

JOB REFERENCE:

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY OF Post War Semi Detached Property



FOR ANY HELP OR ASSISTANCE CALL FREE PHONE:

0800 298 5424

or

visit our website:

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

REPORT FORMAT
SYNOPSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

EXTERNAL

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

INTERNAL

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

SERVICES

ELECTRICITY
GAS
PLUMBING AND HEATING
BATHROOMS
MAIN DRAINS

OUTSIDE AREAS

PARKING
EXTERNAL AREAS

POINTS FOR LEGAL ADVISOR

APPENDICES

LIMITATIONS
GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

REPORT FORMAT

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

GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

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

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



We utilise photographs and sketches to illustrate issues or features. In some photographs a pencil has been used to highlight a specific area.

ORIENTATION

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

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two storey semi-detached property with a substantial rear single storey extension with a parking area to the front and garden to the rear.

The property is situated in a residential area with a mixture of property types and styles although the majority are semi-detached dating from the war years.

We are advised that the property was originally local authority built and purchased via a “right to buy” following it being refurbished. We are also advised under pinning work to resolve subsidence was carried out to the right hand side.

We are advised that the property was built in the 1930/1940’s. If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

1928	Vote for Women aged over 21
1928	Alexander Fleming develops penicillin
1939-1945	World War II (6 June 1944 D-Day)
1948	The Manchester Mark 1 developed (arguably the first computer)
1950	The concept of artificial intelligence for computers was developed by Alan Turing (MOD)

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Side Elevation



Looking across to your neighbours



Rear Elevation



Garden

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Entrance hall
- Lounge/dining room
- Kitchen
- Utilities room
- Ground floor bathroom
- Rear room that is used as a bedroom
- Rear room that gives access to the garden areas

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Family bathroom
- Two double bedrooms
- Single bedroom

Outside Areas

We would refer you to our earlier comments and we would add that the property sits on a sloping site and the garden steps down to the rear to accommodate this.

INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

The following photos are of the internal of the property to help you recall what it looked like and the general ambience (or lack of). We have not necessarily taken photographs of each and every room.

Ground Floor



Lounge



Lounge looking towards the dining area



Kitchen



Ground Floor Shower Room



Ground Floor Bedroom



Rear room with access to the garden

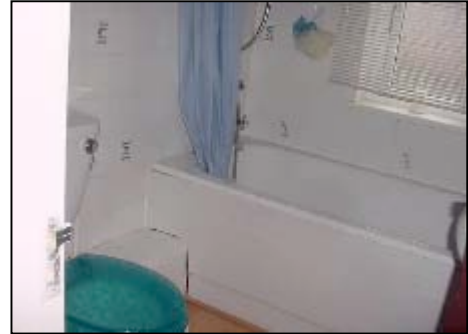


Utility Room

First Floor



Rear right hand bedroom on the first floor



First Floor Bathroom



Master Bedroom

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

EXTERNAL

Chimneys:	Two rendered chimneys
Main Roof:	Pitched and clad in a concrete tile with the rear roof being flat and felt covered.
Gutters and Downpipes:	The gutters and downpipes and soil and vent pipes are all plastic
Walls:	Finished in a pebble dash render, the front wall is painted with a mock Tudor timber affect (assumed)
External Joinery:	Single glazed and double-glazed plastic windows and doors.

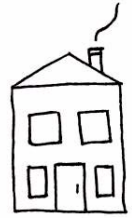
INTERNAL

Ceilings:	Mixed - Lath and plaster with plasterboard in the new extension (assumed)
Walls:	A mixture of solid and studwork
Floors:	Ground Floor: A suspended timber ground floor (assumed) First Floor: Joist and floorboard construction (assumed)

SERVICES

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

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



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

Having said all of that, here are our comments:

Generally we found the house overall in average 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

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

Extension

The property has a good size rear extension

Render to the Side and Rear of the Property

The render to the side and rear of the property is new; please see our comments about the render in the next section.

The Bad

Problems/issues raised in the 'bad' section are usually solvable, but really need negotiation upon. However, a number of them may sometimes put us off the property

1) **Render**

The render to the front of the property looks to be original, it looks to have been fairly recently painted over which we feel are hiding defective areas; we can see some areas where the paint is starting to flake.



If you look closely you can see the flaking paint to the white rendered areas.

ACTION REQUIRED: We feel that you will need to carry out some re-rendering within the next five years. Keeping the paintwork in good decorative order can prolong the life of the existing render.

Please see the Wall Section of this Report.

2) Fascia and Soffit Boards

We are unsure whether the plastic cladding to the fascia and soffit boards is over-cladding; this is where plastic sheets are put over the original timber. This can cause the fascia and soffits timbers to rot and in extreme cases the rafter end. Please see our comments in the External Joinery Section.



A close up of the fascia and soffits. You can see also that the nails are rusting. The photo also gives a good view of the render and you can see the drip detail above the window indicating that it is a reasonable quality render to the back of the property.

ACTION REQUIRED: With a long ladder you need to closely examine the fascia and soffit boards. Some times the only way to find out for certain is to actually drill into the plastic sheeting to see if there is timber beneath.

ANTICIPATED COST: If the fascia and cladding board does need replacing this will vary depending on the quality of materials used. A few hundred pounds to over a thousand pounds.

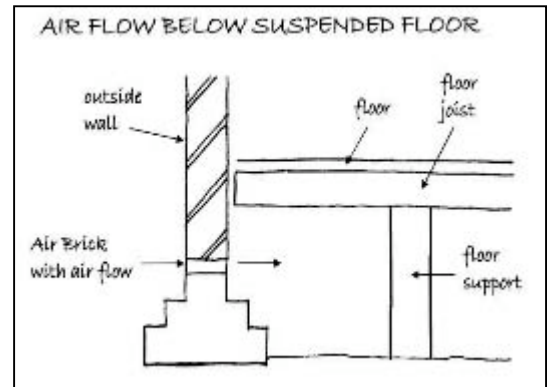
Please see the External Joinery Section of this Report.

3) Airbricks too Low to the Front of the Property

Due to the way the tarmac at the front of the property has been lowered the ground level is now level with the airbricks (which are needed to vent the suspended timber floor), which are too low and are therefore susceptible to rainwater getting into them when it rains.



The Airbrick



ACTION REQUIRED: We suggest a brick barrier is added around them, although this may stop next door from gaining access to the garage area.

Please see the External Section of this Report.

4) Deterioration to Ground Floor

We are concerned that there may be some wet rot to the ground floor joists. Our comments are based upon the deflection we can feel when walking on the ground floor.

The deterioration may well be due to the low position of the airbricks that we have mentioned, dampness getting into the base of the property or a combination of the two.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ideally, the floor should be opened up. We suggest that you employ damp proof contractors to check the property for dampness and open up a section (we suggest underneath the doorway).

ANTICIPATED COST: Quotation to be obtained.

5) Flat Roof

Flat roofs are renowned for there problems. This one does not look to have a suitable fall on it and it also looks to have been re-tarred indicating that it leaked in the past.



A general view of the roof. You can see where the moss is sitting; this means that there is minimal falls to the roof.



There are areas where the felt flashing is coming away from the wall, as can be seen here where I can get my pen literally behind the felt.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend the entirety of the roof have a high performance felt added to it and that a lead flashing is used at the junction where the roof meets the house. The present owner advises us that insulation has been put into the roof voids but unfortunately we do not have any way of knowing this without opening the roof up. Insulation can be cut to falls “to allow the water to drain away.”

ANTICIPATED COST: We recommend that you obtain a quotation. We feel that you should also get a quotation for having insulation cut to falls on the roof as it is flat and water will not get away very easily making it susceptible to future leaks.

6) **Subsidence**

This is more a point of fact than an issue you can do anything about but you need to consider it carefully. Any property, which has had subsidence, generally would be more difficult to sell than a property that has not even if the work has been successfully carried out, as people are usually unhappy with a property that has had a flaw regardless of how well it has been repaired. You need to give this careful consideration.

With regard to the reasons for the subsidence, the fairly typical problem in this age of property is leaks to the drainage run which may have then cause deterioration to the foundations, which in turn resulted in underpinning being needed to the right hand gable wall.

10) **Neighbours**

We would suggest that you come and spend some time in the street to make sure you find the neighbourhood suitable. We refer you to our discussion we had when we met.

Planning Permission and Building Control Permission for the Rear Extension

From our understanding of this matter based upon discussions we had with the owners, we believe that original planning permission approval was given and so was building regulation permission subject to the usual signing off and Completion Certificate at various stages during construction when the work is checked. From what we understand from the owners they have had all of these approvals with the exception of the Final Completion Certificate, which they have now obtained.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor needs to also confirm this.

DIY/Handyman Type Work

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as redecoration to your own personal taste. We have detailed various other DIY type of work within the main body of the report. These problems are fairly typical for this age, style and type of property. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

Purchase Price

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

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Estimates of Costs

Where we have offered an estimate of building costs please remember we are not experts in this area. We always recommend you obtain quotations for the large jobs before purchasing the property (preferably three quotes). The cost of building work has many variables such as the cost of labour. For unskilled labour we currently use between £50 and £75 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

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



SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

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

We feel that probably one of the main difficulties this property has is dealing with the present owners! We would strongly recommend that you investigate the above items particularly costs for adding a high performance felt to the flat roof and we would also recommend the insulation cut to falls as being essential. Additionally, we feel that you need a damp proof contractor to check the property and also open up the floor to inspect. We would be more than happy to comment on any quotations received.

Finally, particularly with regard to the cat incident we feel that you should come and revisit the neighbourhood and check that it is satisfactory for you.

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.

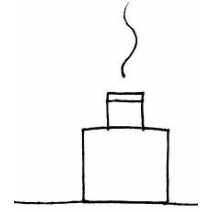
**THE DETAILED PART OF THE REPORT
FOLLOWS, WORKING FROM THE TOP
OF THE PROPERTY DOWNWARDS**



Front Elevation

EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS AND FLUES



Chimney Stacks

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

There are two chimneys to this property they are located to the front and rear and sit on the Party Wall. Considering each in turn:

Chimney One – Front Chimney

This chimney has a pea shingle render finish with a lead flashing and three chimney pots. From ground level it looks to be in reasonable condition for its age. Unfortunately we were unable to see the flaunchings and therefore cannot comment upon these.



Front Chimney

Chimney Two – Rear Chimney

This again is a pea shingle render finished chimney with a lead flashing but is in below average condition particularly with regard to the top areas. Please see the photos and please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Rear Chimney. You can see the darker areas which often indicate that deterioration/dampness is occurring to the render.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend that this chimney is inspected within the next few years (you may as well look at the other chimney at the same time). You will need crawler boards and a ladder to access the chimneys.

Flues

Flues offer ventilation to things like boilers and soil and vent pipes and usually come through the roof covering, which can often also be a weak area.

To the front of the property there is a metal flue visible. Where they come through the roof there is a metal flashing; from ground level this looked in reasonable condition.

Earlier we have used the term Party Wall in relation to the walls.

Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

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

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

Flaunchings Defined

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

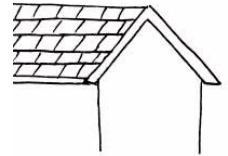
Flashings Defined

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.

Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the chimneystacks and flues 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 main roof and the flat roof.

Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad with a large 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.

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 they are interlocking.

As a general comment on the roofs as a whole, as viewed from ground level, the roof coverings showed nothing out of character for their age and type. Although we would add that the front and rear tiles just above the gutters tip down rather than tipping up. This is generally not a good idea as they should tip up to slow the rainfall down to allow the gutters to catch it. There may therefore be some rainwater spillage around the gutter area, which can cause deterioration to the render finishing. There is a very minor amount of moss growth present on 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.



This photo shows a general view of the roof, some moss to the perimeter and also the flue that we mentioned earlier.



If you look closely at the tiles at the bottom of this photo you can see how they tip down rather than up.

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 Hessian base Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s. We generally found it to be in average condition, it is damaged in a few places but this is not unusual considering its age.

Flat Roofs

Whilst these roofs are called "flat", present building regulations and good building practice presently requires a minimum fall of 12 degrees.

Flat roofs are formed in a variety of materials. Difficulties arise when the water is not discharged from the roof but sits upon it, as this can soon lead to deterioration which flat roofs are renowned for.

We believe this roof has an older style Bitumen. Brushed on tar looks to have been used, which bonds the various layers together. This requires skill, together with the right conditions. Where the bonding was not completed properly, this ultimately led to deterioration. In this case we believe the roof will need ad hoc repair in the near future which is why we have recommended the following works.

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

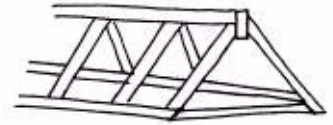


A general view of the flat roof. The picture shows where the roof has been repaired or badly bonded together which are the darker areas.

We would add that this felt sits on a timber decking. It does give and flex more than we would normally expect, therefore there might have been some deterioration to the decking or it may simply be too thin.

Finally, all the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. Flat roofs have been inspected by physically getting on to the roof.

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



ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT

(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

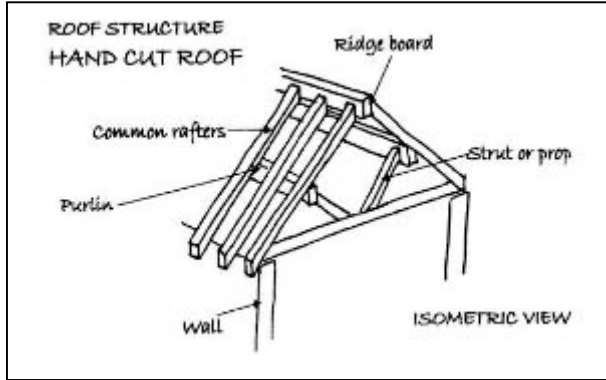
The roof structure or framework must be built in a manner which is able to give adequate strength to carry its own weight together with that of the roof covering discussed in the previous section and any superimposed loads such as snow, wind, foot traffic etc.

Main Roof

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

The loft perimeter has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly. There is a considerable amount of stored items in the roof, in fact the most we have seen for a long while.

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, this roof has had additional supports added to the basement concrete tile roof that is present. These additions are in the forms of props with purlins to the central wall where additional support is taken.



A general view of the roof, you can see the moss and you can also see some slight displacement to the ridge tiles, which will need re-bedding in due course.

Roof Timbers

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 large number of stored items, from what we could see generally we found the roof to be in average condition.

We would add the proviso that our inspection was very limited by the amount of items in the roof.



The common rafters run from the top to the bottom of the picture, the purlins run horizontally. The black area between the common rafters is where the sarking felt is.



A general view looking towards the gable. Here you can see there is a block inner wall has been used.

Front Canopy

To the front of the property there is a small canopy, this has a single pitch with a concrete tile, which looks in reasonable condition. Where it abuts the main building there should be flashing. There looks to be one but it has been tarred over and difficult to see.



Canopy to the front of the property.



A close up of the flashing. You can also see some deteriorating render above it.

Fire Walls

Firewalls help prevent the spread of fire through roofs and are a relatively recent Building Regulation requirement. In this instance the firewall is built in block work.

Water Tanks

There are no water tanks visible in the roof!



Another view of the roof but here you can see the water tank on the right hand side and the vent on the left hand side.

Ventilation

Where there is an underlayer 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.

Electrical Cables

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

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

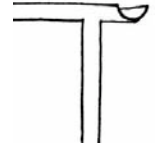
Flat Roofs

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

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).

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 plastic and appeared in reasonable condition. There may be some minor leaks, but we feel that most people could live with these. Our only other thought was that due to the cladding that has been used you find that sometimes the gutters are not that well fixed.

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

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



WALLS

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

Render is a mixture of sand and cement and in older renders also lime. As a surveyor we are always concerned when we see render finished properties as the render can hide a multitude of sins, particularly if it has been recently repainted. We generally would steer people away from rendered properties. In more modern renders a waterproof additive is applied in two or three coats.

Render

The walls to the side and rear of this property are finished in a pebbledash render finish. However, the front render is a completely different matter. This looks to be original and starting to deteriorate.

We have carried out a tap test to the render at low level (literally hitting the render with the back of a hammer to try to establish if there are any hollow areas in it) and we feel that in this instance the render to the side and rear is in above average condition for its age type and style and the render to the front is in below average condition. We would add that we noted some hairline cracking which is not unusual

Render Detailing

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

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

The render at the base of the wall has been formed into a bell-mouth drip detail (again, this is to the side and rear only) which should help stop dampness getting into the structure.

The above relates to the side and rear only, the old render to the front of the property is a different matter and we feel it has now come to the end of its usual life. However, you can keep it going for many years to come by redecorating regularly and patch repair.

ACTION REQUIRED: The render needs replacing, please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



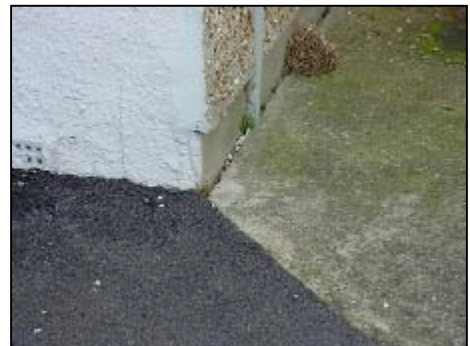
Here you can see on the rear, your render on the left hand side, your neighbours render on the right hand side.



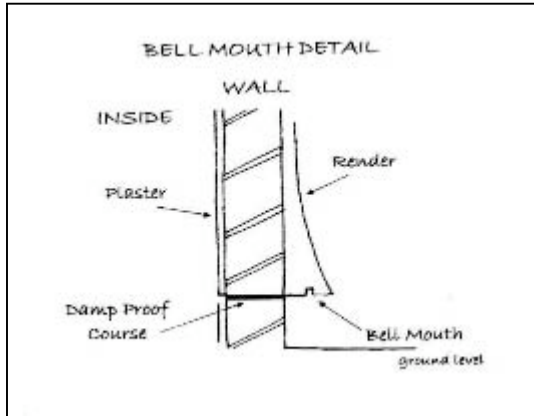
Here you can see the drip detail over the window.



Here you can see the bell-mouth detail to the base of the render



A view of the bell-mouth render where it meets the front render where there is not a bell-mouth.



We noted a gap to the right hand side of the property. We suggest a mastic seal is run along the gap to stop water getting underneath it.

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 pebbledash render and plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age timber lintels, concrete 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 pebbledash render and plasterwork has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the pebbledash render and plasterwork 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 or block work foundation, approximately half a metre deep.

The rear extension looks relatively new; it is therefore reasonable to expect Building Regulations approval to have been gained. Over the past thirty or forty years a duty performed by the Local Authority is to check that the property is built to Building Regulations standards. Bearing in mind these factors, and that there are no visible signs to the walls to indicate any problems, we believe your foundations to be sound.

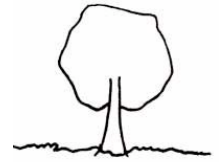
Building Insurance Policy

As this property has had work undertaken with regard to subsidence in the form of underpinning it is possible that this information has been made available to other insurers and will affect the insurance.

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.



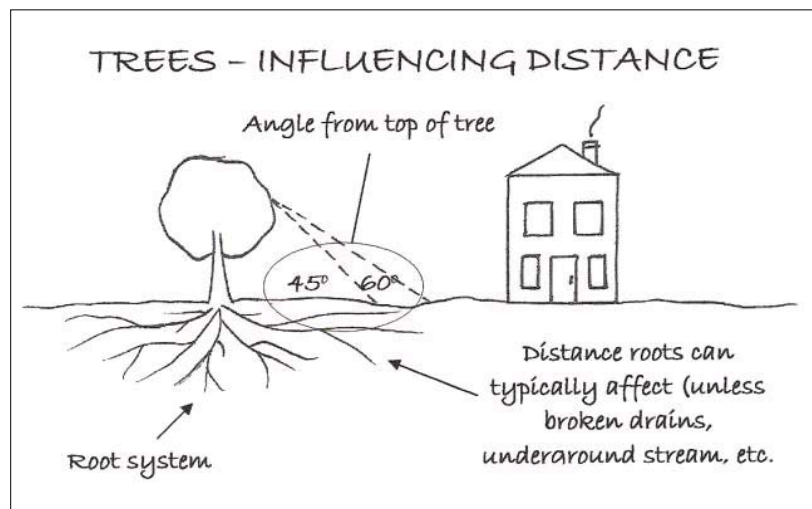
TREES

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

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

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.

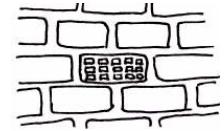
DAMP PROOF COURSE

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.

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, to the render we could not actually see a damp proof course. Your attention is drawn to the section of the report specifically dealing with dampness.

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

AIRBRICKS



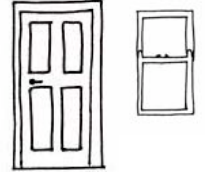
In properties with suspended floors you need to have an airflow beneath to stop deterioration. The air is allowed to pass under the property by the use of airbricks. Generally the rule of thumb is that airbricks are spaced every metre and a half approximately, but this depends upon the specific circumstances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

Airbricks have been incorporated in the external walls at low level. Sub-floor ventilation is essential in discouraging rot and on no account should the airbricks be obstructed. In this case, the airbricks are slightly low to the front and the side of the property therefore it will allow rain etc to get in them. It is literally running off the car parking area. Therefore some sort of action needs to be put in place in this area. We have simply seen bricks around them; please see our further comments in the Executive Summary.



An airbrick to the front of the property

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



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

We noted that the property has plastic fascias and soffits; we think that these may be what is known as over cladding with the original timber fascias and soffits beneath where rot normally occurs. In this instance we are simply not sure whether it is over cladding or not. Some things lead us to think that it is not such as the vents we can see in the soffits board and some things that lead us to think that it is such as the nails rusting and the general condition of it in some areas.

This is a system used by what we can only term ‘cowboy builders’ to look as if the fascias and soffits have been carried out in plastic. The plastic is usually stuck on and as there is no ventilation in this area then rot normally occurs.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see the Executive Summary.

It is now a requirement under the current Building Regulations to have ventilation within the roof space. This looks to have been carried out in this case with ventilation to the soffits, which is quite common. You should also ensure that there is no insulation internally blocking this ventilation. As we did not feel there to be a through draft on the day we did the survey.



A view of the fascia and soffits boards.

Windows and Doors

The windows to the main house are single glazed and those to the extension being double-glazed. 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 did not see any reason to be concerned. Nevertheless a guarantee should be obtained.

Enquiries should be made as to the existence of any transferable guarantees. Generally it is considered that double glazed units have a life of about ten years.

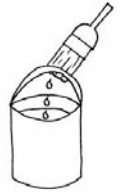


Some of the window beads are loose.



This for example is to the rear right hand bedroom window.

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.

It should be noted that decorative finishes to the external of the property (mainly the front area and also some paintwork to the render to the rear) look to have recently been renewed. These could be hiding defects, which may become apparent as the decorations start to age.

We would comment that when you do eventually have to renew the render to the front of the property, ideally it should not be painted, as this will avoid having to paint it in the future!

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.

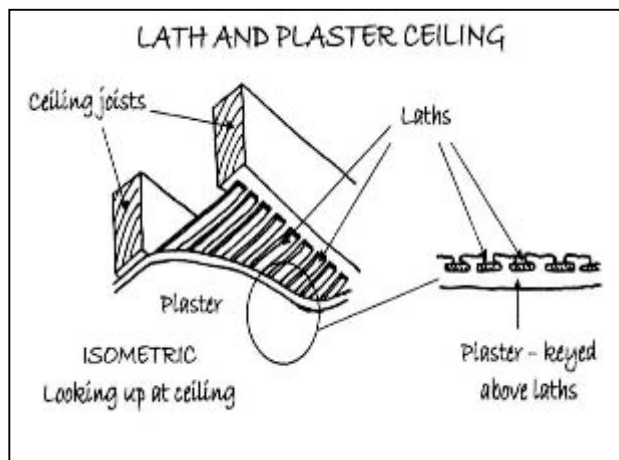
INTERNAL

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 original ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be lath and plaster. Although we do believe that some plasterboard may have been put over the original lath and plaster and the new extension we would expect to have been built with a plasterboard finish.



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.



Here you can see underneath the insulation the back of the lath and plaster

Internal Walls and Partitions

We have carried out a tap test to the internal walls (this is not rocket science, it is literally tapping the walls and listening for the sound made) and found them to be a mixture of solid walls and hollow/studwork walls. Generally the solid walls (likely to be brickwork or block work to dividing walls) will be the structural walls with the studwork walls being dividing walls. This more than likely means that the original construction has been altered.

Removal of Walls

On the ground floor a wall has been removed between the lounge and the dining room. In theory, this should be a structural wall although originally it will not have been designed as a structural wall.

If you recall, because a heavier tile has been used on the roof additional supports have had to be added to the roof structure, these take support off the central wall which has now made the central wall into a structural wall, this is why the ground floor wall should, in theory, have a lintel. Having said that the area looks to have stood the test of time (we have not opened up the structure) with no obvious bulging etc to it.

Another wall has been moved in the kitchen area; here you can see the lintel. This is what it should look like in the lounge dining room area.

Perimeter Walls

The perimeter wall plaster is in reasonable condition, we believe that some of this plaster has been replaced; we did a random tap test to the walls and there were no problems.

From our discussions with the owners we believe that re-plastering formed part of the refurbishment work carried out by the Local Authority.

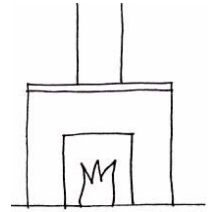
Plasterboard Defined

The usual name for Gypsum plasterboard, which is building board with a core of, aerated gypsum, usually enclosed between two sheets of heavy paper, used as a dry lining.

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.

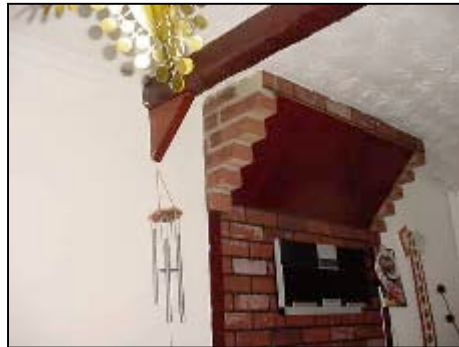
We cannot comment upon the condition of the structure hidden behind plaster, dry lining, other applied finishes, heavy furniture, fittings and kitchen units with fitted back panels.

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 on the left hand party wall, the rear chimneybreast has been removed, the front chimneybreast follows through from the roof level to the ground floor (all directions given as you face the front of the property). Where the left chimney has been removed the chimney now needs venting to stop dampness from occurring in it (we did check it and there was no dampness occurring) but nevertheless it should have vents in.



You can see where the chimney has been removed. You generally find that where the brickwork is stuck back gives reasonable support.

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.

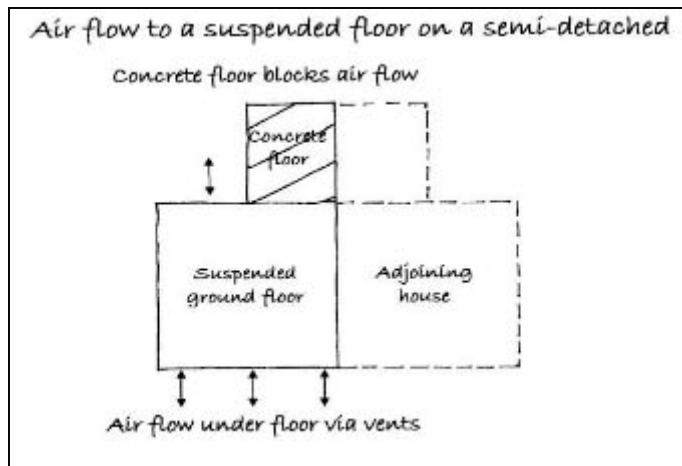
FLOORS



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

We assume that the ground floor construction was suspended timber floor.



Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

A suspended timber floor usually consists of timbers spanning the ground floor, supported on piers (usually brickwork), vented via airbricks within the walls.

Ground Floor Deflection

We are concerned with regard to the deflection to the ground floor as we feel this indicates dampness at some time has got into the timbers beneath it.

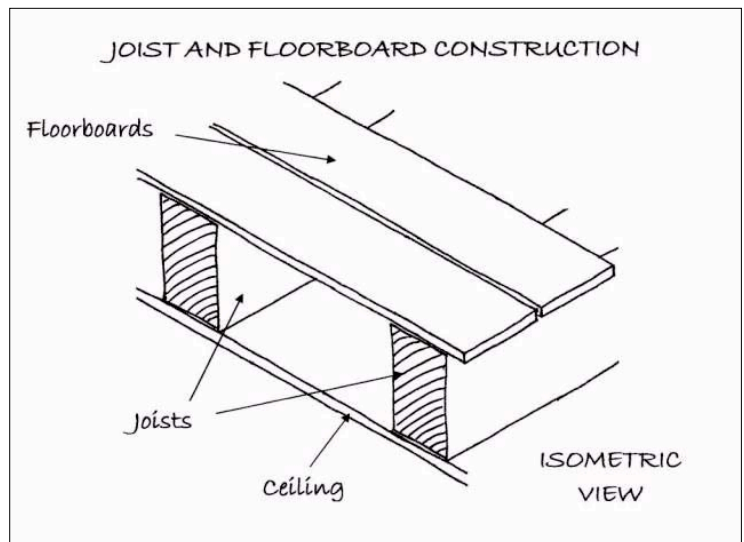
ACTION REQUIRED: Open up a section of the floor and inspect underneath the flooring. We recommend that you ask a damp proof contractor to carry this work out. Please see our comments within the Executive Summary.

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.



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. However, we would add that we were unable to get at the majority of the right hand sidewall where we think there may be some dampness due to the kitchen units and general stored items such as fridges underneath the stair area for example.

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 hollow core doors (sometimes referred to as egg box doors, as this is what the internal of them looks like); they have a stained finish and are slightly marked but nothing unusual

The property has some glazed panel doors internally. One of the current Building Regulations requires that a toughened glass be used to prevent any problems. These doors are in average condition.

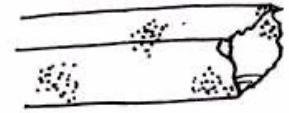
Staircase

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 it has suffered from some general day-to-day marks. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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



TIMBER DEFECTS

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

Dry Rot

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

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 underneath the floor as we have discussed earlier. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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 lots of 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 it 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 approximately 150mm.

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

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

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 in the entrance hall area. The fuse board looked modern.

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



Here we have carried out an earth check on the electrics. Here you can see the meter on the socket point.

Visible wiring and fittings are of a modern 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

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 right hand side of the property.

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

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



PLUMBING AND HEATING

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

Water Supply

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

Water Pressure

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

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

Cold Water Cistern

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

Hot Water Cylinder



The water cylinder is located at the top of the stairs and is factory lagged and we had a limited view of it.

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 property has a back boiler. This is a boiler that is concealed within the chimney; we have not viewed it, as it would mean removing the fireplace to gain access.

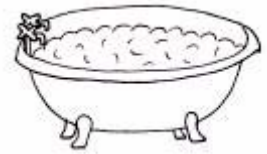
Our limited inspection of the hot water and central heating system revealed no evidence to suggest any serious defects but we would nevertheless recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

Soil and Vent Pipe

The soil and vent pipes are located to the side of the property, which looked in reasonable condition.

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

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



BATHROOM

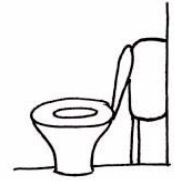
In this section we consider the overall condition of the sanitary fittings such as the bathroom, the kitchen, the utility room and the cloakroom.

The property has two bathrooms. On the ground floor this includes a shower room. You should always check the seals in these areas a month after you occupy them rather than them occupy the property.

The first floor bathroom has a three-piece bathroom suite, which looks in reasonable condition, subject to some day-to-day wear and tear, as one would expect.

To the ground floor the extractor fan is electronically linked to the light switch, which is a good way of ensuring that the air extractor is used, which is particularly important for internal rooms such as this one. We recommend that the extract fan is cleaned regularly.

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 half 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

We have identified two inspection chambers located close to the house and one to the end of the drive. We have duly lifted these to check to make sure they are not blocked.

Inspection Chamber One

This was a fairly shallow cement finish, which was free flowing at the time of our inspection.



Inspection chamber close to the house

Inspection Chamber Two

This looked to go into a back inlet gully; again, this was free flowing at the time of our inspection and was finished with concrete.



Inspection chamber at the end of the drive.

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

Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

In this age of property it is likely to have a combined drain, which feeds, into the main drains. During peak periods, such as the school rush there may be some delay in drainage.

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.

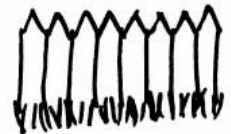
OUTSIDE AREAS

PARKING



There is parking on the road on a first come first serve basis and the front of the garden has been altered to allow off road parking.

EXTERNAL AREAS



Front Garden

This is partly tarmac and partly concrete.

Rear Garden

There is a patio area which steps down into the garden, which is mainly, level and laid to grass. The left hand boundary is usually the responsibility of the subject property of course this is subject to your deeds.

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

This was an elderly gentleman who advised us that there were no issues. This house is the semi-detached property directly linked to your house.

Neighbourhood and Neighbours

We would however draw your attention to the points raised during our discussion with regard to neighbours.



As discussed, your neighbours garden

Right Hand Neighbours

There was no one in at the time of our inspection.

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 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 but mild day for the time of year at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

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

NOT LOCAL

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

EMPTY PROPERTY

The property was empty at the time of our survey, we were therefore not able to carry out our usual question and answer session or have our questionnaire filled out.

INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited due to poor light and access to the roof and due to the sheer amount of stored items in the property sometimes limited us to what areas we could inspection. For example the testing for dampness was fairly limited.



On the right hand side, you can see that the storage within the roof was stacked several boxes high.

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.