

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY
OF
A 1900's Semi-Detached Property, Whittlesford,
Cambridgeshire



FOR

Dr M

FOR ANY HELP OR ASSISTANCE CALL FREE PHONE:

0800 298 5424

or

visit our website:

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

REPORT FORMAT
SYNOPSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS AND PARAPET WALLS
ROOF COVERINGS
ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT SPACE
GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES
WALLS
EXTERNAL JOINERY
EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

INTERNAL

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

SERVICES

ELECTRICITY
GAS
PLUMBING AND HEATING
BATHROOMS
MAIN DRAINS

OUTSIDE AREAS

GARAGES AND OUTBUILDINGS / PARKING
EXTERNAL AREAS

POINTS FOR LEGAL ADVISOR

APPENDICES

LIMITATIONS
GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

We are aware that a report of this size is somewhat daunting and almost off-putting to the reader because of this. We would stress that the purchase of a 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.

ORIENTATION

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

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two storey semi detached property with an adjoining linked garage which has had extensions and alterations over the years, which is not unusual for this age of property.

There are gardens to the front and rear although much of the front garden is given over to the driveway, giving access to the garage.

The property is situated in what we would term as a rural residential area. We believe the property is currently rented out.

We were advised that the property is believed to have been built originally around the turn of the last century (1900's).

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:

1912	The Beginning of the Motoring Age
1914-1918	World War I
1920s	Television Invented
1927	Charles Lindbergh flies across the Atlantic
1928	Vote for Women aged over 21
1928	Alexander Fleming develops penicillin
1939-1945	World War II (6 June 1944 D-Day)

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Rear Elevation



Garden



Patio Area

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Entrance Porch
- Through Lounge
- Kitchen/Dining Area
- Utility Room

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Front Bedroom with en suite bathroom
- Box Room
- Rear Bedroom
- Family Bathroom

Outside Areas

We would refer you to our earlier comments and we would add that there is limited parking in the area which means that some residents park across the road on the grass verge.

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.

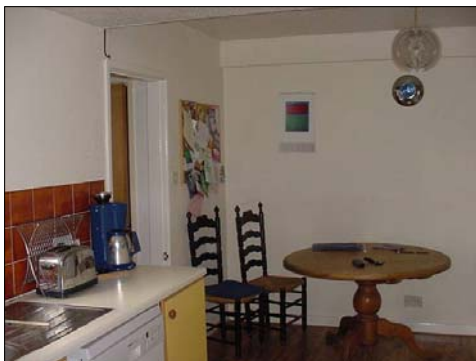
Ground Floor



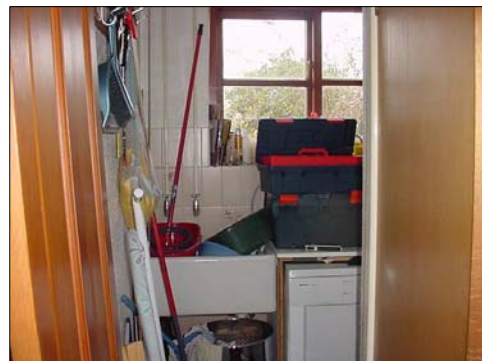
Lounge



Kitchen

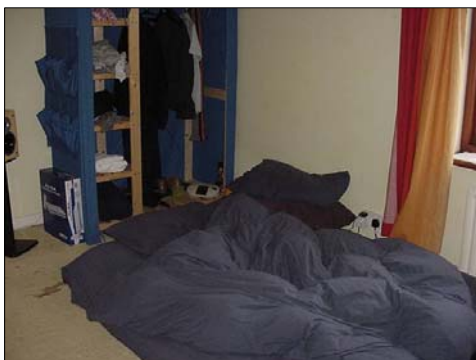


Dining Area



Utility Room

First Floor



Front Bedroom



The en suite shower room which is unfortunately too small to photograph properly.



Bedroom



Family Bathroom

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

EXTERNAL

Chimneys:	One brick chimney
Main Roof:	A pitched roof clad with a quarried slate. Rear felt flat roofs and a manmade pitched slate roof to the garage.
Gutters and Downpipes/Soil and Vent Pipes:	Plastic
Walls:	A mixture of a rendered finish to the front wall. Predominantly with cavity walling and some Flemish bond walling to the side and rear walls.
External Joinery:	Double glazed casement windows and timber fascias and soffits

INTERNAL

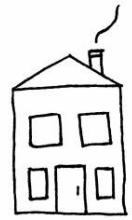
Ceilings:	Plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	A mixture of solid and studwork (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: A mixture of a suspended timber floor and a concrete floor (assumed). First Floor: Joist and floorboards (assumed)

SERVICES

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, drainage, 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 100 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 house overall in slightly below average condition considering the property's age, type and style. This is often the case in properties that have been rented out. However this is a sweeping statement so we would also, in addition, draw your attention to the following and also recommend that you read the report in full. 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 has a good size lounge and kitchen/dining area.
- The property benefits from an en suite bathroom which is not very common in older properties.

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 really need negotiation upon. However, a number of them may sometimes put us off the property.

1) Rear Low Level Flat Roof

To the rear of the property there are felt covered flat roofs and one of these has been covered in bitumen to extend its life. This is usually carried out when the original felt has started to deteriorate; we can only assume this is the case in this instance.



A close up of the flashing; the pen indicates where the seal is broken which has previously been repaired.



A general view of the roof. Note the deteriorating flashing to the rear and right hand side.



Split starting to occur in the roof which is indicated by the pen.

ACTION REQUIRED: Budget for re-roofing within the next five to ten years. Expect some day to day repairs. Ideally we recommend that the roof is replaced, the sooner this is carried out the less repairs will be needed to the roof decking. We suggest you ask the Roofer to patch repair.

ANTICIPATED COST: For day to day £250 to £500 (two hundred and fifty to five hundred pounds). To completely renew the roof in the region of £2,000 to £3,000 (two thousand to three thousand pounds).

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

2) General Condition of the Property

Generally the property is in a slightly unkept/cared for state which is often the case with rented properties. We noted for example to the internal decoration there was water staining to the ceiling below the bathroom indicating that the bath has been allowed to overflow. This will all need redecorating.



If you look closely you can see some staining to the ceiling. This picture was taken in the main lounge.

3) External Joinery

There is deterioration to both the windows and the fascias and soffit boards. We would class it all as saveable. We noted small areas of wet rot to the windows in the worst cases. Generally a redecoration with some minor repairs will suffice to the windows. With regard to the fascias and soffits; these look to be in need of replacement in some areas although we can't be certain until you inspect them closely.



Wet rot is visible to some of the windows.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend repair and redecoration to the windows. The fascia and soffit boards you will need to replace.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £1,000 to £3,000 (one thousand to three thousand pounds) dependent upon the amount of replacement work required.

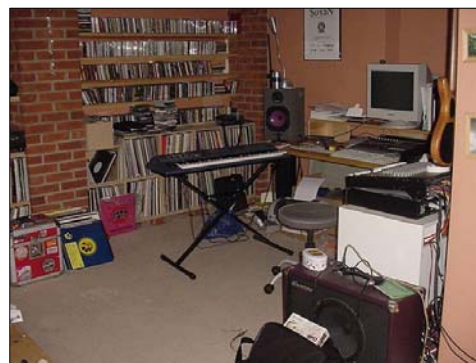


The pen is pushed into an area of wet rot in the window.

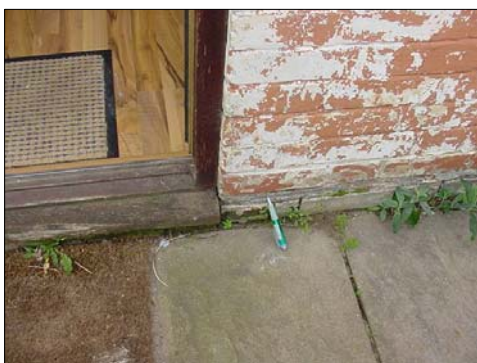
Please see the External Joinery Section of this Report.

4) Damp Proof Course Too Low

We found some minor areas of rising damp in the kitchen. We were expecting to find more. Our inspection was limited by the furniture, particularly the massive LP collection, the likes of which we have not seen before! (We assume from the equipment that the owner was a musician/DJ).



An example of the record collection that got in the way of us checking the walls properly.



This shows that the damp proof course is too low; it should be two courses of brick from the ground level therefore indicating there is likely to be damp in the property.

ACTION REQUIRED: To be on the safe side we recommend that you have a damp proof estimate but insist that the owner moves the record collection away from the wall. Have a damp proof contractor carry out quotations for damp proofing work. The owner of the property will need to ensure that the record collection is moved back from the wall!

5) Woodworm

A minor amount of woodworm was found in the main roof we wouldn't class this as likely to cause structural problems in its current state, although we are certain some woodworm companies would recommend you have woodworm treated! We don't believe this is necessary at present.

ACTION REQUIRED: Periodically inspect the roof for frass (this is the sawdust like based material that the woodworm leaves behind).

6) Electrics

Unfortunately we weren't able to inspect the fuse as we believe it is in the garage which we didn't have access to. From what we could see of the electric points they looked quite dated and relatively old.

We did note that throughout the property there seemed to be a lack of socket points with the present owner using a number of extension leads. Whilst the present owners need for electricity may be higher than the norm with all the musical equipment, they require additional socket points.

In addition please note we have not seen the fuse board/consumer unit we therefore cannot comment upon it.

ACTION REQUIRED: An electrician to check installation.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £200 (two hundred pounds) plus any additional repair work.

7) Drains

We noted that during our testing of the service of the drainage runs we found that the water drained away quite slowly, particularly to the main bathroom.

ACTION REQUIRED: This usually indicates there is some sort of blockage in the system which needs further investigation.

The Ugly

8) Main Roof

The property has the original pitched slate roof, this is coming to the end of its natural life. We noted from within the roof there were many areas of light visible indicating that the slates have moved. We also noted externally there was a large number of lead tingles; these are used to hold slates in place where the nail fixing has rusted/corroded away.



An example to the rear of missing slates and slates having been replaced with tingles.



A close up of the slate roof. You can see the lead tingles (the grey bits) to the centre of the photo.

In addition to this we noticed wet rot to the roof structure where rain is getting into the roof. The rain will have to have been coming in for quite a while to have caused the wet rot.



A close up of the wet rot.



This is a view taken within the roof; looking at the ridge you can see the wet rot to the left hand side.

ACTION REQUIRED: Whilst we would first comment that we are always amazed by how long slate roofs last, we really think this one now requires re-roofing work. The difficulty is with this type of roof is that it is very difficult to do patch repairs successfully. We feel that you are likely to end up re-roofing the entire slate roof.

We feel that you should negotiate a discount on the asking price based upon the cost of repairing and renewing the roof.

ANTICIPATED COST: We feel you should obtain estimates for this and we anticipate it will be in the region of £4,000 to £6,000 (four thousand to six thousand pounds) to replace with a quarry slate roof.

Please see the Roofs Section of this Report.

Flat Roof and Exterior Woodwork

Specific Questions

You specifically asked us to comment upon the flat roof and the exterior woodwork. The above has addressed these issues. There are also further comments within the main body of the report.

Chimney Stacks

You also asked us to comment upon the chimney stacks. Please see the chimney section of this report.

DIY/Handyman Type Work

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as clearing the gutters and external/internal redecoration. These problems are fairly typical for this age, style and type of property. 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 £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 feel the main roof is the main problem area although we do in general feel the property is below standard, although the issues are not insurmountable this will require time and money. We expect you to be able to obtain a discount off the asking price of this property.

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

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

MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT

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

TENURE – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)

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

ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

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

SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR

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

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS

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

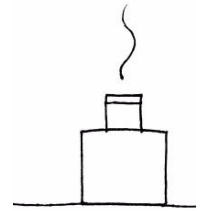
OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION

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

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



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.

Left Hand Chimney

The property has one chimney which is located to the left hand side on the main roof. This is a brick chimney finished with a lead flashing which has one chimney pot. The chimney is in reasonably good condition although in need of some minor repointing. Unfortunately we were unable to see the flaunchings, we therefore cannot comment upon them other than to say the chimney is standing up straight which is a fairly good indicator that the flaunchings are in reasonable condition.



Front view of the chimney.



Rear view of the chimney.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ideally a general repointing of the chimney, the sooner this is carried out the better in the summer of 2005.

ANTICIPATED COSTS: It is very difficult to anticipate costs on chimneys as the actual access to them is usually the most costly as often it has to be carried out off scaffold. An educated guess would be in the region of £1000 (one thousand pounds). A quotation should be obtained.

Flaunchings Defined

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

Parapet Walls

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

To the rear flat roof there are various parapet walls.

Parapet Wall to High Level Roof

These are brick built with a felt flashing and looked in reasonable condition, although there was some hairline cracking to the face of the brickwork. Please see the Walls section.

We carried out tests internally with a damp meter to check if there was any water getting through. We found one area with some dampness but nothing to be overly concerned with (this is in the main rear bedroom).



A view of the high level parapet wall.

Parapet Wall to Low Level Flat Roof

This is completely covered in felt with a brick coping stone. Dampness typically gets in through this type of brick coping stone and weakens mortar joints, although at present we cannot see any dampness getting in. We did note deterioration in one area; this should be picked up by the Roofer that we recommend to have a look at this roof in general. Ask him to repoint the parapet wall. You need to specifically ask him as the work simply won't be carried out unless you do.

ACTION REQUIRED: We did note one area of deterioration. This needs to be picked up by a Roofer.

In this photo you can see the weak area of mortar that is common in this sort of parapet wall.



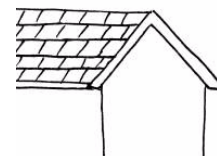
A general view of the parapet wall.



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

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

ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

We will consider the roofs in three areas, the main pitched roof, the flat roofs and the lower level pitched roofs to the garage.

Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad with a quarried slate tile.

Warning! We would not recommend this roof is replaced with anything other than natural slate particularly given the position of the roof structure.

General Information on Slate Roofs

Slate has been commonly used as a roofing material in many areas, particularly where it was available as a natural resource. Its heyday was during the Victorian and Edwardian period although it had a brief revival during the mass building periods at the end of the First and Second World Wars, which with the development of the transport system meant that slates could be used throughout the country.

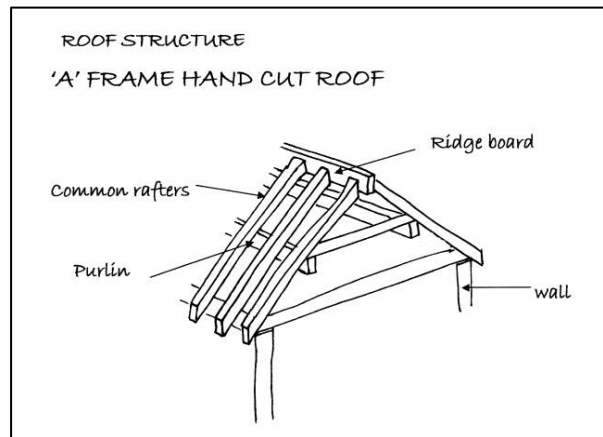
More recently, in some areas, it has become a planning requirement in areas where it was a natural resource and also the introduction of man-made slate has given an economic alternative.

As a general comment on the roofs as a whole, as viewed from ground level, the roof coverings are in poor condition and in need of some work, even when taking into consideration their age, and type.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments within the Executive Summary.

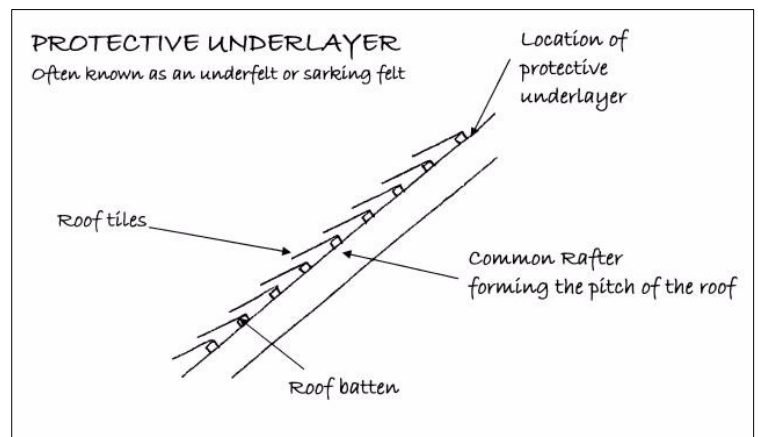
ANTICIPATED COSTS: Please see our comments within the Executive Summary.

The roof structure is similar to this only without the struts and props.



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.



When we inspected the roof space we found there was no underfelt. It is therefore likely that during periods of heavy and prolonged driving rain gets into the roof as can be seen by the rotting timber within.

Immediate Repairs

We recommend the following immediate repairs if you do not decide to re-roof the property:-

ACTION REQUIRED: Replacement of missing slipped and cracked slates. We noted particularly to the rear verge some slates have been displaced. This is often caused by wind catching the edge of the slates.

Rear 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 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.

High Level Flat Roof

The high level flat roof has a mineral felt finish. This looks to have been re-roofed fairly recently. It looked to be relatively new.

We did note what we would term as some smudging, this is where the mineral felt is not quite bonded properly. This is around the parapet wall area as these tend to be more difficult areas.



The newer Bitumen felts are 'torched on' using a flame. They generally tend to achieve a better bond than the older-style Bitumen, although, of course, this is dependent upon workmanship and conditions, as with any job it needs a good tradesman.

Mineral Felt Defined

Mineral felt is a common roofing material. The felt can come in many forms. It is however finished with very fine stone chippings, bonded to the felt. This is to resist frost attack and reduce the de-grading affect caused by the sun.

Low Level Felt Roof

This roof is not in particularly good condition and whilst we have seen worse it is likely to have survived for some time. Please see our comments within the Executive Summary. However we would add that we feel that the best course of action with this roof is to completely renew it as soon as possible using a mineral high performance felt.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £3,000 (three thousand pounds) and a quotation is required. We would recommend that any flashings are carried out in lead.

Low Level Pitched Roofs

There are two low level pitched roofs, one to the porch entrance and one to the garage. Both looked to have manmade slates. We were pleased to see that a lead flashing has been used for cases where they abut the main property.

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.

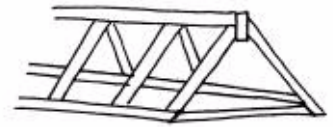
Manmade Slates Defined

Manmade slates look similar to slates but are made from reconstituted stone. This is bonded together in a similar manner to that used with chipboard. Its characteristics are that it sits very flat and is mechanically fixed and has an approximate life of 30 years. This type of roof generally sits very flat and true.

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

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 main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located at the top of the landing. There is no loft ladder or secured floorboarding but there is an electric light. We recommend that these be added, as it will make the loft space safer and easier to use.

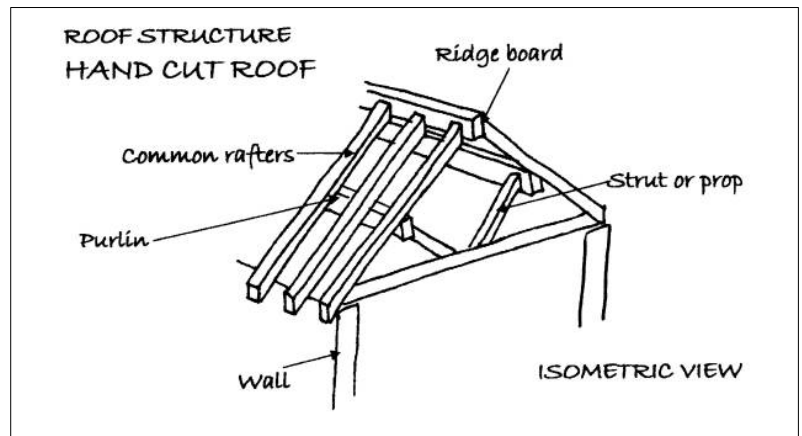
The loft perimeter has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly.



A view of the main roof with some lead tingles.

Cut Timber Roof

This roof structure has what is known as a cut timber roof. This is a roof which 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.



We have inspected the roof for serious active woodworm and for structurally significant defects to the timber together with dry rot and wet rot. From what we could generally see we found the roof to be in below average condition.

There are visible signs of wet rot in some areas and also some of the timbers have been strengthened by other timbers being added. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Here if you look closely you can see where additional timbers have been added.



A general view of the common rafters (the ones that form the pitch of the roof). You can see some staining to the timbers where dampness is getting in and also light to the centre of the picture.

ACTION REQUIRED: When the re-roofing work is being carried out the timbers may need repair and/or replacing. The materials are relatively cheap the work can however be labour intensive.

Fire Walls

Firewalls help prevent the spread of fire through roofs and are a relatively recent Building Regulation requirement. In this instance the firewall is built in timber, they are not particularly good and have been added at a later date.

Water Tanks

The water tanks are formed in plastic, we therefore assume they are relatively new. We were pleased to see that the water tanks were insulated.

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

Modern roofs require ventilation however this property, due to the type of roof doesn't. It is naturally ventilated by the slates that have moved! However any new roofs you put on will require ventilation.

Electrical Cables

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

Due to the nature of flat roof construction there are no accessible roof voids. We cannot therefore comment on the construction of the flat roof, the condition of supporting materials, standards of ventilation, levels of insulation or the presence of a vapour check.

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.

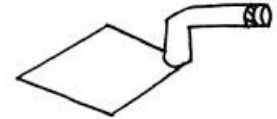
Defective gutters and downpipes are a common cause of dampness that can, in turn, lead to the development of rot in timbers. Regular inspection and adequate maintenance are therefore essential if serious problems are to be avoided.

From ground level the gutters and downpipes looked to all be plastic and appeared in acceptable 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.

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.

The property has a mixture of wall finishes with render to the front elevation and brickwork to the side and rear elevation.

Front Rendered Elevation

We believe the front walls to this property are finished in a smooth faced render and in average condition.

ACTION REQUIRED: We anticipate that some repair work will be required to the render in the next five years.

A way of telling the quality of the render, we have found over the years, is by the quality of detailing above the windows and to the base of the property.

Windows

In this instance we found drip details over the windows, which help throw any excess water away from the window frames and therefore stop them from deterioration. This is generally a sign of good quality rendering.

In this photo you can see the drip detail is formed in render over the window; note the hairline cracking.



Base of the Wall

The render at the base of the wall has been formed into a bell-mouth drip detail, which should help stop dampness getting into the structure.



The bell mouth drip detail to the base of the render.

Brickwork

The side and rear of the property is a brick finish laid in a mixture of a lime and a cement based mortar, bedded predominantly in a stretcher bond which is slightly unusual for this age of property. However there is some Flemish bond brickwork which is more common. Generally the brickwork is in reasonable condition considering its age, however please read on.

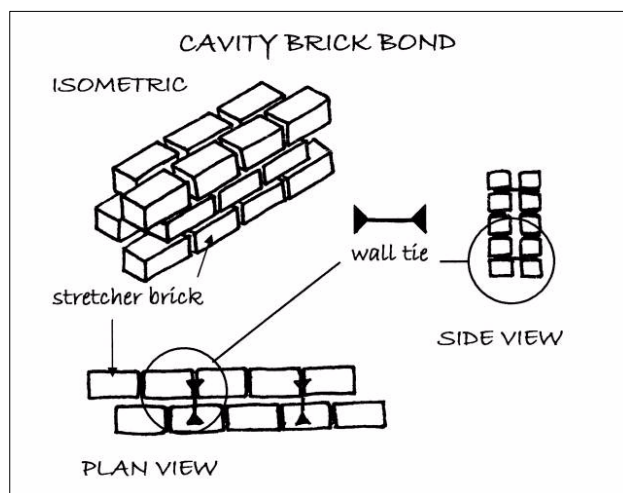


This is looking at the parapet walling. There is a stretcher bond some of which has hairline cracking in it.

Stretcher Bond Brickwork

Let us consider the Stretcher Bond brickwork first.

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.

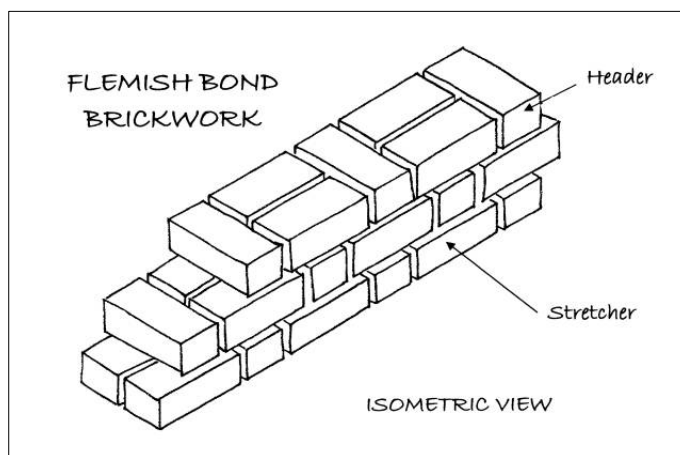


Cavity walls were first used in Victorian times. It originates from solid walls not always being waterproof against driving rain and not providing a good degree of heat insulation. The design of cavity walls makes them relatively unstable and they depend upon the wall ties.

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 it has not been inspected and we cannot comment on the presence or condition of wall ties.

Flemish Bond

With regard to Flemish bond brickwork there is an area to the side of the property which has this. It is quite unusual to see a mix as you have in this instance.



Overall Condition of Brickwork

These are generally in reasonable condition the brickwork has been painted in some areas which we are not keen on as it tends to stop the brickwork from breathing. It causes the face of the brickwork to spall.

Deterioration to the Parapet Wall Area

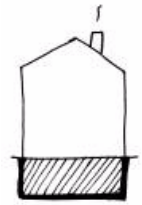
The low level parapet walls surrounding the rear flat roof looks to have had some movement and there is some cracking. This is not that unusual in parapet walls as they tend to be quite exposed and do suffer from this sort of deterioration. There is very little that can be done about this, it is simply a poor design detail.

Lintels

The lintels are formed in a mixture of bricks on edge to the majority of the windows and to the lower level windows what we believe are metal or concrete lintels. The consistency in the way the lintels are formed indicate there have been alterations to the property over the years.

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 and plaster we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age rubbed brick 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 and plaster has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork and 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.

Typically, with a property of this period, we would expect to find a stepped brick foundation, approximately half a metre deep.

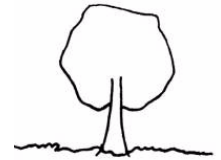
Building Insurance Policy

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

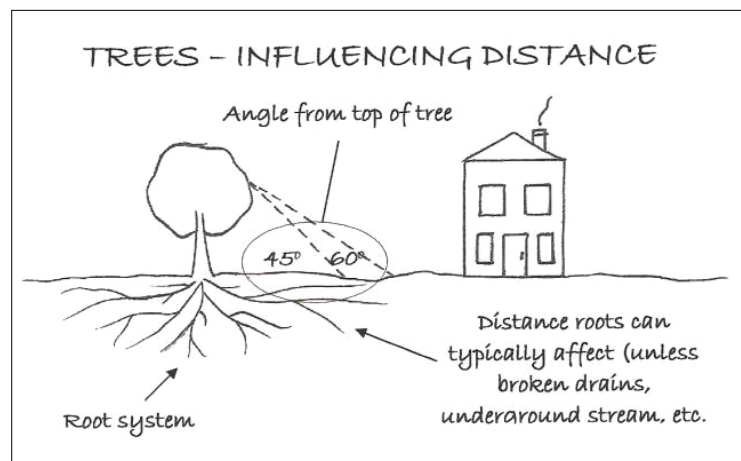


Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.

There is one tree to the rear which is in what we term as influencing distance. It is relatively small and we didn't notice any roots within the inspection chambers when we lifted these.

Influencing Distance Defined

This is the distance in which a tree may be able to cause damage to the subject property.



Please also refer to the External Areas Section.



DAMP PROOF COURSE

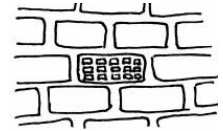
The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required various other basic standards. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout London and then the country as a whole,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

In this case we noted a slate damp proof course in some areas, as mentioned this was too low. The ground in this area needs reducing to ensure a gap of two bricks between the damp proof course and the ground. Your attention is drawn to section 4) in the Executive Summary.

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 were able to note a slate damp proof course which does indicate the age of this property. This type of damp proof course can break down but they are generally very good. 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.

Airbricks visible in this property.

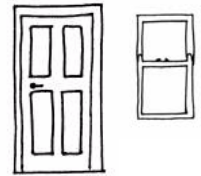
An example of an airbrick in the centre of the photo.



This indicates that the property had suspended timber floors. These appear to have been replaced in some areas with concrete floor. We do feel that there is probably a suspended timber floor to the front of the property; unfortunately this will have deteriorated due to there being a lack of air flow underneath the floor.

ACTION REQUIRED: There is no real easy solution to this as we believe there is likely to be rot under the floor. Apart from opening it up to check the extent of the rot we don't feel that it will be necessary at this time to replace the floor, although in the long term it may well be. We suggest that you phone us with regard to this point to discuss it further.

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 and soffits, 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

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary. The paintwork to the fascias and soffits is literally peeling off.



Windows and Doors

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary. In addition we would draw your attention to the fact that the windows have sealed double glazed units which 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 we would say that some of the sealed double glazed units looked to have deteriorated and may well need replacing. We note there was some damage to the doors to the rear that looks to have been attacked by a dog.



In need of redecoration!

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.

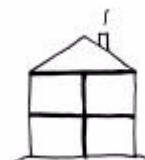
In this case to the render work the external decoration is in good order, although please note our comments upon the condition of the render itself in the Render section.

The majority of the windows are all in need of repair and redecoration and all the fascias and soffits are in need of repair and redecoration.

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

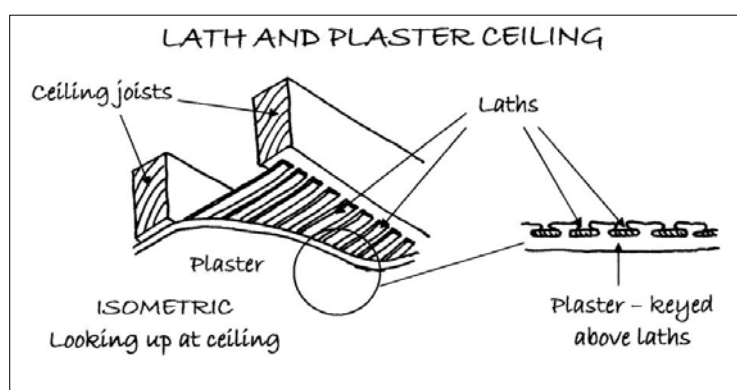


CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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. The concept of internal finishes is relatively modern. Partitioning developed originally to separate the livestock from the human occupants. Finishes have developed from this very functional beginning to their decorative nature of today.

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 which probably replaced the original lath and plaster, or alternatively it may simply have been tacked over (nailed) over the original lath and plaster.



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 studwork walls. Generally the solid walls (likely to be brickwork) will be the structural walls with the studwork walls being dividing walls for example to form the en suite bathroom.

We noted hairline cracking between some of the walls and ceilings. This will need filling in due course and we suggest you use a filler that allows for movement.

Removed Internal Walls

There have been various alterations internally such as removing walls in the lounge area to make a “through lounge” and also from our discussions with the neighbours the staircase position has been moved. Without opening up the structure we cannot be certain that adequate structural supports have been put in. However from our visual inspection there was no obvious signs of deflection.

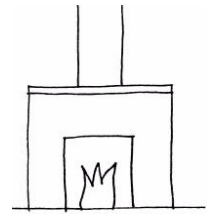
Perimeter Walls

To the perimeter we found some areas of blown plaster. This is not uncommon in properties of this age, particularly around the window and door openings and around the chimney breast. When redecorating you may have to do some re-plastering.

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

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

CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

The chimney breasts are located on the left hand side of the property (all directions given as you face the front of the property).

There is a feature fireplace within the main lounge area. We were pleased to find that all the chimney breasts follow through from the roof level to the ground floor. This means that structurally they are obtaining support throughout their length (as opposed to when a section of the chimney has been removed and no support is present).

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

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

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

FLOORS



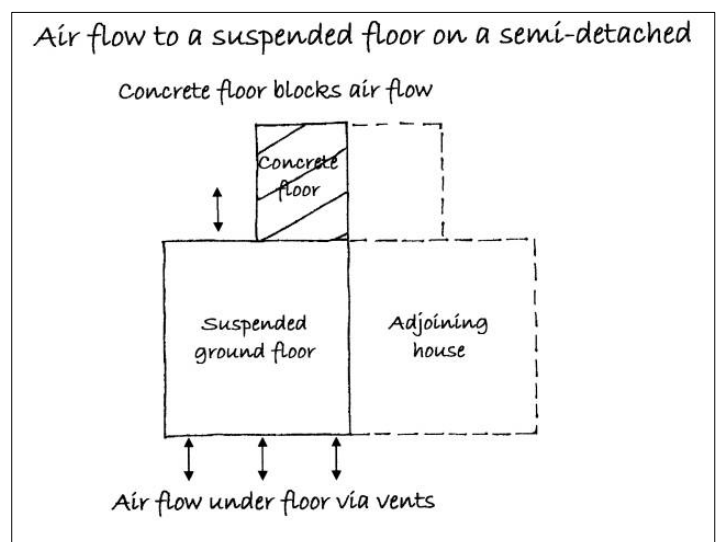
Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.

Ground Floor

Originally we believe that this floor would have been a suspended timber floor to the back extension area – the kitchen being formed with a concrete flooring. We feel though that more recently parts of the timber floor have been removed and concrete added in these too.

Problems with Lack of Ventilation to a Suspended Timber Floor

Suspended timber floors need airflow underneath them to stop rot from occurring. This is achieved via airbricks externally (please see the Airbricks section of this report). In this case the airflow will be blocked by the concrete floors which usually leads to rot.



We carried out an impact test (this isn't rocket science it is simply jumping up and down!) the floor felt reasonably firm with no excessive areas of movement.

We therefore do expect there would be some rot in the floor when opened but nothing excessive.

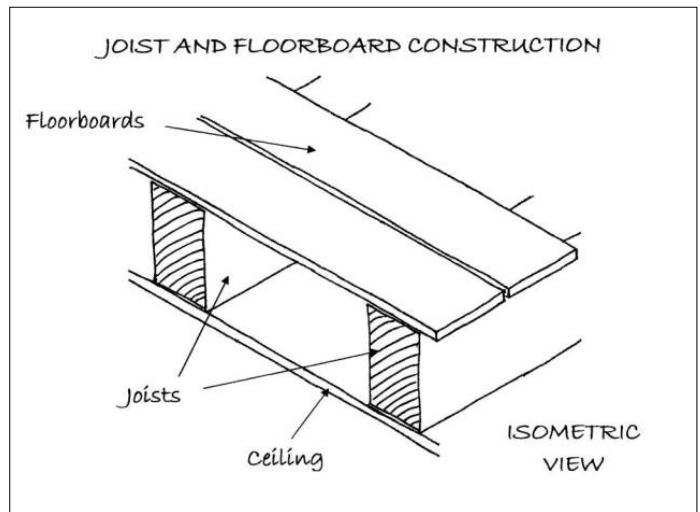
First Floor

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

We did note between the corridor area and the left hand room there is a slight slope indicating there has been movement in the rooms.

Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



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

DAMPNESS



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

Rising Damp

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

A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls and some internal walls. Quite surprisingly we didn't find the amount of dampness we were expecting. We found some dampness to the kitchen area but nothing too excessive.

We believe that the dampness that has been found is due to the damp proof course being too low. The ground levels therefore should be reduced externally.

Limitations of our Inspection

The inspection was very limited in this case due to the vast record and CD collection stacked around all the walls.

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. Our readings were in line with what we would expect for this age of property, i.e. minor dampness. No evidence of any 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.

En Suite Shower Room

There is a small fan in this area you should expect some condensation to occur when the shower is being used and we believe this is why there is hairline cracking to the plasterboard, this is nothing to be overly concerned about.

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 veneer finished timber doors, however we should say unfinished as they don't appear to have any wood treatment on them!

Staircase

We believe the original staircase has been removed and replaced with the present one; this should have had building regulation permission.

ACTION REQUIRED: The removal of the walls and the position of the staircase should have building regulations approval and be signed off by the local authority.

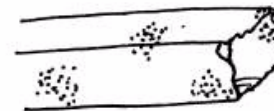
We noted that the underside of the staircase was exposed. It is more normal today to have a half hour fire barrier to stop fire spreading from the ground floor to the first floor in a worse case scenario. You may wish to take a view on whether you add this.

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.*

Given the conditions found within this property there is an outside chance that dry rot is present; if this is the case it would be under the floor and therefore we won't be able to see it unless we open up. There is also a possibility that it is present in the roof due to the dampness found. However in both cases we find it unlikely because of visible signs.

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.*

As explained within the Roof Structure section there is wet rot within the timber roof frame. This looks to be long standing as there have been repairs to it in the past.

ACTION REQUIRED: There are further repairs needed. There is also likely to be wet rot in the floor joists; they are sitting into damp 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.

In the areas inspected there was a minor amount of woodworm found in the roof structure. However we wouldn't class this as being structurally significant.

ACTION REQUIRED: If you wish to be on the ultra safe side then have the roof treated, although we would add we couldn't see any frass (material left by woodworm) which does usually indicate fairly new activity.

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.

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 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.

Roofs

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 200mm. We would not be overly concerned about this as we typically find in roofs between 100mm – 150mm of insulation. In this instance we found approximately 100mm.

Walls

Whilst the majority of the walls are cavity construction which allows the opportunity to put insulation in, in this age of property it was not common practice. Without opening up the wall we cannot confirm whether insulation was added or not.

Windows

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

Services

Service records should be obtained. It is essential for the services to be regularly maintained to run efficiently. The property has a wall mounted combination boiler, you typically find these have a maximum of ten to twenty years assuming they are serviced regularly.

Summary

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

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

HTTP//www.est.org.uk, 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

No security system was noted. 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.

Smoke Alarms

No smoke detectors were noted. We found this quite surprising as the property appears to be rented out. The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply. Obviously in a property of this age that is difficult, as it would mean having surface mounted wires or cutting wiring into the plaster.

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

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

Insurance

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

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

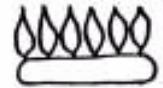
The electric fuses and consumer units we believe are possibly located in the garage, we didn't manage to get access to this due to it being locked.

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

The visible wiring and fittings are slightly dated. Under new legislation any future alterations to this system will have to be carried out by a qualified electrician and certification obtained.



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.



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 consumer unit is located externally to the front left hand side. We assume that the property has mains gas.

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 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

This is located in the roof space.

Plumbing

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

Heating

The boiler is located in the utilities room off the kitchen. It is wall mounted and is manufactured by Ideal and the model type is Response.

We normally switch the heating on however in this case we couldn't get the thermostat to work.

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.

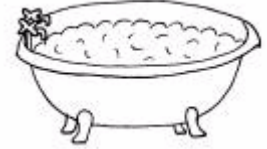
Soil and Vent Pipe

We did not note any soil and vent pipes externally. We therefore believe that the soil and vent pipes are internally encased within a service duct. Therefore, unfortunately, we were unable to inspect them.

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.

Main Bathroom

The main bathroom (the green and purple one) has a three piece bathroom suite which looked in reasonable condition considering its age subject to some day-to-day wear and tear, as one would expect in a rented house.

En Suite (the yellow bathroom)

This has a shower room and we believe it is likely to be a recent addition. We would point out the obvious that there are often problems where showers like this are added, particularly as this type of shower tray tends to give a bit and the tile grout moves away. We suggest that after about a month of living in the house you check all the mastic seals and re-mastic as required.

We would comment that any colour bathroom suite but white (or close to it) tends to date fairly quickly.

Extraction

We noted an extraction fan in the shower room, these generally aren't large enough to deal with the moisture that occurs in such a small room.

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.

Slow Discharge of Water from the Main Family Bathroom

We ran the taps and flushed the toilets etc. and we noted that there was fairly slow drainage from the bathroom. We couldn't see any obvious reason for, it is possibly an internal blockage.

Inspection Chambers

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

Identified Inspection Chambers

We have identified three inspection chambers; two to the rear of the property and one to the front. We have duly lifted these to check to make sure they are not blocked.

Inspection Chamber One (located to the rear of the property next to the garage)

We duly lifted the cover and found it to be free flowing at the time of our inspection.

Inspection Chamber Two (located in the rear garden)

Again we duly lifted the cover and found it to be free flowing at the time of our inspection.

Inspection Chamber Three (located in the front of the property which is outside of the garage)

Unfortunately we were unable to lift this one. We noted that it was meant to be a tight seal. Usually we can lift these although we shouldn't be able to!

We have only undertaken a visual inspection of the property's foul drains by lifting covers and running water from the taps within the house.

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

Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal. In this age of property it is usually via the main drainage system what is known as combined drains.

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 Rainwater Goods section.

OUTSIDE AREAS

GARAGES



Unfortunately we were unable to access the garage.

Front Garden

This is mainly given over to off road parking which is fairly essential given the speed the cars travel along on the road, although we did note that some of the neighbours had parked across the road.

Rear Garden

This is a mixture of a patio area (we were pleased to see that they had not covered over the manholes!). There is a tree fairly nearby which we don't believe is causing problems at present.

Boundaries

The left hand boundary 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

They advised that they had no problems with the neighbours.

Right Hand Neighbours

They advised that the property was rented out and the present neighbours are fairly noisy and were looking forward to having proper neighbours.

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.

- 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) We strongly recommend that Envirosearch or a similar product is used by your Legal Advisor to establish whether this area falls within a flood plain, old landfill site, radon area etc., and brought to its logical conclusion. If your Legal Advisor is not aware of the system please ensure that they contact us and we will advise them of it.
- 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 Local Authority enquiries 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 pleasant mild Winter's 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 are probably aware the year 2000 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.

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 very limited due to the vast record and CD collection stacked around all the walls. There was no access to the garage due to it being locked. The property was unoccupied at the time of our inspection therefore we couldn't carry out our usual question and answer session or carry out our usual questioning. Unfortunately we were unable to see the right hand side of the building.

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.