

DEFECTS REPORT

Middlesex.



Mr A

Prepared by:

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Marketing by:

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INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTION

We have been instructed by Mr A to prepare a report.

We have carried out a visual inspection of the property

The weather was a mild autumn day, with temperatures ranging from 12 to 16 degrees at the time of the survey (temperatures taken at the start and the end of the survey).

We are Independent Chartered Building Surveyors. We are registered with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and are members of the Independent Surveyors Association,

This survey has been prepared by Mr H BSc MSc, MRICS, MCIOB FBEng Chartered Building Surveyor

This survey has been carried out as per our standard Terms and Conditions of Contract which have been emailed to you as part of the confirmation of our instructions. If you would like further clarification please do not hesitate to contact us.

SYNOPSIS

We have been instructed by Mr A to prepare a Defects Report in an Expert Witness format on:-

1. The dampness in the subject property
2. Mice and cockroach infestation in the property.
3. We have duly carried out a visual inspection of the property with Mr A and with the occupier/tenant present and assistant surveyor Mr B MSc.
4. We have not reviewed any documentation in relation to this matter.
5. We have forwarded a questionnaire to the occupier/tenant which we have not had returned as yet and we spoke to them during the course of the survey requesting that they advise us of any issues that they have. They advised us and showed us the following items:-
 - a) Openings in the stairway where they advised that mice used
 - b) Flooring that had moved.
 - c) General condensation staining throughout the property for example specifically in the kitchen and the rear bedroom

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CONSTRUCTION SUMMARY

Victorian property circa 1880/90



External

Chimneys:	Brick chimneys
Main Roof:	Pitched and concrete tiled
Gutters and Downpipes: Soil and Vent Pipe:	Cast Iron and Plastic
Walls:	Flemish bond brickwork pointed in cement mortar (assumed)
External detailing:	Plastic double glazed windows some with trickle vents
Foundations:	Not inspected assumed step brickwork.

Internal

Ceilings:	Lath and plaster or plasterboard (assumed)
Walls	Mixture of solid and hollow (assumed)
Floors: Ground Floor:	Suspended timber floor joist and floorboards (assumed) embedded
1 st Floor:	Joist and floorboards (assumed) embedded

We have used the term 'assumed' as we have not opened up the structure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive summaries are always “dangerous” as they try and encapsulate relatively complex problems in a few precise and succinct words. Having said that here is our executive summary and recommendations:

The two specific areas we have been asked to look at are dampness and mice and cockroach infestation. In both cases we believe that these are due to a combination of issues predominately tenant lifestyle.

1. Dampness

We noted condensation in the form of black mould to various areas of the property specifically:-

- 1.1 The walls in the bathroom
- 1.2 The walls in the kitchen
- 1.3 The plastic windows in the rear first floor bedroom.

We considered the cause of this to be due to the tenant lifestyle and we would note specifically:-

Washing was drying in most rooms at the time of the inspection.



Washing being dried in bathroom



Drying clothes on radiator



Washing drying in front room

Even though the front windows were open the air was clammy in an above average relative humidity.



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Steam cooking taking place during the length of the survey

Steaming of food was taking place during the course of the survey.

The occupier/tenant can air the property and therefore reduce the relative humidity and in turn reduce the likelihood of condensation by:-

Opening windows in all rooms

Vents - in most rooms, we are advised these have been recently added.

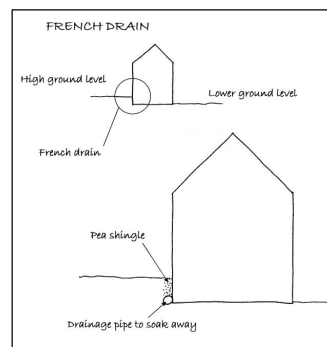
Using mechanical extract fans, which were working at the time of our inspection in the kitchen and in the bathroom, albeit that they require the occupier/tenant to specifically put them on.

Older properties issues

Many properties of this age to some extent have damp walls although we would add that older properties were never meant to have dry walls. In addition to the natural dampness we believe over and above this the property has additional dampness due to the items mentioned above, the moisture within the air internally hitting against the colder surfaces such as the windows and the walls and also dampness from higher ground levels which in turn are causing some rising damp.

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Occupiers/tenants be informed and advised about how condensation is caused:-

- a) Dry washing outside during suitable weather, which will require a washing line.
- b) Use a tumble drier vented to external air during unsuitable weather.
- c) We would recommend the existing extract fans are changed to ones operated by humidity thermostats therefore are not requiring the occupier/tenant to switch them on and ideally we would recommend that they are made larger.
- d) Provide a French Gulley round the property to lower the ground level and reduce the dampness within the walls.
- e) Review these messages adjust and adapt as appropriate.
- f) Cold bridging – we would add that in some older properties which were never meant to be heated to the levels that they are currently heated to, (remember originally they would have had an open fire



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with good air circulation) we are finding that cold spots occur or cold bridging which when occupied will cause condensation.

- g) Drainage check needs to be carried out on properties of this age to ensure that there are no leaks from the drains.
- h) There appears to be, based on the number of beds and clothes in the property a high level of occupancy of the property and we would limit the number of occupants of this property in its present condition to two adults and two children.



Front bedroom



Middle bedroom



Rear bedroom

2. Mice and Cockroach infestation

We saw no signs of mice and cockroach during the course of our survey. The occupier/tenant showed us openings in the steps to the between the rear lounge and the kitchen and advised us that mice were present in there. The property has a suspended timber floor, we would comment that the area under the floor is suitable for mice and cockroaches to live and would add that there is a freely available supply of food within the property. Hygiene is below what we typically see in tenanted properties as food is present on work surfaces, the floors and the walls.



Gaps to steps that allow access under the suspended timber floor

3. Repair works carried out to the property.

From discussions with Mr A we are advised that the occupier/tenant is given a phone number for any repair works and also an emergency number where they have to ring and advise Mr A of any issues. Mr A, who has been working for Mr A for approximately ten years, advised

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that the procedure is when the occupier/tenant phones emergency work is carried out immediately with the consent of the landlord and larger works of a non emergency nature are carried out by a team of regularly used maintenance contractors. We asked Mr A for specific examples of this and he was able to show us and give dates of the work carried out in relation to the rodent infestation and cockroach infestation. In addition to this Mr A advised us that Mr A prepared all property when a tenant leaves typically this includes new furniture and fittings and redecoration.

Following notification from the Local Authority the following work has been carried out:-

Landlord's alterations:-

1. Vents have been added to various rooms, the vent covers do not allow the occupier to vary the venting level, we would recommend these are replaced with adjustable vents.



Vents within bedroom

2. A laminated floor has been added albeit that it needs maintenance.



Flooring not secured

3. Change the fridge unit.

Letting agent – Mr A, carried out mice and cockroach pest control inspections:-

10th May 2008

18th February 2009

31st March 2009

Other elements of maintenance are quoted within the Appendices.

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Time Line – A brief history of the structure

This has been based upon a discussion with Mr A.

1880/90	Victorian terraced property built
Spring 2005	Mr A started managing the property.
10 th March 2005 – 29 th March 2007	Tenant one starting occupying the property.
Date not known	Habitability check carried out by Council and approved upon
Spring 2007	A refurbishment which included new furniture, new mattresses, new carpets and a complete internal redecoration.
Date not known	Habitability check carried out by Council and approved upon
6 th August 2007	Tenant two occupied the property.

INSPECTION

Our inspection has been specifically related to the mice and cockroach infestation issues detailed below:

Our inspection has taken the format of a visual inspection:

1. External of the property.
 - 1.1 The front
 - 1.2 The rear
 - 1.3 The side – we have not be able to view this as it is a terraced property.

We have had the benefit of a x 16 x16 zoom lens on a digital camera.

2. Internal of the property.
 - Ground floor
 - 2.1 Hallway
 - 2.2 Front room
 - 2.3 Kitchen
 - 2.4 Rear bathroom.

First Floor

- 2.5 Front bedroom
- 2.6 Middle bedroom
- 2.7 Rear bedroom.

3. Roof space not inspected.
4. Outside areas, we viewed the front garden and the rear garden and we have looked at the adjoining property.
5. 1. We have spoken to the occupier/tenant.
 - 5.2 We have forwarded on a questionnaire but have not had it returned at this point in time.
6. We have not had the benefit of talking to the neighbours.
7. We have used a resistance meter commonly known as a damp meter to identify the level of dampness within the structure.

References

We would refer you to articles on the 1stAssociated.co.uk website on condensation and rising damp.

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SURVEY FINDINGS

1. From our external visual inspection we noted:-
 - 1.1 Roof – not vented
 - 1.2 Walls – cement repointing to the Flemish bond brickwork with air vents at low level.
 - 1.3 Windows – plastic double glazed predominately trickle vents
 - 1.4 Floors – air vents at floor level indicating a suspended timber floor
 - 1.5 Front ground level we noted was high
 - 1.6 Rear ground level was high, with a slight slope towards property



Water sitting against property due to the high level of ground requires a French gully



High ground level to front of the property requires lowering

2. From our visual internal inspection, please note we have not moved furniture or fixtures and fittings, we inspected and found:-

- 2.1 Mould to the internal walls for example the bathroom, front right hand corner wall.



Damp in front right hand corner of bathroom



Mould to bath

2.2 Extract fans were present in the bathroom and kitchen, these are manually operated.



Extract fan requires independent operation in bathroom



Extract fan within the kitchen has to be independently operated and was working at the time of the report

2.3 Windows are able to be opened to all rooms.



Trickle vents to double glazed window

2.4 We noticed clothes being left to dry internally and specifically on radiators.

2.5 We noted a general cleanness to the property.

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2.6 We noticed use and abuse of the walls and ceilings for example marks and writing on the walls and food staining on the ceiling.



Pasta on the wall

2.7 We also noted mould on the window frames.

Damp Resistant Meter Readings (Damp meter)

Room	Readings Obtained	Typical Readings
Ground Floor		40 – 60 on a solid wall
Front lounge	100 to the front wall	
Hallway	45 to the party wall	
Kitchen	60 to side wall	
Bathroom	60 to side wall 50 to rear wall	
First Floor		
Front bedroom	45	
Middle bedroom	43	
Rear bedroom	52	



Damp readings taken with a Gann meter

SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

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

We believe predominately the condition of the property relates to the tenant lifestyle and knowledge level. We therefore recommend help with regard to their knowledge level and needs some help with the lifestyle such as humidity controlled thermostats on the extract fans.

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

LIMITATIONS

Specific Defects Report

1. Conditions of Engagement

Please note: references to the masculine include, where appropriate, the feminine.

Subject to express agreement to the contrary (which in this particular case has been none) and any agreed amendments/additions (of which in this particular case there have been none), the terms on which the Surveyor will undertake the Specific Defects Report are set out below.

Based upon a visual inspection as defined below the Surveyor will advise the Client by means of a written report as to his opinion of the visible condition and state of repair of the specific problem or problems only. In this instance we have only looked at the dampness and the issues relating to the mice and cockroach infestation.

2. The Inspection

a) Accessibility and Voids

The Surveyor will base this report on a visual inspection and accordingly its scope is limited. It does not include an inspection of those areas, which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible. Our visual inspection will relate to the specific defects shown to us only.

b) Floors

We have not opened up the floor structure. We have only carried out a visual inspection and any conclusions will be based upon our best assumptions. We can open up the floor if so required at an extra fee.

c) Roofs

The Surveyor will not inspect the roofs in this instance.

d) Boundaries, Grounds and Outbuildings

The inspection will not include boundaries, grounds and outbuildings unless specifically stated (none stated).

e) Services

No services inspected.

f) Areas not inspected

The Surveyor will have only inspected those areas identified within the report. His report will be based upon possible or probable defects based upon what he has seen together with his knowledge of that type of structure. If you feel that any further areas need inspection then please advise us immediately.

g) Specific Defects Report

As this is a report upon a Specific Defect we do not offer any comment or guidance upon reactive maintenance and/or planned or routine maintenance items.

h) Whilst we have used reasonable skill and care in preparing this report, it should be appreciated that the Chartered Surveyors cannot offer any guarantee that the property will be free from future defects or that existing defects will not suffer from further deterioration;

3. Deleterious and Hazardous materials

a) Unless otherwise expressly stated in the Report, the Surveyor will assume that no deleterious or hazardous materials or techniques have been used in the construction of the property. However the Surveyor will advise in the report if in his view there is a likelihood that high alumina cement (HAC) concrete has been used in the construction and that in such cases specific enquiries should be made or tests carried out by a specialist.

4. Contamination

The Surveyor will not comment upon the existence of contamination as this can only be established by appropriate specialists. Where, from his local knowledge or the inspection he considers that contamination might be a problem he should advise as to the importance of obtaining a report from an appropriate specialist.

5. Consents, Approvals and Searches

a) The Surveyor will assume that the property is not subject to any unusual or especially onerous restrictions or covenants which apply to the structure or affect the reasonable enjoyment of the property.

b) The Surveyor will assume that all bye-laws, Building Regulations and other consents required have been obtained. In the case of new buildings and alterations and extensions, which require statutory consents or approval the Surveyor will not verify whether, such consents have been obtained. Any enquiries should be made by the Client or his legal advisers.

Drawings and specifications will not be inspected by the Surveyor. It is the Clients responsibility to forward any drawings and specifications that he has or knows the whereabouts of to us to include information in our report. If these are not forthcoming we will make our best assumptions based upon the information available.

- c) The Surveyor will assume that the property is unaffected by any matters which would be revealed by a Local Search and replies to the usual enquiries or by a Statutory Notice and that neither the property nor its condition its use or intended use is or will be unlawful.

6. Fees and Expenses

The Client will pay the Surveyor the agreed fee for the Report and any expressly agreed disbursements in addition.

7. Restrictions on Disclosures

- a) This report is for the sole use of the Client in connection with the property and is limited to the current brief. No responsibility is accepted by the Chartered Surveyors if used outside these terms.
- b) Should any disputes arise they will be dealt with and settled under English law;
- c) This report does not fall under the Third Parties Rights Act.

8. Safe Working Practices

The Surveyor will follow the guidance given in Surveying Safely issued by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

APPENDIX

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Additional maintenance by Letting Agent – Mr A required.



Possible wet rot to the skirting between the front lounge area and the rear kitchen/bathroom needs further investigation



Hairline cracks to render to rear of the property needs to be redecorated and sealed



Gutters require cleaning