

JOB REFERENCE:

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY
OF
An Edwardian Mid-Terrace Property



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or

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two storey mid terrace property situated in a cul-de-sac location.

There are typical sized gardens to the front and rear for the age, type and style of the property sitting on level ground. Parking is on a first come first serve parking permit basis. There are a few pay meters at the end of the road.

This is a Victorian property situated predominantly in a residential area. 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 going on around the time the property was built.

1914-1918	World War I
1920s	Television Invented
1928	Vote for Women aged over 21
1928	Alexander Fleming develops penicillin
1939-1945	World War II (6 June 1944 D-Day)

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Rear Elevation



Base of the Property



Garden

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Entrance area
- Through lounge
- Kitchen with dining area

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Two Bedrooms
- Bathroom with a shower and WC

Outside Areas

We would refer you to our earlier comments and add that the rear garden may only get a limited amount of sunlight during the summer months.

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.

Ground Floor



Kitchen



Dining Room



The nearby high rise block

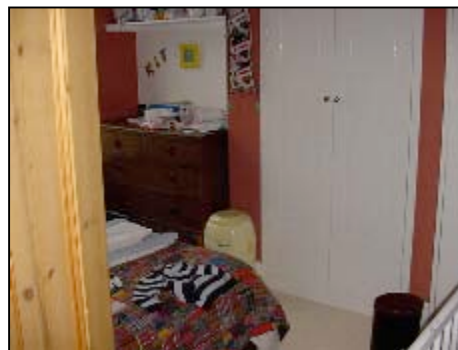
First Floor



First Floor Bathroom



Front Bedroom



Rear Bedroom

Apologies about the quality of the photos, it was very difficult to take within the size of the rooms, especially with a king size bed in the main bedroom.



The unusual, but practical TV within the old chimneybreast.

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

EXTERNAL

Chimneys:	Several chimneys, but we can only see the rear brick chimney
Main Roof:	Not visible, believed to be a butterfly roof, often known as a London Roof
Rear Roof:	Pitched and clad with concrete tiles (assumed)
Gutters and Downpipes:	A mixture of the original cast iron and plastic (assumed)
Walls:	Finished in brickwork, Flemish bond construction (assumed)
External Joinery:	Predominantly sliding sash windows with some plastic and aluminium windows to the rear of the property (assumed)

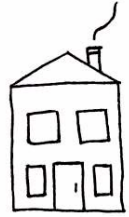
INTERNAL

Ceilings:	A mixture of the original lath and plaster and plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Studwork, we believe with a lime plaster finish (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: A mixture of a suspended timber floor and a concrete floor (assumed). First Floor: Joist and floorboards construction (assumed)

SERVICES

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

The above terms are explained in full in the main body of the Report. We have used the term 'assumed' as we have not opened up the structure.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 175 photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if a comment has not been discussed that you are interested in/concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it. If we have not we will happily go back.

Having said all of that, here are our comments:

Generally we found the house overall in average condition, considering the property's age, type and style. However this is a sweeping statement so we would also, in addition, draw your attention to the following and also recommend that you read the report in full. We have divided the Executive Summary into 'The Good', 'The Bad' and 'The Ugly', to help distinguish what in our mind are the main issues.

The Good

Older properties typically have more space than newer properties, both in the actual size of the rooms and the height of the rooms.

There is good natural light particularly to the front room, which has the bay window.

The property also has some of the original features left, which add to the overall character of the property.



Such as this detail within the hallway.

The Bad

1) **Wood Rot**

We found, during the course of our random inspection of the windows and doors wet rot to one of the front sliding sash windows and wet rot to the rear sliding patio door.

ACTION REQUIRED: Repair in due course. Preferably during the next few years, the longer it is left the worse it will be. Repair and redecorate.

ANTICIPATED COST: Expect costs for repair and redecorate to be in a few hundreds of pounds assuming the work is carried out reasonably quickly, the longer it takes the more repair issues there will be.

Please see the Timber Defects Section of this Report.



Wet rot in the sliding sash window



This is the base of the rear doors



This is a close up of my pen pushed into the rotten timber

2) Ceiling Lights

For example, within the bathroom you have ceiling lights, this can be a fire hazard due to heat given off to the rear of them. You should ensure that they are not covered from within the loft space.

ACTION REQUIRED: Check the back of the lights are not covered.



Ceiling lights in the bathroom

3) Lateral Damp

Damp is coming into the cupboard in the main bedroom on the right hand side adjoining the chimneys. We think this is coming through the wall but there does not seem to be any obvious signs as to where it is getting in. We therefore think that it may be getting in via the parapet wall.

ACTION REQUIRED: The main roof needs to be checked to ensure that the flashings etc are adequate.

ANTICIPATED COST: You will need to obtain a quotation.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.



The dampness found within the cupboard

4) Services – Electrics

The electric fuse board is dated. This to may apply to the rest of the electric system. Ideally we would recommend that a new fuse board be added, as this would be safer.

ACTION REQUIRE: An NIC EIC approved electrical contractor to carry out an IEE (Institute of Electrical Engineers) test.

ANTICIPATED COST: £250 plus recommended repairs.



Dated fuse board

The Ugly

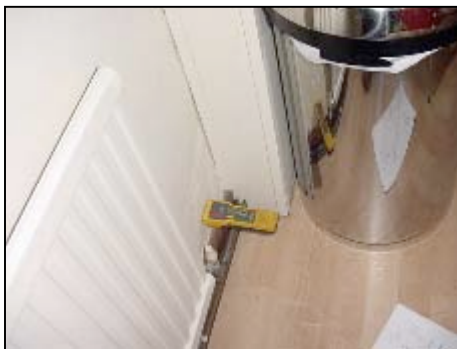
5) **Rising Damp**

Within the kitchen area we found rising damp.

ACTION REQUIRED: Lower ground level externally and possibly add a damp proof course. Obtain quotations.

ANTICIPATED COST: Slightly difficult as ideally, the plaster should be renewed which would involve removing the kitchen unit. Quotation required. In the region of £4,000 depending upon the above matters.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.



Dampness found in the kitchen area

6) Dampness

There is damp to the property but not excessive to the main area but in the kitchen it is higher than normal and we would recommend a damp company to look at this. However, because it is a kitchen and not a room you live in and you will have to remove the kitchen units we suggest that you try and live with it as it is for the moment. But you do need to obtain a quotation from the damp proof company.

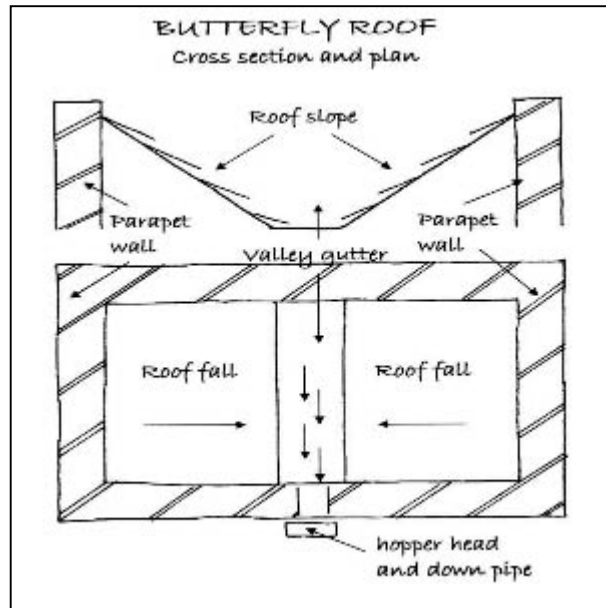
ACTION REQUIRED: Obtain quotation from damp proof company and a 30-year guarantee and negotiate this off the property. The quote should include for removal of the kitchen units, re-plastering, re-position the kitchen units and re-decorating.

7) Roof –Butterfly Roof/London Roof

There are two areas of concern on the roof. This is what is commonly known as a London roof or butterfly roof. Please see our sketch. They are renown for their problems, the owner has advised that they had problems with this roof and they have repaired the ceiling and the roof above and redecorated. This included renewing all of the ceilings, so you can see what sort of problems you can get.

ACTION REQUIRED: Access should be obtained to the main roof before you purchase. We suggest that you pay a roofing contractor with a long ladder to access the roof, take photos and forward these to us.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.



8) Roof-Condensation

Within the roof we can see condensation is occurring, this is due to the lack of ventilation. Ventilation can be added into the pitch of the roof tiles, you should ask the roofer to quote for doing this at the same time as he is generally inspecting the roof.



If you look where the torchlight is in the centre of the photo this is where the plastic underlayer is. To either side you can see the staining to the timbers.

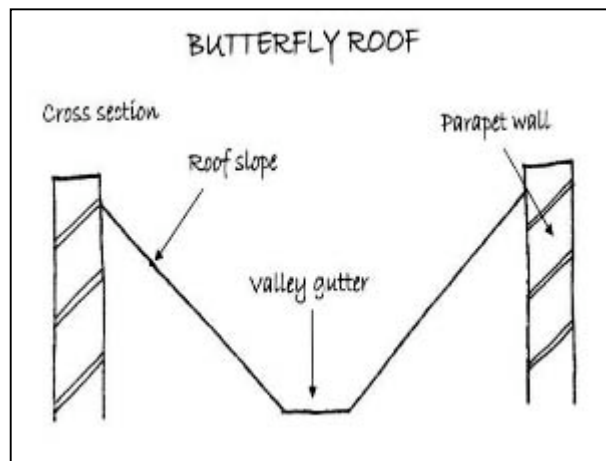


However, our dampness test proved satisfactory.

9) **Roofs-Valley Gutter**

Valley gutters are the danger areas with this type of roof. Really, they should be lead and the material should be tucked up behind the roof covering to stop any water getting in even when it backs up.

ACTION REQUIRED: The roof needs to be inspected by a roofing contractor. We will be happy to see any photos that he takes or look at any quotation that he offers.



10) **Flashing to Roofs in General – Tile on Edge**

Rather than a lead flashing a tile on edge has been used to the roof. This type of flashing usually leads to water getting in sooner or later. The reason it is used is because it is cheaper than lead flashing.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend that all of the flashings be replaced in due course with a lead flashing.



Photo taken out of the rear window perched on the windowsill with a digital camera above our head!



This is the rear view of the chimney where you can see some re-pointing has taken place.

DIY/Handyman Type Work

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as clearing the gutters. 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 currently using up to £75 per day for unskilled labour up to £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

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

SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



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

We would focus our efforts on getting a roofer to look over the main roofs. Preferably taking digital photos to allow us to satisfy ourselves that this area is in good condition. He needs in particular to check the valley gutter and also the flashings.

We believe that a damp proof course should be added and quotations should be obtained. Both of the above items should be negotiated on and taken off the agreed price. We say this because the agreed price that you have made is for a property in average condition. These items mean that it is below average condition.

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.

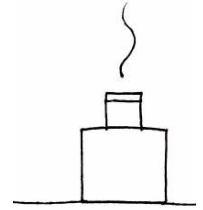
**THE DETAILED PART OF THE REPORT
FOLLOWS, WORKING FROM THE TOP
OF THE PROPERTY DOWNWARDS**



Front Elevation

EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS AND PARAPET WALLS



Chimney Stacks

Chimneys developed originally from open fires placed within buildings. From this, the chimney has developed to its present day format where it has both the function of heating the room and is often also the focal point.

We believe there are three chimneys although we can only see one of them to the rear of the property and the chimney pots to the others. Considering each in turn:

Rear Chimney

This chimney is brick finished with a tile on edge flashing. The chimney has been lowered and looks relatively new. We feel it would be a far better detail if the tile flashing was replaced with a lead flashing as the present flashings tend to work loose and crack over a period of years, whereas lead moves with the structure. Unfortunately we were unable to see the flashings properly; this looks to be relatively new to. We therefore cannot comment upon them.

ACTION REQUIRED: Replace tile on edge flashing with a lead flashing. Ideally this should be carried out within the next five years.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Front Chimneys

With regard to the two other chimneys, we could not see these but we would recommend: -

ACTION REQUIRED: Several roofers are asked to inspect and quote on the roof as a whole, flashings and the chimneys. You need to ensure that they have a long ladder to gain access to the roof and you need to insist that they take photos of what they see. Please forward these on to us for further comment.



This is all we could see of the chimneys

You should remember that the roof is a high-risk area with this type of roof (London roof).

Parapet Walls

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

In this case there are parapet walls to the front and rear of the property.

To the front they are in reasonable condition, from the side that we can see although this area to the front right hand side is where dampness is getting into the main roof, which is why it is essential to have a roofer check the property.

Rear roof here we can see the parapet walls have tiles on edge as a flashing which should be replaced with lead. Please see our comments in the Executive summary.

ACTION REQUIRED: It is essential that the roof be inspected.

Tile on Edge Defined

A tile sitting sideways, bedded in cement mortar which has been utilised as a flashing. Due to the cement mortar it is bedded in being brittle and prone to cracking, this is not an ideal material. We would always recommend the use of lead flashings.

Render Defined

A sand and cement external coating applied in two or three coats or layers.



A close up of the front parapet wall, left hand side



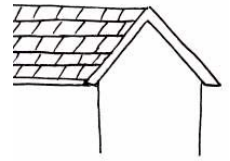
A close up of the front parapet wall, right hand side

Finally, we were only able to see approximately 25 percent of the chimneys, therefore we have made our best assumptions based upon this and only about 10-20 percent of the parapet walls and again made our best assumptions on these.

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

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

ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



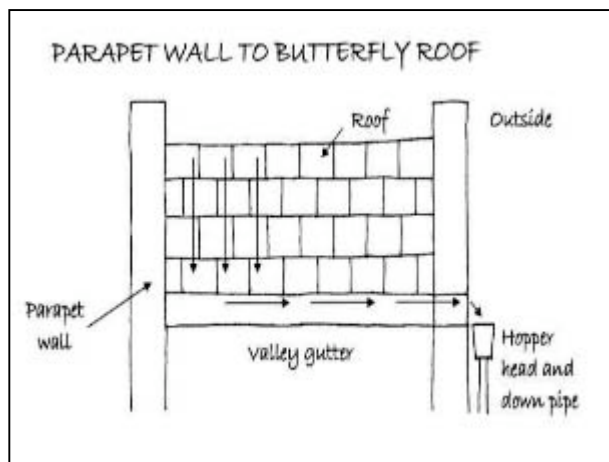
The Roof Coverings and Underlayers section considers the condition of the outer covering of the roof. Such coverings usually endure the extremes of climate and temperatures. They are susceptible to deterioration, which ultimately leads to water penetration.

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

We will consider the roofs in two areas, the High Level Main Roof and the Low Level Front and Rear Roofs.

Main Roof – Butterfly Roof/London Roof

Unfortunately, we were unable to see this roof at all apart from the rear edge and where we could inspect it by getting in the roof. From this we believe it to be a butterfly roof/London roof. Please see our comments within the Executive summary.



Our very limited view of the rear of the main roof.

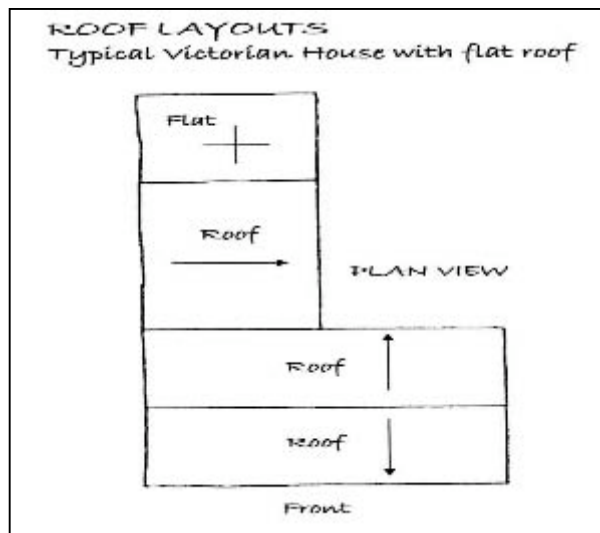
Junction Between High Level Roofs

This is often a weak area. In this instance we believe it is the flashings formed in a tile on edge, which is not ideal as we mentioned earlier and should be replaced with lead.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ideally this should be replaced with a lead flashing although it is a relatively common problem in this age, type and style of property.

Tile on Edge Defined

A tile sitting sideways, bedded in cement mortar which has been utilised as a flashing. Due to the cement mortar it is bedded in being brittle and prone to cracking, this is not an ideal material. We would always recommend the use of lead flashings.



This is the best photo we managed to get with the junction of the two roofs. This is a very strange detail, there is a tile on edge but there looks to be lead underneath it. Bearing this in mind it may well be worth leaving the tile on edge until such time as water is getting in via this roof.

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

From the 1940s onwards felts were used underneath tiles/slates to stop wind damage and water penetration, these in more recent years have been replaced with plastic equivalents. These are commonly known as underfelts but now the name is not really appropriate, as felt is not the only material used.

When we inspected the roof space we found a reinforced plastic sarking felt. This type of sarking felt was used in the 1970s/1980s and its use was generally stopped because it was susceptible to causing condensation unless the roofs are adequately vented, which they are usually not. In this case it was in reasonable condition.



The underlayer, which is a plastic sheet.

Low Level Roofs

There is a bay roof to the front of the property and a single pitch roof to the rear.

Bay Roof to the Front

This has a mineral felt roof, which looks in reasonable condition. Although we could not see a flashing to it.



This is where the bay roof meets the main property and there really should a flashing here.

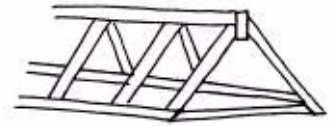
Rear Roof

This has a large interlocking concrete tile finish, which is in reasonable condition; there is some minor moss on it.

Finally, all the roofs were inspected from ground level 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.

Main Roof

The main roof is accessed via two loft hatches located both within the front main bedroom. There is no loft ladder, roof light or secured floorboards. Due to the size of these spaces we do not think it is practical to use them for storage of too many items (although they may be useful for hiding of Christmas present). However, a light would be handy in both of them.

The loft has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly. When we were inside the roof we were able to confirm that the property has a butterfly roof/London roof. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Roof Timbers

This type of roof structure has what is known as a cut timber roof. This is a roof, which is purpose made and hand built on site. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects; however it is in line with what we typically see.

We have inspected the roof for serious active woodworm and for structurally significant defects to the timber together with dry rot and wet rot. 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 slightly below average condition.

Fire Walls

There are firewalls either side of this property, which is good practice.

Fire Walls Defined

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

To the left hand side there is a brick built firewall and to the right hand side there is a brick firewall.

Ventilation

We could not see any ventilation in the roof.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add ventilation.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Rear Loft Hatch

This is located within the bathroom. Again, there was not a ladder but there is a light within the roof. This again has been formed in a cut roof but in this case forming only a single pitch (as opposed to the double pitch in the main roof). This common rafters in this case take support from the ends of brick nibs. We noted some spalling to the brickwork as we did note in the other loft spaces but nothing excessive considering the properties age, type and style.

Ventilation

Where there is a protective under layer 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. Again, we would recommend that ventilation be added.

Water Tanks

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

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

No Access

No access was available to the front bay roof or the rear pitch roofs.

Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

Electrical Cables

We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of wiring found in the roof. In this case there was not sufficient quantity of wiring in any of the roofs for us to feel that we could comment.

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.

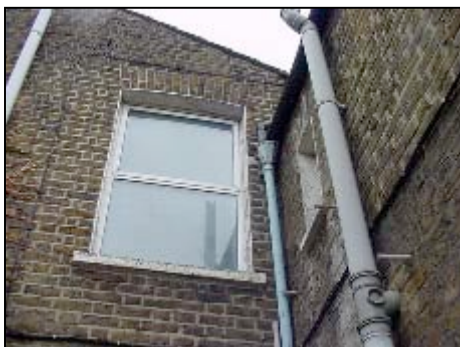
The property has a mixture of the original cast iron and the newer plastic. There may be some minor leaks, but we feel that most people could live with these.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would always recommend that the gutters and downpipes are cleaned out, the joints are checked and the alignment checked to ensure that the gutters fall towards the downpipes.

Junction of Main Rear Building and Main Rear Extension

This is a weak area, which often discharges from the staining to the brickwork; we can see that it is discharging in this area. The only real way round this in our experience is to divert and slow the water down by using lead turns in the roof and to use a deep flow gutter and a purpose made hopper head.

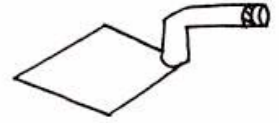
Please see our comments earlier in the roof section and our sketch.



You can just about see the staining below the windows.

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

WALLS



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

Brickwork

This property is brick finished and laid originally in a lime mortar, which in turn has been re-pointed in a cement mortar. This is all bedded in what is known as Flemish Bond construction.

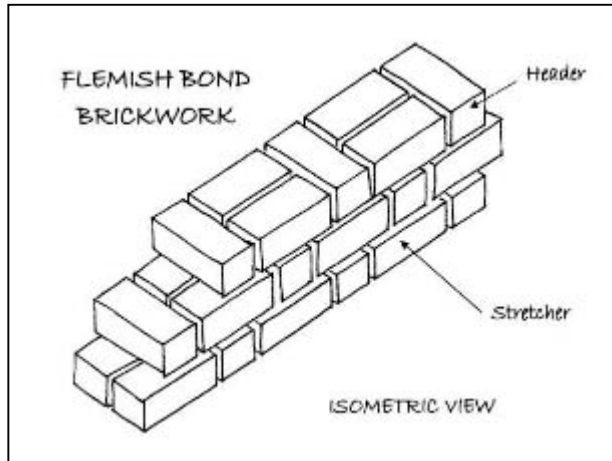
The term "Flemish Bond" relates to the way the bricks are bonded together and have a pattern visible from the outside of the property that shows the end of the brick (header), then the side of the brick (stretcher), then the end of the brick, then the side of the brick, and this pattern repeats course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

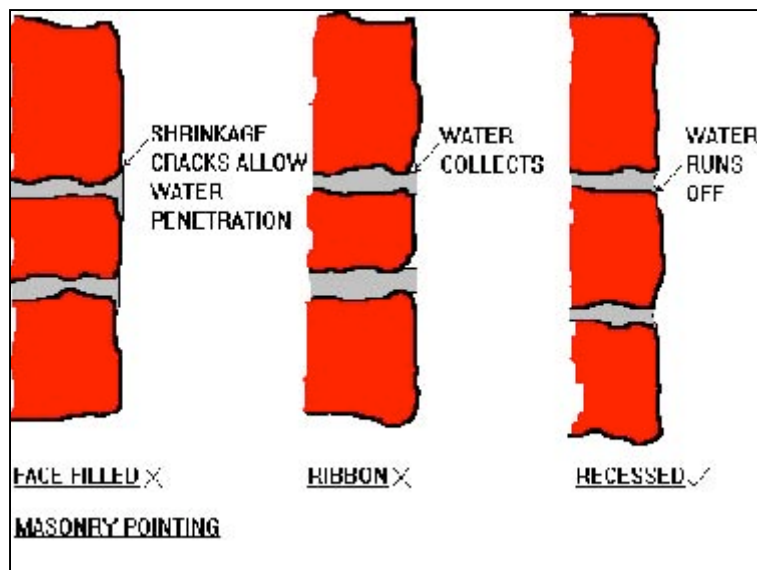
Generally Flemish Bond brickwork is liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon the condition of the brickwork and the exposure to the weather. In this case it is in average condition. It is essential that external faces be kept in good condition.

Unfortunately the re-pointing, whilst well meaning, is not appropriate for this type of construction. A cement mortar has been used rather than a lime based mortar. We recommend you use lime mortar in any future repairs regardless of what the builders say! Using lime mortar will limit further damage to the brickwork, which is almost impossible to repair successfully. However, we would add that many if not most properties have been re-pointed in this way.



Here is a typical example of how the pointing on the property, as you can see, in some areas is worn away. It is necessary to re-point these areas to stop dampness getting into the structure.

ACTION REQUIRED: When re-pointing is carried out we recommend a lime mortar be used, although there is a fair bit of life left in the existing pointing.



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.

To the front of the property there is a small area of render which we were not able to inspect closely, the ladders were not that long. From the ground it looked in reasonable condition.

Render Defined

A sand and cement external coating applied in two or three coats or layers.

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

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

FOUNDATIONS

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

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

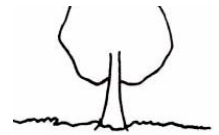
This property stands on London Clay as with the majority of properties in London. It is therefore more susceptible than most should drains leak or trees be allowed to overgrow etc. It is not unusual to have some settlement in London properties. However, from our inspection of the walls we have found nothing unusual.

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.

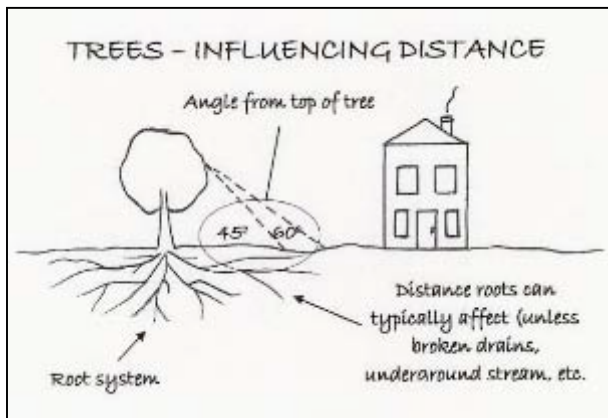
As no excavation has been carried out we cannot be 100 percent certain as to how the foundation has been constructed and we can only offer our best assumptions and an educated guess, which we have duly done.



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

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.



Influencing Distance Defined

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

DAMP PROOF COURSE

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

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

Holes are visible on the outside of the wall. These were noted around the bay window area. This is a typical sign that a chemical injection damp proof course has been added. We are also aware that in many cases cowboy damp-proofing companies (and believe it or not there are some) simply drilled the holes, as this was more profitable!

From our investigations we have found that the main part of the property satisfactory and the rear damp.



If you look very closely just above the airbrick there is a pen indicating where one of the holes for the damp proof course is.

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



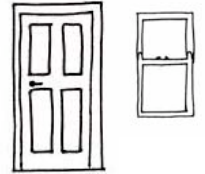
In properties with suspended floors you need to have an airflow beneath to stop deterioration. The air is allowed to pass under the property by the use of airbricks. Generally the rule of thumb is that airbricks are spaced every metre and a half approximately, but this depends upon the specific circumstances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

The number of airbricks noted are fairly typical of what we see. We have checked with neighbouring properties and this seems to be the typical number of airbricks.



One of the airbricks.

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.

Cornice

There is a render cornice to the parapet wall, please see our comments in the walls section and the parapet section.

Cornice Defined

This is a decorative section on the walls.

Windows and Doors

There is a real mixture of windows to this property. To the front they look to be the original sliding sash windows. There is some rot in them but they are certainly saveable. We would not recommend that they are replaced but repaired. To the rear there are plastic and aluminium windows. Please see the Executive Summary for our further comments.

The property has double glazed windows, which generally look to be dated. We would draw your attention to the fact that sealed double glazed units can fail, particularly as a result of poor workmanship during installation. Failure of the seal leads to condensation between the two panes of glass and simply replacing the affected units may not provide a satisfactory long-term solution. In this case we noted that some of them have misted over. Generally it is considered that double glazed units have a life of about ten years.

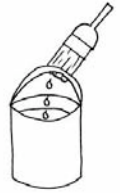


One of the front windows. This looks to be one of the original sliding sash windows. We can tell this due to the thickness or thinness of the profile of the mullions and transoms and also the horns on the bottom of the windows.



One of the rear aluminium windows, you can see how it is misting over with condensation.

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



EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

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

In this case, external decoration will be needed to the windows, the doors, the bay area and the rendered area in due course. Probably within the next three to four years. Do not underestimate the time this takes and the cost if you get someone else to do it.



Decoration required

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

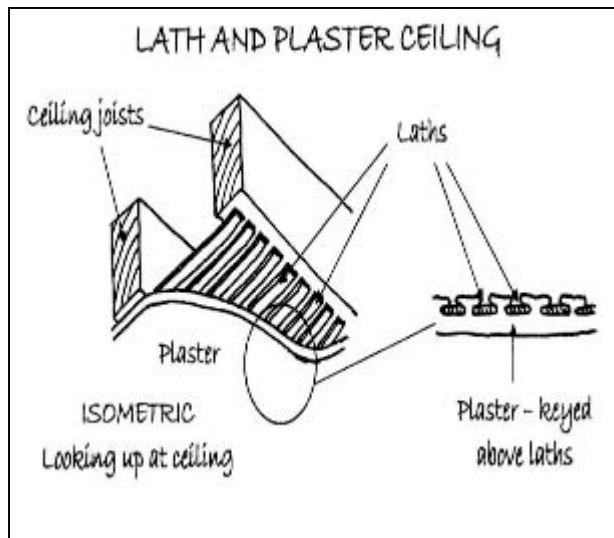
INTERNAL

CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

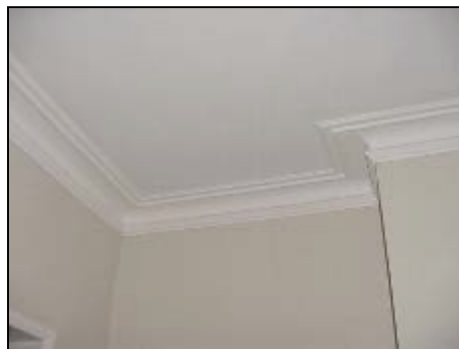
Ceilings

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be a mixture of the original lath and plaster and plasterboards. For example within the main bedroom we can see hairline cracking at the joints of the plasterboard that has replaced the original lath and plaster. This is due to the property being a butterfly/London roof.



Lath and Plaster Defined

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



There are some quite nice mouldings that remain to the ceilings.

Internal Walls and Partitions

We have carried out a tap test to the internal walls (this is not rocket science, it is literally tapping the walls and listening for the sound made) and found them to be studwork walls and fairly lightweight, which is quite common in modern construction (or where there has been an alteration). You may find some noise transfer between rooms. However, in this age of property a fairly dense studwork was often used which does limit noise transfer.

Studwork Defined

Usually a timber frame, clad in either lath and plaster or plasterboard and used to divide areas. Studwork can be structural, i.e. load bearing, or alternatively non-structural depending upon its construction.

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.

In particular we would like to draw your attention to the dampness that we found in the front right hand side of the property, which we mentioned in the Executive Summary. Please see this section for further comments and also to the hairline cracking we noted above the left hand window (all directions given as you face the property) to the master bedroom.

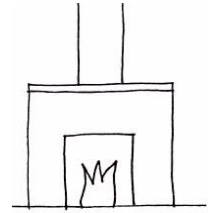
Kitchen Bubbling of Paper

We are advised that in this area there was a leak on next doors property which came through which has now been resolved, although it is difficult for us to comment as the present owners have made no attempt to repair this.

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

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

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 chimneybreasts are located to the front right hand side of the property coming down into the through lounge and into the rear kitchen area (all directions given as you face the front of the property). We were pleased to find that all the chimneybreasts follow through from the roof level to the ground floor. This means that structurally they are obtaining support throughout their length (as opposed to when a section of the chimney has been removed and no support is present).

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

Kitchen Chimney

We were pleased to see that the chimney was also vented, which allows airflow within the chimneys and stops moisture from building up.

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

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

FLOORS



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

Ground Floor

Is a mixture of a suspended timber floor to the main through lounge, stairs and hallway area with a concrete floor to the rear.

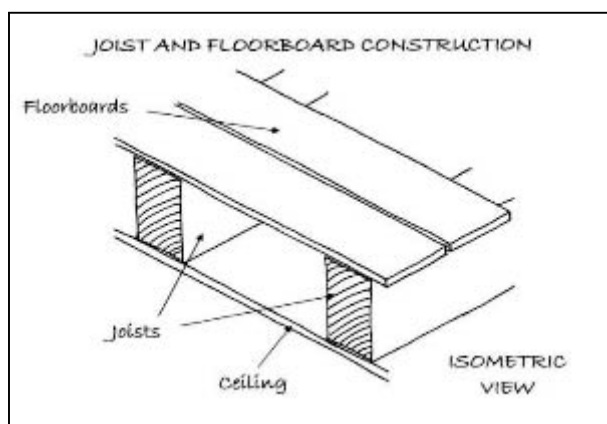
To some extent the concrete floor has blocked the airflow within the property. Please see our comments in the airbricks section.

First Floor

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



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

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



DAMPNESS

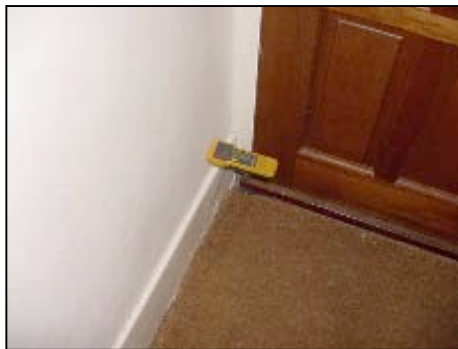
In this section we look at any problems that are being caused by dampness. It is therefore essential to diagnose the source of the dampness and to treat the actual cause and not the effect of the dampness.

Rising Damp

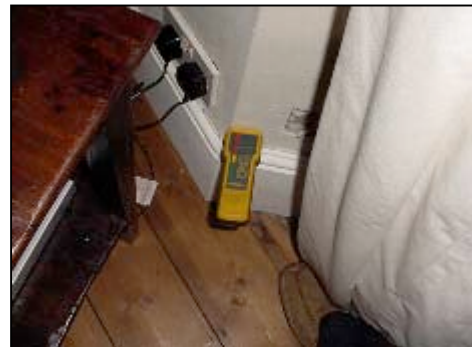
Rising damp depends upon various components including the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation of the material, amongst other things. Rising damp can come from the ground, drawn by capillary action, to varying degrees of intensity and height into the materials above.

A significant amount of rising damp was found to the rear of the property above the levels we would expect.

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



Minor dampness to the front door area, we feel within an acceptable limit.



This is to the front bay where dampness again we feel is within acceptable limits

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. With the exception of the bedroom areas that we have mentioned in the Executive Summary.



Dampness coming in through the walls

Condensation

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

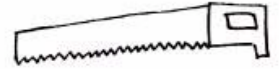
We could see no obvious signs of condensation, however, it depends upon how you utilise the building. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating and ventilation of properties. Normally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

There was also condensation occurring in some of the double-glazed units. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Also, we have mentioned that it may occur within the main roofs if these are not vented.

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

As is the fashion, 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 originally. We would term these doors to be in average condition for their age, type and style.



Internal doors.

Staircase

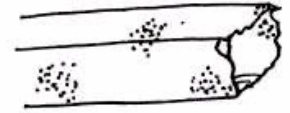
We were unable to examine the underside of the stair timbers due to it being lined with plaster, which precluded our inspection, so we cannot comment further upon the stair structure. We can, however, say that the lining plaster gives a resistance to the spread of fire if such circumstances were to occur.

Kitchen

From our cursory visual inspection the kitchen looked in reasonable condition, although we believe it is a fairly basic quality kitchen. 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 with the exception of the windows and the sliding door frames that we mentioned in the Executive Summary.



Some dampness is getting in to the roof space; this is probably due to the quality of flashings (although we have not been able to see them). Left Long term this would lead to wet rot and possibly dry rot. This is where we recommended that the flashings are replaced.

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 woodworm. However, given the age of the property, there is an outside chance that there may be some present, although we have not physically seen any.

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the roof we found no obvious visual signs of woodworm activity or indeed signs of past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage. In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection is usually restricted by insulation covering some of the timbers and general stored items in the roof, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings. If you wish to be 100 per cent certain that there is no woodworm the only way would be to check the property when is emptied of fixtures and fittings etc

ACTION REQUIRED: If you wish to be 100 per cent certain get the property checked when it is empty of fixtures, fittings and furniture etc.

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

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



INTERNAL DECORATIONS

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

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

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

THERMAL EFFICIENCY

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

Roofs

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

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.

Windows

They are a mixture of predominantly single glazed, which will have poor thermal qualities and some double-glazing to the rear, which will have better thermal properties although the condensation in them indicates that they are no longer operating properly.

Services

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

Summary

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

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

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

or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

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

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



OTHER MATTERS

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

Security

No security system was noted. It is a personal decision as to whether you feel one is necessary. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further. We suggest you contact a member of NACOSS (National Approval Council for Security Services), obtainable through directory enquiries, or your local Police Force for advice on a security system.

Smoke Alarms

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 under the stairs. The fuse board looked dated see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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 dated.

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



Kettle test.



Ceiling Lights set within the bathroom

GAS

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

We are advised that the property has mains gas. The consumer unit is located to the front of the property.

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

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

PLUMBING AND HEATING



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

Water Supply

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

Water Pressure

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

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

Cold Water Cistern

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

Plumbing

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

Heating

The boiler was located in the kitchen.

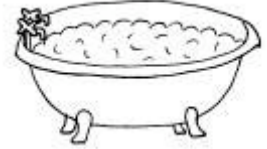
Our limited inspection of the hot water and central heating system revealed no evidence to suggest any serious defects but we would nevertheless recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

Soil and Vent Pipe

They are plastic and located to the rear of the property.

Finally, it should be noted that the supply pipe from the Water Company stopcock to the internal stop tap is the responsibility of the property owner.

We cannot comment on the condition of the water service pipe to the building. It should be appreciated that leaks can occur for some time before signs are apparent on the surface.

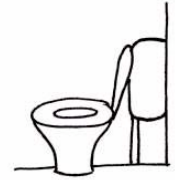


BATHROOM/SHOWER ROOM

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

The property has a three-piece bathroom suite and a shower unit. There looks to have been some leaks in the shower unit in the past and we always recommend that the mastic seals be checked after being in the property for a short while.

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 bathroom and kitchen. No build up or back up was noted.

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

Unfortunately, we did not find any.

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.

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

Please also see our comments within the Rainwater Goods section.

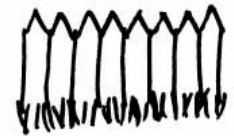
OUTSIDE AREAS

PARKING



Parking is on a first come first served permit basis.

EXTERNAL AREAS



Boundaries

The left hand boundary is usually the responsibility of the subject property.

Front Garden

We note that one of the boundary walls is single skin or one brick thick, whichever way you wish to term it. This type of wall is prone to damage from impact and hedges etc. as they are integrally unstable.

Rear Garden

There is a fence around this, which would benefit from some treatment.

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

Neighbours

Left Hand Neighbours

There was no one in but we would comment that the garden was un-kept and the building generally in a lower standard than the rest of the street.

Right Hand Neighbours

These were in, they advised that they had no issues with the neighbours.

POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

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

- g) Adjoining roads and services.
- h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- i) General development proposals in the locality.
- j) Confirm from enquiries that no underground tunnels, wells, sewers, gases, mining, minerals, site reclamation/contamination etc., exist, have existed or are likely to exist beneath the curtilage of the site upon which the property stands and which could affect the quiet enjoyment, safety or stability of the property, outbuildings or surrounding areas.
- k) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.
- l) 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.
- m) Any other matters brought to your attention within this report.

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

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

Finally, your Solicitor should carry out 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 1st November 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 an overcast winters 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 very limited due to the very nature of a butterfly/London roof. It was very difficult to view. The rear roof was very difficult as it was packed out with storage items.

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.