

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

Bedfordshire



Marketing by:

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION
REPORT FORMAT
SYNOPSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

EXTERNAL

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

INTERNAL

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

SERVICES

ELECTRICITY
GAS
PLUMBING AND HEATING
BATHROOMS
MAIN DRAINS

OUTSIDE AREAS

GARAGES AND OUTBUILDINGS (NOT VIEWED)
EXTERNAL AREAS

POINTS FOR LEGAL ADVISOR

APPENDICES

LIMITATIONS
ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS
GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REPORT FORMAT

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

GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

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

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



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

ORIENTATION

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

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

A two storey good sized detached property which has been extended, amended and altered over the years. The property was originally purchased in 1984 consisting of a cottage with extension; it was then extended further in 1995 together with general modernisation.

We are advised (by the occupier) that the property sits in approximately five acres. There are various outbuildings, etc. The main focus of this report has been on the main property. We would also advise that it was snowing/had snowed at the time of the survey and therefore this has limited some areas of our inspection.

We believe that the property was originally built between the 1930's to 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.

We would also add that we believe this was originally built as a farm and agricultural standards of building can be to very different standards to residential property particularly of this age when national standards were not being rigorously enforced. If the exact age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 1939-1945 | World War II (6 June 1944 D-Day) |
| 1948 | The Manchester Mark 1 developed (arguably the first computer) |
| 1948 | Olympic Games held in London |
| 1950 | The concept of artificial intelligence for computers was developed by Alan Turing (MOD) |

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front of property



Rear of property



Left hand side of property



Right hand side of property



Front garden



Rear garden

External (contd)



General view giving access to rear area



Surrounding views



Aerial view prior to extension



Aerial view with extension

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Entrance hall
- Kitchen
- Utilities Room
- Front lounge
- Adjacent Study
- Large lounge/dining area to rear
- Cloakroom
- Front staircase
- Rear staircase

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Bathroom
- Separate WC
- Main bedroom with ensuite
- Two rear bedrooms
- Rear right hand stairs access a second bedroom and ensuite shower room

Outside Areas

Other than the driveway that we parked on to access the property our survey has been of the main property only.

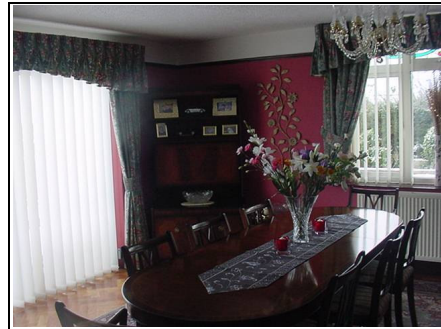
INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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

Ground Floor



Front room



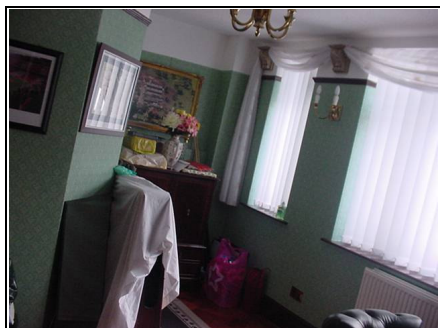
Dining room end of lounge/diner



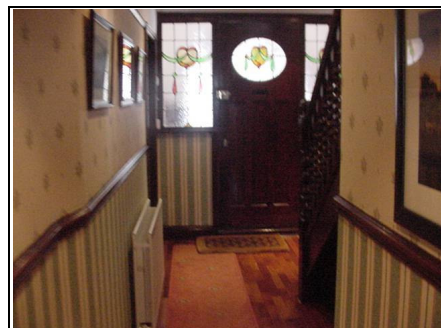
Kitchen



Utility room



Study



Hallway

First Floor



Main bedroom



Ensuite to main bedroom



Rear bedroom



Rear bedroom

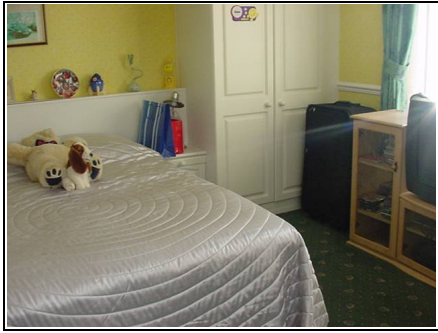


Bathroom

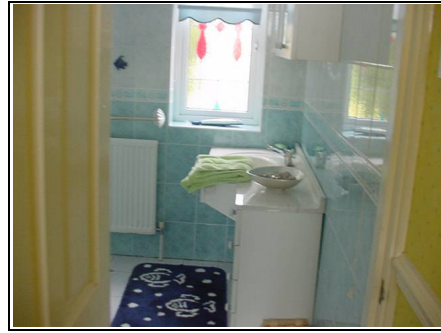


Separate w.c.

First floor right hand side staircase



Bedroom



Bathroom

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Chimneys: | One brick built chimney |
| Main Roof: | Pitched roof clad with clay tiles |
| Gutters and Downpipes: | Plastic |
| Soil and Vent Pipe: | Plastic |
| Walls: | Render (assumed) |
| Fascias and Soffits: | Various plastic and timber |
| Windows and Doors: | Plastic double glazed |

Internal

| | | |
|-----------|---------------|--|
| Ceilings: | | Mixture of original lath and plaster and modern plasterboard (assumed) |
| Walls: | | Mixture of solid and studwork (assumed) |
| Floors: | Ground Floor: | Airbricks indicate a suspended timber floor in parts with concrete as solid underfoot (assumed) in other areas |
| | First Floor: | Joist and floorboards embedded (assumed) |

Services

We are advised that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (assumed), your legal advisor needs to check and confirm this. The boiler is a Worcester boiler and Mega flow both situated in the loft space. The electrics are located in the kitchen and are dated 1980's/1990's.

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

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

Generally we found the property to be in slightly below average condition considering the property's age, type and style with some specific issues which we have identified below. 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!

- The size of the property and the surrounding land.
- The rooms are bigger than we typically find.
- There are two alarm systems.
- The view from the property.

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

The Bad

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

1) Roof

We can see moss is starting to form on the pitch of the roof which often indicates that the face of the tile is starting to deteriorate. Any moss on a roof will accelerate deterioration. We can also see that some areas have been displaced. Internally we can see a 1970's plastic underlayer (behind the hessian underlayer) which leads us to believe that the property was re-roofed, probably in the 1970's or 1980's however the original tiles we believe were re-used with an inter-mixing of newer tiles, you can see a slightly redder colour in the roof.

We would comment that there was unusually timber visible on the left hand side which looked to be part of the roof structure as opposed to a normal fascia board that we would expect.



Grey plastic underlayer and black reinforced hessian



Close up of roof

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend a roofer spends two days overhauling the roof. This would involve such things as replacing tiles that are cracked and broken and also re-securing tiles and putting into place any slipped tiles.

ANTICIPATED COST: £500 - £1,000 depending upon what they find, it may be higher. We would also recommend that you set aside a supply of tiles as there will come a time when damage occurs to the roof that urgent repair will be needed so if you have the tiles it makes this so much easier; quotations required.



Unusual timber detail

Please see the Roof Coverings Section of this Report.

2) Defective render

The property has old pebbledash render on a lot of the original building with a newer render to the right hand side.

To the older render we can see hairline cracking which means that dampness is getting in which means that further render damage will occur.



ACTION REQUIRED: You need to resolve this problem as soon as possible, we recommend the Spring of 2011. You may be at the point where re-rendering is a cheaper alternative in the long term than repairing what is there.

We would also recommend looking at improving the detailing around the windows and to the base of the property particularly in the newer side of the property where the detailing is not present.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £10,000 - £20,000, to have the work carried out properly which includes drip detailing over the windows and to the base of the property which would minimise the amount of damp getting into it; quotations required. In addition to this you are likely to need scaffolding for the high level work.

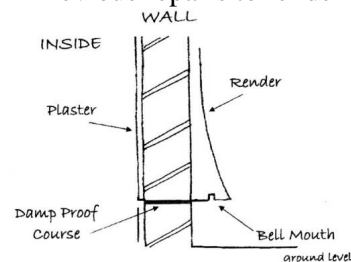
Please see the External Walls Section of this Report.

Render with knife in crack



Old mastic repairs to render

Previous repairs to render



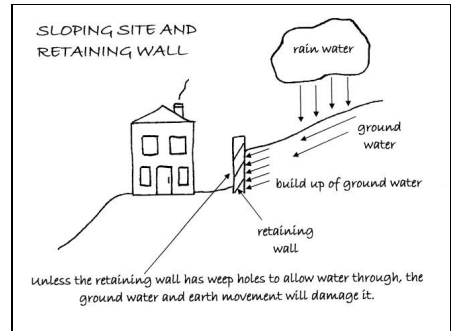
3) Retaining wall without weep holes

As the property sits on a sloping site there are retaining walls around it. We noted that these don't have weep holes in them which has resulted in cracking and minor movement in them. We would recommend that weep holes are added.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add weep holes. We would recommend core diamond drilling.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £750 - £1,500; quotations required.

Please see the Other Matters Section of this Report.



Retaining wall with no weep holes



Crack to retaining wall

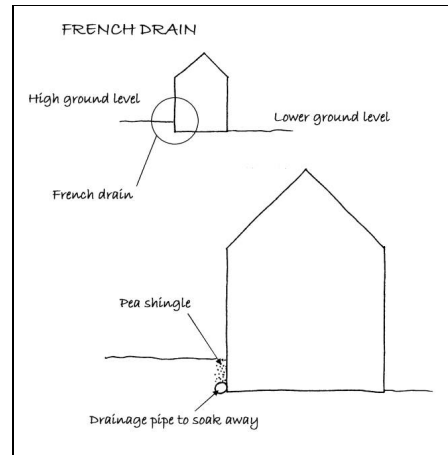
4) Sloping site and dampness getting into the property

We have found and recorded damp readings to the front of the property. This we believe is due to the sloping site and the poor render detailing is allowing water to come in. We would recommend a French Drain is added. Our concern is that the timber floor beneath has been affected with this and there is an element of rot on it. Whilst we couldn't detect any major deflection we are aware that much of the floor was covered with wood blocks and carpeting.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add a French Drain and open up and investigate the floor.

ANTICIPATED COST: £5,000 - £10,000; quotations required.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report and the article at the end of this report regarding French Drains.



Dampness at front of property – meter readings are typically between 30 and 60 on this type of property, here we have readings of 99



Need for French Drain at base of older render

5) Trees

There are some large trees quite close to the property.

ACTION REQUIRED: These need an arboriculturalist report (not a tree surgeon) and then maintenance.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £150 - £250; quotations required.

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.



Large trees nearby

SERVICES

6) 1970's Lighting

These older style 1970's lights tend to give off a lot of heat at the back which in turn can go into the floor or roof space and could ultimately cause a fire.

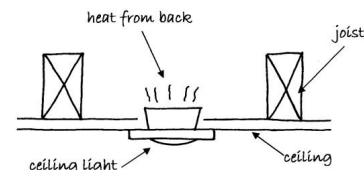


ACTION REQUIRED: We therefore recommend that they are changed.

ANTICIPATED COST: We have been involved with a job where this was carried out which came to a few hundred pounds for approximately half a dozen lights; quotations required.

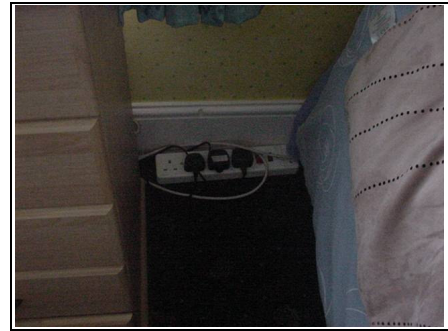
1970's light needs changing

CEILING LIGHTS - DO NOT COVER



Electrics

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



You may need to add more socket points.

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

Please see the Electricity Section of this Report.

7) DIY Plumbing

What can we say other than some of the plumbing looked a bit DIY.

ACTION REQUIRED: Generally repair over the years.

ANTICIPATED COST: Very difficult to give a cost on this; quotations required.



DIY Plumbing in shower room in right hand side bedroom

Please see the Plumbing and Heating 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 feel falls within this category.

Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Electrics

Please see our comments earlier on.

Maintenance

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

DIY/Handyman Type Work

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

Purchase Price

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

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Estimates of Costs

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

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

SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



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

We feel the render is the greatest liability on this property although we do think there could be some rot under the floor which is hidden. Our view was obviously limited by the snow. We are more than happy to return if you wish us to specifically comment further on anything.

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

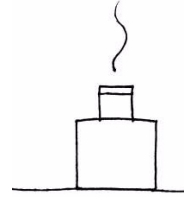
Our aim is for you to be completely happy with the service we provide, and we will try and help you in whatever way possible with your property purchase - just phone us.

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



EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS AND FLUES



Chimney stacks

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

This property has one chimney, which is located centrally.

Chimney one

This chimney is brick finished with a metal flashing (usually lead or zinc) and three chimney pots. From what we could see it looks to be in average condition for a chimney of this age. Unfortunately we were unable to see the very top of the chimney known as the flaunching, we therefore cannot comment upon it. However we would recommend a close up check



ACTION REQUIRED: Carry out minor repairs, ideally within the next two to three years.



Flaunchings Defined

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

Close up of top of chimneys reveals some minor repointing that is needed

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.

Flues

Flues offer ventilation to things like boilers and soil and vent pipes and usually come through the roof covering, which can often also be a weak area.

The property has a plastic flue which is for the boiler located in the roof (it should be remembered that you have to give safe access to the boiler in the roof).



Internal view of Flue

ACTION REQUIRED: We can see nothing obvious. We suggest that it is checked next time high level work is being carried out such as the roof repairs we have mentioned.

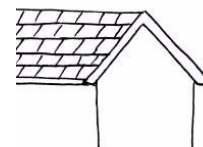


External view of Flue

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

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

ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

Main Roof

The roof is pitched and clad with a small clay tile and, from ground level this looks in below average condition. There is a mixture of types and/or ages of tiles. From what we can see in the roof with the plastic felt this property has been re-roofed in the 1970's re-using the old tiles mixing in some newer tiles. The surface of the tiles it now deteriorating which is why we can see moss sitting on parts of the roof and therefore a further overhaul is required.

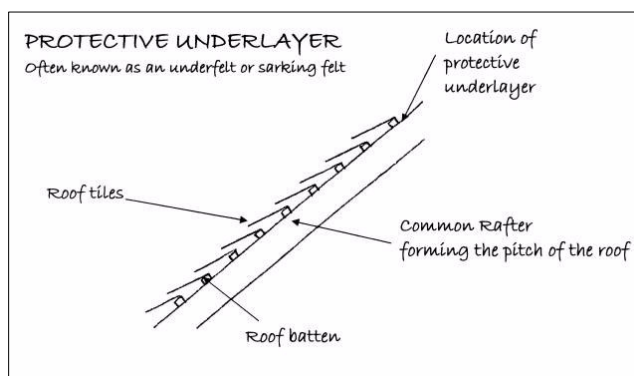


General view of roof

ACTION REQUIRED: An overhaul of the roof is required. It was fairly difficult to be precise due to the snow sitting on the roof. We do feel a roofer spending a few days overhauling the roof and replacing tiles will extend the life of the roof. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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.



The main property has a plastic underlayer, this was popular in the 1970s and 1980s. It tends not to be used today as it was also common that it sweated therefore dampness occurred in the roof. This is probably why it has been felted a second time with an additional reinforced bitumen felt roof. Ideally this plastic should be removed and replaced with a breathable layer which is the current practice. This would involve complete re-roofing of the property.



Outer hessian underlayer in left hand roof space



The grey area is the plastic underlayer left hand side

Right hand roof

This is the extension roof where a reinforced hessian was found.



Right hand roof

Low level roof

There is a low level roof porch area that unfortunately we were unable to access.

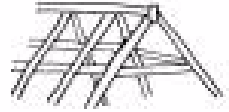


Finally, all the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera.

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

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

ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

Main Roof

Roof Access

The main roof on the left hand side is accessed via a loft hatch located on the landing. There is a loft ladder, electric light and partial floor boarding (which is essential in this case as you have a boiler in the roof which you have to give a safe access to). The loft perimeter has been viewed by torchlight, which has limited our viewing slightly.

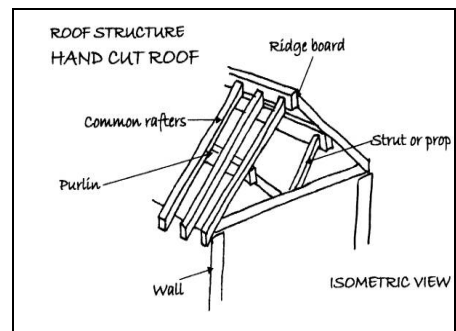


Some floorboards

There is a second roof to the right hand side where you need a ladder to access this.

Roof Structure

Both the main roof and the extension roof have what is known as a cut timber roof, which is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects; however it is in line with what we typically see.



Roof Timbers

We found the roof timbers in both of the roofs generally in average condition considering their age. We have inspected the roof structure for:

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



View of timbers

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



Right hand roof

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

Water Tanks

The water tank is no longer in use although it is still in the roof.

Ventilation

We did not see any vents to the roof to help prevent condensation. With a plastic underlayer this is particularly important due to the sweating affect that can occur.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add vents as soon as possible.

Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

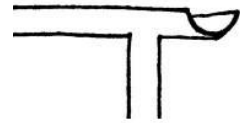
Electrical Cables

We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of wiring found in the roof. In this case there was insufficient quantity to comment on due to them being hidden behind the insulation. Please note our comments in the Executive Summary with regards to the 1970's lighting.

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.

Generally they appear in average condition with the exception of one area where we could see plants growing out of it.



Gutters and downpipes

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



Grass coming out of gutter via leaks on joints

Soil and Vent Pipe

You have both traditional soil and vent pipes on the left hand side of the building and an air inlet valve to the right hand side within the roof. There is a part of the soil and vent pipe which has a minimal fall which is not ideal.



Soil and vent pipe on right hand side and air inlet valve



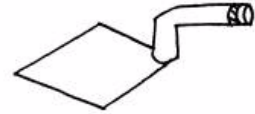
Soil and vent pipe



Soil and vent pipe which is running horizontally which is not ideal

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.

Render

The walls to this property are finished in a render. The walls are in below average condition. With this age of render repairs will increase over the years.

The render has had temporary repairs for many years

We noted mastic in lots of areas on the render which has been used to fill cracks in and stop further water getting in which is good practice. However it is only a temporary repair method but in this case seems to have been used as a permanent repair method!

ACTION REQUIRED: Repair in a like for like material, ideally repair immediately. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Knife into crack in render



You can see the clear mastic which has been used in the past



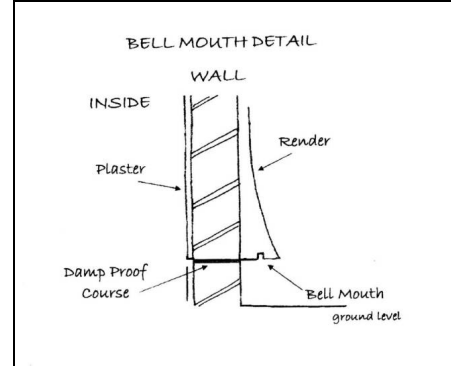
Crack in render



Extensive hairline cracking

Quality of render

A way of telling the quality of the render, we have found over the years, is by the quality of the render detailing. In this instance the older render which is suffering from hairline cracking and general defects has better detailing with drips over the windows which both the old and the new render suffer mainly from not having a bell mouth detail although we can see some areas of the old render where the bell mouth detail is present.



ACTION REQUIRED: Form details to the render such as drips over windows and bell mouths to the base of the render to stop dampness from getting in. We feel this is a contributory factor towards the dampness that we found internally.

Render Defined

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

Bell-Mouths Defined

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

Finally, the external walls have been inspected visually from ground level and/or randomly via a ladder. Where the window and door lintels are concealed by render / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age timber lintels, 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 render / plasterwork has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the render / plasterwork would be if it were opened up for this age, style and type of construction. We are however aware that all is not always as it seems in the building industry and often short cuts are taken. Without opening up the structure we have no way of establishing this.

FOUNDATIONS



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

Foundations

The property is finished in render and is likely to be brick built, we would expect to find a stepped brick foundation possibly with a bedding of lime mortar. However we would add that this originally was built as a farm from what we could gather, therefore we are always concerned with agricultural/farming standards as they often are less than what was recommended at the time due to them being carried out and built by farm labour.

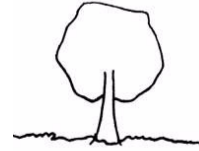
Building Insurance Policy

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.

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.

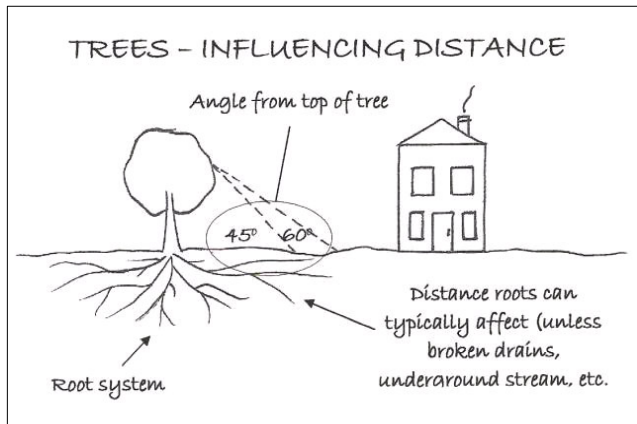
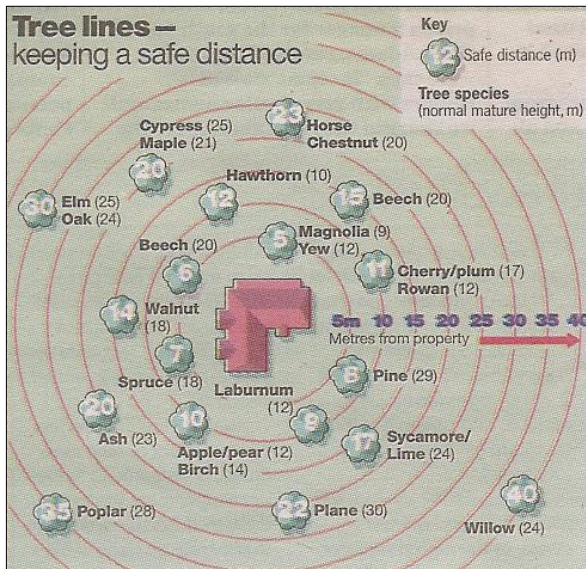
**War years
Detached
Property**



Trees close to property

Properties with trees nearby will always be susceptible to movement

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to obtain advice from an arboriculturist (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.

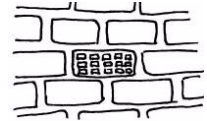
All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, unfortunately we can't see a DPC to the property because of the render. We did find dampness in the property - it is likely to be due to render bridging the damp proof course if it's there or capillary attraction in the render drawing in dampness. If you look at the photo we did see one area where it looked like a damp proof course had been inserted, in which case they need calling back as it certainly isn't working.



Please see the Dampness Section of this report.

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

AIRBRICKS



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

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

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend bricks are bedded around the air bricks to stop water getting into them in the first instance although we have recommended French Drains around the property.



Airbrick

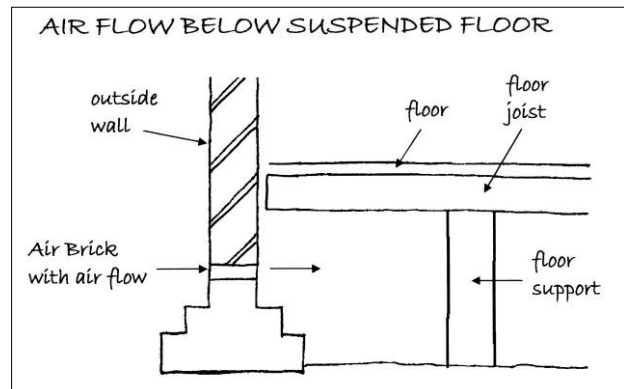
Open up the floor

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

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to open up the floor to check.

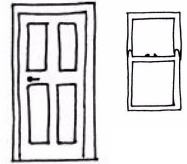
Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

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



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

FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



This section covers fascias, soffits and bargeboards, 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

There is a mixture of plastic and timber fascia boards and soffits.



Soffits

Windows and Doors

The property has double glazed windows which we were advised were installed when there was general upgrading to the property so they will be out of the usual ten year warranty. We would say that they are from the cheaper end of the market as we can't see trickle vents on them and we would also say that as their ten year life has passed that they will now start to become susceptible to the units deteriorating.



Plastic windows

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.

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.

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

EXTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

The external decoration required is minimal as the render is unpainted and the windows are plastic and the fascia and soffit is plastic where it can be seen. Ironically the only thing to paint is the things that shouldn't be painted such as the plastic soil and vent pipe which we would comment that painted plastic never works.

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

Please see our comments in the Fascias and Soffits and Windows and Doors section.

INTERNAL

CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES



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

Ceilings

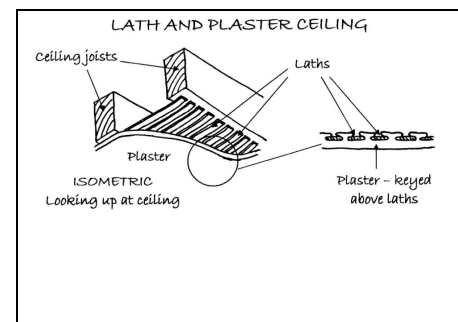
As you would expect in building of this age, the ceilings have been finished in a variety of ways, from the original lath and plaster to more modern plasterboard. We noted the majority of the ceilings had been finished however there is a partly unfinished ceiling in the kitchen which is unusual. In turn we wondered if dampness may be getting in this area and affecting it from the defective render externally. This is what we would have expected to see internally more often given the condition of the render



Unfinished ceiling

Lath and Plaster Defined

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



Plasterboard Defined

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

Internal Walls and Partitions

The majority of the walls are solid, some are studwork as we would expect.



Cracking to walls

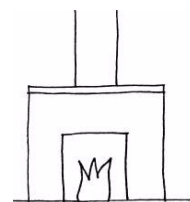
Perimeter Walls

We believe it is likely that they will be finished in a mixture of plasters from the original lime based plaster but based on its smoothness it is likely to have had a skim coat of modern gypsum plaster to a gypsum plaster that would have been used in the right hand extension. Unfortunately there is no way of being certain without taking samples of the walls which is obviously not acceptable in an occupied property!

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

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

CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

The chimney breasts are located in the dining/lounge area as a feature (all directions given as you face the front of the property). We were advised that the chimney had been swept and that the fires are used occasionally particularly during the winter months.

We were also advised during our question and answer session, as is usually the case, that the ones on the upper floors within the bedrooms are not being used.

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 ground floor construction is still a mystery to us. From the airbricks outside and the general age of property we would expect to find a suspended timber floor however due to the woodblocks internally and the carpet, etc. we have not been able to confirm this. We have expressed our thoughts that we believe the floor is probably predominately a timber floor although it is not out of the question it could have been replaced by concrete. This type of floor needs air circulation under it to reduce deterioration from wet rot and dry rot which we simply can't see enough airbricks; please see our comments in these sections.



Woodblock flooring

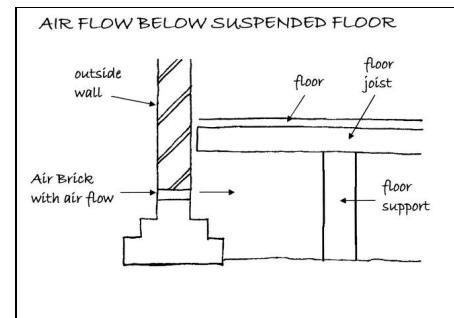
ACTION REQUIRED: The only option is to take up a section of the floor to check its condition.



Unfinished parts of floor

Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

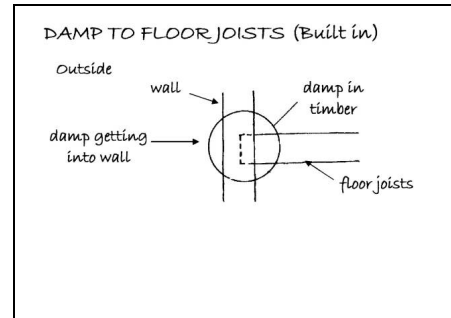
A suspended timber floor usually consists of timbers spanning the ground floor, supported on piers (usually brickwork), vented via air bricks within the walls.



First Floor

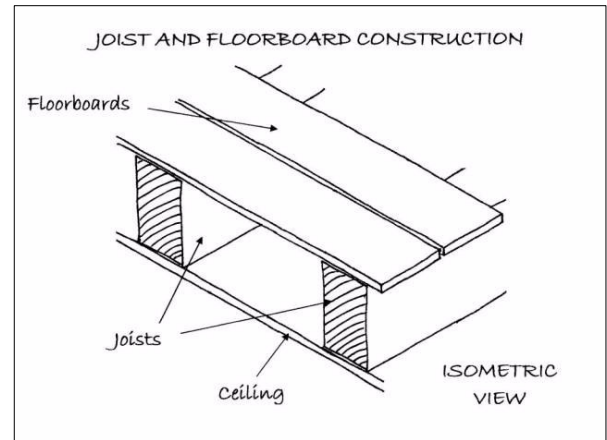
In properties of this age we would expect to see embedded timbers. We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards as this is typical in this age of property.

The floor on the right hand side is likely to be on joist hangers rather than being embedded into the wall which is a more common modern day practice.



Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



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

DAMPNESS

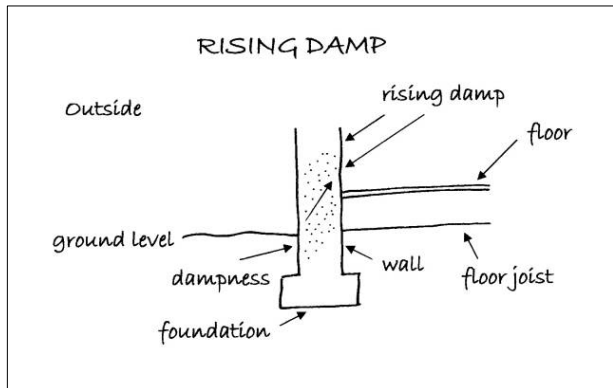


In this section we look at any problems that are being caused by dampness. It is therefore essential to diagnose the source of the dampness and to treat the actual cause and not the effect of the dampness.

Rising Damp

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

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



The readings we obtained indicated that there is some dampness in the property. It is located mainly to the front of the property. The whole of the property needs rechecking, it has to be remembered that it was snowing at the time of our inspection.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our recommendations in the executive summary.

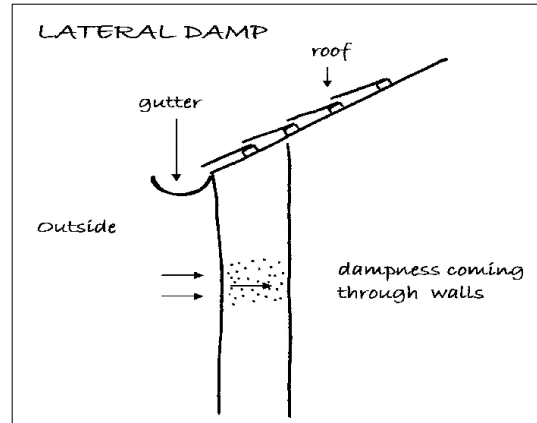


Reading at rear of property

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.

The readings we obtained indicated that there was some lateral dampness in the property. It is not surprising when you see the amount of cracks to the render particularly the hairline cracking.



ACTION REQUIRED: A programme of repairs and replacement to the render is required during the Summer of 2011.

Condensation

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

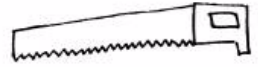
At the time of the survey we could see no obvious signs of condensation, however, it depends upon how you utilise the building. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating and ventilation of properties. Normally opening windows first thing in the morning resolves most condensation issues.

No trickle vents

We are always concerned when properties don't have trickle vents as this can mean there isn't enough air circulation particularly in the moisture generating areas such as bathrooms and kitchens.

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



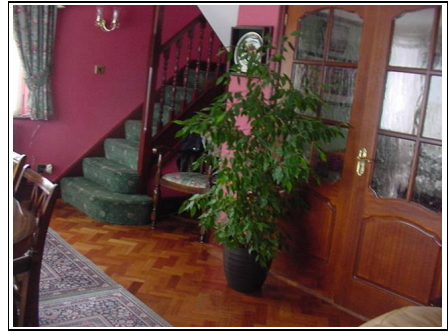
This section looks at the doors, the stairway, the skirting boards and the kitchen to give a general overview of the internal joinery's condition.

Doors

The doors are a dark timber door with a fair amount of glazing in it together with more traditional 1930's/1950's style panelled door with a large panel at the top and three rectangular panels to the lower portion.



Older style door which has been painted a dark brown



More modern replacement timber doors

Staircase

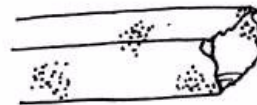
We noted that the underside of the staircase was partly lined where we could see it; we recommend all of it is lined to help reduce the spread of fire

Kitchen

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

Finally, it should be noted that not all joinery has been inspected. We have viewed a random sample and visually inspected these to give a general overview of the condition. Please also see the External Fascias and Soffits and Windows and Doors Section.

TIMBER DEFECTS



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

Dry Rot

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

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

Wet Rot

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

In the areas inspected no evidence was found of any wet rot; however there is an outside chance that there is wet rot in the property because we found dampness in the property and we can't see enough airbricks in the floor. We have lateral damp to the walls which will affect the floor timbers to some extent.

Woodworm



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

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

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

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

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

INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

The decoration is average to above average, with minor marks as you would expect in a home that's been lived in.

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

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

THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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

HIPs (Home Information Packs) Report

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

Roof Insulation

Some roof insulation was present, although not to current Building Regulation requirements of 270mm. We typically find in roofs between 100mm – 150mm of insulation. In this instance you have approximately 150mm.

Walls

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

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

The windows are double glazed and therefore have reasonable thermal properties although they don't have trickle vents, please see our earlier comments.

Services

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

Summary

Generally we found the property to have average thermal properties. Further insulation in the roof for example would require ventilation to stop and avoid condensation.

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

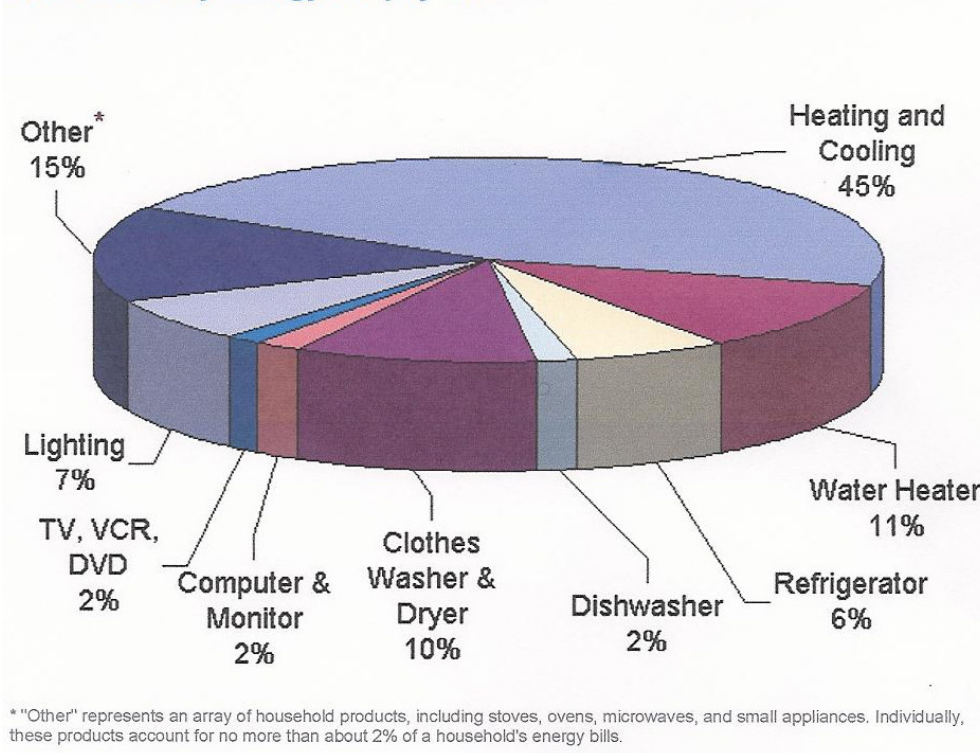
[HTTP//www.est.org.uk](http://www.est.org.uk), which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.

or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

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

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

What does my energy bill pay for?



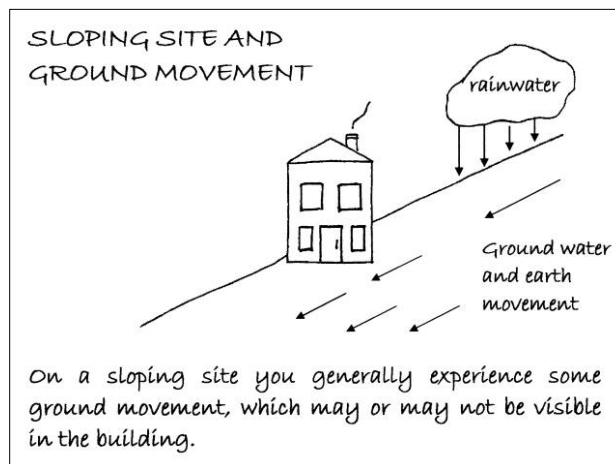
OTHER MATTERS



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

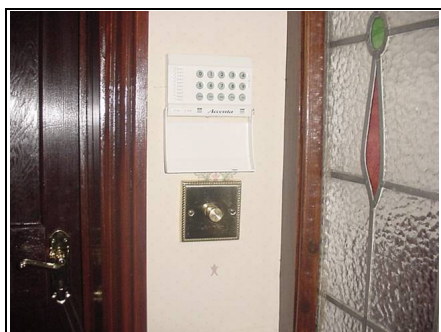
Sloping Site

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



Security System

We are advised that there are two security systems in the property, one on the left hand side and one on the right hand side. The left hand side one is located near the entrance door and the right hand side one is located at the top of the stairs.



Alarm system for main building



Alarm system for right hand section



Alarm sensors

Fire Systems and Smoke Alarms

You may wish to review this and increase the number of smoke alarms in the property.

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 19th century with gas lighting still being the norm for a good many years after.

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

Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the kitchen. We would date the fuse board as being from the 1980s/1990s and, whilst not the best now available, it is reasonable.



Fuse board

Earth Test

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

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



Earth test

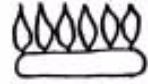
ACTION REQUIRED: If there is no record of an electrical test having been undertaken within the last five years, it is recommended that the installation be tested by a competent electrician (NICEIC registered) and all recommendations implemented. Thereafter, the installation should be re-tested every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

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

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

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

GAS

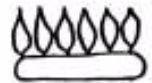


There is very little we can check for in a gas installation, we do inspect to make sure there is one and that it has a consumer unit and that the boilers are vented. Ideally you should have a service inspection carried out by a Gas Safe registered plumber.

All gas appliances, pipework and flues should be the subject of an annual service by a Gas Safe registered heating engineer; works to any gas appliance by an unregistered person is illegal. Unless evidence can be provided to confirm that there has been annual servicing we would recommend that you commission such a service prior to use to ensure safe and efficient operation.

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

OIL/SOLID FUEL



ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal advisor needs to check and confirm whether supplementary heating is required from other sources in a direct written question to the owners.

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 Pressure

When the taps were run to carry out the drainage tests we checked the pressure, literally by putting a finger over a tap, and the pressure seemed typical of what we find.

The Water Board have to guarantee a certain pressure of water to ensure that things like boilers, particularly the instantaneous ones, have a constant supply of pressured water (they would blow up if they didn't!).

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

Cold Water Cistern

We have found a water tank in the roof although it is no longer in use. We can only assume that the water is directly fed to the taps. The original idea behind a water tank was to help water pressure and to give an emergency supply of water.

Hot Water Cylinder

We noted in the roof space a modern Mega flow unit; these are modern heat efficient hot water cylinders. Our experience is that these are generally considered very good by anyone who has them.



Mega flow in roof space

Plumbing

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

Heating

The boiler was located in the roof space, it is manufactured by Worcester. Our limited inspection of the hot water and central heating system revealed no evidence to suggest any serious defects, however we would recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract is placed with an approved heating engineer.

The heating was on at the time of the survey, the property was pleasantly warm.

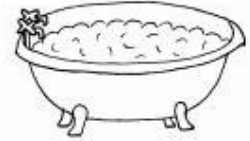
Ten Minute Heating Test

It wasn't necessary to do a ten minute heating test as the heating was on. Externally it had been/was snowing.

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 suite with separate wc

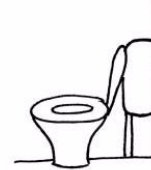
The family bathroom suite looks in average condition. It is slightly small considering the house as a whole.

Ensuite bathroom to the right hand side

The ensuite bathroom suite is in average condition.

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

MAIN DRAINS



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

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

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

Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We didn't identify any manholes in the snow although there may well be some.

ACTION REQUIRED: Check whether the property drains to a soakaway system or into the main drains. Please advise and we will comment further or revisit the property if necessary.

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. With this age of property it is likely to be directly into the ground.

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.

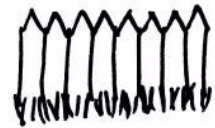
OUTSIDE AREAS

GARAGES/OUTBUILDINGS/ PARKING



Other than the small area of the driveway we have not viewed any of the outbuildings that form part of this purchase, an additional survey would be needed if you wish us to comment on these.

EXTERNAL AREAS



The gardens were covered in snow at the time of our inspection as you can see from the photos.

Front Garden



Rear Garden



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

We are advised that there is approximately five acres, we have not checked this.

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

Neighbours

Left/Right Hand Neighbours

Given the snowy conditions we didn't do the normal neighbourhood checks that we would. Obviously the location is quite isolated which may in turn be also the benefit of it.

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 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 edition published by Royal Institution of
Chartered Surveyors Books.*

House Builders Bible

By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

APPENDICES

LIMITATIONS

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

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

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

ENGLISH LAW

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

SOLE USE

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

ONLY HUMAN!

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

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

WEATHER

As you are aware it was snowing/had snowed at the time of our inspection and this has limited our view although we have done our best given the circumstances.

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

References BBC News www.bbc.co.uk

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

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

As previously mentioned because it was snowing/had snowed at the time of our inspection this has limited our view although we have done our best given the circumstances. We have not opened up the ground or first floors which ideally we would like to do or we did not have the benefit of being able to check the drainage system which can be costly if there are problems. Please see our comments in the relevant sections.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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

THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

Work You Cannot do Yourself

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

INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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

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

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

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

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

French Drain

Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

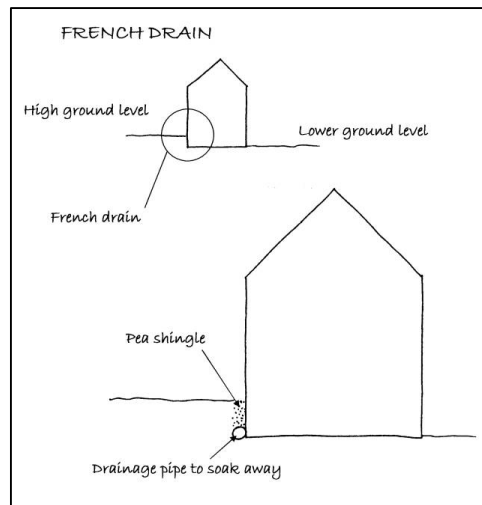
We are finding where we are asked to look at damp walls and damp floors or damp problems in general that commonly it is because the external ground level is higher than the internal ground level, or airbricks have been blocked, or simply paving slabs, decking or briquettes have been used to form a patio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

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

What use is a French drain?

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

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



of
your
the depth,
most cases
there is a
wish to

where

French drains must be on a slope

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

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

The French drain system that we would recommend

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

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

The French pond!

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