

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY
OF
Kempston Near Bedford Bedfordshire



FOR

Mr & Mrs I Brown

PREPARED BY

1st Associated

FOR ANY HELP OR ASSISTANCE CALL FREE PHONE:

0800 298 5424

or

visit our website:

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

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GEM Associates Limited

Independent Chartered Surveyors
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INTRODUCTION

Firstly, may we thank you for your instructions of 4th October 2004; we have now undertaken a Building Survey (formerly known as a Structural Survey) of the aforementioned property. This Survey was carried out on 13th October 2004.

It should be appreciated that defects which would normally be highlighted in a modern property, effectively form part of the 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 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

REPORT FORMAT

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

GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

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

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



We utilise photographs to illustrate issues or features. In some photographs a pencil has been used to highlight a specific area (with this property we have taken approximately one hundred photographs in total and we have enclosed a sample of these within the report).

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, which we are going to consider as being on the riverside.

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a substantial detached two storey house with basements and a large conservatory, together with a modern detached double garage.

The property has gardens surrounding it but predominantly to the front with a drive to the rear. The property sits upon level ground with surrounding mature trees, although the garden area is laid mainly to lawn. There is a driveway surrounding the property and a nearby river, of course there are the new developments to the rear that we spoke of.

We advise that the property was built in 1840 for the then owner of the original Mill house. If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

Putting Life into Perspective!

Some of the things that were occurring around the time that the property was built.

1793 – 1800	The Grand Union Canal was built
1833	Start of Government funded schooling (1881 – it became compulsory to the age of 11)
1840	The First Postage Stamp
1859	Charles Darwin proposes the Theory of Evolution
1863	The Opening of London Underground

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Rear Elevation



Right hand side Elevation



This was about the best photo we could get of the left hand side elevation.



The Garden

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Basement

- Sub divided into approximately six areas including the Boiler Room

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Entrance Hallway
- Kitchen/Utility Room
- Cloakroom
- Breakfast Room
- Three Reception Rooms
- Study
- A good sized Conservatory (the conservatory had vines and grapes growing in it and was quite magnificent!)

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Five Bedrooms (one with en suite facilities)
- Family Bathroom

We believe the Estate Agents have classed this property as six bedroomed with a shower room.

Outside Areas

We would refer you to our earlier comments and in addition there looks to have once been a right of way to the riverside of this property. Your legal advisor should carry out further investigations.

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.

Please note that some of the photos may have been taken with a concave lens, to enable us to show you as much of the room as possible, which sometimes does make the photos slightly blurred.

First Floor



Master Bedroom with en suite



En suite



Family Bathroom



Further bedroom



Further bedroom

Ground Floor



Basement/book store



The main kitchen



Breakfast room



Lounge



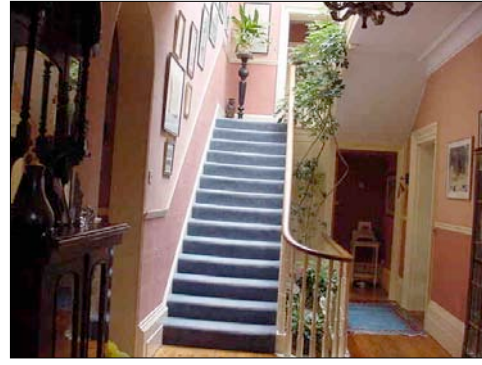
Reception room/library



Leading into the conservatory



A different view of the same room



The feature staircase

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

EXTERNAL

Chimneys:	Three brick chimneys
Main Roof:	Pitched and clad with interlocking concrete tiles
Gutters and Downpipes:	Replacement plastic
Walls:	Finished in brickwork in Flemish Bond (assumed)
External Joinery:	Painted timber sliding sash windows, fascias and soffits and pediment

INTERNAL

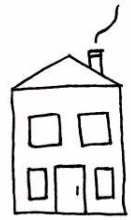
Ceilings:	A mixture of the original lath and plaster and plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Predominantly solid (assumed) brickwork
Floors:	Basement: concrete Ground Floor: a suspended timber floor (assumed). First Floor: Joist and floorboards (assumed)

SERVICES

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Summaries are dangerous as they try to précis often quite complex subjects into a few paragraphs. This is particularly so in a summary about someone's future home when we are trying to second-guess what their priorities are, so it is important the Report is read in full.

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 200 photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if a comment has not been discussed that you are interested in/concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it. If we have not we will happily go back.

Having said all of that, here are our comments:

Generally we found the property average condition (considering the property's age, type and style with more period features than we would normally find in an unlisted property). However these are sweeping statements so in addition we draw your attention to the following and also recommend that you read the report in full. We have divided the Executive Summary into 'The Good', 'The Bad' and 'The Ugly', to help distinguish what in our mind are the main issues.

The Good

This is a substantial property with rooms being of a good size and with good ceiling height. The property has many of the original features, certainly what we would classify as a character property with ambience.

The property also has good natural light, which often in somewhat older properties cannot be so good.

For me the property definitely has a “wow” factor when you go inside it and a good ambience. As we advised you at the time of our on site discussion, we very much believe that the property shows itself from the inside out and we are sure that you could add other things to this list.

Bad

1) Location Location Location

In this sense we will explain what surveyors mean by location, location, location. The first location is for the area which, if we can look at it generally, Kempston isn't as sought after as the Bedford area. Having said that it is generally considered much better than the areas nearby that surround the local landfill sites! Looking more specifically at this site, the land around The Mill House has been sold off over the years putting it almost into an estate type location and is not really that appropriate for a property of this magnitude. This position will be further compounded by the proposed development, the term “fish out of water” comes to mind.

The second location is the location or position in the overall housing market. Whilst the housing market has enjoyed a reasonable start to the year and has had many years of growth, it has slowed down considerably following various interest rises in recent months. In our experience this in particular affects the property market in the higher end of the market, although obviously all of the market has been affected.

The third location relates to the location or place in the market overall i.e. who does a property such as this appeal to? There are very obvious niches in the market such as the bungalow market for the retiring and those wishing to downsize, or those that simply don't like steps! - to the starter bedroom cluster home, flat or house.

The property doesn't really sit into any market easily. Whilst it has the attributes that we look for such as four plus good size bedrooms with en suite facilities, good size reception rooms; albeit that the kitchen is not in proportion with the scale of the rest of the house. Unfortunately neither do the grounds do justice to the grandeur of the property anymore. We are sure the Estate Agent will argue this is all reflected in the price of the property that it is being marketed at.

2) **Ongoing maintenance**

We may be pointing out the absolutely obvious, but a property of this size and character has a fair amount of ongoing maintenance requirements and you may well get to know the local handyman/builders very well over the years! It is just generally par for the course that repair, maintenance and servicing need doing almost on a weekly basis. For example in this case in particular clearing the gutters of leaves, conservatory and high level roofs to stop a build up and then leaks.

To the right hand side of the property (remembering all directions are given from the riverside at the front). The trees are very close and they look to have been pollarded which is a method of cutting the trees back; it is likely to need doing every year to ensure that these give a good coverage of leaves. We did not consider they are within what is termed as influencing distance to the main part of the property.

Nearby Trees and overgrown trees

Also we would comment that there are some fairly high trees close by, although we don't feel these are likely to structurally affect the property, some of them looked like they would benefit from some general maintenance.

ACTION REQUIRED: Instruct an Agriculturalist (not a Tree Surgeon) to advice on maintaining the trees.

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.

3) **Right of way through garden**

To the front garden we feel there was obviously once an entrance way passing The Mill House and there is still a gate there. We spoke specifically to the owner on this point during our question and answer

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session and he advised it was because that they were very friendly with the previous neighbours and it was a matter of convenience that a gate was put there.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal advisor to confirm if there is any right of ways on the property.

The Ugly

4) Rot to the conservatory

The timber conservatory has been heavily filled over the years and looks to have recently been repaired. We found several areas of rotten timber, particularly around the rainwater hopperheads and downpipes.

ACTION REQUIRED: The property is in need of proper repair to the joints and valley gutters, which currently have been filled or covered with a product known as Flashband which is a temporary repair material.

ANTICIPATED COST: This really is how long is a piece of string. We would say to resolve it properly you are looking in the region of £10,000 to £20,000 (ten thousand to twenty thousand pounds). You will need to get a quotation for this work, but to be fair on the carpenter this is very much a repair as you go along job, which in turn is a blank cheque book scenario for yourself but we have tried the best we can to quantify this.

Flashband Defined

Flashband is a sticky backed felt which is best used for temporary repairs only.



A general view of the side of the conservatory



If you look more closely you can see flashband has been stuck over the timber frame.

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This is one of your valley gutters with the hopperhead in black



This is a close up of the valley gutter and you see our pen kni sticking into the timber. The present owner is well aware of these problems as they have been filled many times.



This is another view of the conservatory. Here is the hopperhead against the main building, the hopperhead will be overloaded during any rainfall. In our opinion it simply isn't big enough to take the surface area.

5) **Rot and repair to the sliding sash windows**

We also tested a random sample of the sliding sash windows to the ground floor and found them to mostly have rot and are in need of work before they become fully operational. We generally tend to find that the lower level windows are in a better condition than the first floor windows, as they are easier to reach and repair and no scaffolding is needed!

ACTION REQUIRED: We feel that this is a fairly major area of expenditure.

ANTICIPATED COST: We would guess in the region of £10,000 to £20,000 (ten thousand to twenty thousand pounds) to get them fully working.

Please see the Windows Section of this Report.



Our knife going into the base of the window.



The windows on the left hand side of the property (some at the front of the property being the riverside)



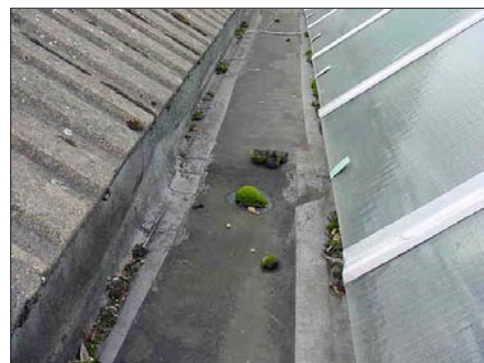
Our knife going into one of these windows.

6) Repairs to box gutter

There is a box gutter to the property around the light well over the stair areas which will benefit from being repaired properly. It has over the years had many patch repairs, although there were no obvious visible signs of leaks internally i.e. staining to the ceiling. We do feel that leaks are probably getting into the structure but simply not coming out as far as the ceiling.



This is looking to the roof along the roof light



This is the box gutter. You can see on both the right and left hand side flashband has been used.

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This is a typical example of how debris starts to build up.



Here you can see repairs to more flashband.

DIY/Handyman Type Work

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as regularly clearing the leaves from the valley gutters, both to the main building and to the conservatory. These problems are fairly typical for this age, style and type of property. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

Purchase Price

We have not been asked to comment upon the purchase price in this instance, we have however referred you to sources of general information on the housing market within the Information on the Property Market Section, which can be found in the Appendices at the end of the Report.

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

Every business transaction has a risk, only you can assess whether that risk is acceptable to you and your circumstances. You should now read the main body of the Report paying particular attention to any “**ACTION REQUIRED**” points.

Estimates of Costs

Where we have offered an estimate of building costs please remember we are not experts in this area. We always recommend you obtain quotations for the large jobs before purchasing the property (preferably three quotes). The cost of building work has many variables such as the cost of labour, we are

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currently using on this type of property £75 per day for unskilled labour and up to £150 to £200 per day (generally London and city areas) for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

If you obtain builders estimates that vary widely, we would advise the work is probably difficult or open to various interpretations and we would recommend a specification is prepared. It would probably be best to supervise the work if it is complex, both of which we can do if so required.

SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



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

We feel from our discussions with you the main issues here are more related to future value of the property, particularly when bearing in mind the unknown, such as the development to the rear. In our opinion this will make the property into more of an estate type area. Whilst it could be argued that you would live within it within complete isolation, we don't think that perhaps this property would attract the right sort of clients in a less buoyant market.

We do however feel that for the price (although we haven't looked into it fully or carried out a valuation by any means) that there is some reflection in the location. We would need to do further research to be able to clarify this further; we would be more than happy to do this if you so wish. Please telephone the office.

With regard to major repairs we suggest that you focus on the repairs to the joinery work, the conservatory and the sliding sash windows and we suggest if you wish to proceed these would be ideal things to obtain quotations on. It would also give a general feel as to whether the present owners wish to negotiate or whether the price that is on offer is the price.

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

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

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

MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT

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

TENURE – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)

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

ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

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

SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR

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

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS

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

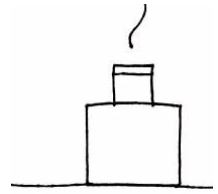
OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION

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

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



EXTERNAL



CHIMNEY STACKS AND ROOF LIGHTS

Chimney Stacks

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

There are three chimneys to this property. Two to the left hand side and one to the right hand side (all directions given as you face the property from the riverside). Considering each in turn:

Chimney One – front left hand

This is brick built with a lead flashing and three chimney pots. There is some slight deterioration to the mortar, but is generally in reasonable condition. There has been some deterioration resulting in some small or minor cracking, this is nothing to be overly concerned about. Unfortunately we were unable to see most of the flaunching therefore we cannot comment on its condition.

ACTION REQUIRED: Repoint the chimney within the next five years. The choice of mortar to be used should match existing. Flaunching to be checked.

ANTICIPATED COST: We would expect the cost to be in the hundreds of pounds as the chimney is accessible from the flat inner roof/light well over the stairs.



Left hand chimney

Chimney Two – rear left hand

This is brick built with a lead flashing and two chimney pots. It is fairly typical for a chimney of its age with no obvious work. Unfortunately we were unable to see all the flaunching therefore we would comment that the chimney pots are relatively straight which usually indicates that it is in reasonable condition.

Chimney Three – right hand

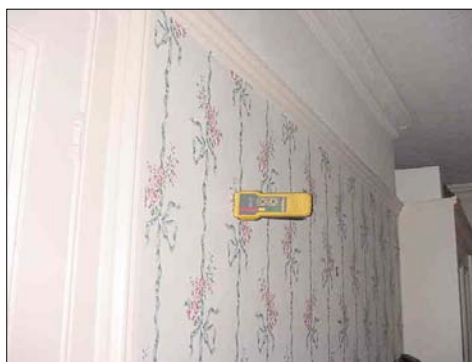
This is also brick built with a lead flashing, two chimney pots and two flues. It looked in reasonable condition, however we found internally dampness coming through on this particular chimney into the master bedroom area.

ACTION REQUIRED: Carry out a close inspection of all sides, repoint as necessary and check the flashings and the flaunchings. As this work is being carried out imminently we also suggest the other chimneys are checked at the same time.

ANTICIPATED COST: We would estimate costs to be in the region of £500 to £1,000 (five hundred to one thousand pounds).



Right hand side chimney



This is our damp meter stuck in the chimney getting damp readings.

Light Well/Atrium

The property has purpose made roof lights over the staircase which looked in reasonable condition considering its age. There is bound to be some wet rot if its checked more closely, it was very difficult to do this with the owner following us around at this particular point! We didn't think he would take too kindly to us putting a knife into the well structure. From our experience it seems inevitable with roof lights that they sooner or later leak and that repair is an ongoing process. It is however the flashing around the light well that gives

us most concern, as this has been repaired and repaired again. We could see to the joints flashband has been used in most cases, this is probably an adequate repair in this instance, although we would very rarely recommend flashband without complete renewal of the light well it would appear the only option.

ACTION REQUIRED: The entirety of the box valley gutter we feel would benefit from being renewed in the next few years. Ideally with lead although further advice would be needed on this. Bearing in mind our comments with regard to the light well and the flashband repairs; not an ideal situation, so the entirety of the light well will need renewing at some point in time. This is very much something we find owners put off and off.

ANTICIPATED COST: We believe the work to the box valley gutter is likely to cost in the region of £10,000 (ten thousand pounds). You do need to obtain quotations if you intend to proceed with purchasing this property.

We would suggest in the region of £10,000 to £20,000 (ten thousand to twenty thousand pounds) to renew the light well. We are not in any way suggesting that this needs doing immediately. Indeed in the near future, providing you are prepared to carry on repairing it.

Flaunchings Defined

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

Flashings Defined

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

Flashband Defined

Flashband is a sticky backed felt which is best used for temporary repairs only.



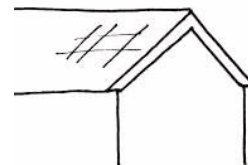
Here is a close up of the box gutter and also the corner of the light well complete with the flashband repair; you can see the silver.

A view of the light well.

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

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

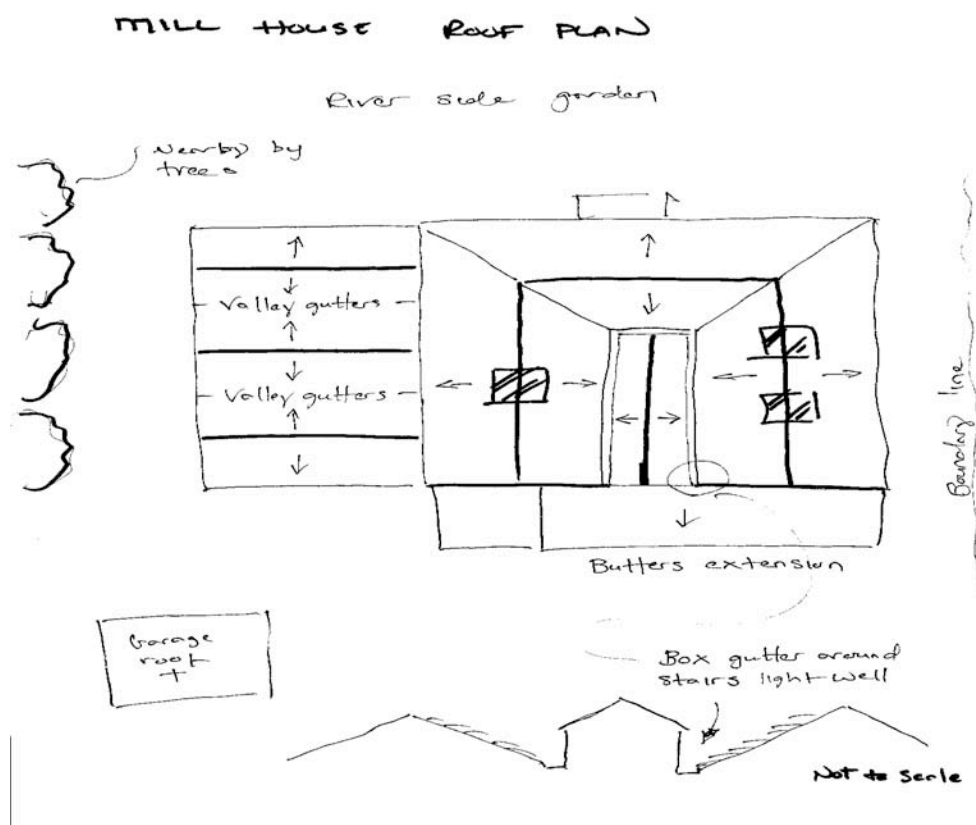
ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

We will consider the roofs in three areas, the high level main roof, conservatory roof and the other lower level roofs.



Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad with large interlocking concrete tiles.

General information on concrete tiles

Concrete tiles have been used for the past 40 or 50 years and are generally the cheapest alternative for roofing materials as they can be mass produced without compromising on quality, giving both a consistent size and quality.

The concrete tiles are lying level and look in reasonable condition considering their age. Sometimes we find that deterioration occurs to the ridge and exposed areas such as the eaves, you should periodically check these areas.

Concrete tiles come in two forms; nibbed - this is where ridges on the back of the tiles allow fixing to the roof battens and the roof structure; and interlocking or "mechanical" fixings - this is where troughs or grooves in the tiles allow the fitting of the joining tiles together as well as the nibs previously mentioned. In this instance we believe them to be interlocking concrete tiles.

There is some moss growth present on the roof slopes. This can, in extreme cases, impede the run-off of rainwater, lead to gutter blockages and cause water penetration, which in turn may lead to rot or other defects in nearby timbers. You need to clear the roof moss periodically; the present owner advised that he does this on a yearly basis.

Unfortunately we were only able to see approximately 80 percent of the roof from ground level via the light well roof 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.



A general view of the roof. To the left hand side you can see the purlin

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.

Underfelt for the main roof

There is a mixture of underfelts from the old paper base underfelt to the modern Hessian based underfelt.

There are several different underlayers in the roof, indicating that it had been re-roofed several times. The newer areas were to the rear of the roof on the light well side. In parts there were some of the earliest type of underlayer which is almost paper like.



The paper like underlayer.



Whereas to the light well rear side of the property there was a Hessian based bitumen, as can be seen in this photo.

Conservatory roof

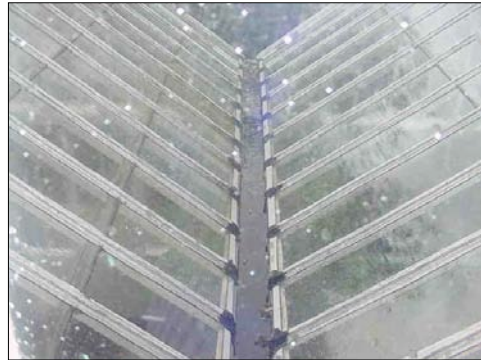
You have a glazed roof with box gutters set within a timber frame and this poses a problem if they are not well maintained. We believe the conservatory has been recently painted, we assume to help sell the property and in doing so many of the repair issues have been painted over. This makes it very difficult for us to see them! However we would comment the box gutters pose a problem. From what we could see internally there has been considerable making good. To some extent we would expect this due to what we have seen

externally. It is pointless carrying out any repairs internally before the problems externally are resolved.

ANTICIPATED COST: It is very difficult to calculate without further investigation and obtaining quotations. In the region of £10,000 to £20,000 (ten thousand to twenty thousand pounds). If you are serious about taking this property on, we suggest that quotations need to be obtained.



A general view of the conservatory roofs.



A view of the valley gutter.



A close up of the box gutter. You can see there is moss and leaves etc. accumulating here and you can also see it is full of water. If you look closely you can also see that bitumen has been added to the end of the conservatory, indicating that dampness is getting through in these areas. Also what you cant see is that there is flashband over most of the join.

Lower level roofs

There are a few lower level roofs and also the garage.

Butlers Extension

To the rear of the property (remembering the front of the property is on the riverside) is a butler's extension and associated roof.

This roof is single pitched and clad with concrete tiles. We were advised during our question and answer session it was re-roofed approximately 19 to 20 years ago to allow an extra course of tiles to be added (we were advised by

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the present owners) and is due to the tiles not being sufficiently lapped. We managed to view this roof, although we didn't get into the loft space and we did notice that the angle of the roof has been changed by the addition of extra roof timbers, which would help stop water getting in when there is driving rain.

Flat Roof next to butler's extension

There is a flat roof that we just haven't been able to see unfortunately. There is a small roof next to the butler's extension.

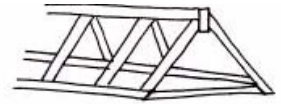
Garage Roof

This is dealt with within the garage section.

Finally, all the roofs were inspected from ground level and also from the roof level - the light well area with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera.

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

ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

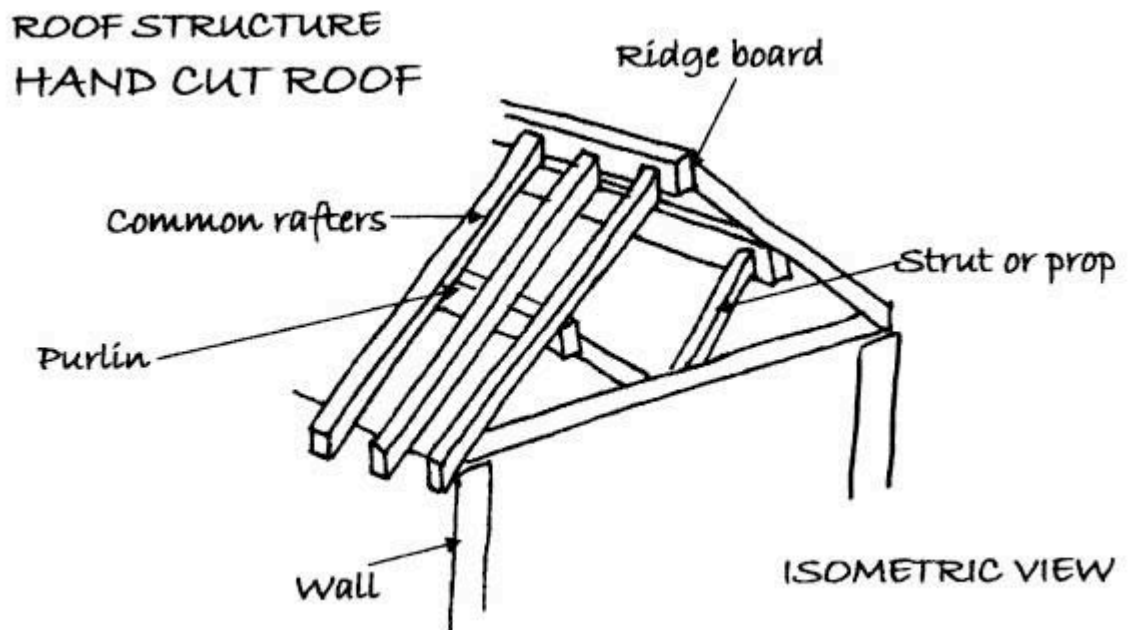
The roof structure or framework must be built in a manner which is able to give adequate strength to carry its own weight together with that of the roof covering discussed in the previous section and any superimposed loads such as snow, wind, foot traffic etc.

The roof can be accessed in two areas; the main roof and the butlers extension on the garage side .

Main Roof

There is no loft ladder or secured floorboards, there is however a light to part of the roof. The main part of the roof within the loft perimeter has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly.

This roof structure has what is known as a cut timber roof. This is a roof which is purpose made and hand built on site. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects; however it is in line with what we typically see. In addition to this there were examples of early Victorian prefabricated trusses and newer timbers around the box gutter to the light well, indicating that there have at some point in time been major repairs in this section.



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

It is however feasible that there are problems in the roof which are hidden. The only way to be 100 per cent sure is to have the roof cleared and checked. In this instance we don't think this is necessary.



A general view through the roof. To the left hand side you can see the purlin.

Purlins Defined

The purlin is the horizontal timber member usually running from gable end to gable end and parallel with the walls which supports the jack or common rafters (the angled rafters forming the slope to the roof).

Water Tanks

We found these in the roof. The water tanks are formed in plastic; we therefore assume they are relatively new (in surveying terms that's the last 30 years!) We were pleased to see that the water tanks were insulated.

We would always recommend that water tanks be drained down and cleared of any debris etc. (we have seen dead birds and other unmentionable things in these tanks). As you are cleaning your teeth with this water it is best that it is as clean as possible!

Ventilation

This is currently provided by the gable end vents. This system was working very well whilst we were in the roof. For your information, where there is an underlayer as in this case and insulation to a roof, cross ventilation is now recommended and required under the current Building Regulations. This is to stop condensation occurring within the roof, which can affect the timbers and also cause dampness.

Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report. In this case we will just put here that sawdust has been used in a small proportion of the roof which needs to be removed as it could be a fire hazard.

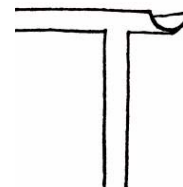
Electrical Cables

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

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

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

GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

From ground level the gutters and downpipes looked to be generally be plastic, but we do think some of the original cast iron is remaining and they appear in reasonable/to poor condition. There may be some minor leaks; this is due to the plastic replacing the original cast iron. From what we could see there hasn't been much thought put into the way the plastic gutters and downpipes have been used. This is in our opinion why there are various leaks to it.

For example the hopperheads have replaced the original cast iron hopperheads. These tended to be larger with the plastic ones having to be smaller due to their lack of integral strength. The new hopperheads cannot by any stretch of the imagination cope with the water, they thereby leak and the surrounding areas are damp, or in the case of the conservatory they rot.

ACTION REQUIRED: In the long term you really need to look at replacing the hopperheads, at the very least to larger sizes, although we are not certain they do these in plastic. Ideally we would recommend that the entirety of the gutters and downpipes are replaced in cast iron, but this is expensive. A half way measure may well be to replace them in aluminium which has more strength. We would always recommend that the gutters and downpipes are cleaned out, the joints are checked and the alignment checked to ensure that the gutters fall towards the downpipes. Please refer to the photos in the Executive Summary.



This is an interesting photo. This looks to be a mixture of the original cast iron and a plastic downpipe; the two never marry up well as one is imperial measurements and the other is metric, not to mention that they are different materials and we would expect leaks in this area.

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

Brick has been used for many Centuries. However, it wasn't until the 16th Century that it began to be used in domestic architecture. Originally, the bricks were hand made. This later developed into more automated processes. The predominance of brickwork very much depended upon the natural resources available in the area, with most small towns that had suitable resources having their own brickworks.

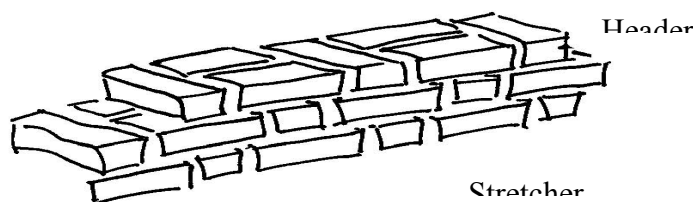
It wasn't until transportation costs were reduced, mass production techniques were developed, and the end of brick tax in 1850, that brickwork became the predominant material used in England for house building.

Brickwork

The property is brick finished laid in a lime mortar and is all bedded in what is known as a Flemish Bond.

FLEMISH BOND PATTERN

Isometric View



Plan View

The term "Flemish Bond" relates to the way the bricks are bonded together and have a pattern visible from the outside of the property that shows the end of the brick (header), then the side of the brick (stretcher), then the end of the brick, then the side of the brick, and this pattern repeats course after course, i.e. header-stretcher, header-stretcher.

The solid external walls may be liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon their condition and their exposure to the weather. External faces should be kept in good condition.

Before the 19th Century, the practice of building timbers into external walls was almost universal. These were known as bonding timbers. They are of course prone to rot as solid walls allow dampness through. Unfortunately, without opening up the structure, we are unable to confirm if this is the case.

Generally Flemish Bond brickwork is liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon the condition of the brickwork and the exposure to the weather. In this case its in average condition. It is essential that external faces are kept in good condition. In this instance the walls are reasonable to good condition.



A close up of the brickwork. As you can see the pointing is in good condition.



A close up of the brickwork. The pen is indicating where the pointing is.

Stepped cracking

To the front of the property (the riverside) on the right hand side between the two windows, the one to the first floor being the main bedroom and the one below being to the front reception room, there is a small sign of movement in this area but nothing that is unacceptable in this age, style and type of property.

Base of the property

To the base of the property at the front there has been a soft red brick used and to the left hand side is limestone. This may be from an older construction, we simply do not know. We spoke to the owner during the question and answer session and they didn't know either.



An example of the base of the property with the softer red bricks.

Beams over windows

As is common in this style of property there are large window openings. As there is no access available it is not possible to comment on the construction or condition of the load bearing beam above the bay window opening. Rainwater penetration can give rise to the development of rot in supporting timbers and careful maintenance is required if such problems are to be avoided.

Butlers Extension

This is quite a different style to the rest of the property. We were advised by the owners that an extension was added only a few years after the property was built and they decided they couldn't do without a butler! A similar brick has been used, but to the base different stone has been used in part. This simply indicates they were built at different times when different local stones were available.

To summarise, we would comment that the brickwork and pointing is in very good condition considering the property's age.

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

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

FOUNDATIONS

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

Typically, with a property of this period, we would expect to find a stepped brick foundation, approximately half a metre deep. Although having said that the property has a basement forming the entire footprint of the house; a very brave thing to do considering how close the property is to the river. This means that it is likely to have had a slightly deeper foundation and is susceptible to flooding during wet weather.

Building Insurance Policy

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

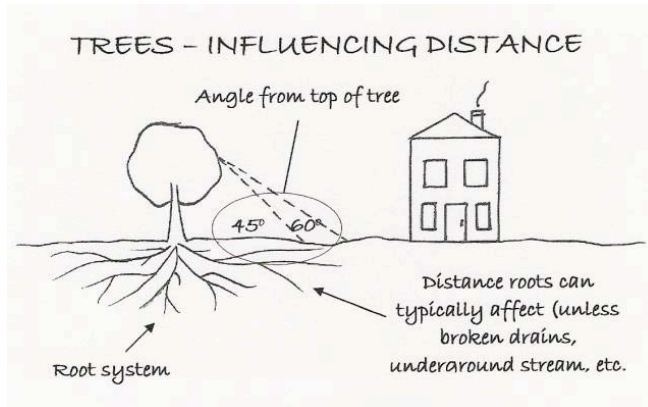
Finally, we have not excavated the foundations but we have drawn conclusions from our inspection and our general knowledge of this type, age and style of property.

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

TREES

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

There are a number of trees within the vicinity or what we term as influencing distance of the building. We did note some tree roots visibly damaging the road surfaces and we also noted there are conifers surrounding the property that do tend to grow particularly fast.



Influencing Distance Defined

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

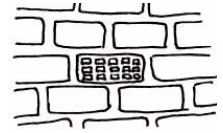
DAMP PROOF COURSE

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

We couldn't physically see a damp proof course in this case. We did note in other areas that slate has been used so there may well be a slate damp proof course here, but we simply didn't see it.

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

AIRBRICKS



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

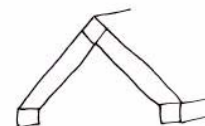
In this case the airbricks are also the vents to the cellar they are of a good size; therefore there should be good airflow providing they are not blocked.



Airbricks/vents to the cellar.

Finally, we have made our best assumptions based upon our visual inspection of the outside of the property and our general knowledge of this age, type and style of construction. We have not opened up the floor, unless we have specifically stated so in this section.

EXTERNAL JOINERY



The external joinery part of this section covers fascias and soffits, windows and doors, and any detailing such as brick corbelling etc.

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

Fascias and Soffits

The property has a nicely detailed fascias and soffit board. These looked in reasonable condition, although we are aware that some of the gutters are leaking we therefore would expect there to be some repairs. We would estimate redecoration would be required in about two to three years time.



Looking up at the fascia board from the side of the conservatory.

Windows

The window as we know it, was not widely used until the 16th Century (1500s). The casement window was the original English window and probably looks something similar to the typical Tudor window. The double hung sliding sash is Dutch in origin and came over in the 18th Century (1700s).

The property has some quite substantial sliding sash windows. As mentioned earlier within this report we found rot in many of them. We physically didn't try and open them just in case there were problems.

ACTION REQUIRED: We feel that this is a fairly major area of expenditure.

ANTICIPATED COST: Please see our estimate within the Executive Summary. We would guess in the region of £10,000 to £20,000 (ten thousand to twenty thousand pounds) to get them fully working.

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Please see our comments within the Executive Summary.

Sliding shutters

Often in this age of property we find a folding shutter that folds into the recess of the wall. We have only come across a few sliding shutters as we have in this property. We tried a few and these worked very well, the only disadvantage that we could see with them is that where they slide into the wall you cant fit anything in these areas that needs a fixing via the wall, for example a radiator.

Doors

As you would expect with this age of property the doors are purpose made and therefore non-standard. They would be difficult/expensive to replace today – and certainly not available in the average DIY store.

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

EXTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

Generally overall the external decorations are in a fair condition, however we would comment that the property looks to have been decorated to help itself and that repairs have not been carried out in many cases. Rot has simply been painted over. Having said that there has been extensive repairs to the woodwork over the years which lead us to believe it to be original.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would expect some redecoration to be required within the next three to four years and fairly major repairs.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

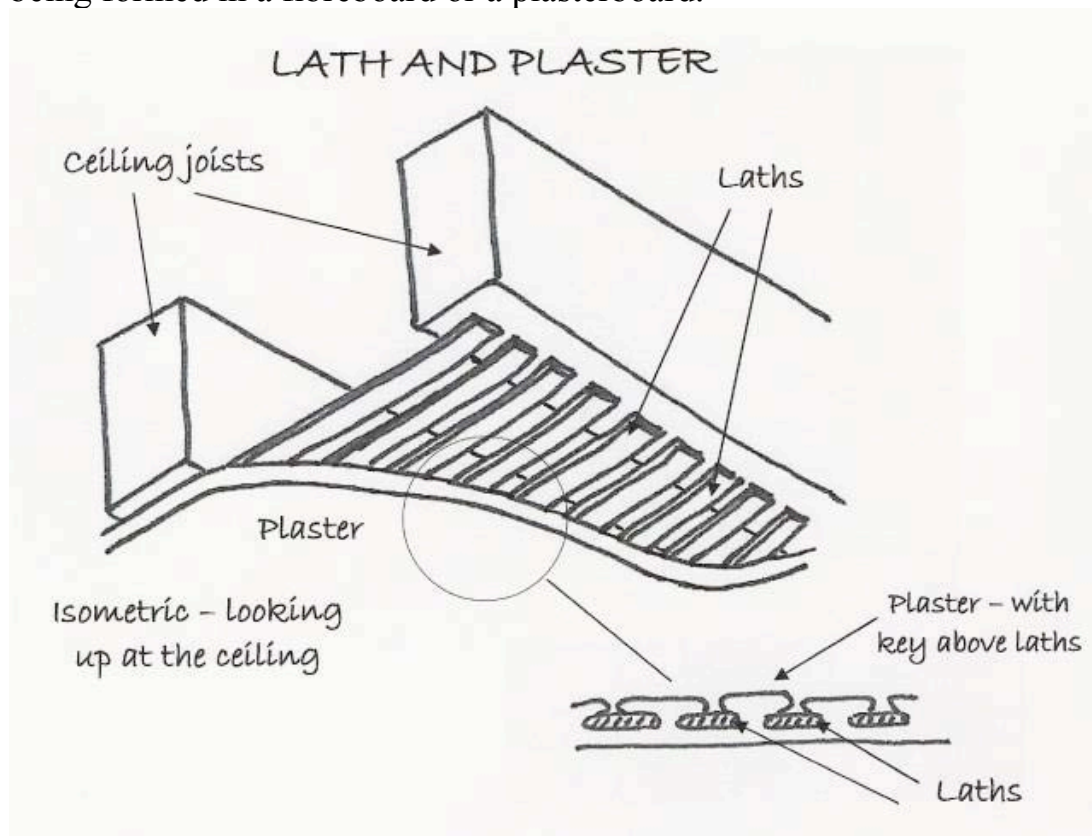
INTERNAL

CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

In this section we look at the finish applied to the structural elements such as the plasterwork applied to the ceiling joists, walls or partitions, together with the construction of the internal walls and partitions. The concept of internal finishes is relatively modern. Partitioning developed originally to separate the livestock from the human occupants. Finishes have developed from this very functional beginning to their decorative nature of today.

Ceilings

From within the roof space we identified the ceiling and part of the property as being formed in a fibreboard or a plasterboard.



Internal Walls and Partitions

We have carried out a tap test on the internal walls (this is not rocket science, it is literally tapping the walls and listening for the sound made) and found the majority to be solid when tapped, indicating that internal construction is likely to be, for this age of property, brickwork. We much prefer this type of construction as it minimises noise transfer between rooms.

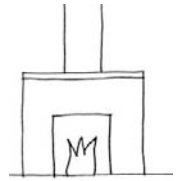
Perimeter Walls

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

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

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

CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

The chimney breasts are located throughout the property! We were pleased to find that all the chimney breasts follow through from the roof level to the ground floor. This means that structurally they are obtaining support throughout their length (as opposed to when a section of the chimney has been removed and no support is present). We were advised that most of the fires were used occasionally. The new real effect fire in the breakfast room they advised they were particularly impressed with the heat it gives off once it was installed.

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 found all the chimneys to be damp, please see our earlier comments. Finally, it is strongly recommended that flues be cleaned and checked for obstruction prior to use to minimise the risk of hazardous fumes entering the building.

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

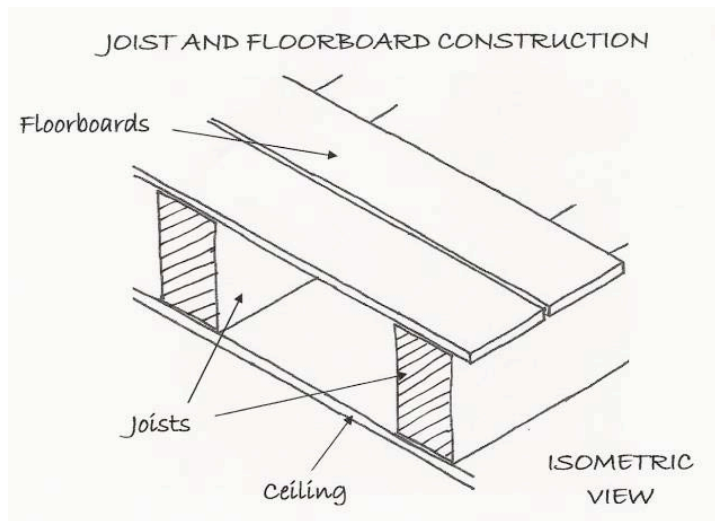
FLOORS



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

First Floor

We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards, 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.

Cellar Floor

The floors felt solid and firm underfoot so we have assumed they are formed in concrete, we have not accessed the floor. They have a quarry tile finish possibly a lime mix cement underneath.

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

DAMPNESS



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

Rising Damp

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

A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls and some internal walls. No evidence of any significant rising dampness was detected.

Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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

Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to internal walls, floors and other surfaces. Our readings were in line with what we would expect for this age of property, i.e. minor dampness. No evidence of any significant penetrating/lateral dampness was detected.

Condensation

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

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

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

INTERNAL JOINERY



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

Doors

The property has panel doors throughout which looked original, with the exception of some of the ground floors which have, as is fashionable, the doors have been dipped and stripped of their paint. Often unfortunately the process also effects the glue that has been used and ironically the timber used in these doors would not have been considered good enough to be exposed in the way it is today. We would term these doors to be in average condition for their age, type and style.



An example of the door frame and architrave.

Main Staircase

The stairs are quite magnificent and in our opinion a feature of the property. There is also stairs going into the cellar. There are old butler stairs going into the utility room off the kitchen which seemed to be boarded over by the present owners.

Incidentally, with regard to the staircase/entrance hall it is common within this type of property to have an entrance hall. The grander the hallway and associated stairway the higher the social profile of the person occupying it.

Inside of the conservatory

We would refer you to our earlier comments with regard to the conservatory in the roof section.

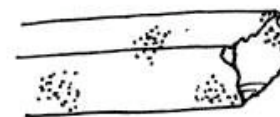
Kitchen

From our cursory visual inspection the kitchen looked in reasonable condition, although slightly dated. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

TIMBER DEFECTS



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

Dry Rot

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

In the areas inspected no evidence was found of any dry rot and we feel it is unlikely that it is occurring, given the conditions found.

Wet Rot

*Wet rot, also known by its Latin name *Contiophora puteana*, is far more common than dry rot. Wet rot darkens and softens the wood and is most commonly seen in window and doorframes, where it can relatively easily be remedied. Where wet rot affects the structural timbers in a property, which are those in the roof and the floor areas, it is more serious.*

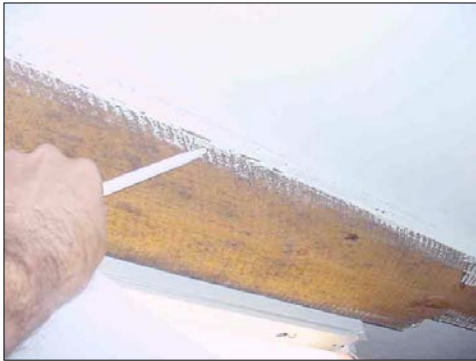
In the areas inspected no evidence was found of any wet rot, however there is an outside chance that there is wet rot in the property. That said, from the conditions that we have seen and the style and age of this property we do not consider this likely. There is an outside chance there is wet rot within the roof where it meets the box guttering around the light well. However, having studied the roof as closely as one can do with a torch light, we believe the timbers to be in average condition.

Woodworm

Active woodworm can cause significant damage to timber. There are a variety of woodworm that cause different levels of damage with probably the worst of the most well known being the Death Watch Beetle. Many older properties have woodworm that is no longer active, this can often be considered as part of the overall character of the property.

In the areas inspected no evidence was found of any significant woodworm. We did find a small amount within the loft, given the age of the property this isn't unusual.

ACTION REQUIRED: What we suggest you do is when the property is empty of furniture you keep an eye open for frass which is a chewed up sawdust and the woodworm flight holes (the flight holes mean that they have flown, it doesn't mean that they are active regardless of what the woodworm companies say). The only time that you can really tell if woodworm is active is during the breeding season in Spring. If you find them we would be happy to advise you of various ways of establishing if the woodworm is active. Even if it is we feel its still relatively small.



A minor outbreak of woodworm was found, but don't panic!

Finally, when you move into the property, floor surfaces should be carefully examined for any signs of insect infestation when furniture and floor coverings are removed together with stored goods. Any signs that are found should be treated to prevent it spreading. However, you need to be aware that many damp and woodworm treatment companies have a vested interest in selling their products and therefore have fairly cleverly worded quotations where they do not state if the woodworm they have found is 'active'. You should ask them specifically if the woodworm is active or not.

We would also comment that any work carried out should have an insurance backed guarantee to ensure that if the company does not exist, or for whatever reason, the guarantee is still valid. More importantly it is essential to ensure that any work carried out is carried out correctly.

INTERNAL DECORATIONS



With paints it should be remembered that up to 1992 lead could be used within paint and prior to this most textured paints (commonly known as Artex) contained an element of asbestos up to 1984, so care should be taken if the paintwork looks old and dated.

You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste. It is very difficult to advise on how frequently redecoration should take place. This very much depends upon the use and abuse the decoration gets, for example, within hallways this tends to be greater than for example within a spare bedroom.

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

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 liming 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.

You have a substantial cellar in this property running the entire footprint of the building. We feel that it was somewhat optimistic of the original owners to build such a large cellar so close to the river. However, in 1840 the cellar would have had many practical uses for storing of food and areas for the servants to work etc.

During our question and answer session the owner advised during the 1998/99 floods, some water did get into the cellar. We would comment from what we were shown that the river rose to, we were surprised that the basement was not full of water, although the owner did say that he had lost quite a lot of books although not valuable ones. During 1998/99 we were literally working in an office approximately half a mile away from this property and we don't recall any problems!

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

We were unable to find a sump. This means that should the cellar floor, the removal of water may be difficult. A sump is a low area within the cellar where the water would gather and often incorporates a sump pump to remove the water.

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.

THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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

Roofs

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

Please note our earlier comments about the wood shavings that have been used as insulation, these need replacing.

Walls

The walls to this property are solid. It is very difficult to improve thermal efficiency in solid wall construction without major alterations. These will usually affect the external appearance or reduce the internal space – best left alone.

Windows

The windows are single glazed and therefore will have poor thermal properties.

Services

You have a two boiler system which is a very sensible system; a larger boiler for the winter and smaller one for the summer. 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 average compared with what we typically see.

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

HTTP//www.est.org.uk, which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid

or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

or www.ecocentre.org.uk for an alternative technological view.

Finally, we would advise that an energy rating is likely to be required for future house sales.

OTHER MATTERS



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

Security

A security system has been installed. A good alarm system should not only help reduce break-ins but also your insurance. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further. Further information should be obtained from the vendor and the installer at a later date.

Smoke Alarms

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

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

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

Insurance

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

SERVICES

This survey does not include any specialist reports on the electricity supply and circuits, heating or drainage, as they were not requested. The comments that follow are based upon a visual inspection carried out as part of the overall Building Survey.

Services and specialist installations have been visually inspected. It is impossible to examine every detail of these installations without partially dismantling the structure. Tests have not been applied. Conclusive tests can only be undertaken by suitably qualified contractors. The vendor/seller should be requested to provide copies of any service records, test certificates and, ideally, the names and addresses of the installing contractors.

ELECTRICITY



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

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the basement and looked relatively new. During our question and answer session with the owner he advised that he had recently had this replaced following a survey that they have had carried out (we assume by a prospective purchaser).

We carried out an earth test in the kitchen area to the socket point that is normally used for the kettle, this proved satisfactory. Visible wiring and fittings are an oldish type.

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



GAS AND SOLID FUEL



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

We are advised that the property has mains gas. The consumer unit is located on the left hand side of the property externally (all directions given from the riverside).

All gas appliances, pipework and flues should be the subject of an annual service by a competent engineer, i.e., a member of CORGI (the Council of Registered Gas Installers); works to gas appliances etc., by unqualified personnel is illegal. Unless evidence can be provided to confirm that there has been annual servicing we would recommend that you commission such a service prior to use to ensure safe and efficient operation.

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

PLUMBING AND HEATING



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

Water Supply

The property has a two boiler system, a smaller boiler for the summer and a larger boiler for the winter. This also means that there is a spare boiler for emergencies. The sheer size of heating the property will mean that you will have to limit your occupation of the rooms.

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 low.

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!).

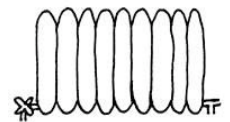
Cold Water Cistern

The cold water cistern was located in the roof space. Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

Plumbing

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

Heating



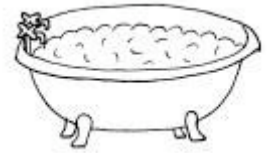
As mentioned there are two Potterton boilers in the basement area, large and small for winter and summer.

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 is 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.

BATHROOMS AND SHOWERS



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

The property has an en suite bathroom, a family bathroom, a shower room and a W.C. and looked in reasonable condition although slightly dated. The shower room and en suite are in yellow. We suggest you check the seal to these once you have moved in, say within the first month

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

Finally, although we may have already mentioned it above we would reiterate that it is important to ensure that seals are properly made and maintained at the junctions between wall surfaces and baths and showers etc. We normally recommend that it is one of the first jobs that you carry out as part of your DIY on the property, as water getting behind sanitary fittings can lead to unseen deterioration that can be costly, inconvenient and difficult to repair.

MAIN DRAINS



The sanitary system, as we know it now, came into being some 100 years ago during the Victorian era and works so successfully today it is often taken for granted. It is only in recent years that re-investment has taken place to upgrade the original drainage systems.

It is assumed that the foul drains from the property discharge into a public sewer; this should be confirmed by your Legal Advisor prior to exchange of contracts, who should also provide information in respect of any common or shared drains including liability for the maintenance and upkeep of the same.

The cold taps have been run for approximately quarter of an hour in the family bathroom, the en suite bathroom and the shower room. No build up or back up was noted, although as mentioned earlier the pressure of the taps was not particularly great.

Inspection Chambers/Manholes

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

Identified Inspection Chambers/Manholes

We have identified three inspection chambers/manholes. We lifted two of these.

Manhole One

This manhole is adjacent to the property, this looked like it was recently added and it was free flowing at the time of our inspection. The tap was on within the cloakroom.



From what we could see it is brickwork built.

Manhole Two

This manhole was located in the driveway. This has got a lightweight manhole cover which is not really appropriate for this location as it deforms when driven over. The manhole itself was free flowing at the time of our inspection.



Note the lightweight cover



If you look carefully at this you can see how the handles on the manhole cover have been broken. These should be replaced at some point in time.

From what we could see it is brickwork.

Manhole Three

This manhole was located in the garden covered in earth. We did not open it as we thought we may get more earth down it and cause a blockage in doing it!

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

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

Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal, but it is likely to be directly into the drainage system.



This is a good example of a poorly detailed hopperhead; there should be leadwork around it. We are sure there will be dampness in this area.

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.

OUTSIDE AREAS

GARAGES AND OUTBUILDINGS / PARKING

Garages

The property has a modern double garage which is box like and no attempt has been made to build this in keeping with the property. There is a flat roof to the garage and we didn't actually access it, it looked in reasonable condition all things considered. We viewed it from the light well roof. The main focus has been on the main property. If you wish us to carry out a detailed inspection we would be happy to return.

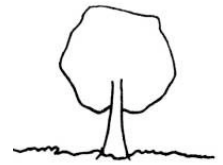
Walls

It is brick built with a flat roof. We didn't actually access it and it looked in reasonable condition all things considered. We viewed it from the light well roof. The main focus has been on the main property. If you wish us to carry out a detailed inspection we would be happy to return.



The only thing we would warn you about with regard to the garage is that the decking i.e. the bit under the roof is formed in strannett board; this is basically glued together straw. Any dampness that gets into this type of roof it will deteriorate very rapidly.

EXTERNAL AREAS



Boundaries

The boundary of the property has not been warped. We had the main focus of the survey on the property.

Leylandii have been noted either within your property. This type of tree is very quick growing and can restrict light, possibly even leading to the devaluation of the subject property. Leylandii is presently very topical due to the nuisance which can be caused. The action group “Hedge Line” are actively partitioning central Government to provide legislation relating to these trees. However, at present, your rights are very limited if your trees are grown within the adjoining property’s boundary.

In properties of this age it really is down to what is on the deeds as to who owns which boundary.

Trees are present in the garden. If left unmanaged, any tree may become a problem causing damage to the property.

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

Neighbours

Whilst the property doesn’t have any direct neighbours other than The Old Mill who were out at the time of our inspection, although we did go and knock on the door. We were advised that the property is rented. We walked along Meadow View, at the time of our inspection we only managed to speak to No. 3 who advised there was no problems as far as they were aware and were not aware of any details with regard to the development other than they knew about it.

POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:
 - i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
 - ii) Rising damp treatments.
 - iii) Roof and similar renewals.
 - iv) Central heating installation.
 - v) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
 - vi) Any other matters pertaining to the property.
- d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- e) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.
- f) Liabilities in connection with shared services.

- h) Adjoining roads and services.
- i) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- j) General development proposals in the locality.
- k) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.
- l) Confirm from enquiries that no underground tunnels, wells, sewers, gases, mining, minerals, site reclamation/contamination etc., exist, have existed or are likely to exist beneath the curtilage of the site upon which the property stands and which could affect the quiet enjoyment, safety or stability of the property, outbuildings or surrounding areas.
- m) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.
- n) Any outstanding Party Wall Notice or the knowledge that any are about to be served.
- o) We strongly recommend that Envirosearch or a similar product is used by your Legal Advisor to establish whether this area falls within a flood plain, old landfill site, radon area etc., and brought to its logical conclusion. If your Legal Advisor is not aware of the system please ensure that they contact us and we will advise them of it.
- p) Any other matters brought to your attention within this report.

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

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

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

Finally, an extract from the book “Sold”!

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

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

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

For and on Behalf of

**GEM Associates Limited
Chartered Surveyors**

This Report is dated:

REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses

Published by Estates Gazette Limited

Life expectancies of building components

*Published by Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and
Building Research Establishment*

Surveying buildings

*By Malcolm Hollis 4th edition published by Royal Institution of
Chartered Surveyors Books.*

House Builders Bible

By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

APPENDICES

LIMITATIONS

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

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

The report has been prepared in accordance with our Conditions of Engagement dated 4th October 2004 and should be regarded as a comment on the overall condition of the property and the quality of its structure and not as an inventory of every single defect. It relates to those parts of the property that were reasonably and safely accessible at the time of the inspection, but you should be aware that defects can subsequently develop particularly if you do not follow the recommendations.

ENGLISH LAW

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

SOLE USE

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

ONLY HUMAN!

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

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

WEATHER

It was a rainy Autumn day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

We would add that some defects only become apparent upon physical occupation or are only present as a result of the extremes of weather (which are becoming a more frequent occurrence). As you are probably aware the year 2000 was the wettest year on record, 2003 the driest year on record and August 2004 was the wettest August on record in many areas, this may have adverse effects on lots of buildings in years to come.

NOT LOCAL

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

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 due to the sheer size of the property.

INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

www.halifax.co.uk and www.nationwide.co.uk

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

www.hometrack.co.uk

From what we can see this is an internet based company who say they offer independent property research (in fact they say they are the only independent company), although they also advise that they are part of a property related group that has bought and sold over 60 million pounds worth of residential property, which indicates that they may have a vested interest. They do also comment that they have carried out their own independent surveys and they have at least two Hometrack recommended estate agents in each postcode area. We would refer you to the 'About us' section within their website to understand better where their information is coming from. We would comment that we have been pleasantly surprised with the quality of information provided by the company.

Motleyfool.co.uk

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