

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

Windermere, LA23



FOR

**Mr and Mrs G**

Prepared by:

**INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS**

Marketing by:

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# **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.

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## **SYNOPSIS**

### **SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION**

The subject property is a centre terraced cottage in the centre of the town of Windermere. The property is small and located on XXX Street which leads from the A591 into the town centre. There is a similar cottage to the left and a small retail unit to the right. XXX Street slopes slightly down to the left of the property. No Y is slightly higher than No Z.

There is a public house directly opposite, Windermere railway station is located approximately 250 yards away and a supermarket similarly. The property backs onto the rear of three storey mainly residential properties.

It would appear that some of the other residential properties in the area are short term or holiday lets.

We cannot be sure but we estimate that the property was constructed around 1870; a nearby property of a different style is labelled 1859. If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

XXX Street is a busy thoroughfare and at the time of the inspection 11.00am there was queuing traffic causing congestion.

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

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

1837	Victoria becomes Queen of Great Britain.
1840	The First Postage Stamp
1851	First World Exhibition held in London
1854	Florence Nightingale pioneers modern nursing in the Crimea
1859	Charles Darwin proposes the Theory of Evolution
1870	British Red Cross Established
1899-1902	Boer War between Britain and Boers in Southern Africa
1901	Queen Victoria Died

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# EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Street View



Front Garden



Passageway to rear

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# **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

(All directions given as you face the front of the property)

## **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Hallway
- 2) Front room
- 3) Kitchen

## **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Bathroom located at rear
- 2) Front Bedroom
- 3) Rear Bedroom

## **Outside Areas**

There is limited duration (1hour) parking on the road at the front of the property on a first come first served basis. There is a side passageway leading to a small yard at the rear of the property.

Finally, all these details need to be checked and confirmed by your Legal Advisor.

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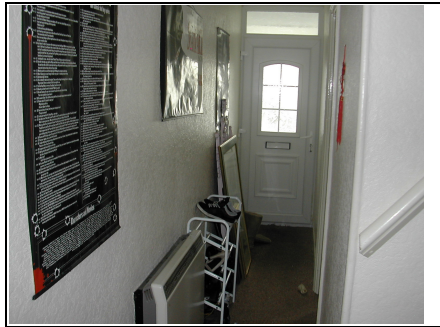
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# INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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



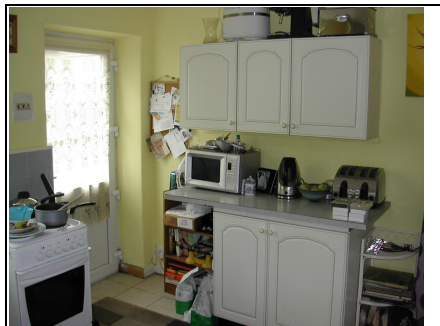
Hallway



Lounge



Kitchen



Kitchen



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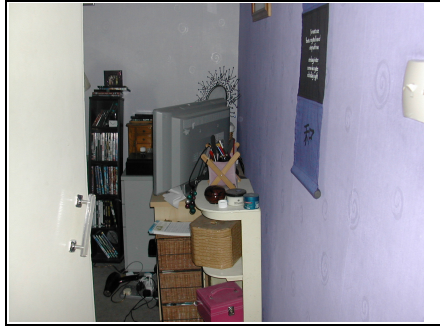
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**First Floor**



Rear Bedroom



Bathroom



Stairs

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# **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

## **External**

Chimneys:	Lakeland stone
Main Roof:	Pitched, clad with slate
Main Roof Structure:	Cut timber roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	Assumed to be Plastic, with one cast iron downpipe (assumed)
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Assumed to be Plastic
Walls:	Random Lakeland stone.
Fascias and Soffits:	No fascias or soffits seen
Windows and Doors:	Mainly UPVC, bathroom window id of timber

## **Internal**

Ceilings:	Mixture of Lath and plaster (assumed) and plaster board
Walls:	Mixture of solid and hollow (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Suspended floor to the front with a concrete floor to rear (assumed)
First Floor:	Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)

## **Services**

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (all assumed).

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.

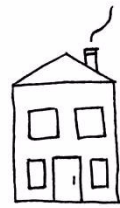
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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



Summaries are not ideal as they try to précis often quite complex subjects into a few paragraphs. This is particularly so in a summary about someone's future home when we are trying to second-guess what their priorities are, so it is important the Report is read in full.

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 100 photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if an issue has not been discussed that you are interested in or concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it; if we have not we will happily go back.

We have divided the Executive Summary into 'The Good' and 'The Bad', to help distinguish what in our mind are the main issues.

## **The Good**

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

1.0) This is a superficially quaint attractive cottage handy for the centre of Windermere and all its amenities.

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

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## **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.*

Note that some of the issues highlighted 'overlap' so if you obtain a quotation you may find it less than the total of each individual item.

### 1.0) **Parking and Congestion**

This may be an issue for you if you have a car to park, or have visitors requiring long stay parking at times when the town is busy, particularly during the holiday season.

This may also implicate the logistics of carrying out any works to the property, for example in the siting of any skips required.



Front of property

XXX Street is a busy thoroughfare for both pedestrians and vehicles.

### 2.0) **High risk purchase**

Although the property is currently occupied we consider that it is not one that you can move into without undertaking at least some basic safety works (for example the installation of smoke alarms) and preferably more extensive repairs dealing with such things as heating, dampness and structural integrity.



Purlin requiring repair

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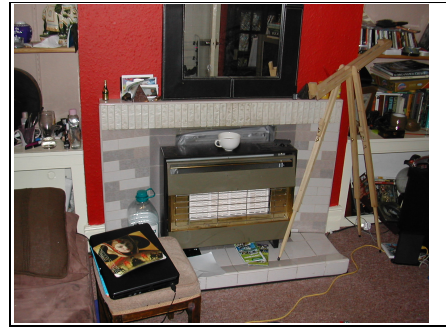
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### 3.0) Chimney Breast

Reference is made in the report to the fact that it was not possible to confirm that the chimney breasts follow through from ground floor (with support in the cellar to the roof space). You need to confirm the precise position and ascertain whether there is a working flue to the gas fires, providing appropriate support if necessary.



Gas fire

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Worst case - allow a budget cost of £3000.

Please see the Chimney Breast Section of this Report.

### 4.0) Dampness

There is extensive penetrating and rising damp in the property. This is likely to be due to number of factors, for example;-

- Defective cement fillet on the chimney and roof.
- Failure of the lime mortar used in the wall structure.
- Defective gulley drain adjacent to the front of the cellar.
- Lack of ventilation to the roof space and property generally.
- Apparent lack of any damp proof membrane to the perimeter walls of the property and the cellar in particular.
- Rain ingress at doorways and windows.
- Roof repairs being necessary



Dampness in cellar

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**ANTICIPATED COST:** Taken together you should allow a budget sum of approximately £7500 to carry out the repairs necessary and any associated building works.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

#### 5.0) **Structural Integrity**

Reference is made to the fact that from the inside the front elevation wall appears to bow outwards. This may suggest that the floor joists have lost their key. Further investigation is required.



Wall appearing to bow

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Worst case – allow a budget of £3000 to rebuild the wall if necessary.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

#### 6.0) **Gardens**

Gardens are very small and the rear courtyard is probably subject to the rights of others passing through.

Please see the Outside Areas Section of this Report.



Front garden

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## 7.0) Heating and Gas

You need to obtain a Gas Safety check as a minimum, and if you propose to let the property you are required to comply with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Allow for a sum of £1000, depending on works required.



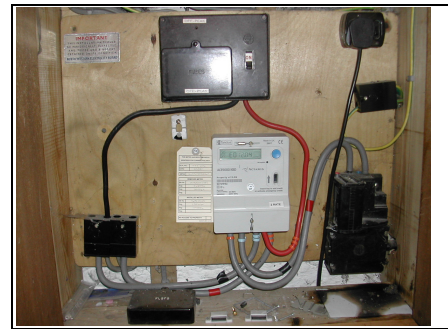
Kitchen gas fire

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

## 8.0) Electricity

If you are going to let the property you should obtain a certificate from a NICEIC approved contractor to confirm compliance with Part P of the Building Regulations. This may reveal that additional electrical works are necessary.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Allow a budget cost of £1500 for repairs and any replacement installation.



Electric meter

## 9.0) Cellar

In addition to the comments made about dampness in the property the cellar requires extensive works, including, drying out, the removal of any defective plaster and repair, tanking, and decoration.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Allow a budget sum of £3500.



Please see the Cellar Section of this Report.

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## **10.0) Roof**

Further investigation is required to the condition of the purlins and the existence of rot within the timber.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** depending on the works necessary allow sum of £3500.



Purlins

## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

## **Maintenance**

It should be appreciated that defects which would normally be highlighted in a modern property, effectively form part of an older property's overall character and style. Such defects are considered acceptable and may not have been specifically referred to as defects within the context of this Report.

This type and age of property will require ongoing maintenance and repair and a budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in good condition. This will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration.

## **Services**

Whilst we have carried out a visual inspection of the services within the property we also need to advise you of the following:

## **Electrics**

For the electrics we would recommend an Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE) test and report carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent, which is recommended whenever a property changes occupancy. Whilst we noted some evidence of recent electrical work we believe that there is still work to do.

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## **Heating**

We would 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.

## **Drainage**

Whilst we were unable to lift the manhole covers the only true way to find out the condition of the drains is to have a closed circuit TV camera report to establish the condition of the drains. In this age of property there may have often been leaks over the years.

## **Water Supply**

There is danger in older properties of having a lead water supply; we would recommend that you speak to the water company to ask them if they have carried out such replacement, as you will be re-piping much of the water used in the building it gives an ideal opportunity to also check for any remaining lead pipes.

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.

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## Estimates of Costs

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

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.

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## **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:

Whilst appearing to be an attractive proposition at the lower price bracket for property in the Lake District, the property requires extensive repairs to put it into a condition suitable to create acceptable, stable and healthy living conditions. Careful consideration needs to be given to the purchase of the property, the budget necessary to repair, the logistics of carrying out the works, and the likely effect on value on completion.

We would refer you to our comments in the Executive Summary, ‘Good’ and ‘Bad’ Sections and ask that you re-read these.

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 in full and contact us on any issues that you require further clarification on.

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# **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 Building Surveys, as agreed to and signed by yourselves. If you have not seen or are not happy with the terms of engagement please phone immediately 0800 298 5424 or email the secretary from which this survey came from.

## **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.

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



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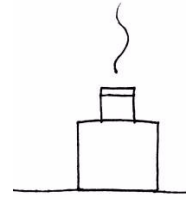
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## EXTERNAL

### CHIMNEY STACK



#### 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.*

There is one chimney to this property located to the left and sitting on a Party Wall with No 12 (all directions given as you face the property).

This chimney is constructed of Lakeland stone finished with a lead flashing and two number chimney pots. The area around the chimney pots appears to have been filled with cement mortar. From what we could see from ground level it looked in average condition considering its age, type and style. The reverse side of the chimney appears to have been rendered with mortar. Unfortunately we were unable to see the top of the chimney known as the flaunching, we therefore cannot comment upon them.

We noted cement mortar at the join of the left hand party wall and the roof of the adjoining property.

The chimney to the right of the property with the party wall to the retail outlet appears in similar condition with an area of cement mortar affixed thereto.



Front view of chimney



Front view of chimney

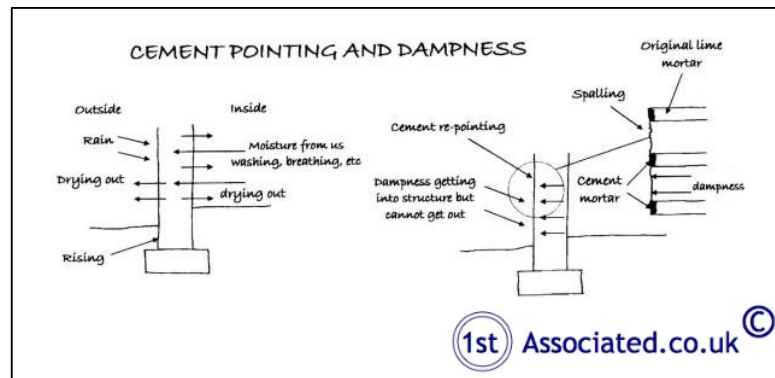
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Chimneys are the most exposed part of the house and therefore do weather and need re-pointing. Avoid using pure cement when re-pointing, as it is too hard and inflexible. The re-pointing should be carried out with a lime based mortar.



#### 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.

#### Flaunchings Defined

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

Finally, we were only able to see approximately 50 percent of the chimney therefore we have made our best assumptions based upon what we could see. A closer inspection may reveal more.

## Party Wall

The party wall relates to shared walls between the subject property and adjoining ones.

There are two party walls that the subject property depends on. As has been referenced previously the one to the left has cement fillet at the joint of the wall and the roof of the adjoining property.

Both party walls were seen from within the roof space; the one nearest the loft hatch gave 'red' readings on the damp meter indicating dampness and water penetration.

The only other point to make with regard to the party wall is the straps that have been used for the aerial. We have found in the past that these cause damage to the brickwork as they produce pressure points ; we suggest that this be checked.



Party walls

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If you do any work on these you will need to deal with the Party Wall Act.

Here is a brief explanation of it.

Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

A structure that both parties enjoy the use of or benefit from. An example of this would be where both parties gain support from a wall or utilise a chimney or chimneys.

*Any work to party structures, such as party walls or party chimney stacks, require agreement under the Party Wall Act. We would be more than happy to offer you help and advice in this matter.*

Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the chimney stacks and party walls from the parts we would see above roof level. 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.

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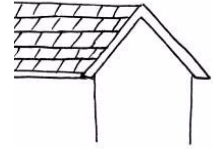
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# ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



*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.*

*Dependent upon the age of your property and the type of construction it may or may not be present, please read on:*

## Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad with slates and, from ground level, this looks in average condition considering the roof's age, type and style. With this age of roof there will usually be a few missing or displaced tiles, this is nothing unusual.



Main roof

The roof appeared relatively flat, although there looks to be a slight dishing effect. Some slates are broken and missing.

The roof is formed by purlins running from side to side supporting the rafters running from ridge to eaves. Two of the purlins appeared to be damp with the beginnings of spore growth along their length and at their ends where they fit into the party walls.

With roofs of this age a problem known as nail sickness can occur. Whilst the roof does not appear to have any unexpected undulations considering its age and the slates sit relatively flatly, we would comment that nail sickness is a possibility. Nail sickness is where the nails rust and give way and allow the slates to slip.

Under current Building Regulations, it is a requirement to ventilate roofs to stop condensation, but this is not a retrospective requirement.

In a Conservation Area you will need planning permission to replace the roof covering.

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There is a porch at the front of the property leading to the principal entrance door. The roof to this has some slipped slates and other debris on top.



Slipped slates on porch

There appears to have been patching around the door frame and there is a hairline crack around it.



Hairline cracking around door frame

The front step leading to the door is of concrete and craze cracked.



Crazing to front door step

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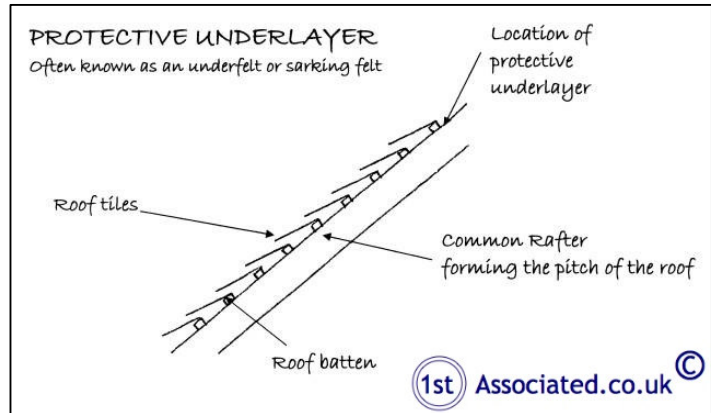
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## Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)

*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.*



Often an older roof will have no protective underlayer at all unless it has been re-roofed post war and then it will have a Hessian base bitumen membrane.

In this case inspection within the roof space showed a roof lining of an unknown material (possibly hessian based) nailed to roof timbers. It was unclear whether there is a further roof lining behind this.

There is a hole in the roof lining near the ridge above the loft hatch.



Roof lining in unknown material

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Lining of the roof

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

Finally, we were only able to see approximately 50 percent of the main roof from ground level via our ladder or via any other vantage point that we managed to gain. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see, however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

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

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# **ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT**



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

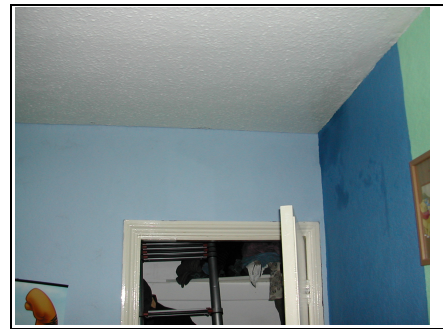
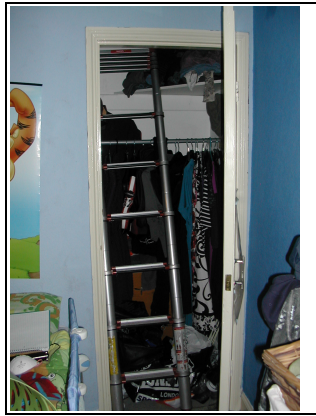
*The roof structure or framework must be built in a manner which is able to give adequate strength to carry its own weight together with that of the roof covering discussed in the previous section and any superimposed loads such as snow, wind, foot traffic etc.*

### **Main Roof**

#### **Roof Access**

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located in a cupboard in the front bedroom. There is no loft ladder, electric light or secured floorboards. 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.



Loft hatch and ladder

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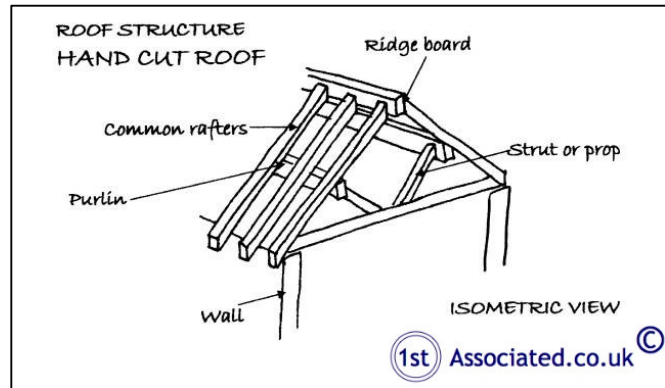
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## Roof Structure

This type of roof structure has what is known as a cut timber roof. This is a roof that is probably 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 poor overall condition.



## Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

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



Rear roof pitch

Our examination was limited by the fact that it was considered un-safe to enter the roof space without risk of damage to the ceilings below.

We noted that the roof purlins were wet in places, along their length and at their ends where they fit into the stonework forming the party walls. Ceiling joists were mostly concealed by loose fill insulation but we feel that there may be problems hidden. What we could see was generally found to be in poor condition for its age, type and style.



Purlins

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Roof purlins



Joist and loose fill insulation

### **Fire Walls**

The property has two brick firewall(s) created by the party walls at either side of the property. From what we could see the fire walls were in-tact.

#### Fire Walls Defined

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



Firewall

### **Water Tanks**

We could not tell what the material used in the construction of the water tank was, as it could not be reached, however some insulation is in place.

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 often cleaning your teeth with this water it is best that it is as clean as possible.

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Water tank

### **Ventilation**

We consider that the amount of ventilation into the roof space is poor and contributing to the damp and moist conditions found there, including staining to roof timbers.

### **Additional Support Added to Roof**

There is additional support to the roof purlins however we doubt the structural effectiveness of these.

### **Insulation**

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

### **Electrical Cables**

We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of wiring found in the roof. In this case there was insufficient quantity of wiring in the roof space to comment. The exposed wiring within the cellar suggests that some electrical works have been undertaken but we would recommend further investigation by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor.

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

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

# GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

## Gutters and Downpipes

The property has mostly plastic gutters and downpipes (assumed). There are some cast iron sections. The condition is fairly typical of what we see; they are in average condition for their age, type and style.

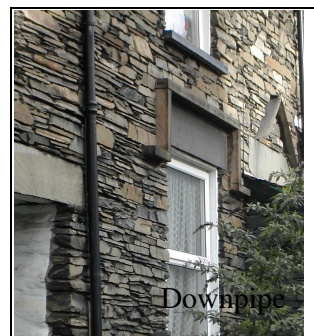
There may be some minor leaks but most people would be happy to live with these providing repairs are carried out within the next six to twelve months.

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.

From ground level the condition and alignment of the rainwater goods appeared to be satisfactory.



Gutters and downpipes



Plastic gutter to rear

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## Soil and Vent Pipe

The property has plastic soil and vent pipes. These show evidence of leaks.



Plastic soil and vent pipes



Combined drainage entering the ground

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

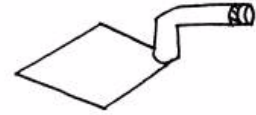
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# WALLS



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

The walls are constructed of stonework of an igneous type usually found in South Lakeland.

This type of stonework consists of larger blocks of stone, which are usually of good quality, being a mixture of flat and larger stones and built in courses. Originally this type of stonework was used predominantly in major/important buildings and was only used for domestic construction in areas where stone was plentiful.



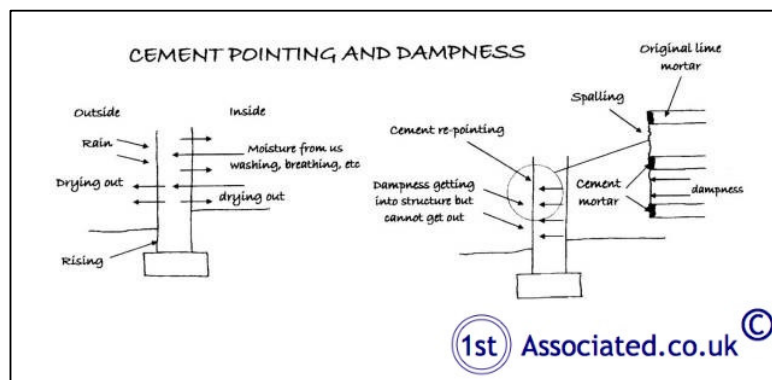
Lakeland stone

Taking into consideration the age, type and style of this property we would say that the stonework and pointing overall is in average condition.



Close up of Lakeland stone

In this particular case the original mortar was of a lime mortar/putty variety. This means, due to the mixture of characteristics, cement being brittle and lime mortar/putty being relatively flexible, deterioration will occur relatively rapidly - re-pointing should be carried out on a like for like basis, i.e. lime mortar/putty re-pointed with lime mortar/putty. Where the lime mortar still exists this is generally in poor condition.



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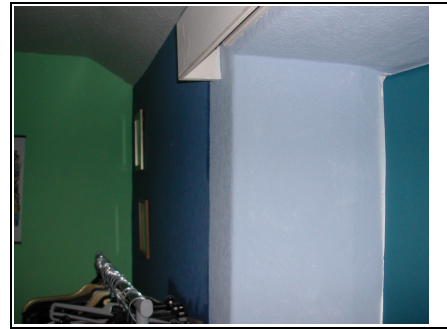
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The wall at the rear appeared true and vertical. We also inspected the front elevation wall in view of what we found on the inside face. It appeared generally true; there is a large lintel above the front window which may be stressing the structure and giving rise to the wall appearing to 'bow' when viewed on the inside face.



Front elevation wall with large lintel above



Wall appears to be bowing

We do not consider that a cavity wall exists in this property.



External wall in the side passageway in poor condition

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The face of the wall alongside the passageway is in poor condition. It has been painted and it is suspected that cement mortar has been used contributing to its poor condition.

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 stonework we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age stone 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 stonework has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the stonework would be if it were opened up for this age, style and type of construction. We are however aware that all is not always as it seems in the building industry and often short cuts are taken. Without opening up the structure we have no way of establishing this.



# **FOUNDATIONS**



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

## **Foundations**

Given the age of the property you may find different depths of foundations. We consider that there may be a basic foundation of stone or none at all. However we did not note any evidence of ground movement leading to structural instability.

Without excavating a trial pit, we are unable to confirm the exact nature of the subsoil or the quality of the foundations. The soil drift map for this area indicates that the subsoil is likely to be siltstone and mudstone, which is less susceptible to the excessive shrinkage normally associated with clay subsoils (the drift map is a 1-2500 scale and more detailed maps may obtain different results).

## **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.

It is your responsibility to check out prior to commitment to purchase that insurance is available on the property on the basis of the things we have reported in the survey. Much as we would like to we are unable to keep up with the changing insurance market and give you advice with regard to this. Please remember to talk about any cracks identified within the property. Often insurers will refer to progressive and non-progressive cracking. Unfortunately this is something we are unable to comment upon from a one-off inspection - the Building Research Establishment recommend a year of monitoring of any cracking.

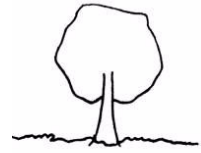
We would always recommend that you remain with the existing insurance company of the property.

We would refer you to our comments with regard to building insurance throughout this report.

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.

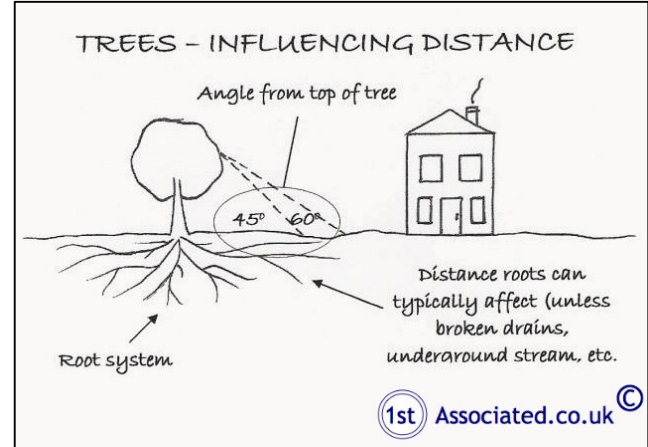
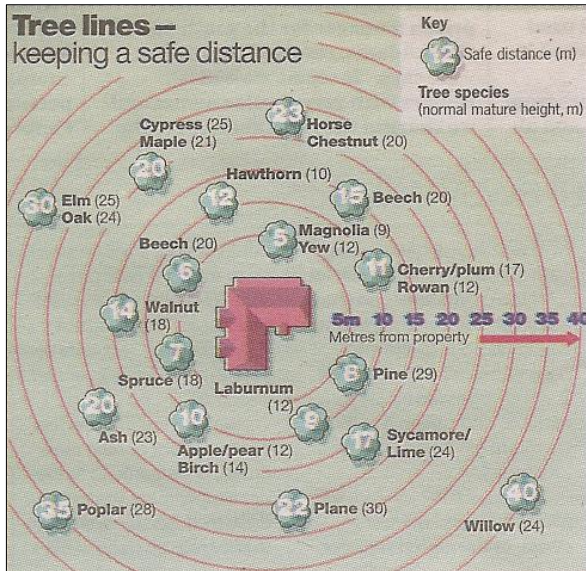
As no excavation has been carried out we cannot be 100 percent certain as to how the foundation has been constructed and we can only offer our best assumptions and an educated guess, which we have duly done.

# 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 property.



## 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.

Finally, insurance requirements with regard to trees have varied over the years and in our opinion have got ever more onerous. We have seen the notifiable distance of a tree away from a property to have been reduced over the years and we reiterate our comments elsewhere within this report that you need to make enquiries with regard to the insurability of your property in relation to trees and other features when you purchase the property.

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

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## DAMP PROOF COURSE



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

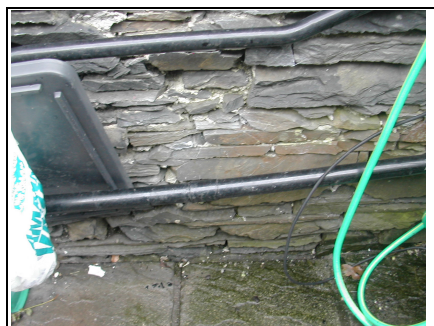
In properties of this age it is unlikely that a damp proof course would have been built in originally. However, often they have had damp proof courses added at a later date.

We were unable to see any evidence of a damp proof course retrospectively installed.

A failure in a damp proof course will not only involve expensive repairs to the damp proof course itself it could also involve replacement of the plasterwork, which in turn may mean radiators and plumbing has to be moved, electrics and obviously furniture, carpets etc. It can also mean that timbers in contact with it can suffer from wet rot.

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.



No damp proof course

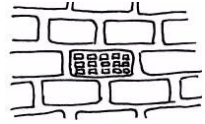
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## AIRBRICKS



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

We did not note any air bricks; we would not necessarily expect to find such in walls constructed using lime mortar which should enable the walls to breathe.

There is a cast iron grid at the base of the front elevation providing ventilation to the cellar.



Cast iron grid to front of property

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.

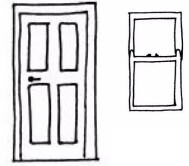
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# FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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

There are no fascias or soffits visible from ground level.

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



Wooden rafter feet

## Windows

One timber casement to the bathroom was noted. This was in poor condition.

Elsewhere, the original windows to the property have been replaced with plastic windows; these are of a reasonable standard, though not at the top end of the market. We believe the windows are unlikely to have any structural support in them, which a top quality window would have.

We would draw your attention to the fact that sealed double glazed units can fail, particularly as a result of poor workmanship during installation. Failure of the seal leads to condensation between the two panes of glass and simply replacing the affected units may not provide a satisfactory long term solution. Enquiries should be made as to the existence of any transferable guarantees. Generally it is considered that double glazed units have a life of about ten years.

In a Conservation Area you will need planning permission to replace windows.





Windows in poor condition

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## Doors

It was noted that the doors are made of plastic. We generally find that this type of door has a very good locking system and therefore offers better security in general than the older style timber door with a mortise and deadlock. We have also noted on the older plastic doors that during warm weather these doors often expand and contract making a cracking noise, which can be quite surprising.



Front door and cracked door step



Door to the rear

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.

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# **EXTERNAL DECORATIONS**



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

There are few areas that have been previously decorated. Where this has been undertaken the condition is poor.

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.

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# INTERNAL



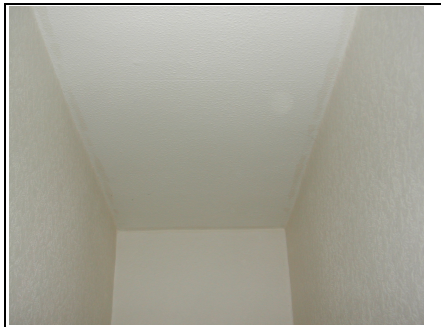
## CEILING, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

### Ceilings

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be a mixture of lath and plaster (where we could see this in the roof space) and plasterboard.

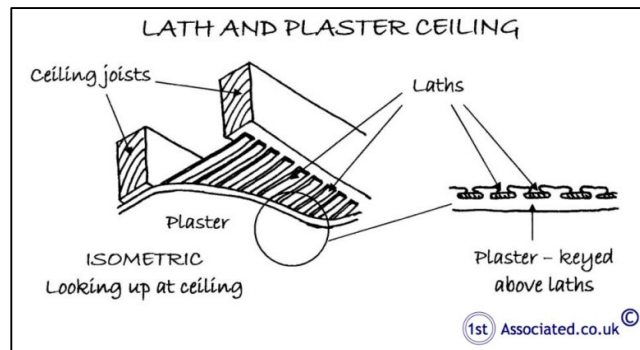
From our visual inspection the ceilings appeared in reasonable condition.



Ceiling

#### Lath and Plaster Defined

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



## **Internal Walls and Partitions**

These are, we believe a mixture of solid and studwork construction. It is of course impossible to determine the construction without opening up the walls and we have therefore taken an educated guess.

The first floor walls all appeared to be of stud partition and we believe that the whole of the first floor would have been open plan when it was first constructed. We do not believe that the partitioning meets current Building Regulations with regard to fire resistance.

## **Perimeter Walls**

Originally these would have been constructed with a wet plaster, possibly a lime plaster.

Again, we cannot be 100% certain of the wall construction without opening them up which goes beyond the scope of this report.

This comment has been based on the visual look of the wall which is relatively “smooth” and normally means a modern finish.

Dampness was found in several locations in perimeter walls;-

- Adjacent to the fire place in the kitchen.
- In the party wall on the right hand side of the front hallway.
- Adjacent to the base of the rear door.
- In the right hand side wall of the front bedroom
- In the right hand party wall viewed from within the roof space.
- In the lounge, at the base of the fireplace and in the front elevation wall, at its base and at window level.
- In the rear elevation wall in the kitchen.
- In the right hand wall of the kitchen.
- In the rear elevation wall within the rear bedroom.

The perimeter walls in the cellar were also in very poor condition being particularly damp.



We have mentioned elsewhere within the report that there is dampness in the property. This can cause the plaster to degrade and it is generally recommended that walls are replastered where dampness has occurred. If this is an older property we would always recommend a lime based plaster, where as in a newer property carlite plaster is recommended.



Damp ceilings and walls

To some areas the plaster is 'blown'. This term is used where the plaster is no longer sticking to the wall and is sometimes known as 'losing its key'.



Hairline cracks to ceiling

There is a hairline crack between the front door and left side at the start of the hallway.

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.

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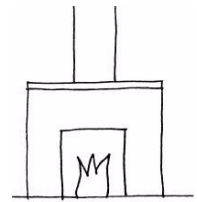
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# CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



*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 to the left hand side (all directions given as you face the front of the property).

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

We are unable to confirm that the chimney breast follow through from ground to first floors, and into the roof space. It is possible that the chimney breasts have been removed from the first floor suggesting that there may not be a flue for the gas fires in the lounge and kitchen, or that the route of the chimney breasts merge and are concealed within the party wall.



Chimney



First floor wall above chimney breast



Gas fire



Wall in cellar beneath chimney breast above

We took meter readings on your chimney with our electronic damp meters and found dampness is coming through. This is probably due to the chimney and flashing being defective.

Finally, we will comment on the condition of the chimney breast where we can see the chimney breast. If we can see a chimney breast has been removed we will inspect for signs of movement and advise. However, often the chimney breasts are hidden so we cannot comment. Also additional support can be concealed very well when chimney breasts are hidden particularly when plastered over.

Your Legal Advisor needs to specifically check with the Local Authority for removed chimneys and associated chimney breasts and Building Regulations Approvals and advise by e-mail immediately if chimney breasts are found to have been removed. We would recommend opening up the structure to check the condition. If we are not advised we will assume the relevant Building Regulations Approval has been obtained.

It is strongly recommended that flues be cleaned and checked for obstructions prior to use to minimise the risk of hazardous fumes entering the building.

Please also see the Chimney Stacks, Flues

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# FLOORS

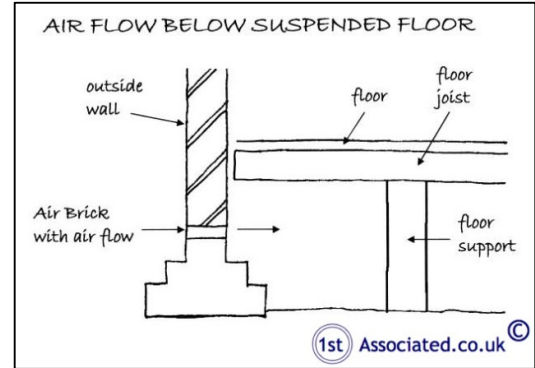


*Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.*

## Ground Floor

### Suspended Timber Floor

The floors to the front of the property ( in the lounge) are suspended timber floors which require air movement underneath to This is confirmed by the view of the floor from within the cellar.



Ground floor concealed by boarding in the cellar

We noted evidence of woodworm through a small gap in the ceiling board to the cellar.



Evidence of woodworm

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## Solid Floor

The floors to the rear (in the kitchen) felt solid under foot so we have assumed that they are constructed in concrete.

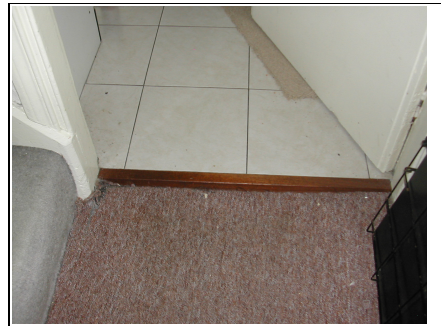
This is at a slightly higher level than the hallway.

The floor felt damp, and the occupier advised that water penetration occurs during periods of rain.

However, we have not opened up the floors or lifted the carpets or floor coverings.



Solid floor in kitchen



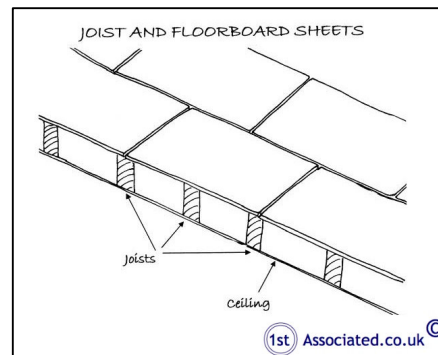
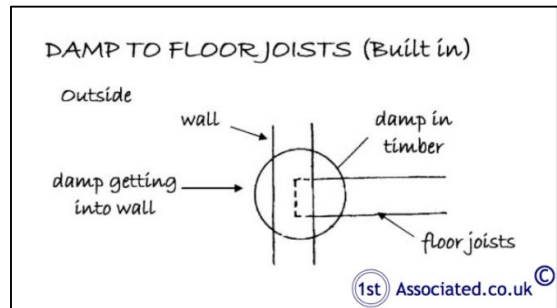
Kitchen floor higher than hallway

## First Floor

We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards / floorboard sheeting, with embedded timbers as this is typical in this age of property.

### 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.





The floor in the rear bedroom has a perceptible slope to it, to the rear of the property.



Evidence of woodworm in front bedroom



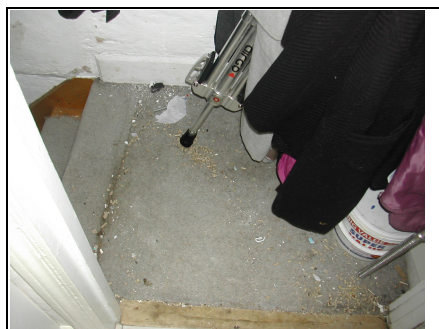
Front bedroom floor



Landing floor



Bathroom floor



Floor at top of stairs to cellar



Cellar floor

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

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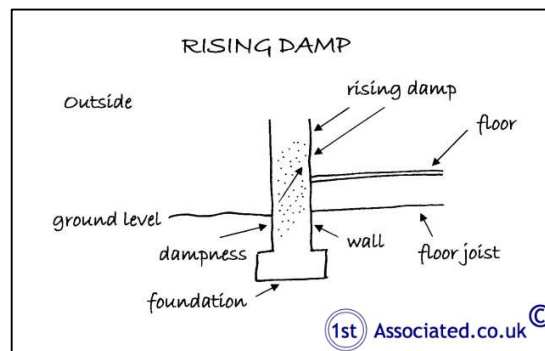


## DAMPNESS

*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.*



The readings we obtained indicated that there is extensive dampness in the property.

You should instruct a qualified and experienced contractor who is a member of the BWPDA (British Woodworm Preserving and Damp Proofing Association) issuing a long-term insurance backed guarantee to carry out a quotation on the property which should be forwarded to us for comment and to implement all necessary remedial works. In conjunction with the above, damp affected plaster should be replaced in accordance with the specifications of the specialist contractor. Failure to do so may nullify the validity of the guarantee.

As a general note, we would point out that timbers in contact with dampness such as the floor joists are prone to rot. Without opening up the floor we cannot examine these, we can only give you our best opinion which in this instance is that we expect some timbers to be rotten due to contact with dampness.

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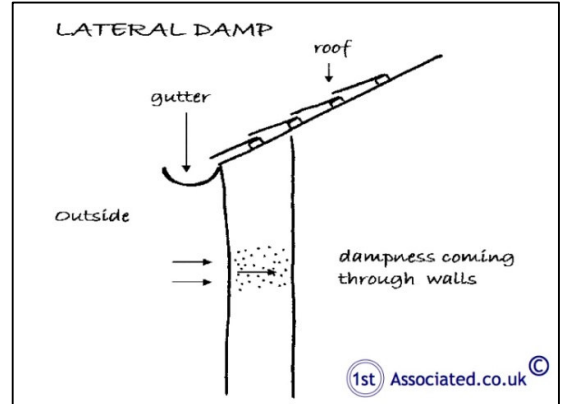
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## Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

*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. We generally got high dampness readings and/or visually noticed dampness coming through the property.

The external pointing needs some work to stop the dampness coming through.

## Condensation

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

At the time of the inspection there were several areas where there are signs of condensation. We feel that the lack of ventilation in the property means that there is a serious condensation problem.



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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, cooling and ventilation of properties. Normally opening windows first thing in the morning resolves most and opening windows to air the property regularly.

We believe that timber treatment works may have been carried out at some stage in the past. Although guarantees may be available there is a possibility that they may no longer be valid or may not apply to the whole of the property. Guarantee documents should be lodged with your legal advisor who should be instructed to advise on their scope, validity and transferability. If possible a copy of the original specification should be obtained.

### **Extract fans in kitchens and bathrooms**

A way of helping to reduce condensation is to have good large extract fans within the kitchens and bathrooms which are moisture generating areas. We would recommend humidity controlled extract fans be added to kitchens and bathrooms.

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.

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# 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 original doors have been replaced with 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), they have a paint finish and are slightly marked but nothing unusual.



Hollow core door

## Staircase

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 worst case scenario. You may wish to take a view on whether you add this.

The staircase to the cellar has been pre-fabricated and factory manufactured and is of timber construction.



Exposed underside of stairs

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## Skirtings

The skirtings have been replaced with a more modern version.

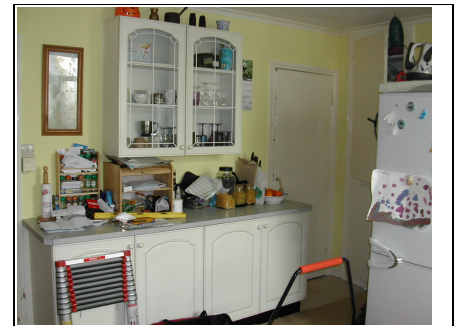
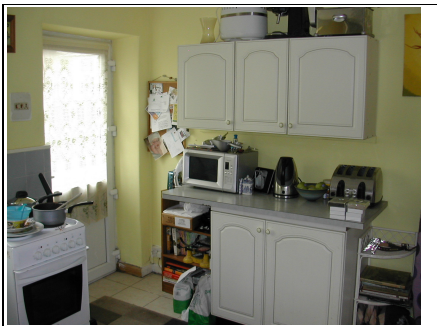


Modern skirting

## Kitchen

We found the kitchen in poor condition.

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.



Kitchen

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.

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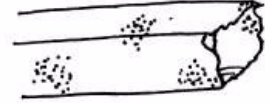
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## **TIMBER DEFECTS**



*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.*

We have not visually seen any dry rot during the course of our inspection. We would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had a limited view of the roof.

### **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.*

We noted signs of wet rot on roof timbers, and potentially at the ends of rafters.

Again, we would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had a limited view of the roof.

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## 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 floor is the main area that we look for woodworm.

Within the floor we found signs of woodworm activity at the entrance to the cupboard in the front bedroom, in the ceiling timbers to the side passageway and, in the underside of the lounge floor.



Signs of woodworm activity in front bedroom floor



Front bedroom



Signs of woodworm activity in the floor



Signs of woodworm activity in timber in roof above passageway

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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.

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.*

Internal decorations are in poor condition.

Generally we thought the internal decorations are 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.

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.

You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste.

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

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## CELLARS AND VAULTS



*Cellars and vaults tend to be found in older properties and offer a useful space, although usually they are damp, unless some treatment has taken place such as the tanking of the walls, which is a lining process, or an external damp proofing membrane of some type has been added, or if internally the walls have been lined, therefore hiding the damp. Cellars are often susceptible to flooding from excessive rain, rising water table levels or even blocked drains.*

We would first of all comment that due to the very nature and location of cellars they are usually damp. Overall we consider this one to be in very poor condition.

There is evidence of extensive dampness at the front left (possibly caused by a rainwater downpipe gully on the outside), the front right and at the base of the stairs.

The floor at the base of the stairs, beneath the vinyl covering, was wet.

Due to dampness usually found within the cellars, we would recommend that only non-perishable goods are stored in this area.



Excessive damp in cellar



Damp floor



Damp walls

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Damp walls



High damp readings



Damp floor

Finally, we have made a visual inspection of the cellar/vault only and have no way of knowing what the construction is without opening up the structure.

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# THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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

## HIPs

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

## Roofs

Some loose fill roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 300mm.



Loose fill roof insulation

## Walls

The walls to this property are solid in the sense that they do not have a cavity as a modern property would have. Also they are unlikely to have any substantial insulation. However, unfortunately it is generally very difficult to improve the insulation without affecting the external or the internal appearance of the property.

## Windows

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

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## Services

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 below average compared with what we typically see.

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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.*

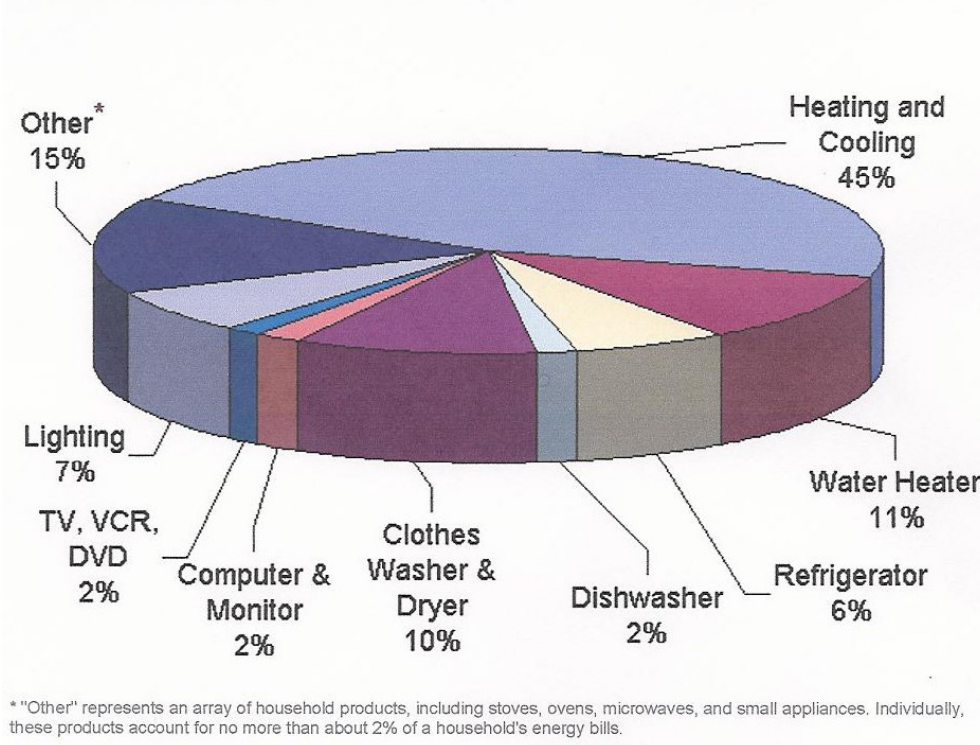
*or alternatively www.cat.org.uk*

*or Sustainable Energy Without the Hot Air by David J C MacKay  
HTTP//www.withouthotair.com/Videos.html to download for free or buy a paper copy as we did.*

*It is worth watching the video How Many Light Bulbs? by David J C MacKay  
HTTP//www.youtube.com/watch?v=UR8wRSp21Xs*

Finally, we would comment that energy we feel will become a major consideration in years to come, particularly with the greater focus in modern buildings on energy efficiency.

#### What does my energy bill pay for?



## OTHER MATTERS



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

### 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.

### Fire / Smoke Alarms

No 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 that is difficult, as it would mean having surface mounted wires or cutting wiring into the plaster.

We would recommend, for your own safety, that smoke detectors be installed. We would always recommend a hard wired fire alarm system and are also aware that some now work from a wireless signal which may be worth investigating. Whilst fire is relatively rare it is in a worst case scenario obviously devastating.

### 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.

We would refer you to our comments with regard to building insurance throughout this report.

### Asbestos

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos however we did not find any. We are not asbestos surveyors. If you wish to confirm you are 100 percent free of asbestos you need to have an asbestos survey carried out.

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## **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.

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# ELECTRICITY



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

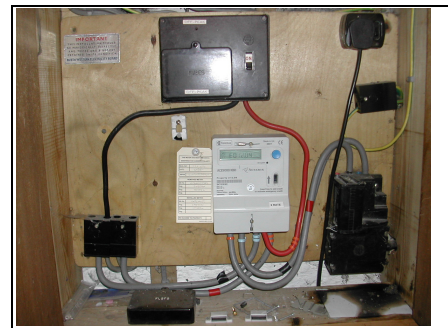
Periodic inspections and testing of electrical installations is important to protect your property from damage and to ensure the safety of the occupants. Guidance published by the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) recommends that inspections and testing are undertaken at least every 10 years (we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

## Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the cellar. The fuse board looked dated.

We noted that some ceiling lights did not operate.

In this age of property we would expect to find a mixture of different types of electrical cable, from the original to more modern updates in PVC.



Fuse board

It is important that the plumbing is earthed in a property. In older pipe systems it was possible to just put one earth on, which transferred through the entire system and earthed itself. However, with modern properties there is often an element of plastic in the installation that stops earthing. Therefore you have to earth in several places, such as under the sink in the kitchen, and in the bathroom.

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## **Earth Test**

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

As the property is changing occupancy an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test and report should be carried out by a NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

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

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

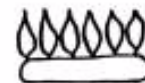
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# GAS



*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 Gas Safe registered plumber.*

We are advised that the property has mains gas. The consumer unit is located in the cellar.

All gas appliances, pipework and flues should be the subject of an annual service by a competent engineer, i.e., a member of Gas Safe; 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.



Consumer unit in cellar

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

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# 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 located beneath the kitchen sink. We believe that there may be some lead pipe work in this location.

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.



Stopcock under kitchen sink

## Water Pressure

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

## Cold Water Cistern

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

## Hot Water Cylinder

There is a hot water cylinder located in the kitchen cupboard. It has an insulation jacket which indicates that it is relatively new (in this case we mean in the last 30 years). This cylinder will therefore have a good thermal efficiency, although not as good as the more modern hot water cylinders. This provides the hot water for the property.



Hot water cylinder is in kitchen cupboard

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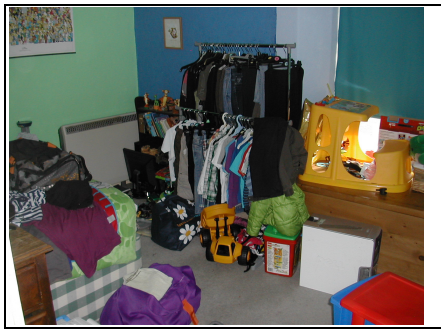


## Plumbing

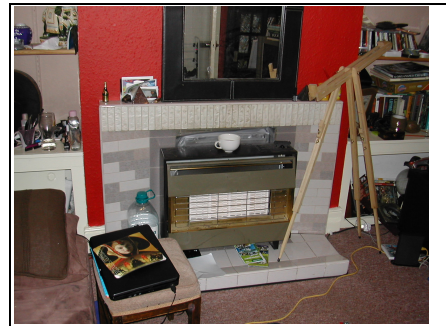
The plumbing, where visible, comprises copper piping. No significant leakage was noted on the surface, although most of the pipework is concealed in floors, walls and ducts.

## Heating

There is no boiler in the property. Heating is via gas fires in the lounge and kitchen and night storage heaters.



Night storage heater



Gas fire in lounge

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.

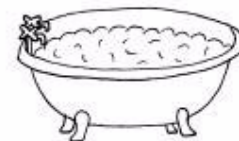
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# **BATHROOM**



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

## **Bathroom**

The property has a three piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin and WC, which looks in average condition, subject to some day-to-day wear and tear, as one would expect.

The bathroom has no natural ventilation. We therefore recommend that an extract fan be added that discharges externally and preferably fitted to a light switch or even a humidity stat to control its operation.



Bathroom

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.

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## MAIN DRAINS



*The sanitary system, as we know it now, came into being some 100 years ago during the XXXn 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.

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

### Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We have identified one inspection chamber / manhole.

The drain run appears to be to the rear of the terrace of cottages on XXX Street.



Manhole

#### Manholes Defined

Access areas which usually fit a man (or woman) into them and are put in where the drains change direction.

We were unable to inspect the drain as it was not physically possible to lift the cover.

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.*

In this age of property it is likely to be into shared drains. These can be a problem during heavy rainfall and peak periods, such as the 9 o'clock rush to work.

The grates and gullies around the property were noted to have debris and vegetation growth in them. These may indicate a blockage in the surface water drain and should be further checked when cleared.

We believe that the gully at the front left of the property may have failed contributing to the conditions found in the basement.



Drains and gullies

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.

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## OUTSIDE AREAS

The main focus of this report has been on the main building. If you wish us to do a specific report on the other buildings then you need to instruct us for this separately. We are offering here a brief overview.

Parking is usually roadside parking on a first come first served basis, limited to one hour.

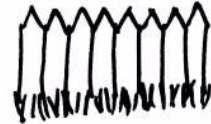
There are few long term parking spaces in the town.

There is a dilapidated shed at the rear of the property. It appears to be of brick construction with a corrugated roof but is almost completely covered with vegetation.



Dilapidated shed

## EXTERNAL AREAS



### Front Garden

There is a small front forecourt.

The stone walls appear in reasonable condition but are covered in vegetation and may require repair and maintenance, and accordingly need to be checked.

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Front entrance



Gate and wall



Stone wall covered in vegetation



Front garden



Stone wall

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## Rear Garden

There is a small rear courtyard. A gate opens onto the adjoining courtyard at the rear of the right hand retail outlet.

The timber fences are in poor condition. The rear stone wall was in poor condition.

The courtyard is currently being used to keep a dog and there is a kennel in the corner.



Dilapidated gate to courtyard



Timber fence in poor condition



Timber fence



Rear stone wall



Dog kennel

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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.

### **Left Hand Neighbours**

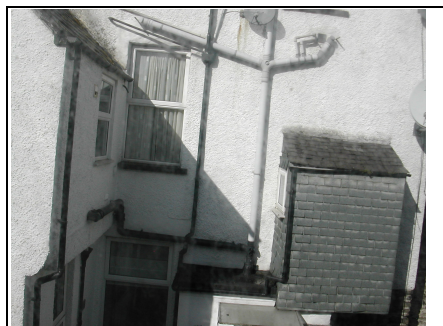
The left hand property is a cottage used for residential purposes.

### **Right Hand Neighbours**

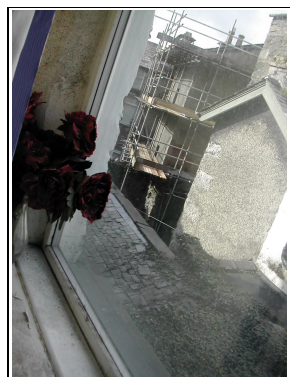
The right hand property is a retail outlet trading as ‘Scarlett Ribbon’.

### **Other Neighbours**

There is a public house opposite.



View to the rear



View to the rear

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## **POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:
  - i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
  - ii) Rising damp treatments.
  - iii) Double glazing or replacement windows.
  - iv) Roof and similar renewals.
  - v) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
  - vi) Removal of any walls in part or whole.
  - vii) Removal of any chimneys in part or whole.
  - 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 and egress to the rear yard by the occupiers of the subject property and any neighbours having rights over the passageway and rear courtyard, 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.

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

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

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

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

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

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



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

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

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## **REFERENCES**

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

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

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

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

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# **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 the contents should not be divulged to third parties without the authors consent.

## **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.

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## **WEATHER**

It was dry and overcast at the time of the inspection.

In recent times our weather seems to be moving towards the extremities from its usual relatively mid range. Extremes of weather can affect the property.

## **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 limited:-

- as we did not have full access to the roof,
- as we were not able to open up the ground floor or the first floor,
- as we were unable to have clear view of the rear roof pitch.

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## **BUILDING INSURANCE**

We do not advise with regard to building insurance. You need to make your own enquiries. Some areas may have a premium, some buildings may have a premium and some insurers may be unwilling to insure at all in certain areas. You need to make your own enquires prior to committing to purchase the property. Please be aware the fact a building is currently insured does not mean it can be re insured.

We would comment that non-insurability of a building we feel will affect value. It is therefore essential to make your own enquiries with regard to insurance before committing to purchase the property and incurring fees.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

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

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# APPENDICES

1. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
2. Information on the Property Market
3. Windermere Conservation Boundary Map

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# **THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS**

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

## **Work You Cannot do Yourself**

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

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## INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

[www.landreg.org.uk](http://www.landreg.org.uk)

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

[www.rics.org.uk](http://www.rics.org.uk)

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

[www.halifax.co.uk](http://www.halifax.co.uk) and [www.nationwide.co.uk](http://www.nationwide.co.uk)

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

[www.hometrack.co.uk](http://www.hometrack.co.uk)

This gives information with regard to house sale and purchase prices.

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[www.motleyfool.co.uk](http://www.motleyfool.co.uk)

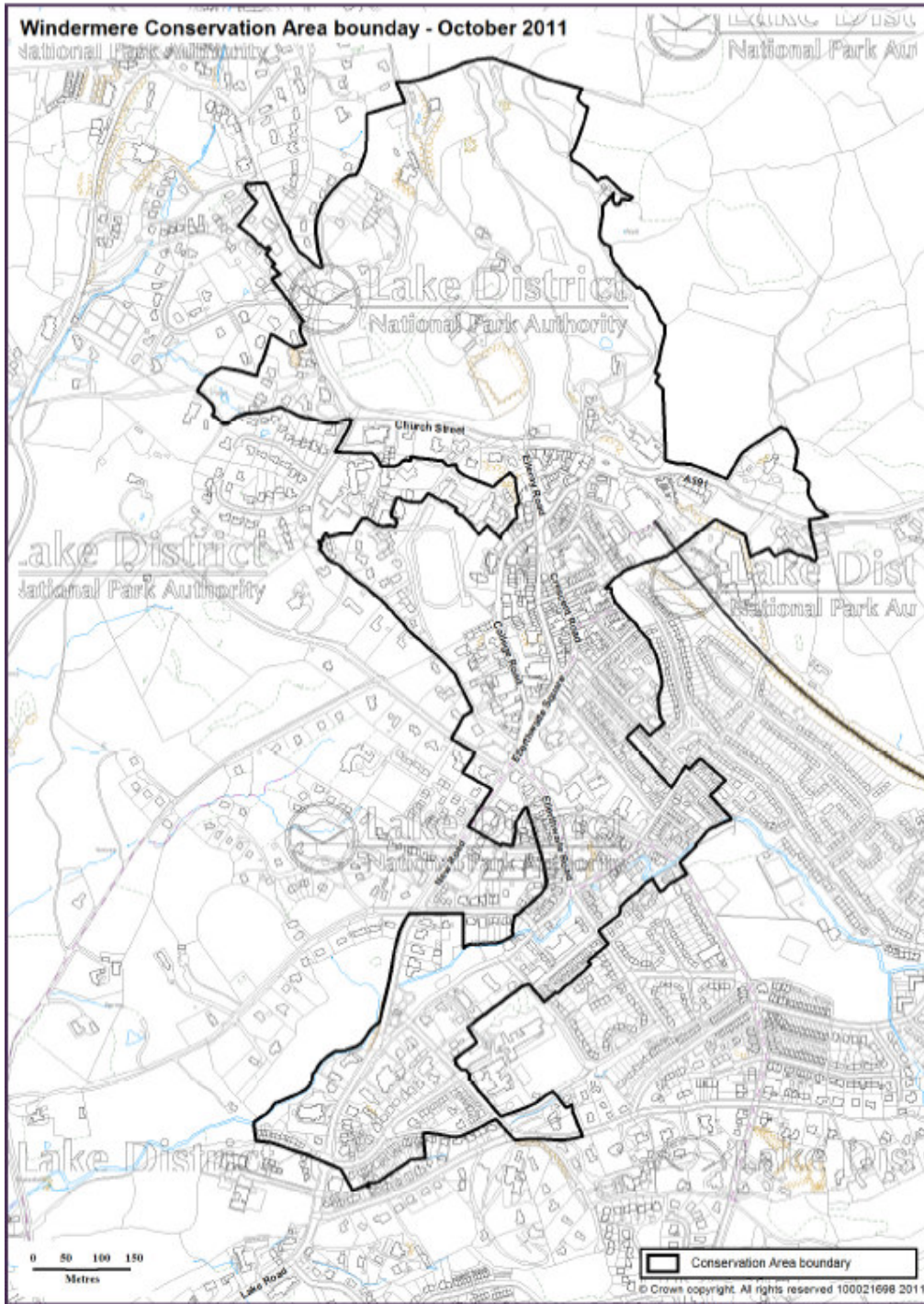
We also like the Motley Fool website which is a general financial site and although it is selling financial services and other services they do tend to give a very readable view of the housing market.

[www.rightmove.co.uk](http://www.rightmove.co.uk)

This is probably the largest Internet search engine for estate agency sales and also has useful information with regard to prices of property (but it is not the same as having a chartered surveyor value it).

[www.zoopla.co.uk](http://www.zoopla.co.uk)

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



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