

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

OF

Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL8



FOR

Mr G and Miss T

Prepared by:

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Independent Chartered Surveyors

—— Marketing by: ——

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION
REPORT FORMAT
SYNOPSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

EXTERNAL

CHIMNEYSTACKS
ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS
ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT SPACE
GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES AND SOIL AND VENT PIPES
EXTERNAL WALLS
EXTERNAL JOINERY
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

GARAGE/PARKING
EXTERNAL AREAS

POINTS FOR LEGAL ADVISOR

APPENDICES

LIMITATIONS
ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS
GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

Independent Chartered Surveyors

—— Marketing by: ——

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

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.

Independent Chartered Surveyors

—— Marketing by: ——

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two storey detached property situated at the end of a cul-de-sac in a residential area.

The property has mature gardens surrounding it. There are also very large trees to the perimeter!

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

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

1960	Internet was developed as a communications system for the defence industry
1963	President Kennedy assassinated in Dallas
1964	The Death Penalty is abolished
1966	England win football World Cup
1969	Man lands on the Moon
1971	Decimalisation
Early 1970s	British Property Boom

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view



Right hand side of property



Rear of property

Independent Chartered Surveyors

Marketing by: ———

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Entrance hall
- Lounge
- Kitchen
- Cloakroom

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Four bedrooms
- Bathroom

Outside Areas

The property sits on a sloping site and is surrounded by large trees, which we feel immediately stand out to a good surveyor as being a potential area, which indeed they have been with the movement in the past.

Independent Chartered Surveyors

—— Marketing by: ——

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

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.

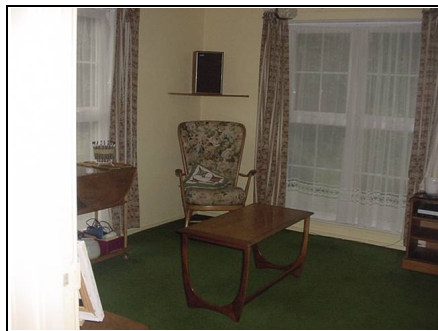
Ground Floor



Lounge



Kitchen



Dining room

Independent Chartered Surveyors

—— Marketing by: ——

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

First Floor



Rear left hand bedroom



Rear right hand bedroom



Bathroom



Front left hand bedroom



Front right hand bedroom

Independent Chartered Surveyors

—— Marketing by: ——

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

EXTERNAL

Chimneys:	One brick chimney
Main Roof:	A pitched hipped roof, clad with concrete pantiles
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Finished in stretcher bond brickwork
External Joinery:	Mixture of plastic, aluminium and timber glazed windows and timber/possibly asbestos fascias and soffits

INTERNAL

Ceilings:	Plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Mixtures of solid and lightweight walls (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: concrete floor (assumed) First Floor: Lightweight joist and floorboards (assumed)

SERVICES

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas. Your legal adviser needs to check and confirm this.

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.

Having said all of that, here are our comments:-

Generally we consider the property to be a high risk purchase as we found it to be in a poor condition structurally as we found it to be in a position where it was vulnerable to future further risk of movement. The main issue being, in a nutshell, that the previous works had merely repaired the property and not taken any future preventative measures against the same problem occurring again.

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 property is located at the end of a cul-de-sac.
- There are good sized gardens with surrounding mature trees (from an aesthetic point of view)
- The house is good sized and, relatively speaking, has good natural light.

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) **The Chimney**

We could see water coming in through the roof at the rear of the property around the chimney. We therefore believe that the chimney needs to have work carried out to it, or the area directly behind it, which unfortunately we were unable to see from the ground level or any other vantage point.



Note the wet timbers to the right hand side of the chimney

ACTION REQUIRED: Inspect the rear of the roof closely. Taking an educated guess, the damage may have been caused by a branch falling on to the roof, a defective flashing to the chimney or dislodged tile.

ANTICIPATED COST: We would estimate a few hundred pounds. Work should be carried out as soon as possible as you can never underestimate the damage that water getting into a structure can do.

Please see the Chimney Section of this Report.

2) Asbestos to the soffits

In this age of property asbestos was commonly used (it was used almost as a substitute for wood in some instances). We believe asbestos was used to the soffits, although it is very difficult to tell with the human eye. It is possible it has also been used in other areas in the house, such as to line the staircase and other places as a lining material.



Possible asbestos to the soffits boards

ACTION REQUIRED: The perception of problems with asbestos is a concern to house purchasers. We would always recommend that any asbestos is removed, but in the first instance you will need to have a specialist asbestos company check the property and advise the type and condition of the asbestos.

ANTICIPATED COST: Generally we find anything to do with asbestos is not cheap and therefore we would expect £500 plus, but you will need to obtain an estimate.

Please see the Timber Section of this Report.

3) Loose Flashings

There are several flat roofs to the property. We believe they all have had repairs to the flashings.

You will note in the photograph that there is a white pen. This is stuck behind the mortar of the flashing where it is coming away.



ACTION REQUIRED: You will need to re-bed flashings. We would recommend that you look to replace the flashings with a lead flashing. This should be bedded into mastic, which allows for movement unlike the cement mortar that you presently have.

4) Garage

The garage has a flat roof which has water sitting on it, this is not ideal. We can see that previous repairs have been carried out to the parapet wall around the flat roof.

We feel this will discharge water into the garage and may make it difficult to get out when it is icy.



Garage roof, likely to be leaking

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend re-roofing with an insulation cut to falls.

ANTICIPATED COST: £2,000 - £5,000 or you may alternatively wish to wait until this roof fails (lets in water) before carrying out any work and then do a relatively inexpensive job depending of course on what you intend to store within the garage.

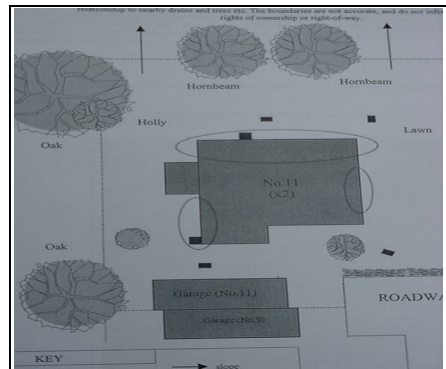
Please see the Outside Section of this Report.

The Ugly

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

We have read the various reports in relation to the subsidence work that was carried out in 2002 and the information relating to hoopsafe that was used to underpin the property.

We do, however, feel that anyone purchasing the property is in a precarious position for several reasons. The main one being that they are susceptible to future movement in the property as the repair works are simply that, repairs works rather than measures being taken to stop the problem from re-occurring.



Planned view of the house taken from the report showing areas affected by movement

We would also comment that any property that has cracking in it, such as this one, would put a percentage of people off buying it so this limits the future saleability of the property, as the market into which it can be sold is limited.



Cracking indicated by the pen

We would also comment that no matter what work is carried out, the property sits on clay sub-soil which will inevitably be affected by weather conditions (which we seem to be getting greater extremes of) and surrounding trees.

From our reading of the report it concludes that the rear left hand tree was mainly the cause of the problems, which is a tree owned by the council. There is also an additional oak tree to the left hand side, again owned by the council. In both cases you are reliant upon the council carrying out suitable and adequate maintenance to these trees to ensure that your property does not have any problems. The lack of appropriate maintenance seems to be one of the main issues that previously occurred, which is still out of your control.



Movement indicated by the pen

Even with the existing insurance company saying they will continue insuring the property, this is not as good as having a property where there is a minimal risk of having any problem and indeed it would be interesting to see if another insurance company would be equally as obliging to insure the property.

Whilst we do not feel we are an expert on trees to the same degree as those opinions that have been sought within the report, we do feel that their brief was to rectify the movement problems to the property, rather than provide a future prevention of the property problems occurring again. We have seen in the past root barriers being added to prevent the roots of the trees getting under the property and whilst we are unsure if this is the correct solution in this case, as far as we could see in the report, no preventative measures had taken place.

We would comment that the house construction is what we would term as “lightweight” as were many houses constructed in this era. By this we mean that minimal grand materials have been used in some areas, for example the floor. The deflection on the right hand side of the property is quite large and excessive. It may have been something displaced by the movement but this really should have been checked by the insurance company when they were carrying out their work.

On a final note, if you do decide to proceed, we can say, and we are recommending that you do not, that you insist that a drainage report is carried out. This is because drains to the property, viewed via a close circuit television camera report, give a good indication of any movement that has occurred. Of course if any leaks or breakages in the drains are identified this means that there will be future problems. Typically, this will cost a few hundred pounds.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend not purchasing this property.

Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Electrics

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

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

Maintenance

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 re-decoration to your own personal style and taste. 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 property to be a high risk purchase and your money would be better spent elsewhere. We particularly feel that there will be future problems in five, ten or twenty years time and so that when you come to sell the property you will be selling into a limited market. This may affect the future market value of the property, particularly if the housing market is depressed.

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**



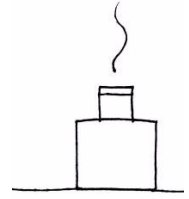
Independent Chartered Surveyors

—— Marketing by: ——

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

CHIMNEY STACKS AND, PARAPET WALLS



Chimney Stacks

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

This property has one chimney, which is centrally located.

Central Chimney

This chimney is brick finished with a metal flashing which we believe to be lead. It has two small chimney pots, one of which is a flue. From what we could see the chimney looks in average condition. Unfortunately we were unable to see the very top of the chimney known as the flaunchings, we therefore cannot comment upon this.



ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary about the dampness getting in around the chimney.

Flaunchings Defined

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

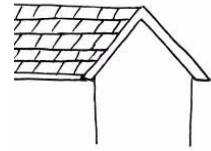
Flashings Defined

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

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

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

ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

Main Roof

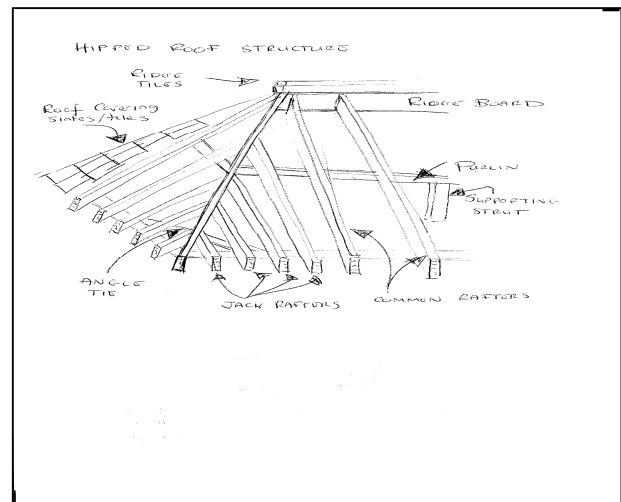
A pitched hipped roof, clad with concrete pantiles. A pantile roof is one which has tiles with a curve that helps the roof lock together. It can be prone to moss and cement mortar coming out of the perimeter.



Moss on concrete tiles can cause problems with damage to the face of the tiles and blocked gutters. The side that we can see has minor moss but we often find the sides near the trees have excessive moss

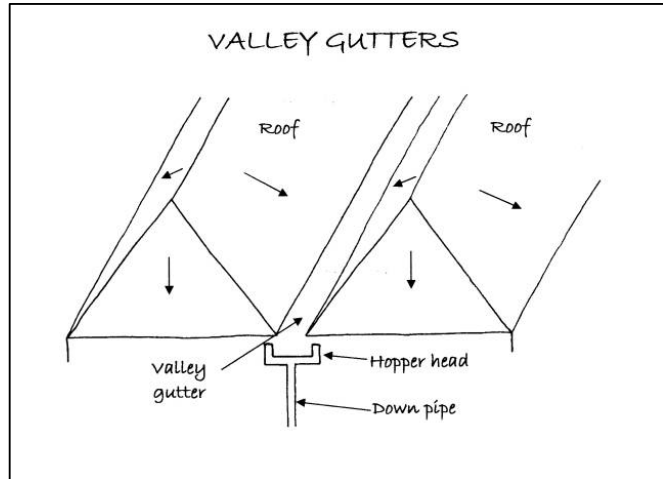
ACTION REQUIRED:

You need to check the entire roof and clear it of moss.



Valley Gutter

There are several valley gutters to the property. Valley gutters occur where two roofs join and are generally considered weak areas. In this instance we can see that it is getting blocked with leaves etc.



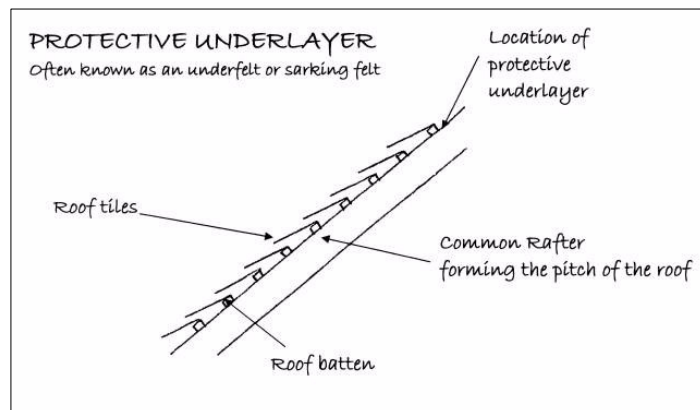
ACTION REQUIRED: Remove the leaves from the valley gutters and also check the sides of the valley gutters as these often come away.



Blocked valley gutter

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 underlayer is formed from a Bitumen based paper which is brittle and fragile. Although it is not in good condition it is very difficult to advise to replace it, as to remove and replace the underlayer is a very expensive job because the entirety of the roof covering has to be removed.



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

ACTION REQUIRED: The underlayer needs to be monitored. For example, the dampness that we could see behind the chimney.

Low Level Roofs

There are two flat roofs to the property, one to the front and one to the left hand side. Making a general comment on both roofs :

Flat Roofs

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

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

The flat roof has a felt finish, which in turn is finished with a loose stone chipping. This is to resist frost attack and reduce the de-grading affect caused by the sun. Care should be taken when walking on the roof. This type of roof covering has not been generally used for many years.



Flat roof to front of property

Where the roof meets the main building we could see a felt flashing.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

We would also comment that as the roof has moss upon it that the rainwater is sitting on the roof and therefore this will reduce the length of life of the roof, which we would expect to be approximately ten years.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments on the flashings in the Executive Summary. You will need to do general maintenance to ensure this roof lasts.

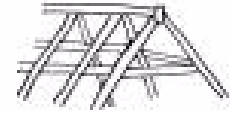
For your general information the latest Building Regulations require flat roofs to be ventilated. Building Regulations are not retrospective but the reason for the requirement is to make sure that any moisture that enters the roof construction is dispelled by way of ventilation. We would suggest that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

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

Finally, all the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. Flat roofs have been inspected from a ladder from which we could only see approximately 60% of the main roof.

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

ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

Main Roof

Roof Access

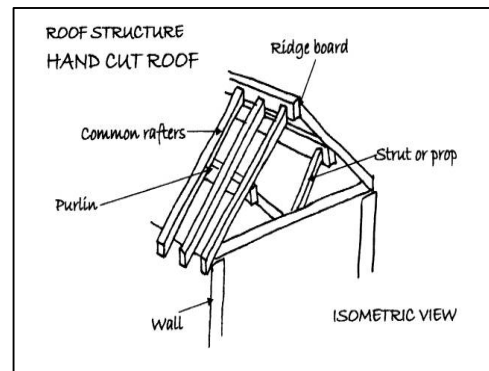
The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing. There is a loft ladder, electric light and partial floorboards. The loft perimeter has been viewed by torchlight, which has limited our viewing slightly.



Ladder to loft hatch

Roof Structure

This type of roof structure has, what is known as, a cut timber roof, which is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site. 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 generally in average condition considering their age. We have inspected the roof structure for

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



Photograph of the junction of the hipped roof

Our examination was 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 average to above average condition considering the property has movement. We would normally expect to find some movement to the actual hips of the roof. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.

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

Water Tanks

The water tanks are formed in plastic and we therefore assume they are relatively new (in surveying terms, in this instance, that is the last 30 years).

We are pleased to see the water tank has a lid, which stops anything getting in it, though we would always recommend that water tanks be drained down and cleared of any debris etc. (we have seen dead birds and other unmentionable things in these tanks). As you are cleaning your teeth with this water it is best that it is as clean as possible!

Ventilation

We did not see any vents to the roof to help prevent condensation.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add vents.

Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

Electrical Cables

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

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

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

GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

Gutters and Downpipes

We believe the gutter is what is known as a deep flow gutter, which is a wider gutter than you would normally find, which in our opinion is a great help where you have the likelihood of leaves going in the gutter, as in this instance. There may be a few repairs, but we feel that most people would be happy with getting these carried out.



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.

It rained like it never rained before

It would be fair to say that it rained very heavily during parts of this report and the gutter did not cope with it.

If you look at the adjoining photograph you will see staining on the walls where the gutters overflowed. We do feel that the rain was exceptional in this instance and we did have to cope with flooded roads on the way to the survey. We do feel that the gutters would cope with most usual rainstorms (providing they are not full of leaves).



Soil and Vent Pipe

These appear to be internal and we can only really see them where they exit at roof level.

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



Soil and vent pipe to right hand side of the hip of the roof

WALLS



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

The walls are formed in brickwork. Cracking was evident which we will discuss further on within this section and also in the Executive Summary.

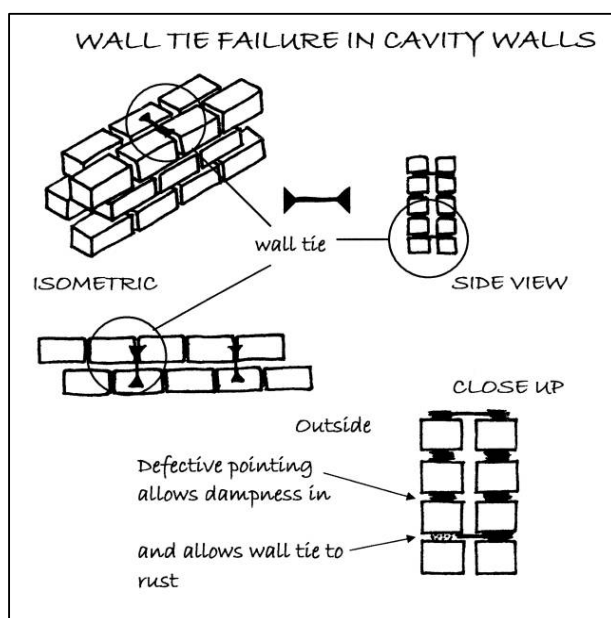
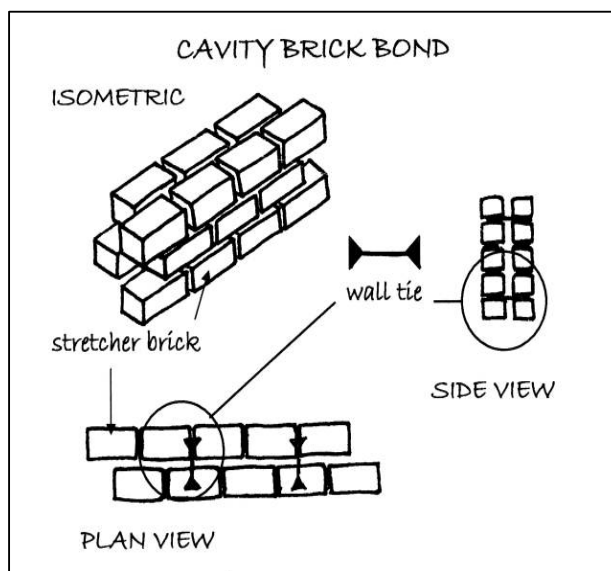
Stretcher Bond Brickwork

This property is brick finished and laid in a lime mortar originally and repointed in cement mortar. This is all bedded in what is known as Stretcher Bond.

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

In this age of property we also need to mention the wall tie failure which there is an increased risk of.

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



Movement Cracks

There is evidence of what we would term as minor cracking to the property. However, the hairline cracking is extensive and we can see why it was of concern to the owners and to the insurance company. As mentioned, we have read the relevant reports relating to the litigation work that was carried out and the subsequent underpinning system that was used. Our initial thoughts were that the insurance company has used “a sledge hammer to crack a walnut”, though we would temper this comment by saying general insurance companies are looking for 110% certainty in what they are doing.



Cracking to the rear elevation



Cracking to right hand elevation



Cracking over front left hand window

We would also comment that, as far as we can see, there are no preventative measures put in place to stop this from occurring again, which of course is a requirement for insurance companies as they are only insuring you to the situation you are in before movement occurred.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary section of this report.

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

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

FOUNDATIONS



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

Foundations

Since 1948 the Local Authority has been tasked to check that the property is built to Building Regulations standards, it is reasonable to expect Building Regulations approval to have been gained. Your legal adviser needs to check and confirm this.

Generally foundations were to 900mm to one metre deep prior to the 1970's and subsidence became an issue. It has been argued that this was due to our warmer, dryer summers and then foundations tended to be increased to 1.2 metres. It is likely that this property has a concrete foundation of approximately one metre, but we cannot be certain without opening it up.

Building Insurance Policy

In this instance we believe there is a letter confirming that the insurance company will carry on insuring the property. However, it does mean that you may not be able to go out into the market to get a "competitive" quote as other insurance companies may be more wary of insuring.

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

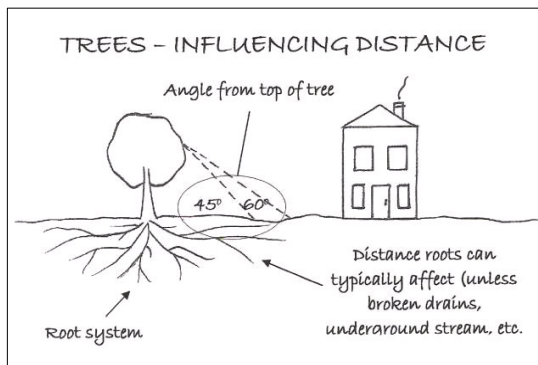
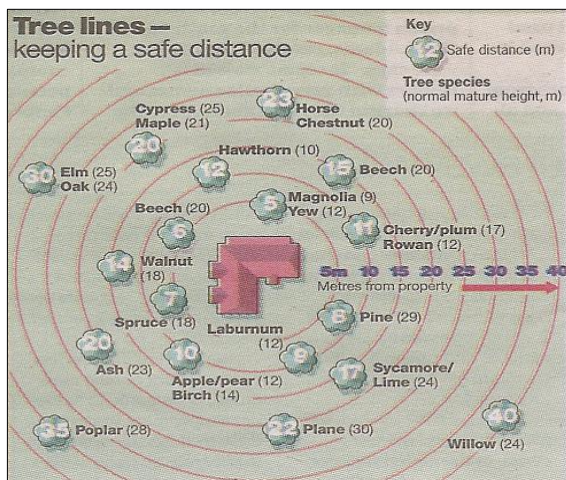
Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.

Future Movement Possible

As you are aware, there has been movement in the past which has been attributed to the oak trees. There are also a number of other trees within the vicinity of the building in what we would term “influencing distance”. We believe, as stated in the various reports, that the tree roots will be under and around the property.

As this is a clay soil it can affect the condition considerably. Unfortunately, the oak trees are not within the bounds of your property and therefore you do not have control over their maintenance. You only receive the resulting problems from lack of maintenance. It is a fine balance with trees such as these between maintaining them in such a way that it is going to create subsidence by extracting too much water from the soil, or heave by extracting too little water from the soil. The clay type soil in this area (according to the report) can be affected considerably by the water content.

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.

Independent Chartered Surveyors

Marketing by: ———

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

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, As the property is relatively new (last 30 years in this case) we would expect to find a plastic damp proof course, often known by its trade name of hyload.



We could see a damp proof course to the property. It is slightly low in some areas, but this is nothing overly to be concerned about, particularly bearing in mind the other issues on this property.

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

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

AIRBRICKS

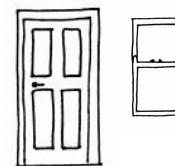


In properties with suspended floors you need to have an airflow beneath to stop deterioration. The air is allowed to pass under the property by the use of airbricks. Generally the rule of thumb is that airbricks are spaced every metre and a half approximately, but this depends upon the specific circumstances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

We noted airbricks to the property. These were at such a level as to ventilate the rooms. This was a common practice in the 1960's to help reduce condensation. Often the properties would be susceptible to this.

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.

EXTERNAL JOINERY



The external joinery part of 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

The fascia and soffit detail includes exposed rafter feet. We generally find that due to the awkwardness of these they do not get painted / stained as often as they should and you may find rot if they are closely examined.



ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the executive summary with regard to asbestos.

Windows and Doors

The property has plastic, double glazed windows, which generally look to be of a reasonable quality. We did not see any trickle vents.

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



A selection of front windows and doors

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

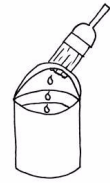
Trickle Vents

The windows have trickle vents that allow a trickle of air through, therefore stopping/reducing the likelihood of condensation occurring within the property.

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

Please also see the Internal Joinery section.

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; the rafter feet and the fencing are the only items we can think of and that will be in a few years to come.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

INTERNAL

CEILING, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES



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

Ceilings

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction, we believe that the ceilings are likely to be plasterboard (assumed).

Plasterboard Defined

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

Internal Walls and Partitions

We have carried out a tap test to the internal walls (this is not rocket science, it is literally tapping the walls and listening for the sound made) and found them to be a mixture of solid walls and hollow/studwork walls.

Generally it is a reasonable assumption that the solid walls are likely to be made from brickwork / blockwork and will be the structural walls, with the studwork walls being purely to divide the rooms.

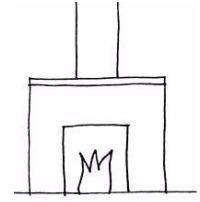
Perimeter Walls

Generally perimeter walls are finished with a modern plaster believed to be carlite / gypsum plaster and decorated. Without the removal of the decorative finish we cannot be 100 per cent certain, this type of plaster is used in most modern properties.

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 breast is located to the middle of the property (all directions given as you face the front of the property).

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.



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

Ground Floor

The floors felt solid underfoot so we have assumed they are formed in concrete, however, we have not opened up the floors or lifted carpets.

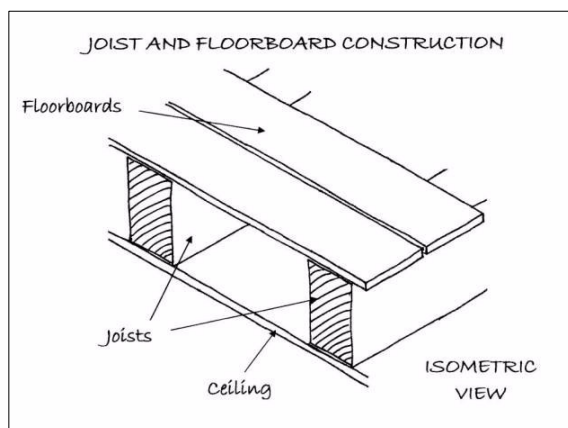
First Floor

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

The floor gives very slightly, as in the 1960s/1970s some builders used either smaller section timbers or larger spacing, you should ensure you are happy to live with this.

Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



Joist and 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 and floor coverings etc. The comments we have made are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction. We would emphasise that we have not opened up the floors in any way or lifted any floorboards.



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

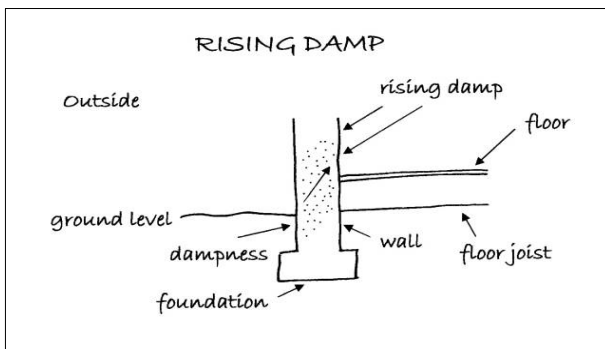
No evidence of any significant rising dampness was detected in the random areas checked. The property sits on a sloping site with a proof course not being consistently two bricks above ground level. It is not unusual in a property of this type and age to have minor damp particularly to the rear. We believe most people will be happy to live with this.



Checking for rising damp

ACTION REQUIRED: If you wish to be 100% certain, we would recommend a damp proof test by a BWPBA approved contractor, who can offer an insured guarantee for any work carried out.

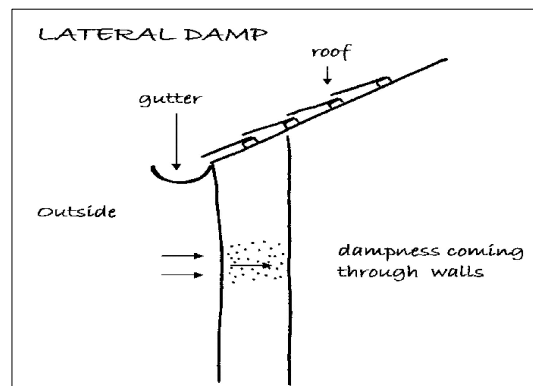
Rising damp depends upon various components including the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation of the material, amongst other things. Rising damp can come from the ground, drawn by capillary action, to varying degrees of intensity and height into the materials above.



Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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

Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to internal walls, floors and other surfaces. No significant penetrating/lateral dampness was seen or detected.



Condensation

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

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

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

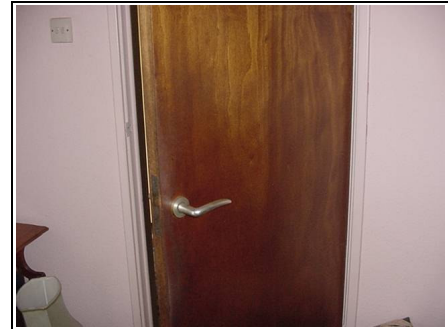
INTERNAL JOINERY



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

Doors

The property has veneered hollow core doors (sometimes referred to as egg box doors, as this is what the internal of them looks like when they are opened up).



Staircase

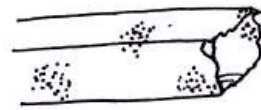
We were unable to examine the underside of the stair timbers due to it being lined, which precluded our inspection, so we cannot comment further upon the stair structure. We can, however, say that the lining plaster gives a resistance to the spread of fire if such circumstances were to occur.

Kitchen

From our cursory visual inspection the kitchen looked in reasonable condition, although it has suffered from some general day-to-day marks. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

TIMBER DEFECTS



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

Dry Rot

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

In the areas visually inspected no evidence was found of any significant dry rot.

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 visually inspected no evidence was found of any significant wet rot.

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 had a very limited view. Our view was limited because the chimney and the water tank restricted access. We found no obvious visual signs of significant woodworm activity or, indeed, signs of past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage. However we could only see about 10% of the timber.

In many properties of this age, there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection was considerably restricted in the roof by insulation covering.

ACTION REQUIRED: If you wish to be 100 percent certain that there is no woodworm the only way would be to get the property checked when it is empty of fixtures, fittings and furniture, 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, with minor marks as you would expect in a house that has 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.



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.

Roof Insulation

Some roof insulation was present, although not to current Building Regulation requirements of 270mm. We would not be overly concerned about this as we typically find in roofs between 100mm – 150mm of insulation. In this instance you have approximately 150mm. Ventilation should then be added to the roof.

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.

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.

Please see our comments in the executive summary.

Windows

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

Services

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

Summary

Overall, provided our assumptions correct and considering the properties age, type and style, it has average thermal properties.

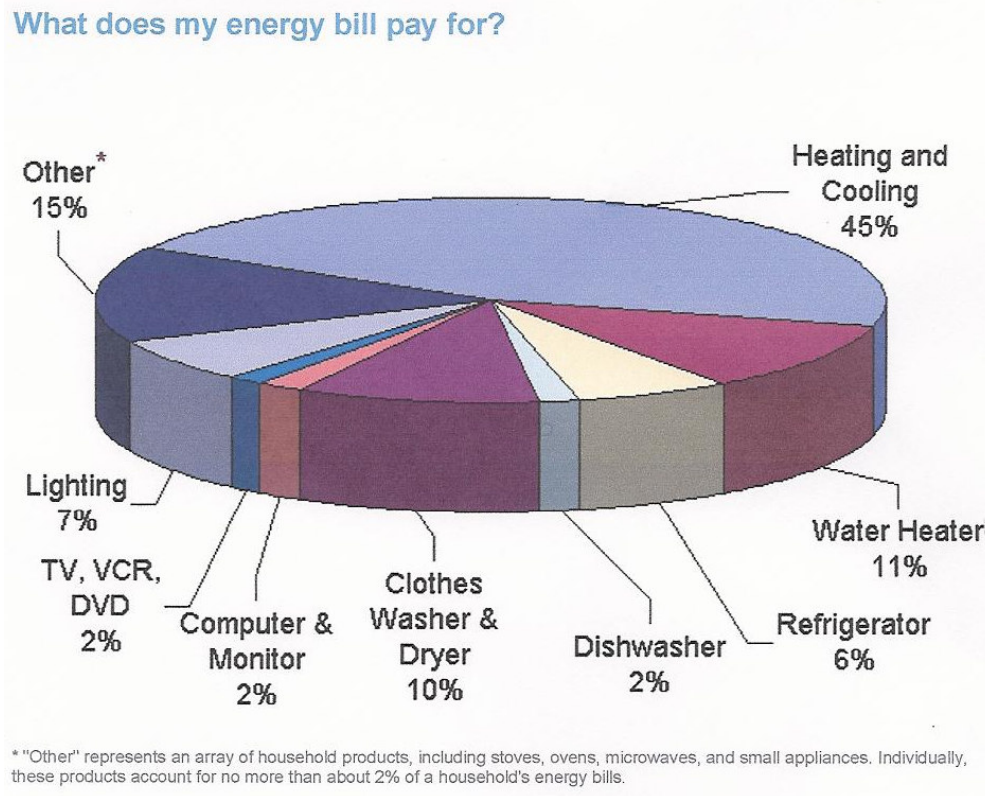
Further information can be obtained with regard to energy saving via the Internet on the following pages:

[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 likely to be required for future house sales.



Independent Chartered Surveyors

Marketing by: ———

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

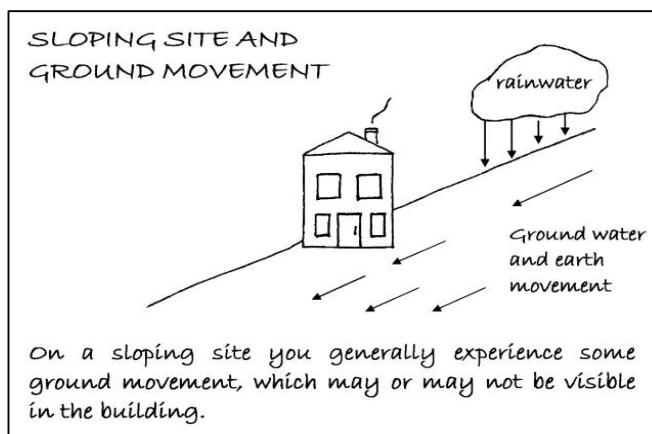
0800 298 5424



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

Sloping Sites

The sketch obviously exaggerates the slope on the property. It does make the point that the rainwater is travelling from the top of the garden to the bottom of the garden. As such you have a greater chance of movement, particularly to the rear and the side gables which is exactly where the movement has occurred.



Security System

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

Fire Systems and Smoke Alarms

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

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

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

Insurance

As commented on earlier the existing insurance company advise that they will continue insurance. However, this does limit the insurers you can go to. We would comment that normally we 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

We think that we have found asbestos to the soffits. This needs to be checked. We found that asbestos 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: Have an asbestos survey carried out by a specialist company.

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.

Fuse Board

We have not been able to locate the electric fuses and consumer units. We believe it may be in the garage as we did not manage to gain access to this area.

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.

Earth Test

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

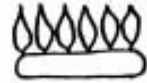


ACTION REQUIRED: If there is no record of an electrical test having been undertaken within the last five years, it is recommended that the installation be tested by a competent electrician (NICEIC registered) and all recommendations implemented.

Also note that Building Regulations require certain electrical work to be certified by an approved contractor.

For further information please see the appendices at the end of this survey for further details.

GAS



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

The main gas meter was not found. All gas appliances, pipework and flues should be the subject of an annual service by a competent engineer, i.e. a member of CORGI (the Council of Registered Gas Installers); works to gas appliances etc. by unqualified personnel is illegal. Unless evidence can be provided to confirm that there has been annual servicing we would recommend that you commission such a service prior to use to ensure safe and efficient operation.

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

PLUMBING AND HEATING



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

Water Supply

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

ACTION REQUIRED: Ask the Owners

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!).

Cold Water Cistern

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

Hot Water Cylinder

We found a hot water cylinder which was factory lagged, indicating that it was relatively new, i.e. in the past twenty years.



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 is floor mounted and is a Potterton Baxi, which is a commonly found make, but slightly dated.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend that you get the boiler serviced by a CORGI registered plumber and ask advice as to the condition of the boiler.

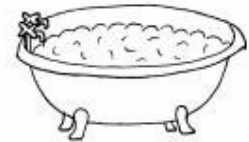
Ten Minute Heating Test

We did not carry out a ten minute heating test, which we normally would do. This is because the property is unoccupied and may cause damage or leakage which we are not in a position to rectify.

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

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

BATHROOM



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

The property has a three piece bathroom suite, including a walk in shower rather than a bath, which looks in an as new 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 foul drains from the property discharge into a public sewer; this should be confirmed by your Legal Advisor prior to exchange of contracts, who should also provide information in respect of any common or shared drains including liability for the maintenance and upkeep of the same.

We have run the cold water taps in the kitchen and bathroom for 15 minutes, without any build up or back up.

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 assume that the property has the benefit of mains drainage, from the man holes we have seen the drainage run is to the front of the property, although this should be confirmed by your legal advisor's enquiries.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend that a CCTV report is carried out ASAP and a specialist contract or be instructed to carry out tests on the underground drains and to implement all necessary repairs and replacements.

We have identified one inspection chamber / manhole.

Inspection Chamber / Manhole One to the front of the property near to the garage

We were unable to lift the cover.



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.

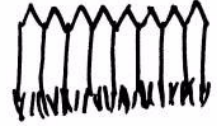
Some rainwater drains are taken into the main drainage system, which is now illegal (as we simply do not have the capacity to cope with it), and can cause blockages to the main drains! Here we have done our best from a visual inspection to advise of any particular problems.

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal. This is particularly important due to the nearby trees which will be looking and hunting for good supplies for water.

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



DETACHED GARAGE (ALTHOUGH LINKED TO NEXT DOOR) / PARKING



Unfortunately we were unable to gain access to the garage. We could, however, see from the roof that there had been leaks to it and we could see the newer brickwork that we found to the parapet wall of the garage, that these had been quite extensive. We suspect that there is water damage within the garage, though we would reiterate that we have not been in the garage.



Front Garden

A mature garden on a slight slope.

Rear and Side Gardens

A mature garden on a slight slope with surrounding trees.

Please see our earlier comments in the Trees Section of the report.

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

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

Neighbours

Left Hand Neighbours

We spoke briefly to them and they advised that they knew of no issues.

Right Hand Neighbours

No-one answered the door when we called.

POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

If you wish to proceed with your purchase of the property a copy of this 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.
- h) Adjoining roads and services.
- i) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- j) General development proposals in the locality.
- k) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.

- l) 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.
- m) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.
- n) Any outstanding Party Wall Notice or the knowledge that any are about to be served.
- o) 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 read: www.1stAssociated.co.uk/leaderboard.asp

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

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

When you booked this survey we asked you if you required us to carry out a verbal check on the status of the property with the Local Authority regarding whether it is a Listed Building, in a Conservation area and any history that is available over the phone with regard to Planning Applications and Building Control. In this instance you have not requested that we carry out this work.

Finally, your Solicitor should carry out any Local Authority checks and any additional enquiries he/she feels necessary, advising us if they feel that we can have further input.

Finally, an extract from the book “Sold”!

“When you receive your full structural survey (now known as a Building Survey) or House Buyers Report, do remember that you have requested a list of the property’s faults so it is unlikely to make cheerful reading. Every property has its faults but what you are looking for are the serious ones. If your Report does reveal a serious problem that you had not anticipated when making your offer, the first thing to do is to decide whether you want to take on the repairs if an adjustment is made to the price. If you do, then get quotes for the work as quickly as possible and present your case in a fair manner. Most people are reasonable under such circumstances and will compromise but inevitably there are those who are sufficiently confident of their position to say take it or leave it. In a very active market, prices may have moved up sufficiently to cover the extra expenditure in theory and the vendor will not hasten to point this out but remember that he has probably got a vendor pressing him to proceed quickly and starting with a new purchaser will cause him delay”

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

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

REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses
Published by Estates Gazette Limited

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

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

House Builders Bible
By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

APPENDICES

Independent Chartered Surveyors

—— Marketing by: ——

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

LIMITATIONS

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

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

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

ENGLISH LAW

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

SOLE USE

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

ONLY HUMAN!

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

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

WEATHER

It was raining, very heavily in some instances, at the time of the inspection. The weather did limit our survey slightly.

We would add that some defects only become apparent upon physical occupation or are only present as a result of the extremes of weather (which are becoming a more frequent occurrence). As you may be aware 2006 was the warmest year in Britain since records began, we believe, in the 1700s; with July 2006 being the hottest July on record in Britain. 2005 was the third driest year on record in Britain with 2003 being the driest. The year 2000 was the wettest year on record and August 2004 was the wettest August on record in Britain. This may have adverse effects on lots of buildings in years to come.

NOT LOCAL

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

EMPTY PROPERTY

The property was empty at the time of our survey, we were therefore not able to carry out our usual question and answer session or have our questionnaire filled out.

INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been limited due to being unable to access the garage or the benefit of talking to the owner for their comments about the work that took place with regard to the movement to the property.

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.

Independent Chartered Surveyors

—— Marketing by: ——

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

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.