JOB REFERENCE: RBS/RM

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

OF

A 1980's Detached Bungalow, Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire

FOR

Mr.Q

FOR ANY HELP OR ASSISTANCE CALL FREE PHONE:

0800 298 5424

or

visit our website:

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

CONTENTS

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 house 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 house is yours but we will do our best to offer advice to make the decision as easy as possible.

REPORT FORMAT

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

GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

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

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

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

ORIENTATION

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

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This property is a modern detached bungalow, with a conservatory added. It is situated in a mixed residential area.

There are gardens to the front and rear. The front garden is an Alpine garden with generally low maintenance. There is also has a driveway to the integral garage, situated on the right hand side as you face the property. There is also an access passageway to the left hand side, which allows you to access the rear garden without going through the property.

We are advised that the property was built in 1989. Even though this property was fairly recently built building regulations and standards have changed since then, which we duly comment upon in the report. If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

1980	John Lennon Shot Dead
1981	Falklands Conflict between Britain and Argentina
1984	Live Aid Concerts
1987	The Channel Tunnel is started
1994	Digital Cameras come of age. Also the first recorded case of SPAM, interestingly enough, sent out by an Arizonian law company.

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Front Elevation

Rear Elevation

Garage

Front Garden

Rear Garden

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Entrance corridor
- Lounge
- Conservatory
- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Two bedrooms
- A further room presently set up as a study, it could also be used as a bedroom

Outside Areas

We would refer you to our earlier comments and add in addition to the integral garage there is also off road parking on the driveway.

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.

Entrance Corridor

Lounge

Conservatory

Kitchen

Bathroom

Left Hand Bedroom

Left Hand Side Study

Right Hand Bedroom

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

EXTERNAL

Main Roof: A hipped pitched concrete tile roof with a valley gutter

Conservatory roof: Polycarbonate

Gutters and Downpipes: Plastic

Walls: Finished in brick with a cavity wall bond (assumed)

External Joinery: The windows are plastic double-glazed and the fascias and soffits are painted timber and plastic soffits. The timber soffits are vented.

INTERNAL

Ceilings: Plasterboard (assumed)

Walls: Predominantly solid although there are a few studwork walls (assumed)

Floors: Ground Floor: Solid underfoot (assumed) concrete or beam and block floors.

SERVICES

We are advised (by the owner) that the property has a mains water supply, drains, electricity and gas.

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 95 photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if a comment has not been discussed that you are interested in/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 found the property internally, decoratively to be in above average condition and externally the property is in average condition, all considering the properties age type and style. We have divided the Executive Summary into 'The Good', 'The Bad' and 'The Ugly', to help distinguish what in our mind are the main issues.

The Good

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

- Decoration as new
- The property is detached
- It has its own garage

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) Valley Gutters to the Roof

Valley gutters come about where two roofs meet. The valley gutters have been recently tarred. We spoke to the owner about this and he advised that it was due to dampness getting in through them. We would personally have not recommended tarring until we had actually found the leaking area and repaired it. Tarring the entire valley gutter is very much a lazy solution.

Valley gutters are problematic and we would expect you to have problems with these valley gutters in years to come. Unfortunately, now the tarring has been started it will now be expensive to remove and far simpler in the short term to simply tar over.

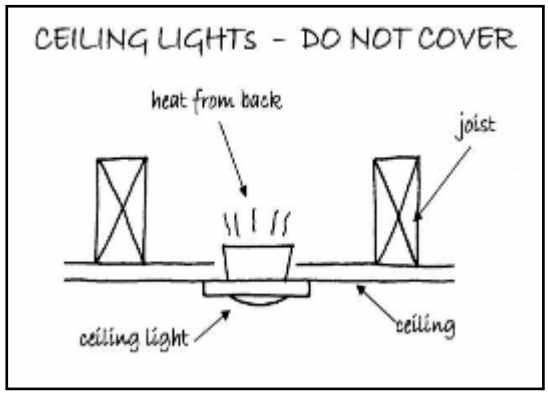
ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of a few hundred pounds every time a leak appears.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

2) Ceiling Lights

The ceiling lights do not have any protectors on the top of them. When we discussed this with the owner he advised that he actually put the lights in rather than a qualified electrician.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend that these are checked by an electrician and that and IEE (Institute of Electrical Engineers) test is carried out by an NIC EIC Contractor and all recommendations are carried out.



ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £200 plus any associated recommendations.

Please see the Electrics Section of this Report.

3) **Horizontal Hairline Cracking Above Windows**

There is minor hairline cracking (one to two millimetres) adjacent to where the windows are. We believe this relates to settlement following the double-glazing being put in.

Please see the Walls Section of this report.

4) **Fans**

You may or may not like the fans within the rooms. They should in theory be positioned a minimum of 2.1 metres above floor level for obvious reasons!

5) **Microbore Pipes**

We noted that the property has microbore pipes. These tend to be used today by plumbers as they are very quick and easy to install and not requiring any real plumbing work such as bending and also reduces the number of joints. However, it does leave you with the problem that it blocks up.

We discussed this with the owner during our question and answer session who was well aware of the problems and advised that he had drained down the heating system and therefore cleared it – he offered this advise before we made our comments with regard to the problems with them. We do feel he is genuine, however, we cannot be certain without literally draining down the plumbing system, which we do not do in our building survey.

6) **Conservatory and Windows Guarantee**

Conservatories and windows normally come with guarantees. You should establish if these do.

Planning Permission

With regard to the conservatory, it should be checked that planning permission and building regulation approval has been obtained assuming it was required.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor should check and confirm that there are transferable guarantees available for both the conservatory and the windows.

ANTICIPATED COSTS: This should be included within your Solicitors fees but it is always best to check.

Please see the External Section of this Report.

7) **Shingle**

Shingle around the conservatory has been removed and replaced with a concrete fillet. We spoke to the owners about this, as it will encourage dampness into the conservatory (in the form of rising damp). We were advised that with the practicalities of having dogs they decided to remove the shingle.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend that the cement fillet is removed and replaced with pea-shingle.

ANTICIPATED COST: A few hundred pounds.

Please see the Dampness 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 that we feel falls within this section.

Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Maintenance

This type of property is relatively modern 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

Generally, the property is in reasonable condition maintenance wise. There will be the usual maintenance such as clearing the gutters etc and from what we can see there will be some filling to the walls where items have been removed and possibly redecoration to make the house into your own home.

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 £50 and £75 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 would refer you to our earlier comments and have nothing further to add but please feel free to call us to discuss any matters you so wish.

The only this we would add is that in theory all electrical work now should have building regulation approval. Your Legal Advisor will be able to check to see if this has. This is to stop DIY electrical installations, which may have happened in this case.

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.

If you so wish we can prepare specifications and obtain quotations for the work, whatever you do don't allow the estate agent to organise the quotes as he will utilise people he regularly uses who know they have to keep in with him/her to get further work and therefore are very keen to please the estate agent, as opposed to you the real client and at the end of the day it doesn't take long to organise.

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.

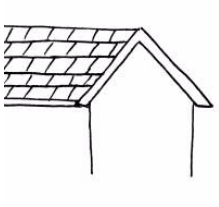
OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION

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

ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

We will consider the roofs in two areas, the main roof and the rear conservatory roof.

Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad in a large inter locking concrete tile. From what we could see the concrete tiles are lying level and true and look in reasonable condition considering their age. Sometimes we find that deterioration to the ridges and the perimeter. You should periodically check these areas.

General Information on Concrete Tiles

Concrete tiles have been used since the 1950/60s, they are relatively cheap to produce, and can be manufactured to a reasonably standard size and quality.

A general view of the roof.

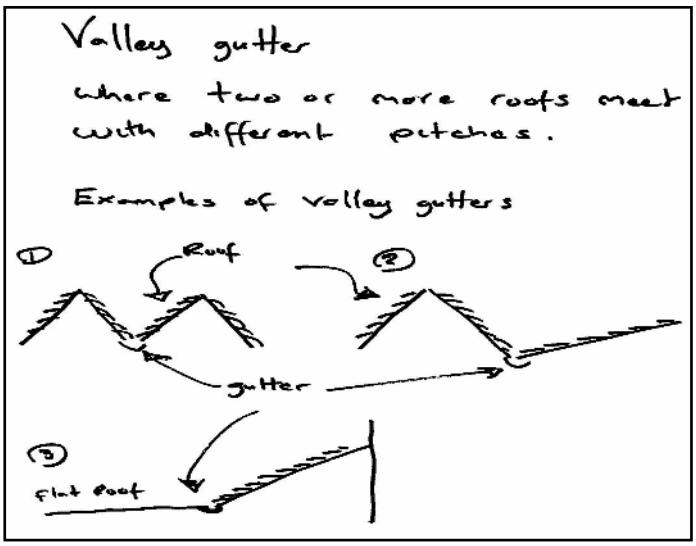
This is a close up view of the roof.

Splitting to the group perimeter concrete, this needs sealing.

Valley Gutters

Valley gutters occur where two roofs join, these are generally considered weak areas. In this instance we noted that the gutters have been tarred.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Conservatory Roof

The conservatory roof is in a polycarbonate (polycarbonate is a plastic, in this case a reinforced plastic). The roof generally looks in reasonable condition. We did not notice any ponding or staining. We generally find that roofs that have a reasonable fall on them tend to be the most watertight. We would warn that these roofs tend to leak sooner or later, this is just part of the fact of life on a modern conservatory. Where the conservatory meets the main building there is a lead flashing, which in our opinion is the best type of flashing.

The polycarbonate conservatory roof meeting the main building with a lead flashing.

Close up of lead flashing.

On a more general note we noted that there was no blinds to the conservatory. We often find that there can be considerable heat gain in modern conservatories (yes even in England), as they do not have ventilation to

the eaves. The only way to combat this is to put blinds to the ceiling, which can be expensive.

Polycarbonate Defined

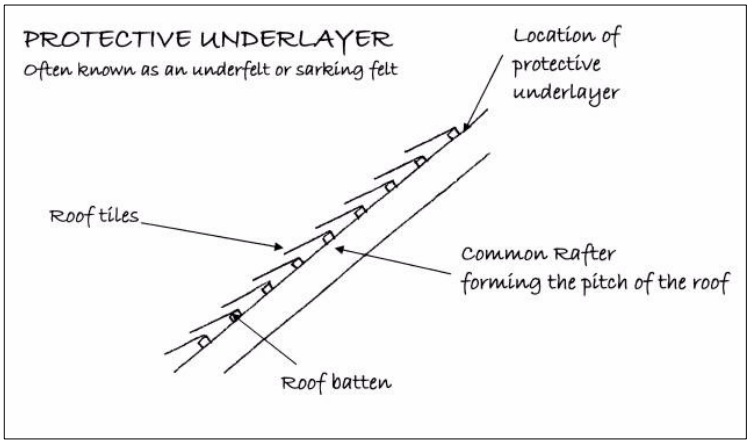
Transparent, extremely tough plastic sheet, used for conservatories. It is available in double walled or triple walled, or 10 or 16mm thick. It can be coated to resist damage from ultraviolet.

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.

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.



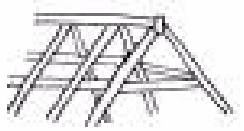
To the main roof, the property has a Hessian based underlayer, which is in reasonable condition. As you would expect to find to some areas there is minor deterioration. This is acceptable given the relatively newness of this property.

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

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 80 percent of the roof from ground level via our ladder or via any other vantage point that we managed to gain. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see. However a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

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



ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT

(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

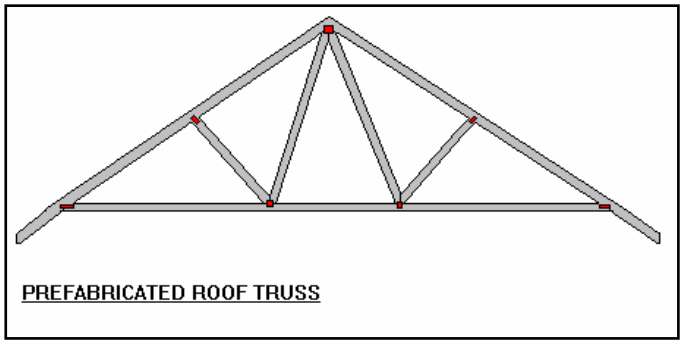
Main Roof

The roof is accessed via the loft hatch located in the hallway. There is a loft ladder, electric light and partial floorboards. Care should be taken in the roof, as some of the boards are not properly secured and only half sitting on the ceiling joists. We recommend properly secured loft boards are added together with additional lighting.

The loft perimeter has been viewed by torchlight, which has limited our viewing slightly.

Roof Structure

The property has a pre-fabricated trussed roof rafter. These are made in a factory and transported to site and then lifted into place. Without the manufacturers calculations and installation



details we cannot comment categorically on the roof structure other than to say it is in line with what we typically see when looking at pre-fabricated trussed roofs.

Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof for serious active woodworm and for structurally significant defects to the timber together with dry rot and wet rot. Whilst our examination is impeded by the general configuration of the roof, the insulation and stored items, from what we could see generally we found the roof to be in an average condition.

Water Tanks

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

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. Vents help reduce condensation which can occur in modern roofs due to the amount of insulation that we use and the general level of heating.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add vents.

ANTICIPATED COST: A few hundred pounds.

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 in this case, within the roof, there was insufficient quantity of wiring for us to feel that we could comment.

Please see our further comments in the Executive Summary with reference to the ceiling lights that have been added by the present owner.

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.

From ground level the gutters and downpipes looked to be plastic and appeared in reasonable condition. There may be some minor leaks, but we feel that most people could live with these.

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.

Minor leaks to the downpipes

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

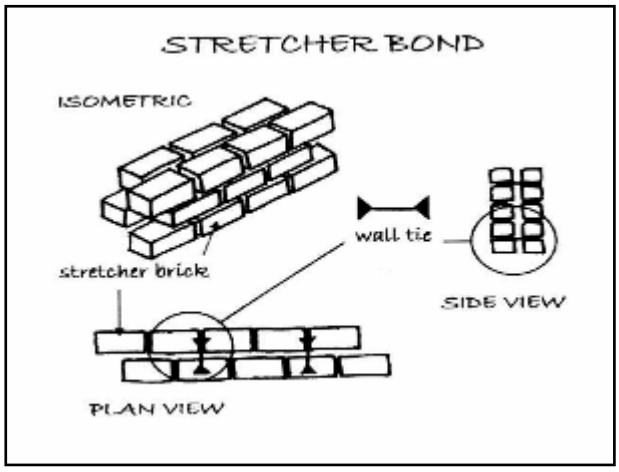
WALLS

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

Brickwork

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

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



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

Walls of cavity construction should incorporate ties to hold together the inner and outer leaves of masonry. As there is no access to the cavity these cannot be inspected and we cannot comment 100% on their presence other than to say that in this age of property there is typically been cavity wall ties built in and the property should have been checked by the Local Authority as they have been built.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Advisor should, as standard practice check that full planning permission and building regulations have been approved for the property.

Hairline Cracking

We noted horizontal hairline cracks over the windows. This is reasonably common where replacement plastic windows have been used.

This is usually due to new windows being a slightly different size to the original windows and a small amount of settlement occurring in the walls, although we have never read any research into this. We believe that the plastic windows are usually not as strong as the original windows (unless specifically

reinforced).

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/plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age concrete lintels or metal lintels are common, which can be susceptible to deterioration that is unseen, particularly if in contact with dampness.

Our comments have been based upon how the brickwork/plasterwork has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork/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 at 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.

As the property is relatively new, it is reasonable to expect Building Regulations approval to have been gained. Since 1948 the Local Authority have been tasked to check that the property is built to Building Regulations standards.

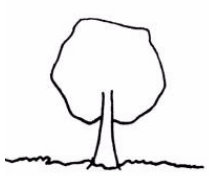
Building Insurance Policy

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

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

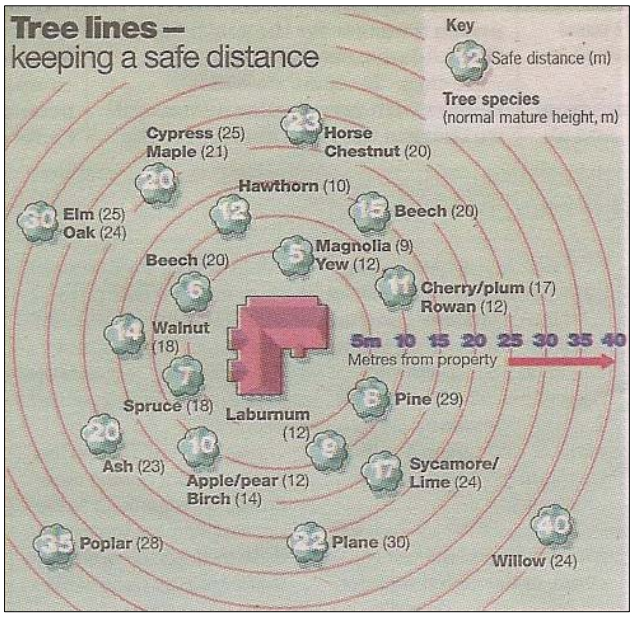
As no excavation has been carried out we cannot be 100 percent certain as to how the foundation has been constructed and we can only offer our best assumptions and an educated guess, which we have duly done.

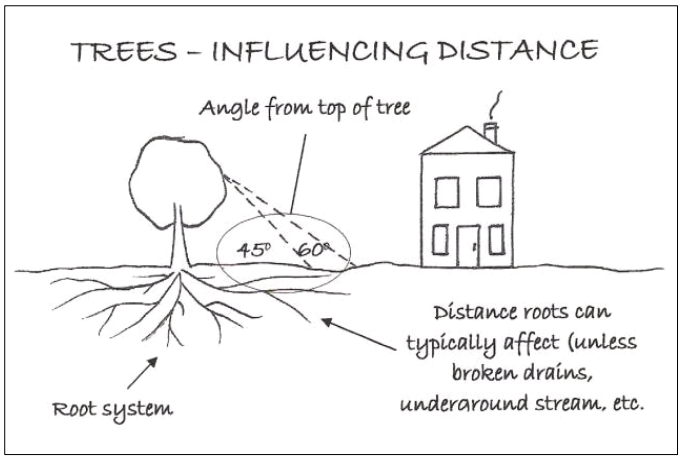
TREES



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

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





Influencing Distance Defined

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

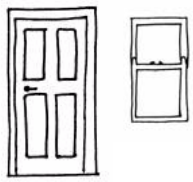
DAMP PROOF COURSE

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

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, we could see a damp proof course, to parts of this wall. Given the properties age it should have had a damp proof course built to the entirety of the ground level. We believe that it is probably there it is just that we cannot see it in all places where it has been hidden by the mortar. 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.

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 property has both timber and plastic fascias/soffits these are in average condition.

We noted that the timber fascia and soffit boards had air vents. You need to check in the roof that there is no insulation in the way and that these will allow airflow. When we were in the roof it certainly did not feel like there was any flow as it was very still and hot in the roof area.

Vented soffit to the left hand side.

This may be because of the plastic fascia and soffit boards that have been added that are stopping a through flow.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add vents to the roof.

Windows and Doors

The property has plastic double-glazed windows, which generally look to be of a reasonable quality, although we did not note any trickle vents (trickle vents allow an air flow into the property). We would add manufacturers are getting better at hiding them.

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

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

Trickle Vents Defined

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

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

EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

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

In this case, the external decoration required is minimal, the garage door, the fencing and the fascia and soffit boards are the only items we can think of and that will be in 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

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

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.

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 block work and will be the structural walls with the studwork walls being purely to divide the rooms.

Perimeter Walls

Generally internal 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 properties of this age.

Generally, all the ceilings and walls are newly decorated and they could therefore be hiding latent defects and there is simply no way to establish this.

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.

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.

A lot of the floors are covered with a laminate. They do however feel solid and firm underfoot so we have assumed they are formed in concrete or a beam and block construction, which would be the typical construction for this age of property.

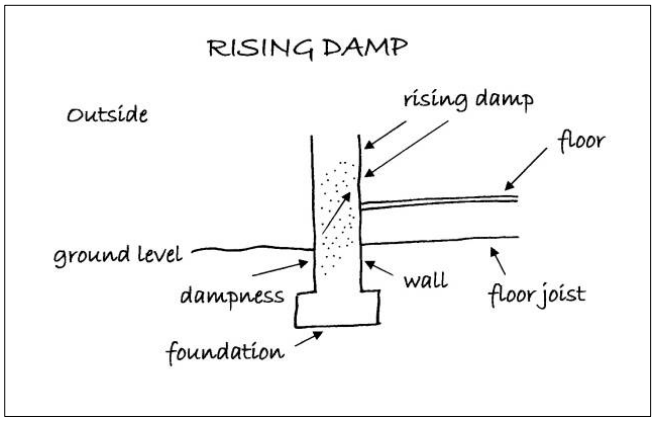
Finally, our normal ways of identifying if there are problems in the floor is being hidden from us by the laminate floor coverings. The comments we have made are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction. We would emphasise that we have not opened up the floors in any way or lifted any floorboards.

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

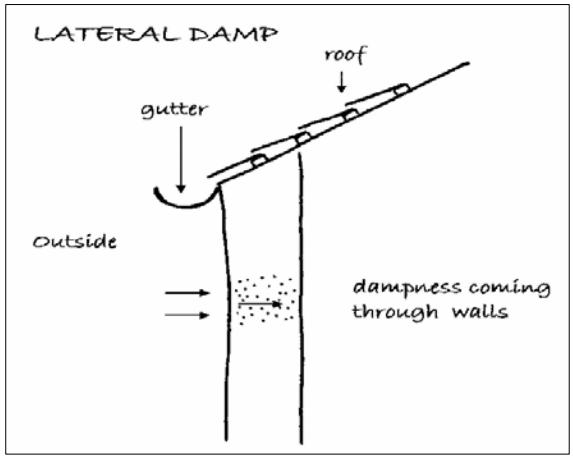
Rising damp depends upon various components including the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation of the material, amongst other things. Rising damp can come from the ground, drawn by capillary action, to varying degrees of intensity and height into the materials above.



We have carried out tests with an electronic damp meter to a random selection of areas, where we would expect damp to be if the property had it and we are pleased to advise that no significant dampness was found.

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.



Again, random moisture meter readings were taken with an electronic damp meter. Our readings were in line with what we would expect for this age of property, i.e. minor dampness. No significant penetrating/lateral dampness was detected.

Condensation

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

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.

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

INTERNAL JOINERY

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

Doors

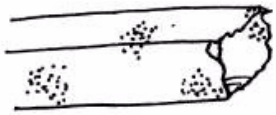
The property has hollow core doors, (sometimes referred to as egg box doors, as this is what the internal of them looks like when they are opened up), generally in reasonable condition. They have a pressed and painted finish.

Kitchen

From our cursory visual inspection the kitchens they both look in acceptable 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 over-view 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.

There are no obvious visual signs of dry rot or indeed circumstances that we thought would lead to 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.

Again, there are no obvious signs of wet rot. The only area where we would comment it is possible and indeed likely is the valley gutter if this carries on leaking. You should have periodic inspections from within the loft space of these areas.

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. 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. We would comment in this instance that there is no need for any further investigation.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to be 100 per cent certain 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 internal decorations are as good as new in our opinion, we noted some old fixing points where shelf's etc have been removed, you will need to fill these and make good. It could be hard to match in the paintwork.

You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste. It is very difficult to advise on how frequently redecoration should take place. This very much depends upon the use and abuse the decoration gets, for example, within hallways this tends to be greater than for example within 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 insulted disproportionately to the ventilation as this can cause condensation and you should be aware that you need to ventilate any property that is insulated.

Roofs

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 270mm. We would not be overly concerned about this as we typically find in roofs between 100mm – 150mm of insulation. In this instance we found 100mm.

Walls

The property has a stretcher bond construction, we can only assume from the age of the property that it is likely that when it was built it included cavity insulation. Without opening the wall up we cannot be certain.

Windows

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

Boiler

Typically we are finding that the wall-mounted boilers are lasting up to 15 years from new, often known as combination boilers or 'combi' boilers, assuming regularly serviced. In this instance it looked dated and probably coming to the end of its natural life although there is no long history of us using combination boilers as yet.

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

Summary

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

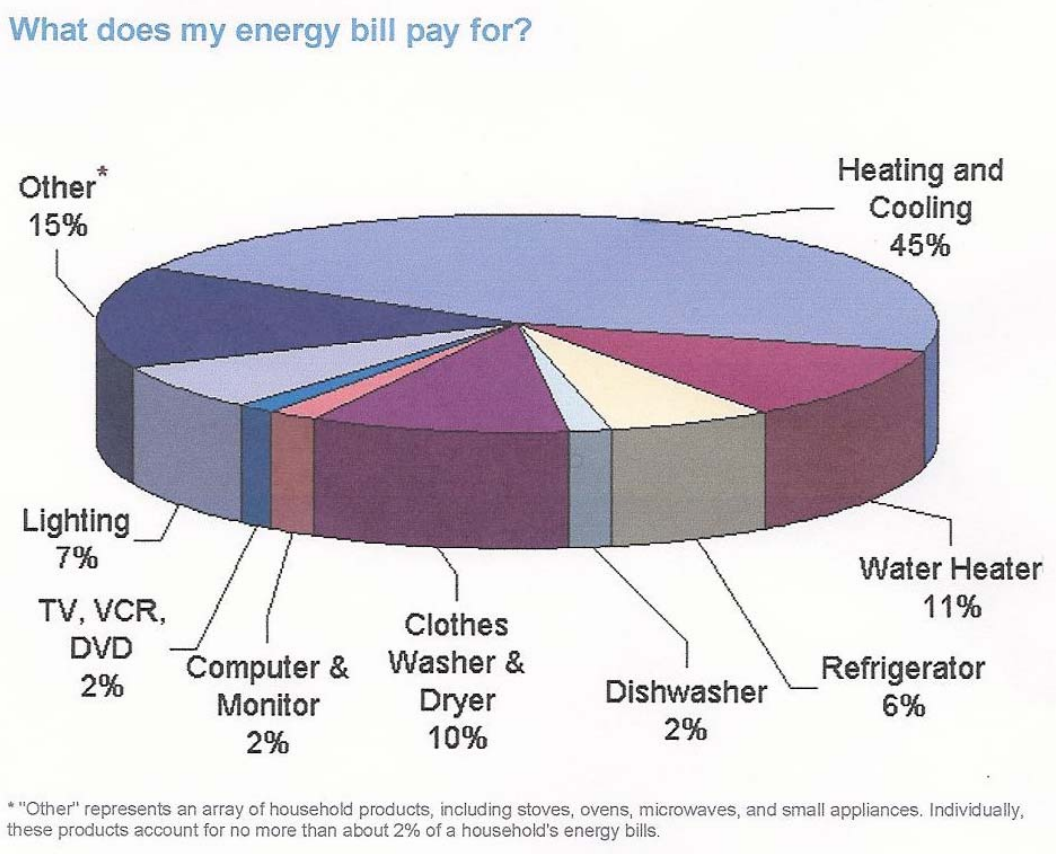
Further information can be obtained with regard to energy saving via the Internet on the following pages:

HTTP//www.est.org.uk, 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.



OTHER MATTERS

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

Security

A security system was noted. We discussed this during our question and answer and where advised it only partly works at present.

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

Fire/Smoke Alarms

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

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

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

Insurance

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

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.

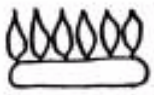
The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the kitchen. We would date the fuse board as being from the 1990's, and whilst not the best now available are reasonable.

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

ACTION REQUIRED: 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 New Building Regulations require from 1st January 2005 certain electrical work to be certified by an approved contractor. 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.

We are advised that the property has mains gas. The gas metre cupboard is located outside, left hand side.

All gas appliances, pipework and flues should be the subjects 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

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

Water Pressure

When the taps were run to carry out the drainage test we checked the pressure literally by putting a finger over the tap and this seemed average.

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

Cold Water Cistern

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

Plumbing

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

Heating

The boiler was located in the kitchen, Potterton manufactures it and the model type is a Supersaver Model 2, which is quite an old make.

ACTION REQUIRED: You should budget for a new boiler but initially get this one tested and inspected.

ANTICIPATED COST: A new boiler typically cost in the region of £1,000.

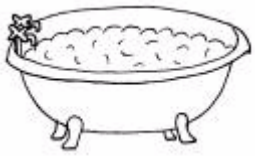
We also mentioned that you have got microbore pipework that should be replaced at the same time.

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

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, which looks in reasonable condition, subject to some day-to-day wear and tear, as one would expect.

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.

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 are advised the drains are hidden under the shingle. We have therefore run the tap in the kitchen for fifteen minutes to check the drains.

Finally, it must be emphasised that the condition of the property's foul drains can only be ascertained by the carrying out of a test; such a close circuit T.V. camera report, such a test has not been undertaken. Should there be leaks in the vicinity of the building then problems could occur, particularly with respect to the stability of the building's foundations. Drainage repairs are

inevitably costly and may result in damage being caused to those areas of the property beneath, or adjacent to, which the drains have been run.

Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal.

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

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

OUTSIDE AREAS

GARAGE/PARKING

The property has an integral garage and off road parking on a shingle driveway.

EXTERNAL AREAS

Front Garden

This we believe is what is known as an Alpine garden and is minimal in maintenance, which personally is how we prefer gardens!

Rear Garden

This is a mixture of wooded areas and grassed areas. It is in a very well kept order at the time of our survey.

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 had a brief chat with the left hand neighbour who was very pleasant and had no problems with the present neighbour.

Right Hand Neighbours

They were not in at the time of our inspection.

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 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) 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.

k) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.

l) 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

m) 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 4th 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

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

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 2005 is the third driest year on record to date and other notable dates are the year 2000 which was the wettest year on record, 2003 the driest year on record and August 2004 was the wettest August on record in many areas. 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.

OCCUPIED PROPERTY

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

INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited due to some stored items within the roof space. There were also stored items within the study area, which restricted our view and the front right hand bedroom.

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.