

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



### **Certain types of buildings are more susceptible to condensation and cold bridging**

You often see condensation in properties, for example on a mirror in a bathroom when you have had a shower or a bath. Cold bridging is far worse than condensation as it is caused by an element in the structure which you can do very little to change without great expense.

Typically this will be a lintel. Problems can occur with concrete lintels that were commonly used in the 1970's, and also in more modern, better insulated properties, cold bridging has been known to occur on metal lintels. The problem is what to do about it.

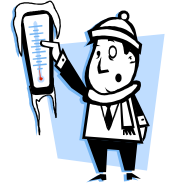


Example of a concrete lintel – can you notice where the cold bridging would be in this photo?



A close up view of the concrete lintel

## When is Cold Bridging Most Likely?



In our experience cold bridging is most likely on properties built in the 1930's to 1980's, most commonly in the 1970's. This is the era when we were just starting to think about insulation and we added insulation into our structures for example with cavity wall insulation or double glazed windows. This meant they were warmer which in effect has meant the significance of a lintel over a door or window being colder and allowing the transfer of coldness becomes much more important. This results in condensation that we commonly see above windows in this age and era of property.



Typical 1970's house



Typical 1970's houses

## So what can you do about Cold Bridging?

The difficulty is resolving cold bridging. Normally where condensation is involved if you get the balance of warm and coolness of the air, the air ventilation and movement you can reduce considerably the chances of condensation. Airing the room which seems to have gone out of fashion where you literally open the windows in the morning to air the room is a big step forward.





## Where do we most commonly see cold bridging?

We would answer this in two ways. Firstly, we see as mentioned cold bridging is common in 1970's houses. It's also more common to various other factors.



The main other factor is large families or families with young children where there is a lot of washing going on and often during the winter months this washing is then dried on radiators. This is generally known as the lifestyle of the occupants.

### Expert witness cases

We have seen some terrible examples of this. We have been involved in several court cases as expert witnesses where landlords are being taken to court over the condensation being caused by cold bridging. The discussions that then take place in court with us as expert witnesses are, is it a design characteristic or is it a lifestyle characteristic that is causing problems.

## Is Cold Bridging a design problem?

We have been involved in many reports on condensation and cold bridging and some legal cases where we have been asked to act as expert witness. Really it's down to the design of the property. There are cold elements in it such as a concrete frame or concrete lintels. You have a disadvantage although, not impossible to stop the condensation it's very hard. It could also be argued that where cold bridging is occurring in a modern property you are getting interstitial condensation which is condensation within the structure which you literally can't see.



1960's concrete frame



Concrete lintel visible externally  
but they are not always visible



Dampness and condensation around  
the concrete window lintel

## Do lifestyle issues cause condensation?

By lifestyle issues we mean the way the building is being used. We have come across quite a few instances where it is how the property is being used that's causing the problems. This may be due to showers being taken without extractor fans being put on or it may be due to clothes being dried internally, particularly during the winter months. It could be steamy kitchens. Some things can be helped by airing the home by opening the windows and in bathrooms and kitchens you can have extractor fans that are controlled by humidity controls on the fans. So it really is an individual answer in most cases to the problems with the property.



We hope you found the article of use and if you have any experiences that you feel should be added to this article that would benefit others, or you feel that some of the information that we have put is wrong then please do not hesitate to contact us (we are only human).

The contents of the web site are for general information only and are not intended to be relied upon for specific or general decisions. Appropriate independent professional advice should be paid for before making such a decision.

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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.

[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.