

JOB REFERENCE: Hotel,/MH/MGM

# COMMERCIAL BUILDING SURVEY

OF

**A Two Storey Hotel situated in Southport**



FOR

**Mr Hotel**

Prepared by:

**GEM Associates Limited**

**INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS**

Marketing by:

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# **INTRODUCTION**

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

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 building's services. We conclude with the section for your Legal Advisor.

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

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

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

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

# **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” type face for clarity.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**



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**

A corner plot, two storey, freehold hotel situated in an area of mixed commercial and residential properties. There is car parking to the front of the property for guests and private parking to the side.

There is limited external space on the right hand side of the property that is accessed from the self contained flat that we have been advised has been rented (we were not advised whether this is on a formal or informal basis) for sixteen years or so at a cost of £100. Your Legal Adviser needs to check and confirm the situation (particularly to establish if it includes the fire exit area).

We believe the property to be of varying ages; the older parts being from the early Victorian era and there have been many alterations and amendments over the years. If the exact 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:*

1837	Victoria becomes Queen of Great Britain.
1840	The First Postage Stamp
1851	First World Exhibition held in London
1854	Florence Nightingale pioneers modern nursing in the Crimea
1859	Charles Darwin proposes the Theory of Evolution
1863	The Opening of London Underground
1878	Electric Street Lights are installed in London
1896	First modern Olympic Games (Athens)
1899-1902	Boer War between Britain and Boers in Southern Africa
1901	Queen Victoria Died

## EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



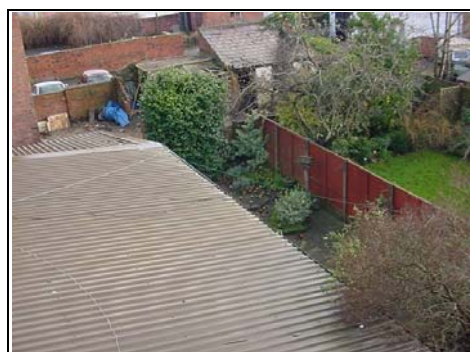
Limited right hand side view



Left Hand Side View



Area over the shop



View across the rear of the property  
taken from the fire exit looking  
over the billiards / snooker room

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# **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

## **In Summary**

### **Basement**

- Cellar

### **Ground Floor**

We are advised that there is:

#### **Front of House**

- Bar Area
- Breakfast Room Area
- Reception Area and associated Lounges
- Billiards / Snooker Room
- Ladies and Gents Toilets

#### **Back of House**

- Bar Servery Area
- Reception Servery Area
- Catering Kitchen
- Numerous associated storage rooms
- Staff Toilets
- Main staircase and two other staircases

#### **Private Living Accommodation**

- Two areas of private living accommodation

### **First Floor**

- We are advised that there are 23 en suite rooms on the first floor (we have only visited a random selection of these as noted within the report).
- There is also a shower room and kitchenette.
- One area of private living accommodation

### **Outside Areas**

Strip of land to the right hand side; we are advised that this is leased.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Adviser needs to confirm the exact boundaries and advise if they are different to those stated here.



# **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.

## **Sample Selection of Rooms**

### **Ground Floor**



Right Hand Side  
Bar Area



Right Hand Side  
Bar



Right Hand Side  
Side Lounge



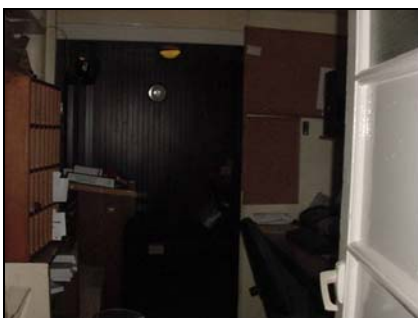
Left Hand Side  
Dining Area / Breakfast Area



Left Hand Side  
Dining Area / Breakfast Area



Left Hand Side  
Reception Area Lounge



Back of Reception Office



Snooker / Billiards Room



Catering Kitchen





Ground Floor Boiler Room



First Floor - Bedroom



First Floor - En Suite to  
Bedroom



First Floor - Bedroom



First Floor - Bedroom



First Floor - Bedroom

**Flat One – To Right Hand Side**



Lounge



Bathroom



Bedroom

# **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

## **MAIN BUILDING**

### **External**

Chimneys:	Four brick chimneys and one removed chimney
Roofs: Various high and low level roofs	Pitched slate roofs, flat roofs and a corrugated metal roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	A mixture of cast iron and plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	A mixture of cast iron and plastic
Walls:	Painted render, brickwork and painted brickwork (assumed)
External Joinery:	Mixture of sliding sash windows, timber windows, casement timber windows and double glazed plastic windows

### **Internal**

Ceilings:	A mixture of lath and plaster and plasterboard (assumed)
Walls	A mixture of studwork and solid (assumed)
Floors: Basement Floor:	Stone slab finish on earth (assumed)
Ground Floor:	Suspended timber floor (assumed)
First Floor:	Joist and Floorboards (assumed)

### **Services**

We have been advised by the owner that the property has a mains water supply, drainage, 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 business 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 plus photographs (a CD of all photos is included with this survey) during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if a comment has not been discussed that you are interested in/concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it. If we have not we will happily go back. Having said all of that, here are our comments:

Generally we found the property to be in below average condition for its age, type and style. The Executive Summary incorporates our overall recommendations. We have divided this 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!*

- The property has considerable potential, albeit that it is presently closed and therefore effectively will be like a new start up business in many respects.
- The bedrooms are en suite.
- The property has some on-site parking and private owner's parking.

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

## **The Bad**

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

### **1) Roof Level Work**

The property has both pitched and flat roofs.

#### **Pitched Roof**

The pitched roofs have been considerably repaired due, we believe, to nail sickness and dampness getting into the roof valleys; water was literally sitting in the valleys at the time of our inspection.

Nail sickness is the rusting of the nail fixing points. These have been secured in place by lead tingles.



Lead tingles to the valley gutter

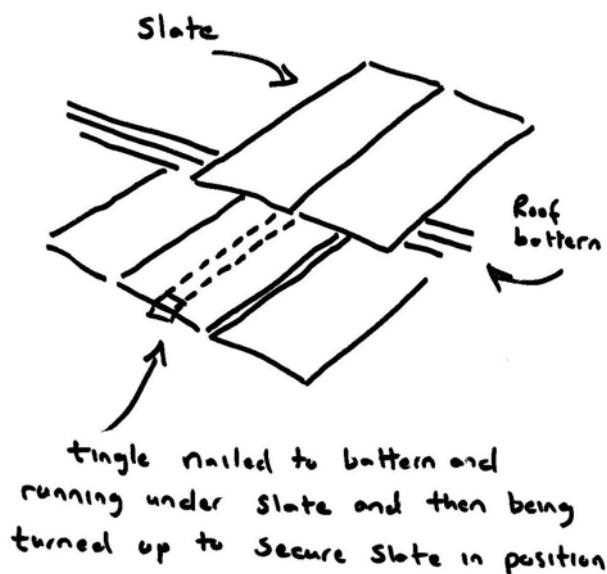
#### **Poor Roof Condition**

Generally if a roof has a dozen lead tingles we would say that it needs re-roofing. In this case we believe that this limit has been exceeded but we do believe the roofs have some life left in them and could be repaired and amended over the years. Ultimately it will need to be substantially repaired or replaced, depending upon how long it is left.

#### **Lead Tingles or Lead Slaps Defined**

These are strips of lead usually about 25mm wide which are used to secure slates where they have slipped.

#### **Roof tingle**



## View of the Pitched Roof from within the Roof Space

Whilst we did not have the benefit of being able to get into all the roof spaces we did manage to gain access to the front left hand side roof. Within this roof we could see that dampness was coming in from various places; this could be a combination of the roof leaking and the valley gutters leaking; if left unchecked this will lead to wet rot or possible dry rot. We would also add that we recommend that each of the roofs are not only made watertight but have ventilation added to them.



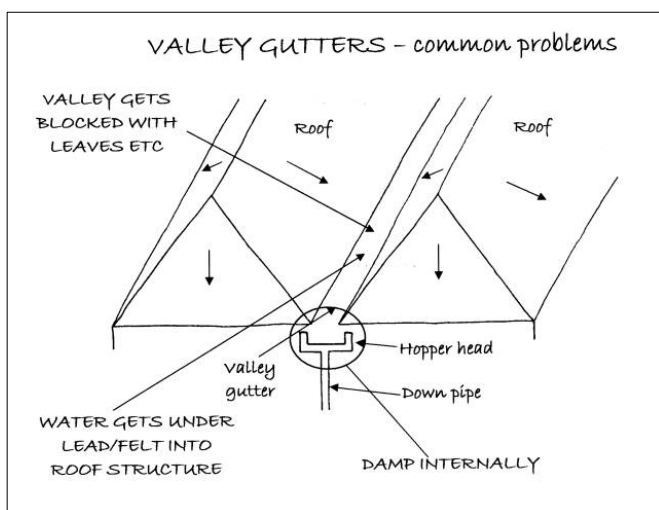
Dampness visible to the base of the roof timbers adjacent to the valley gutter.

## Valley Gutters

We believe a special mention should be given to the valley gutters. These are very problematic areas and are generally prone to leaking. In this case we could see from within that the valley gutters have leaked in the past.



Valley Gutter



Dampness coming in via the valley gutter



We spoke specifically to the owner about this during our question and answer session and he advised that the valleys had been lined. Unfortunately we did not feel that it was safe to walk along the valley gutters without crawler boards; the only way to check the condition underneath is to literally lift the slates. However, we feel there is enough evidence to take an educated.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repairs are needed to the pitched roof. They don't need to be carried out instantly but they certainly need to be carried out within the next three years, possibly sooner. We were quite surprised that we did not see much more dampness inside.

We recommend that each of the roofs are not only made watertight but have ventilation added to them.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would anticipated costs to be in the region of £5,000 - £10,000 over the next three years, with a further £5,000 - £10,000 over the following two to three years. Estimates required.

### Long Term Investment

If you are looking at the property as a long term investment it may be worth reconfiguring the roofs to resolve some of the problems with the valley gutters etc.

### Flat Roofs

The property has several flat roofs; we have divided these into three areas: the high level flat roofs to the main property, the flat roof adjacent to the shop and the flat roofs to the various bay windows to the property.

#### High Level Flat Roof

The basic problem with this flat roof is that it is flat and has minimal run off points.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend re-roofing in this area using a high performance felt (also known as elastomeric felt) with insulation beneath and cut to falls so that you can correct this problem and then forget it for many years.



High level flat roof



**ANTICIPATED COSTS:** In the region of £5,000 - £7,500 pounds. Estimates required.



### Flat Roof Adjacent to the Shop

Whilst we haven't had direct access to this roof we were able to view it from the rear of the property. We noted moss sitting on this roof, which indicates that it is a 'flat' flat roof without the rainwater being able to discharge from it.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We believe that patch repairs are required to this roof at present and ultimately we would recommend again that insulation cut to falls is added and a high performance felt is used.



Flat roof adjacent to shop

**ANTICIPATED COSTS:** We would estimate costs to be in the region of £10,000 - £15,000 for this area.

We would also recommend for this roof and the previous roof that lead flashings are used rather than the present felt flashings. Estimates should be obtained.

## Low Level Flat Roofs, for example over the Bay Windows

We could see that some water has been getting in via these smaller flat roofs, for example to the front left hand bay there are repairs indicating that there has been dampness coming in through this roof for some time.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** We often find with bay window roofs that it is a simple case of the downpipes needing repairing and patch repairing. Unfortunately we have not been able to see into these bay window roofs.

The underside of the left hand bay window (all directions given as you face the property from the front). You can see that dampness has been coming through in this area.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would suggest you set aside a sum of £3,000 for patch repairs. Estimates to be obtained.

## Metal Roof

We inspected within the roof space and noted that there is dampness getting in caused either by rain getting in or condensation. This is causing rot into the timber members and also rusting of the structural steels.



Dampness



Corrosion to the metal 'I' beam

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Typically dampness gets in on this type of roof via the bolt fixing points and the usual way of resolving this is to mastic around these bolt points, but great care needs to be taken as more damage than good can be caused in some instances.

We would also add that we would suspect that there would be condensation in this roof space when the property is occupied and we would therefore recommend that ventilation is added to the roof.

**ANTICIPATED COSTS:** In the region of £1,000; estimates required.

### **Access to Roofs not Accessed**

We have not had access to all of the roof spaces.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would strongly recommend that the roofs we have not accessed are opened up to inspect due to dangers of wet rot and possibly dry rot within them.

### **Gutters and Downpipes**

There is a mixture of gutters, from the original cast iron to a more modern plastic. The gutters look to be leaking as can be seen from the paint coming away from the walls. There are also signs of rust to the cast iron. The cast iron is suffering from a general lack of maintenance.



Paintwork coming away from the walls due to leaking gutters and downpipes



Leaking gutters and downpipes causing paint to come away from the walls



Rusting downpipe

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that the cast iron is maintained as in a well maintained condition it will last far longer than the plastic.

**ANTICIPATED COSTS:** We would expect costs in the region of £2,000 - £5,000. Estimates required.

## **High Level Work – Do we need Scaffolding?**

The roofs and the gutters and downpipes are both what we would term as 'high level work' which will probably require scaffolding. We think in this instance that the majority of the work may be able to be carried out without scaffolding, due to the accessibility of the roof (which is why we wanted to show you the roof and how relatively easy it was to get on to), although we would add that we feel you would need to put some handrails around the roof when work is being carried out.

Please see the Roof Covering Section and Gutters and Downpipes Section of this Report.

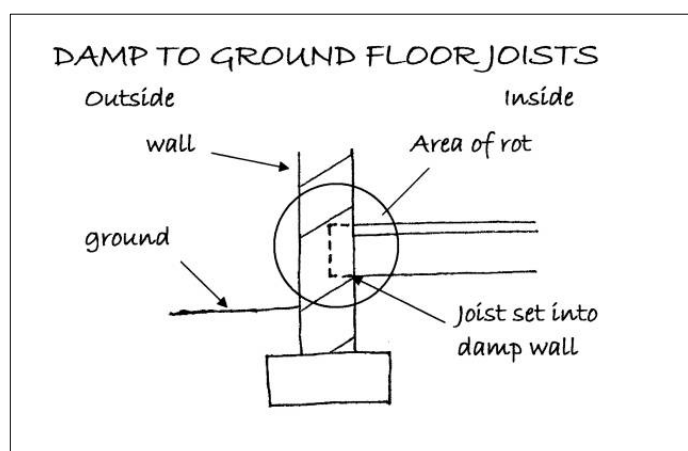
## **2) Movement in Property, Cracks in the Structure and Tie Bars / Bracing**

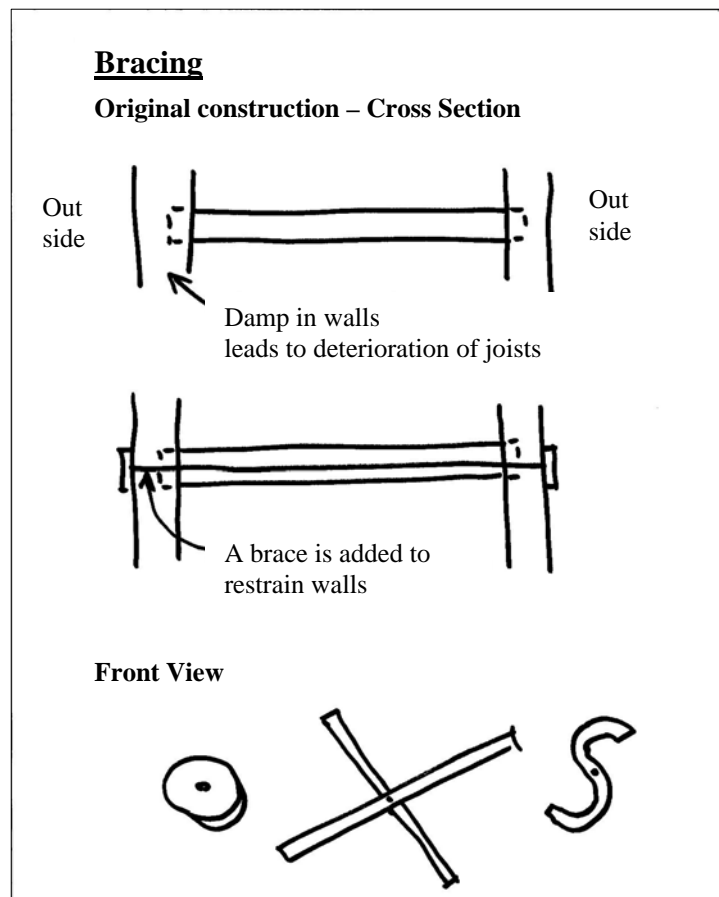
We could see that there has been some movement in the property from many years ago which has had tie bars / bracing added.



Tie bar / bracing

The tie bars / bracing indicate that the joist ends have rotted or given away at some point in time and the lateral restraint that they give has been reduced, the walls have bowed and it has been necessary to add in the tie bars.





### **Gable End Wall Adjacent to Flat Roofed Area**

We believe dampness is getting in through the parapet wall adjacent to the flat roofed area. This area is likely to have lateral dampness; this is dampness that comes through the wall.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend a coping stone is added to the parapet wall in the first instance to stop water from penetrating from the top of the wall. We also recommend that lead flashings are added.



Parapet wall above the deteriorating gable.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £1,000 - £2,000. Estimates required. Once the wall has dried out then redecoration will be required.

Please see the External Walls Section of this Report.



### 3) **Rising Damp**

Rising dampness has been identified in the property to the front and side walls. We believe this is due to the higher ground level.

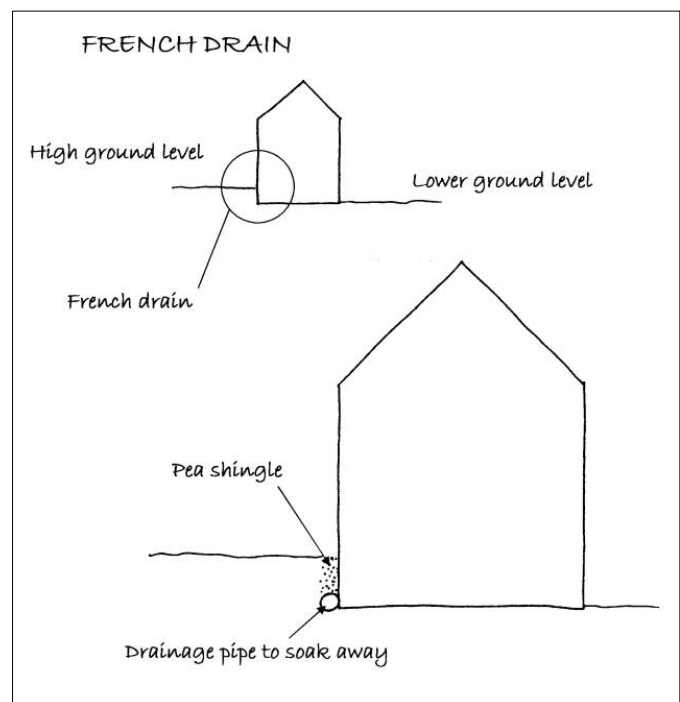
**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that a French drain is added, however is difficult to identify where the French drain would drain to. Ideally a soak-away should be added.



Finding rising damp to the front of the property

**ANTICIPATED COST:**

In the region of £3,000 - £5,000 for a French drain. A soak-away would increase the costs significantly, probably adding a further £3,000 to the costs, as the soak-away would have to be placed in the car park. Estimate required.



Soak-away Defined

A soak-away is literally a large hole that is filled with shingle which contains rainwater and allows it then to filter into the ground.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.



#### 4) Suspended Timber Floor and Rising Damp

A slight concern with the rising damp is that you have wooden timber floors at ground floor and first floor level that run across the property from side to side as you face the property from the front entrance. We believe, in years gone by, as we mentioned earlier, the timber joists at the first floor level have rotted and have had to have tie bars bracing – the floor joists would normally have given the bracing to the floor.

We feel that there is a good chance that further work will be required to the timbers. Within the cellar we took the adjoining photo. If you look carefully you can just see the lighter timbers; these are timbers to the bay window area which have been replaced. This is fairly common in properties of this age; it nevertheless does not stop it from being expensive!



**ACTION REQUIRED:** This is why it is essential to carry out the French gulley work we have mentioned and once this has been carried out we would recommend that the floor joists are checked carefully.

Please see the Floors Section and the Cellar Section of this Report.

#### 5) Repair and Redecoration of Windows and Render

##### Windows

We have tested a selection of the timber windows (at ground floor level) with a knife, by literally pushing it into them, and we found there to be 30% - 50% rot within them. We do believe these windows are 'saveable' and believe this is probably the most economic way to carry out repairs, although ultimately you may wish to replace some of the timber casement windows with a modern plastic equivalent or more appropriate period window.



Our knife going completely into one of the windows

## **Render**

The render looks to have been painted to sell. There was a paint blister in one area that we popped to reveal degraded paint beneath.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You will need to carry out a proper repair and redecoration of the windows and render.



Popped paint blister

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £5,000 - £10,000. This will be a recurring cost that you will need to carry out every three to five years. Estimates to be obtained.

Please see the External Walls Section, External Joinery Section and External Decorations Section of this Report.

## **6) Services**

### **Heating Test**

As discussed you have had a heating test carried out on the gas fired central heating system, so we have limited our view in this area.

We would just like to advise that we did ask for the heating to be turned on for ten minutes or so and we then checked to see that they had warmed up and there was some heat present. We trust that your check and inspection has ensured that they do heat fully. We would add that we noted parts of the property are heated with electric heaters.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Generally we find that the whole system in this type of property would benefit from being cleared out / drained down and a rust inhibitor added and replacement of the valves with thermostatic radiator valves together, in this case, with replacing some of the rusting radiators. We would also recommend it would be beneficial and more efficient if you used double panelled convection radiators as are common today; although this is, of course, dependent upon the report that you have had carried out and the boilers being man enough to heat the property.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We trust your specialist will advise you on this matter.

## Electrics

Originally the owner advised that the electrics had been tested. However, during our question and answer session we asked further detailed questions and ultimately discovered that what it had was a PAT test, which is a Portable Appliance Test rather than a test of the hardwired electric services, i.e. the ones that power the lights and power points etc.



One of the four up to date fuse boards

Whilst we don't carry out an Institute of Electrical Engineers test and report (and we would recommend this is carried out, making sure the electrician is NICEIC or similar approved) we have carried out a basic visual check and earth check and we were pleased to see from our inspection of the five fuse boards that four of them were relatively new and would estimate that they were probably replaced in the mid 1990s to early 2000s.

The fifth fuse board located in the cellar is dated, probably from the 1960s and needs replacing.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As at our discussion, we recommend a full Institute of Electrical Engineers test by an NICEIC (or similar) approved electrical contractor. We spoke to you about the need for the electrical contractor to also offer commonsense advice.



Dated 1960s fuse board in the cellar (the fuse board is to the centre of the photo).

We recommend that the dated fuse board in the cellar be replaced.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A full estimate should be offered on completion of the inspection and test.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

## 7) Main Drains

We have been unable to identify where the drainage runs are.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that a close circuit TV camera report is carried out on the drainage.

Please see the Main Drains Section of this report.

## 8) Fire Alarm System

We feel that we are not expert enough in this area to offer full advice with regard to a fire alarm and emergency exit system; however we would make broad comments as follows:

### 1. Fire extinguishers need appropriate signage and location

Generally signage was in place where we found the fire extinguishers, although we would comment that the extinguishers do need to be checked and filled, which can be a costly exercise. We spoke to the owner about this during our question and answer session and he advised that they needed to be checked.



Old style fire exit signs are still in place.

### 2. The fire exits do need to meet the European Standards

We noted that some illuminated fire exit signs still had the wording rather than the pictorial fire exit definition that is now used. The aim of an illuminated sign is to give a safe egress should there be a fire or an emergency.

### 3. Fire Doors

All the doors to rooms should be fire doors. We noted that some have been amended and altered over the years to make them into fire doors. It was typically the case that asbestos would be added to them and this may have been the case in this instance.

The owner should have a record of any asbestos within the building. We have spoken to them about this and they advised that there is no asbestos, but equally that they had not had a test and inspection carried out. We did note what looked to be an asbestos soil and vent pipe, which should be removed. We believe that legally a test and inspection should have been carried out.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** A full asbestos test will be needed. We believe that most insurance companies require this.

**ANTICIPATED COSTS:** This is specialist work, so you do need to obtain quotes, but we would budget a cost of £1,000 for the inspection and test.

With regard to asbestos we have not carried out an asbestos test and report, which is the only way to establish if there is asbestos throughout the property. We are not asbestos surveyors.

Please see the Gutters and Downpipes Section and the Other Matters Section of this Report.

## 9) **Disability Discrimination Act 1995, amended in 2005**

There is now a requirement on public buildings to make them accessible for the disabled / less able. This can include anything from having a general policy on what you would do should a disabled person wish to stay at the property; which, in your particular case with this building and the various steps and ups and downs in it, may be very difficult.

Copies of the Disabled Discrimination Acts are available from the following website:

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/disabledpeople/rightsandobligations/disabilityrights/dg\\_4001068](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/disabledpeople/rightsandobligations/disabilityrights/dg_4001068).

But we quote from the DDA 1995 Section 21:

*Where a physical feature (for example, one arising from the design or construction of a building or the approach or access to premises) makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled persons to make use of such a service, it is the duty of the provider of that service to take*

*such steps as it is reasonable, in all the circumstances of the case, for him to have to take in order to —*

*(a) remove the feature;*

*(b) alter it so that it no longer has that effect;*

*(c) provide a reasonable means of avoiding the feature; or*

*(d) provide a reasonable alternative method of making the service in question available to disabled persons.*

We have heard it said that it is how the term ‘reasonable’ is interpreted that is a very important part of this Act. From what we have seen in your particular case it will be very expensive to carry out alterations and amendments as these would require everything from ramp access to the entrance, to the addition of ramps internally to gain access to amended toilet facilities, to have some sort of lift provision on the stairs and then to adapt a room. Therefore we recommend you take further advice about exactly what provisions are required.

We would comment that it may well be worth converting one of the ground floor private living accommodation rooms to a room for the disabled / less able should the opportunity arise.

Please see the Other Matters Section of this Report.

## **The Ugly**

*We normally put here things that we feel will be difficult to resolve and will need serious consideration.*

Whilst there is no one specific item in the ‘ugly’ section we would say that there are more than an average number of items in the ‘bad’ section which would put many people off. In our opinion it very much depends upon what price you are buying the property at as we feel these issues could be dealt with providing the money is available. We are very aware that cash flow is important when you start a new business.



## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

### **Maintenance**

We would recommend that you have a maintenance man for general day-to-day work who could be employed on a part time weekly basis. For emergency work and larger jobs you should have a contractor that you use regularly so that they get to know the property; we also feel that there is nothing better than an active interest in this sort of work when you first start. It should always be remembered that before you carry out any refurbishment you should ensure that that part of the property is watertight!

### **Purchase Price**

We have not been asked to comment upon the purchase price and we have not seen any of the books or accounts etc. In today's market you need to be absolutely certain that you are buying at the right price.

### **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 £75 and £100 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

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 with our thoughts a few days after the initial survey. We would add the following:-

As discussed it is very important that this property is purchased at the correct price. We feel that our estimates of costs give a good guide and this is the amount that you should be looking to negotiate off the true price of the property. We do feel that you should take your time and gather as much information as possible as the more information you can gather before purchasing, and the associated costs in relation to this, the less risky the venture. We therefore recommend that you slow the entire process down and obtain all the various information and advice that we have recommended and that we have spoken about.

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

We would ask that you read the Report 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**

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.

## **COMMERCIAL AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?**

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

## **TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS**

This report is being carried out under our terms of engagement for Commercial 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 business purchase. If you require any further information please telephone us.

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

The following part of the report has been written for the layperson and therefore includes introductory sections, definitions and photographs. We trust this will aid your understanding of the survey.



## **EXTERNAL**

### **CHIMNEY STACKS, PARAPET WALLS AND ROOF WINDOWS**

#### **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.*

This property has five chimneys; one to the front, two to the left hand side, one hidden chimney and one removed chimney.

#### **Chimney One – Located to the Front**

This is a substantial brick chimney finished with two metal cowls. We also noted a vent pipe part of the way up the brick chimney, indicating possibly that one section has been capped. There is a lead flashing to the base.

Please note that during our question and answer session with the owner he advised that this chimney was used last winter.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** The chimney looks to have been repointed. We suggest that a close inspection is carried out when the valley gutters are attended to in a year or so. There is nothing immediately urgent.

#### **Chimney Two – Front Left Hand Side Chimney**

This is a brick chimney with a single chimney pot and a lead flashing. This chimney is in average condition.



Located to the left hand side

### **Chimney Three – Located to the Far Left Hand Side**

This chimney is brick built with two chimney pots and a lead flashing. The chimney is in need of some minor repointing.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repoint within the next two years.

**ANTICIPATED COSTS:** In the region of £250 - £500, assuming this is accessible without scaffolding.



### **Chimney Four – Hidden Chimney**

This chimney is brick built and has been capped. There is a very awkward detail where the chimney meets the valley gutter and a roof window. Although the base has a lead flashing we do believe that dampness is getting in in this area (we have not had access to this roof void).



### **Chimney Five – Removed Chimney on the Right Hand Side**

Unfortunately it was not possible to see this chimney externally; however we could see it internally. There should be Building Regulation approval for a chimney to be altered in this manner.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your solicitor to contact the Local Authority to check and confirm whether approval was given.





## Summary

In summary, the chimneys are in average condition to slightly below average condition needing some repointing. The hidden chimney (Chimney Four) is the most susceptible to problems as we believe dampness is coming in around the base of it. We have mentioned in the Executive Summary that a reconfiguration of the roof may be the only way to solve the roof problems. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

### Capping Defined

Capping is a practice used when chimneys are no longer in use to prevent moisture from entering the structure in the form of rainwater via the chimney. This usually involves the closing of the chimney with a tile or slab positioned across. It should include vents to allow air circulation.

### 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.

## Parapet Walls

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

The property has several hidden parapet walls to the centre of the property and adjacent to the flat roof, which in itself is adjacent to the antique shop.

The parapet walls are allowing dampness to seep into the property, which is a very difficult problem to solve.

The sort of damage this dampness causes is particularly visible to the gable end on the left hand side where the paint and the render is being affected by it. The wall is literally saturated by dampness coming in via the parapet wall and possibly now via the deteriorating render.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Initially we would suggest you put coping stones across the entirety of the parapet walls, ideally removing two courses of brick and adding a damp proof course. Also all the flashings should be replaced with lead.

## **Roof Windows**

### **Older Style Roof Windws**

There are two older style roof windows, as can be seen in the adjoining photo. These are flush with the pitch of the roof. Typically these type of roof windows have a lead surround, as looks to be the case in this instance



Older style roof windows

It seems inevitable with this type of roof window that leaks will occur sooner or later. If this doesn't occur then they seem prone to condensation. Keep a cloth handy!

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally in the long term we would recommend that these roof windows are replaced with a purpose made roof window.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £1,000 - £2,000 including fitting. Estimates required.

### **Purpose Made Roof Windows**

There is also a purpose made roof window on the ridge of the roof adjacent to two valley gutters. These are typically made in timber and then have lead applied to them. In this case from the detail it looks to be lead.



We did not think it would be safe for us to access this roof window via the valley gutter.

Incidentally you can the damage and deterioration to the slate roof on the right hand side and a number of tingles. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary for further information on this.

**ACTION REQUIRED AND ANTICIPATED COSTS:** We suspect this roof window is leaking although we have not been able to access it closely either externally or internally. We would however recommend the provision of £2,000 - £4,000 to carry out associated repairs, but the problem really is the configuration of the roof. Please see our further comments in the Roof Covering Section.

Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the chimney stacks, parapet walls and roof windows 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 four areas, the main pitched roof, the main high level flat roofs, the smaller flat roofs and the metal roofs.

## **Main Pitched Roofs**

The main pitched roofs are clad with a quarried slate. The slates sit fairly true however there are many tiles that have been displaced or cracked. Considering the property's age the roof is in below average condition and needs a general overhaul.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary regarding the lead tingles.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We believe there is probably about a week's work of repairing and replacing slates. The big difficulty is that sometimes more damage can be caused than good as slates are broken as the roof is accessed to carry out other work.

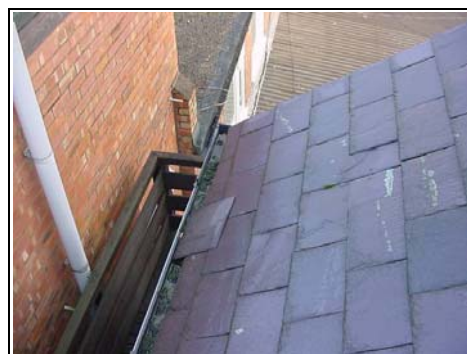
The big issue with this roof is the valley gutters. Please see our comments below.



Main Roof



Close up of lead tingles to roof



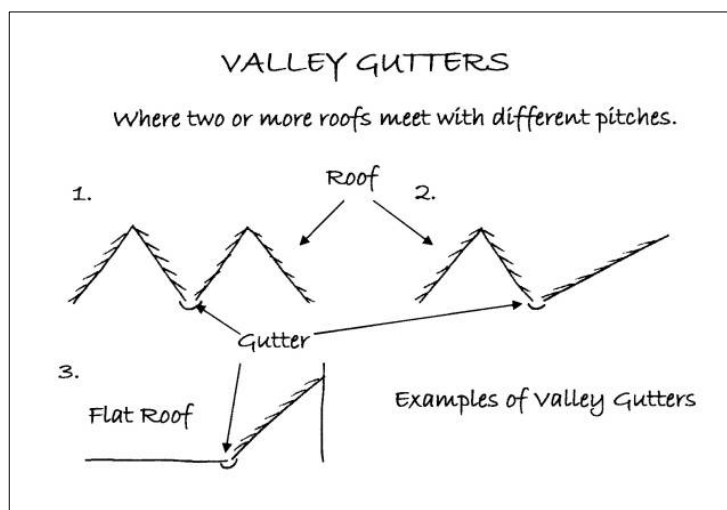
Close up showing slipped slate



## Valley Gutters

Valley gutters occur where two roofs join and these are generally considered weak areas. In this case the valley gutters are a terrible detail and water is literally sitting in them.

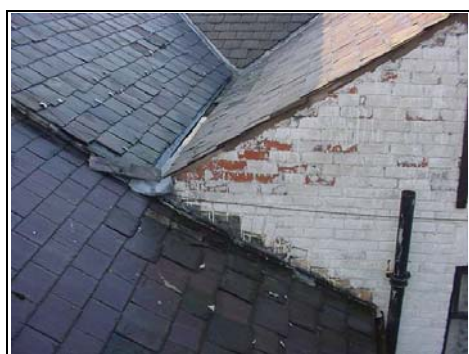
Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



We would add that we had a limited view of the valley gutters but we could see water was sitting in them. This may simply be vegetation which can be cleared but it looks to be a more long term problem as we could see dampness within the roof of the one high level pitched roof that we could access (on the front left hand side).



Here we're looking at the base of the pitched roof where it meets the valley gutter and you can see the dampness.

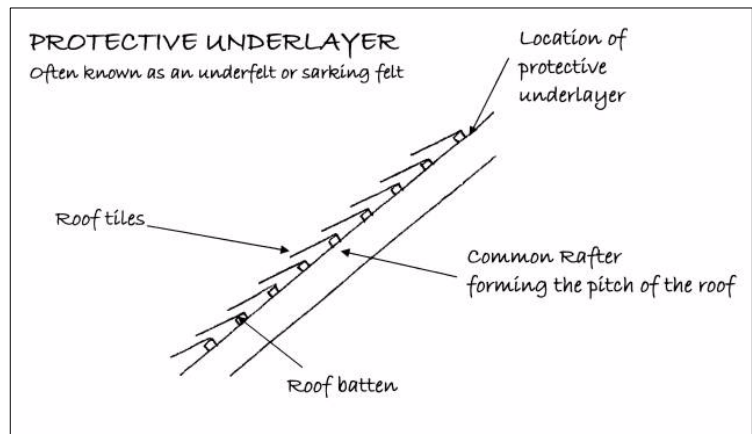


We would comment that valley gutters will leak unless regularly maintained. Please see our further comments in the Executive Summary.



## **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.*



### **Front Left Hand Roof**

In the front left hand roof when we inspected the loft space we found a Hessian based Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s. We generally found it to be in average condition, it's damaged in a few more places than we normally find.



This photo shows the common rafters (the ones that form the pitch of the roof) and the dark area between is the underlayer.

## **Main High Level 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 can 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.*

There are various flat roofs at high level; they are felt finished and the flashing is felt and lead. We much prefer lead as it is much more pliable.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that the entirety of the flat roofs are replaced within the next five years with an insulation cut to falls and a high performance mineral felt, such as elastomeric felt, then you can literally forget about them. Other than this we would expect day to day maintenance over the next few years to be up to a few thousand pounds. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Left hand side flat roof



As an aside, the latest Building Regulations require flat roofs to be ventilated. Building Regulations are not retrospective but the reason for the requirement is to make sure that any moisture that enters the roof construction is dispelled by way of ventilation. We would suggest that if the opportunity arises ventilation should be provided. This will stop the possibility of fungal growth above the ceiling in the flat roof area.

Also it could not be established if there is insulation within the roof or a vapour barrier, without the vapour barrier and combined with inadequate ventilation there will be an increase in the risk of wet or dry rot.

### Flat Roof Adjacent to Shop

Although we did not physically get on this roof we could see from the rear fire escape that moss is sitting on the roof which indicates that the roof is too flat. We would add an insulation cut to falls and a lead flashing around. The wall that cannot be seen on the photo is the rendered wall that has been affected by the dampness coming from the parapet wall. It is particularly important that this area is made watertight.



Flat roof adjacent to shop

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

### **Smaller Flat Roofs, for example above the Bay Windows**

There are various smaller flat roofs that are around the property, for example over the bay windows. There look to have been leaks coming through in these areas in the past which are usually due leakages in the downpipes. We note that the bay window has a smaller downpipe than would commonly be used today, it looks to be two inches (50mm) and typically four inches (100mm) is used today.



Bay Window Flat Roof

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## Metal Roof

Whilst the metal roof looks in reasonable condition externally when we inspected within the roof space we noted that there is dampness getting in. This can either be from rain or condensation. As the property has been unoccupied for some time we suspect it is likely to be rain damage. This is causing rot into the timber members and also rusting of the structural steels.

As we would expect there was no underlayer in this roof.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Metal roof



Dampness coming in

Dampness

Corrosion to the metal 'I' beam

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Mastic around the bolt vexing points to stop the dampness getting in and add ventilation to the roof to stop condensation.

## Central Open Area

When we were on the main roof we noted that there is a central open area that has various roofs in. It looks to have suffered in the past from leaking gutters.



Central vaulted area

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that a wide gutter is added (often known as a deep flow gutter) as this area really does need a permanent solution as any problems will be unseen until major problems occur. It would also be worth repairing or replacing the cast iron downpipe.



Downpipe

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 from upper floor windows and/or ground level.

Unfortunately we were only able to see approximately 60 percent of the main pitched roofs and the flat roofs, and we have not had access to some of them, from ground level via our ladder or via any other vantage point that we managed to gain. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see; however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

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



## **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.*

We were only able to access two of the pitched roofs. We believe that the front roof is accessible but this is via a glass panel which we could not get open as it had been painted / fixed shut over the years. The flat roofs were not accessible which is usually the case.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We feel that some of the other pitched roofs would need accesses forming in them, which we would recommend is carried out.

Given the condition of the flat roofs we would recommend that sections are opened up to check the roof structures and the roof decking.

### **Main Front Left Hand Roof**

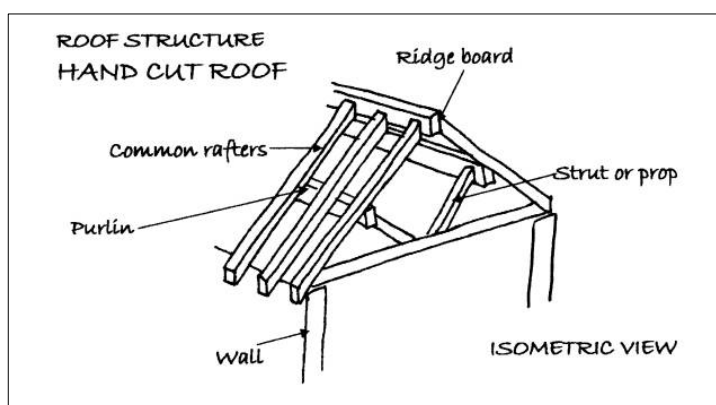
#### **Roof Access**

The main front left hand roof is accessed via the loft hatch located in one of the en suite bathrooms. 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 has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly.



## Roof Structure

Expect dampness in this roof. This type of roof structure has what is known as a cut timber roof, which is a roof that 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, with the exception of the dampness.



## Roof Timbers

We found the roof timbers generally in below average condition due to the dampness (and we could only see one side of one of the valley gutters, so we would anticipate it to be in a bad condition in the other roofs if we could have gained access). We have inspected this roof structure for:



Dampness was found

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

Our examination is limited by the general configuration of the roof, as mentioned what we could see was generally found to be in below average condition considering its age. We found dampness due to the valley gutter. Please see our other comments on this in the Executive Summary and the Roof Coverings Section.

It is feasible that there are additional problems in the roof that are hidden.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The valley gutters need to be made watertight and possibly alterations to be carried out to the roof configuration. We would also recommend adding ventilation and insulation to the roof space.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

### **Water Tanks**

The water tanks have not been found, it is possible that they may be in some of the other roofs.

### **Ventilation**

We recommend that ventilation be added to the roof space to help reduce the condensation and general dampness.

### **Insulation**

None was found in this roof. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary and 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 an insufficient quantity was seen to comment upon, however what we could see we noted had a green and yellow earth wire which means that this has been added and altered in the last 20-30 years.

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

## **Roof Void Below Metal Roof**

Please see our earlier comments in the Executive Summary and the Roof Coverings and Underlayer Section.



Looking into the roof void below  
the metal 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.*

## Gutters and Downpipes

The property has a mixture of the original cast iron gutters and downpipes and the more modern replacement plastic gutters and downpipes. What we saw of the gutters and downpipes are in a poor condition and therefore they are causing deterioration to the property.



Plastic gutter



Likely to have been caused by leaking  
gutters and downpipes

**ACTION REQUIRED:** From what we saw of the gutters and downpipes we believe they are leaking, as you can see by the above photos. Generally it is worth looking at replacing with a wide or deep flow guttering whilst the roof work is being carried out; also many of the gutters need realigning. Please see comments in the Executive Summary.

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.



## **Soil and Vent Pipe**

There are a mixture of soil and vent pipes from cast iron to asbestos to plastic. They appear to be satisfactory where a surface inspection is possible, although the cast iron ones are rusting.

The only asbestos one should be removed.

The plastic ones have missing top sections which should project approximately one meter above the roof level to disperse smells etc.

You also have a very long soil and vent pipe run to the left hand side of the property.



Plastic gutter and downpipe and cast iron soil and vent pipe and an asbestos soil and vent pipe



Soil and vent pipe disappearing through the trees

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

# 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.*

There are various wall finishes to this property including, to the majority of it, a painted render finish; there are sections of brickwork and also sections of painted brickwork, these are predominantly to the sides and rear of the property.

## Render

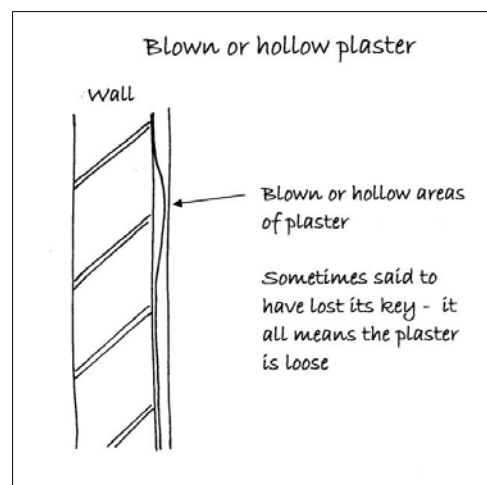
The walls to this property are mainly finished in a smooth faced painted render. We have carried out a tap test to the render at low level (literally hitting the render with the back of a hammer) to try to establish if there are any hollow areas. We have found some areas but this is average for this age of property.



The areas that we weren't able to check with a tap test were at high level; we noted to the front right hand side that there were undulations in the render which indicate that it has either been repaired or it is blown or blistered.

### Blown Plaster Defined

This is where the plaster has come away from its base leaving a hollow area.



It is inevitable with this age of render that there will be repairs and we would expect in the region of a few hundred to a thousand pounds a year, depending upon whether the property has been redecorated or 'painted to sell', as we would term it; this is literally hiding problems. It is always very difficult for a surveyor to comment as a good painter can hide a multitude of problems.



Please see our comments in the Executive Summary and External Decorations section.



Relatively modern render

### **Deterioration to Gable End Caused by Parapet Wall?**

Please see our earlier comments about dampness getting in through the parapet wall which then appears to be seeping down into the painted render section. This, as we have mentioned, can be very difficult to resolve and, for example, the drying out period can take a while; generally it's considered a month per inch (2.5cm) from the time the dampness stops getting in for it to dry out.

### **Tie Bars / Bracing**

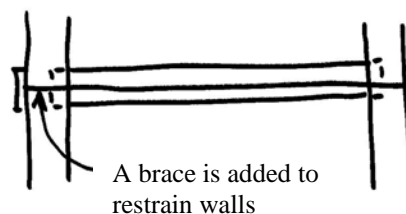
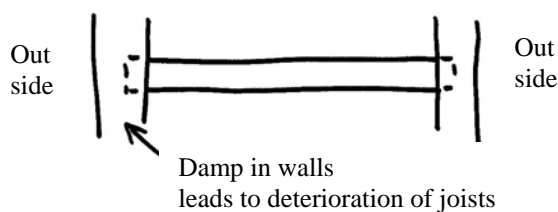
The property has tie bars; these have been added to resist movement in the structure. Originally the floor joist rafters running from side to side would have added lateral restraint. These are usually embedded timbers, which have deteriorated over the years.



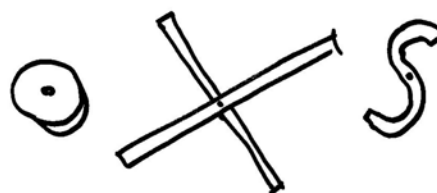
Please see our comments in the Executive Summary and the Floors Section.

#### **Bracing**

##### **Original construction – Cross Section**



##### **Front View**



## **Movement**

Over the years the property has had movement. We believe part of this is what is known as 'differential movement'; this is caused where different structures and different characteristics are added, for example the various extensions and alterations that have been added over the years causing movement. From a one off inspection we are unable to establish if this is progressive (still moving), however we could not see any fresh cracking. We believe the cracking that is present is due to dampness within the structure.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to fill all cracks etc and advise us of any movement that you feel is occurring.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary

## **Large Timber Lintel over Windows**

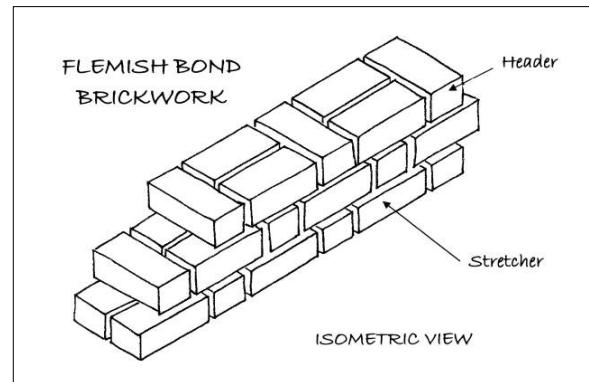
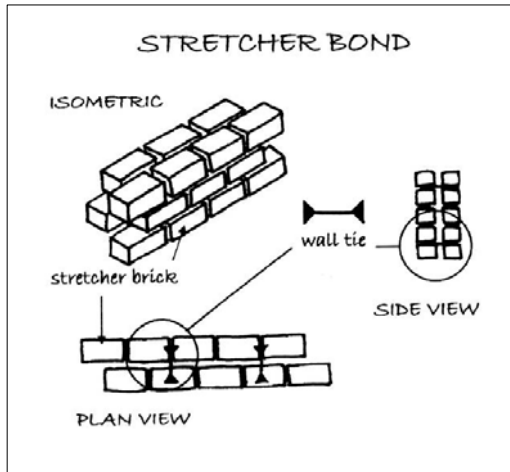
In this age of property, particularly the older part of the property, bonding timbers would have been used. These are timbers built into the structure which can rot over the years. Also they will have used large timber lintels over the bay windows which also can rot, particularly as in this case we have seen that some of the bay windows have leaked over the years, which will cause deterioration to the lintels.



When the render is being repaired or redecorated we suggest that you take a section of the render out and check the condition of the lintel beneath. Replacement, such as the lintels, can be very expensive.

## **Brickwork**

The brickwork that we have noted is predominantly stretcher bond, which is much more modern than we would have expected. We were expecting to see Flemish bond brickwork.



We did note that there has been some repointing to the brickwork in a cement mortar. This is fairly common and is often used where lateral dampness (dampness coming through the wall) has been caused.



We also noted areas where the brickwork has been painted and the paint has flaked off; we believe this relates to leaks from the gutters and downpipes. It is slightly unusual to paint modern brickwork as brickwork is normally painted to stop dampness getting through, which doesn't generally occur on modern brickwork.



Paint coming off the wall due to leaking gutters and downpipes

We feel it is possibly a case of the owner treating the 'effect', i.e. the dampness coming through the walls, rather than the 'cause', i.e. the leaking gutters. As with many of these problems you have to try various remedies before you get a solution, and in older properties you never get a perfect solution.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary and the Gutters and Downpipes Section.



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 painted render, painted brickwork, brickwork and plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age timber lintels, concrete lintels, rubbed brick lintels or 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 painted render, painted brickwork, brickwork and plasterwork has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the painted render, painted brickwork, brickwork 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.*

Given the age of the original property, we would expect to find a shallow stepped brick foundation possibly with a bedding of lime mortar to this area with the exception of course of the cellar area where the foundations will be much deeper.

Without excavating a trial pit we are unable to confirm the exact nature of the subsoil or the quality of the foundations. The foundations have obviously stood the test of time; it is such things as leaking drains that can be a problem.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary and Main Drains Section about us being unable to identify where the drainage runs are.

### **Building Insurance Policy**

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

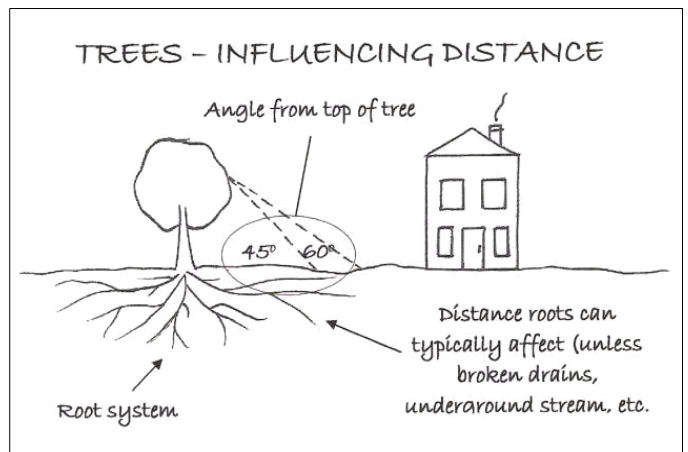
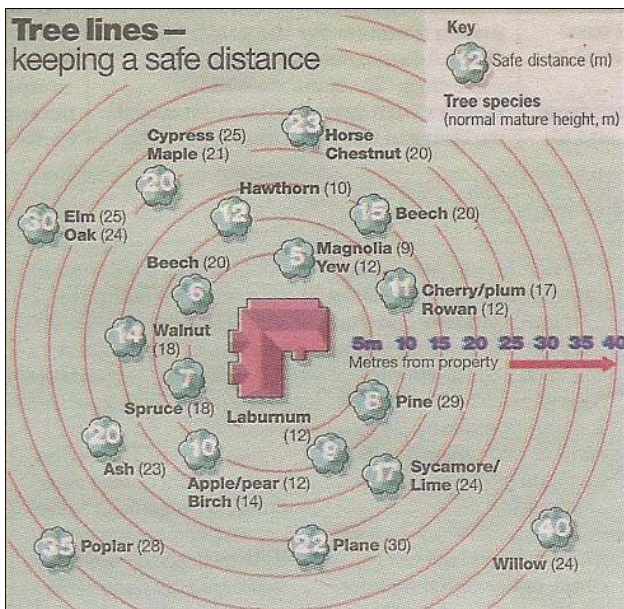
Finally, we have not excavated the foundations but we have drawn conclusions from our inspection and our general knowledge of this type, age and style of property.

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

# TREES

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

There are some trees in close proximity of the property, particularly on the left hand side. It should be remembered that trees need professional maintenance on a regular basis.



## Influencing Distance Defined

This is the distance in which a tree may be able to cause damage to the subject property. It is not quite as simple as our sketch; it depends on the tree, its maturity, the soil type etc., etc.

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 years 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.

Unfortunately we could not see a damp proof course to the property because of the render. To the older parts of the property we would not expect a damp proof course to be present; to the newer parts (to the rear) we would expect a damp proof course to be present. We did find some dampness to the front and side of the property where it had been bridged by the higher ground level and we suspect that similar problems will occur to the right hand side, although we have had difficulty viewing this section.

Your attention is drawn to the Executive Summary and the Dampness Section of the report.

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.

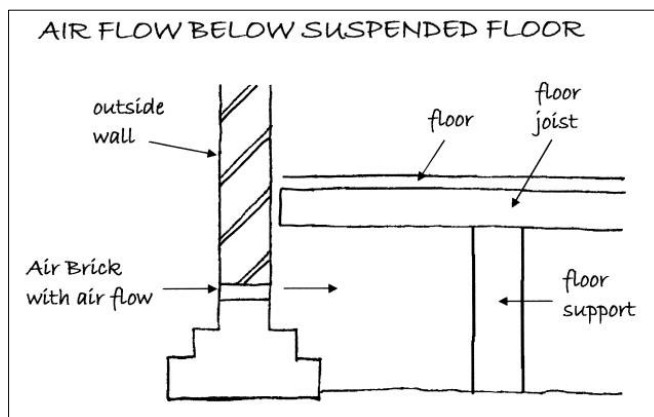
# AIRBRICKS

*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.*

We noted air bricks to the left hand side of the property and there should also be airbricks to the right hand side of the property which we have not been able to view. You need to check and ensure that there are airbricks to the right hand side and that both sets of airbricks have a clear air flow. The aim of the airbricks is to help reduce dampness.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Airbricks need to be on the left and right hand side to give a clear flow of air. From our inspection there have been some timbers replaced over the years which indicates that dampness does cause problems; these were around the bay window area.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary and the Floors Section of this report.



## Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

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

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, soffits and bargeboards, windows and doors, and any detailing such as brick corbelling etc.*

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

### **Fascias and Soffits**

The property has painted timber fascias and soffits; some were in surprisingly good condition and some had paint peeling, as we would expect. No doubt caused by deteriorating or leaking gutters.



Fascias and soffits to the front in relatively good condition



Fascias and soffits in below average condition with peeling paint

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Redecorate / Repair fascias and soffits boards once the gutters and downpipes have been made good.

### **Windows and Doors**

The property has a mixture of painted timber windows, which are single glazed; these are divided between the large sliding sash windows to the front and front side of the property and then more modern timber casement windows, probably from the 1970s. As is always the case these timber windows rot very quickly and whilst they are 'saveable' it may not be the most economic way to proceed.





**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend you look at replacing with double glazed plastic windows or better quality timber windows. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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.*

### **Painted Render**

We would comment that the redecoration of the render when it is required will be either fairly expensive or take up several of your weekends and you should not under estimate re-decorating render.

### **Fascias and Soffits**

The condition of the fascias and soffits indicate that there are leaks to the gutters and downpipes. Some repair and repainting will be necessary, in the next few years. If required the access scaffold can be very costly.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

As should be expected with a building of this age, the ceilings have been finished in a variety of ways, from the original lath and plaster to more modern plasterboard.

Generally the condition of the ceilings relate to their age and how waterproof the roof is above. We have commented at length earlier in this report about how some roofs are allowing in water and we could see dampness in these areas.

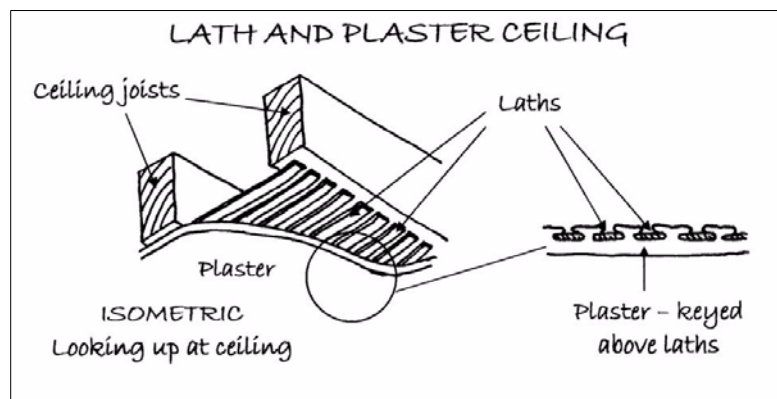


Leaking ceiling underneath  
the bay window

You need to have a systematic approach of making the property watertight via the roofs and gutters and downpipes and indeed the render to the walls and carry out appropriate repairs. We do not feel that the ceilings are unacceptable considering that the property is presently shut and hasn't been open for some time.

#### 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.



### 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.

## **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 mainly studwork walls which is quite common in modern construction and refurbishment and alteration work. It is quite common in properties such as this that have been altered and refurbished; we were advised that the original 30 odd bedrooms were changed to the present arrangement of en suite bedrooms when this work was carried out no doubt lots of studwork walls were used.

An issue that can sometimes occur with older studwork is that there may be noise transfer between rooms as insulation for noise was not generally thought about or a requirement of Building Regulations.

## **Perimeter Walls**

We carried out a tap test on the perimeter walls by literally hitting them and tapping them with the back of our hand. We found many areas of hollow plaster; this doesn't mean that the plaster will literally fall off but what it does mean is that there has been damp ingress over the years, as we would expect in this age of property. You should be aware if you are refurbishing it that it will mean that some plaster will come away. We would always recommend replacing plaster like-for-like with the associated plaster.

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.*

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

We were advised that the chimney in the reception lounge area works, although we did not see it working. We could see from the roof that the central chimney has been capped and we could also see that the chimney on the right hand side has been removed in part. Often with this age of property, particularly where alterations have been carried out, there are chimneys that have been removed that would not meet Building Regulation requirements i.e. they haven't had reinforced beams added beneath them. However, we often find that the way the bricks are keyed into the wall means that they are almost self supporting. Nevertheless, you do need to be aware of this if you do ever carry out alterations within the property.

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.*

## Basement

Stone slab finish on earth.

No sump pump was noted to the cellar area. This does mean that if the cellar floods you will have a problem getting rid of the water.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You should specifically ask the owner if there is a sump pump or a low point and whether the cellar has flooded.



Floor to cellar

## Ground Floor

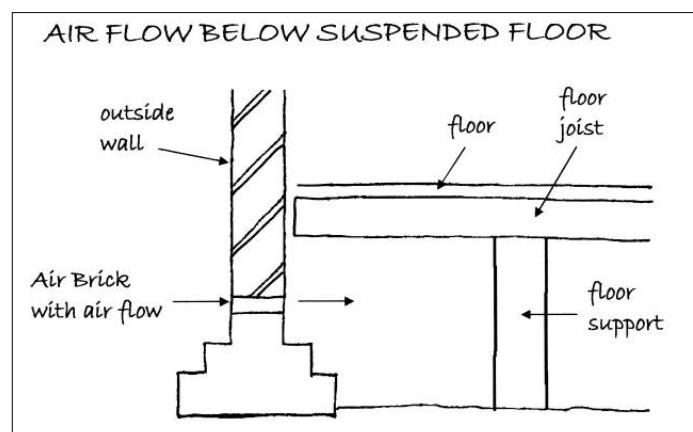
We have assumed that the front part of the property is constructed with joist and floorboards, known as a suspended timber floor. To the rear parts of the property we believe there is a concrete floor beneath although there may originally have been a timber floor and some of it may still remain.



Tiles to catering kitchen – ingrained dirt requiring a deep clean.

### Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

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





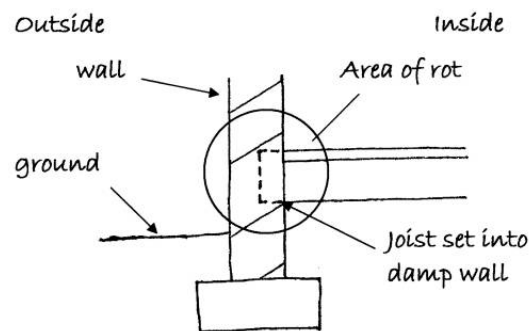
Under floor taken from the cellar area



We noted new timbers under the bay window area. The owner when questioned confirmed that they had been replaced.

Given the age of the property the timbers are likely to be embedded in the walls, which means wet rot is likely. Without opening the floors up we cannot comment further.

#### DAMP TO GROUND FLOOR JOISTS



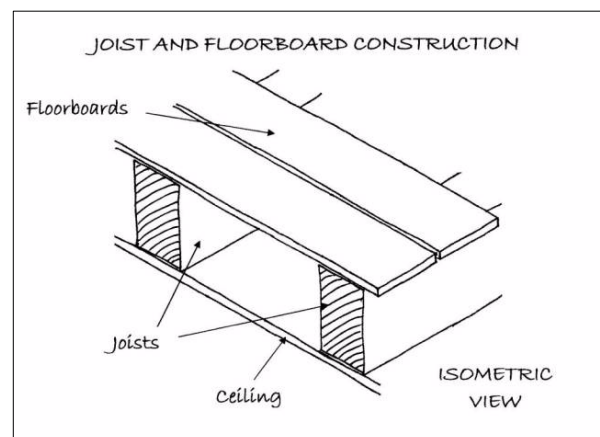
## First Floor

We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards as this is typical in this age of property. Again, we think there will be embedded timbers.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary and the External Walls Section with regard to the tie bars.

#### 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.



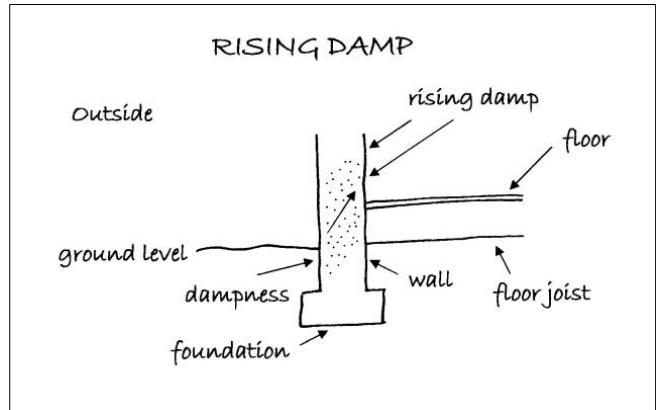
Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with various floor coverings. The comments we have made are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction. We would emphasise that we have not opened up the floors in any way or lifted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



We have carried out tests with an electronic damp meter to a random selection of areas and we found rising damp.

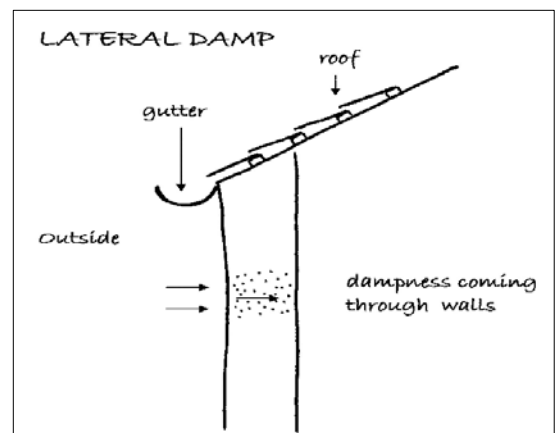
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



We found rising damp to the front and side of the property

## 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.*



We noted some areas of damp, when testing with the electronic damp meter, and also some areas of blown plaster as well.

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



Checking for lateral dampness



Dampness coming in via the valley gutter



Dampness near rear fire exit coming in from valley gutter above.

## **Condensation**

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

In the metal roof structure we noted dampness that could either be dampness coming in due to the roof not being watertight and / or due to condensation.

We would also comment that given the construction of the roof when the property is occupied we would expect some condensation to occur in this area.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You will need to add insulation and ventilation to help reduce the condensation. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary and the Roof Coverings and Roof Structure Sections.

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**

You have many fire doors. It is very difficult to give specific advice, without going through the plans in detail, as a general rule a fire door has a door closer and an intumescent strip to help reduce the spread of fire and smoke. Also doors around a staircase should be fire doors as the staircase is looked on as a chimney that helps transfer fire from one level to the other, i.e. the ground floor to the first floor.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Have a specialist look at and investigate the costs associated with upgrading this property with regard to fire requirements.

### Intumescent Strips Defined

These are strips within the door that expand during the course of a fire to seal the door and resist smoke passing through it.

## **High Risk Areas**

Protection usually needs to be added to high risk areas, such as kitchen areas and staircase areas.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## **Staircases**

As mentioned all these should be lined. The one staircase that we could see the underside of to the left hand side access had been lined where we could see it; however, part of the stairs is hidden from view. All stairs need lining for fire regulations.

## **Kitchen**

The property has both domestic and commercial kitchens; you may need to amend the kitchens depending upon your commercial requirements.

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 visually inspected no evidence was found of any significant dry rot. However the conditions are present within the roof areas to form dry rot. This would be our concern in the roofs that we have not accessed. Please note we have not had access to all the roofs.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## **Wet Rot**

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

We did find evidence of wet rot within the roofs, particularly around the valley gutters; although, as we mentioned earlier within this report our view was limited of the roof and we were only able to get into the front left hand side roof and the metal roof.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary and the Floors Section.

## **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.*

*Recent research has shown that many woodworm chemicals do not actually work and it should be remembered that the chemicals are poisons. Also, unless great care is taken, the people applying the treatment can cause significant damage. The woodworm can only*

*really be seen in action during the breeding season, which runs from April to July. We have therefore tried to take a pragmatic view on this matter.*

We got into two of the four roofs – the front left hand side roof and the roof over the billiards / snooker room. The roofs are the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the roofs we inspected we found no obvious visual signs of significant woodworm activity or, indeed, signs of past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term ‘structurally significant’ damage.

In many properties of this age, there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection is usually restricted in the roof by insulation covering some of the timbers and general stored items in the roof, as it is restricted throughout the property (for example the floors) by general fixtures and fittings. We would comment in this instance that the conditions are good for woodworm as they tend to like damp warm conditions.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to be 100 percent 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.*

The decoration is average to below average where it is damaged by dampness to dated in many areas, with marks as you would expect in a property that has been used such as this.

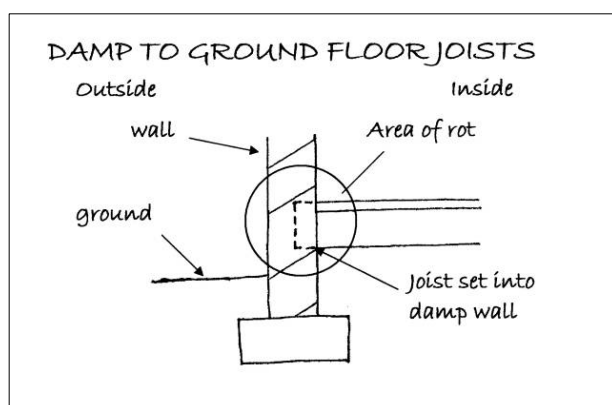
Finally, we would draw your attention to the fact that removal of existing decorative finishes may cause damage to the underlying plasterwork necessitating repairs and making good prior to redecoration.

## CELLARS

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

We would reiterate that we did not note a sump pump and we believe some of the joist ends will have started to rot due to the embedded timbers.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary and the Floors Section.



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



# **THERMAL EFFICIENCY**

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

## **Roofs**

We generally found no insulation. Current Building Regulation requirements are for 270mm of insulation; we typically find in roofs between 100mm – 150mm. We would recommend that insulation is added but you do need to add ventilation as well to reduce condensation.

## **Walls**

The walls to this property are solid and will have a relatively poor thermal efficiency. It is very difficult to improve thermal efficiency in solid wall construction without major alterations, which will usually affect the external appearance or reduce the internal space.

## **Windows**

The windows are mainly single glazed with some double glazed. The thermal properties will not be that good.

## **Services**

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

## **Summary**

Overall, considering the properties age, type and style, it has below average thermal properties.

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](http://www.cat.org.uk)*

*or [www.ecocentre.org.uk](http://www.ecocentre.org.uk) for an alternative technological view.*

## **OTHER MATTERS**

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

### **Security**

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

### **Smoke / Fire Alarms**

We recommend that interlink radio optical smoke/heat detectors are installed. If one alarm detects a fire, all alarms go off. We would recommend the mains powered units are used (never forget to change batteries again!).

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to seek specialist advice. In our experience the costs of fitting such systems can be in the tens of thousands.

### **Fire Regulations**

We have assumed for the purposes of this survey that fire regulations are adhered to and that a service contract is in place.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Advisor needs to confirm whether there is a Fire Certificate in place or a record of maintenance.

### **Disability Discrimination Act**

You should be aware that it is a requirement to give reasonable access to the disabled and make reasonable amendments to the property as is necessary to accommodate them.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## **Asbestos Register**

It is a requirement for any public building to have an asbestos register, indicating whether there is or is not asbestos and if so where it is.

A Type Two Survey should be carried out under the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002.

Given the age of this property you may have asbestos, as it was once used almost as generally as wood. For example to the service ducts, and linings to the lift etc. We believe that one of the soil and vent pipes is asbestos.

We are finding that generally buyers are unhappy to purchase property with any defective asbestos. We have inspected for visible damaged / degrading asbestos, (no tests have been taken) and not found any. See our articles regarding asbestos on our website: [www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk).

Our Insurers require us to state that we are not asbestos surveyors.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The current owner should hold an Asbestos Register, ask to see it and copy it to us.

If you want to be 100% free of asbestos you need a specialist asbestos survey, where samples are taken.

You should, note that work involving products containing asbestos is covered by Health and Safety legislation and you are recommended to seek the advice of the Local Authority Environmental Health Officer before proceeding with any such work.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary and the Gutters and Downpipes Section.

## **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.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** 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 19<sup>th</sup> century with gas lighting still being the norm for a good many years after.*

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

## **Fuse Board**

Five fuse boards were located. Four are from the 1990s / 2000s and are up to date. One of the fuse boards, located in the cellar, is from the 1960s and should be replaced.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Replace the dated fuse board.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Dated fuse board in the cellar

## **Earth Test**

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



**ACTION REQUIRED:** As the property is changing occupancy an IEE report should be carried out by a NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor.

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

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

## 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 gas emergency cut off is located near the entrance to the cellar just behind the reception.

You advised that you have had a specialist service engineer look at the system and we would be happy to comment on their report if you so wish.



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 owner advised that the external stopcock is located by the side entrance and the internal stopcock is located inside by the side entrance. 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 check the pressure, literally by putting a finger over the tap, the pressure varied depending upon what other taps and appliances were being used.

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**

We have not found a water tank. We can only assume that the water is directly fed to the taps. The original idea behind a water tank was to help water pressure and to give an emergency supply of water.

## **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 boilers are located in the boiler rooms behind the kitchen area. We have not carried out an inspection of these as you have had specialist engineers to look at them.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

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



## **BATHROOMS**

*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 rooms have en suite bathroom suites. We have looked at a selection of these and they were in average condition. We often find that in small bathrooms such as these that some condensation can occur, particularly if the extract fans are not working or well maintained or windows are not openable.

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 property has the benefit of mains drainage and that the foul drains 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.

### **Inspection Chambers / Manholes**

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

We have not found any man holes / inspection chambers or rodding eyes, this is fairly unusual. The owner could not advise us of the location of any manholes.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that a close circuit TV camera report is carried out on the drainage. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

We would always recommended that Inspection chambers / manholes / rodding eyes be formed within the boundaries to allow access to the drains for maintenance purposes.

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 Gutters and Downpipes section.

## **OUTSIDE AREAS**

### **PARKING**

There is parking for half a dozen or so cars to the front of the property and there is also parking to the side for the owners.

### **EXTERNAL AREAS**

The only external area is to the rear right hand side and we were advised that this is on a yearly lease.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to negotiate an option to buy this land outright.

**Boundaries:** The left hand boundary (all directions given as you face the property) is usually the responsibility of the subject property.

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

### **Neighbours**

We noted that the antique store, which is underneath part of the building, is closing down (44 years and retiring). We would recommend that you have a chat with the owner.

We note that nearby to the rear of this property the units have been turned into flats.

## **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) Cavity wall insulation and cavity wall tie repairs.
  - iv) Double glazing replacement windows.
  - v) Roof and similar renewals.
  - vi) Central heating installation.
  - vii) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
  - viii) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
- d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- e) Rights of Way e.g., access, 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) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.



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

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

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

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

In this instance we have not carried out any formal or informal Local Authority enquiries.

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

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**.

## **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**

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

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

## **ENGLISH LAW**

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

## **SOLE USE**

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

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

## **WEATHER**

It was a dry but cold winter's 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 may be aware 2006 was the warmest year in Britain since records began, we believe, in the 1700s; with July 2006 being the hottest July on record in Britain. 2005 was the third driest year on record in Britain with 2003 being the driest. The year 2000 was the wettest year on record and August 2004 was the wettest August on record in Britain. 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.

## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited as we have not had access to all the floors and some of the roof spaces and generally to the right hand side of the property.



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

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

## **Work You Cannot do Yourself**

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

## INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

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

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

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

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