JOB REF: J1070/CBS/??/??

COMMERCIAL BUILDING SURVEY

OF

A Private 1960's Clubhouse

FOR

Mr A Client

Prepared by:

GEM Associates Limited

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

FOR ANY HELP OR ASSISTANCE CALL FREE PHONE:

0800 298 5424

or

visit our website:

www.1stAssociated.co.uk

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

We are aware that a report of this size is somewhat daunting and almost off-putting to the reader because of this. We would stress that the purchase of a business has many risks, the property being one of the biggest. Often when a business is purchased our clients can only see the opportunities that it offers, the aim of this report is to give a balanced view on the future risk.

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 our 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 business 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

The property is situated within walking distance of the centre of ????????? shopping area. We would class it as a secondary or tertiary location.

This is a two-storey and single storey property, which we believe was built in the mid 1960s as a library and has subsequently been run as a club by the ?????????? and is now being run as a private club.

From our inspection we could see that there have been various alterations carried out over the years, which we discuss within the main body of the report.

???????? is a market town that has some of the national retailers and the majority of the major national banks and building societies. It sits on the river ???????? and still has a regular market.

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Front Elevation

Left Hand Elevation

Rear Elevation

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Note: There is no private living accommodation.

Ground Floor

The ground floor facilities consist of:

- Front of house trading area
- Male and female toilets
- A cellar
- A fire escape corridor
- A spirit store under the stairs
- Enclosed stairway to the first floor

First Floor

The first floor facilities consist of:

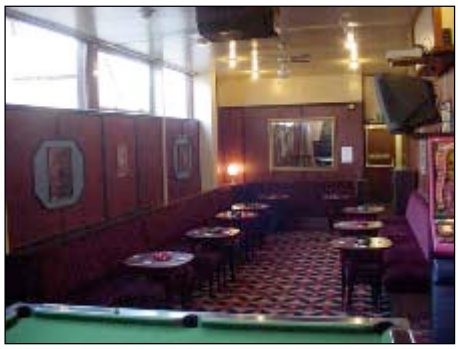
- A front of house trading area with bar servery area and what we are advised is a separate food trading area
- Male and female toilets
- An office

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.

The Bar

This photo was taken at about 3.00pm on Friday



Ground Floor Bar

The Cellar

First Floor Bar

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

EXTERNAL

Two-storey roof:	A flat roof covered with bitumen felt and chippings.
Single storey roof:	A shallow pitched roof covered with a mineral felt with a flat roof to the far right hand side.
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic.
Walls:	The two-storey section of the property is constructed on a steel frame (assumed) with the single storey section being traditionally built in brickwork (assumed).
External Joinery:	A mixture of metal windows and timber with timber fascias and soffits.

INTERNAL

Ceilings:	Plasterboard and suspended ceiling tile finish
Walls:	A mixture of solid and studwork with a plaster finish (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: Part suspended flooring and part solid assumed concrete.
	First Floor: Likely to be timber decking on a steel frame with some timber joists (all assumed).

SERVICES

Heating:	A warm air system with the boiler being located to the left hand side of the bar, with access from the trading area.
Hot water:	A boiler located within the bar, believed to be electric.

OUTSIDE

There are access alleyways to the right hand side and rear. There is an area with a bench to the front and a small patio area and bin store to the rear. From our visual inspection we could see no allocated parking.

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 when discussing someone's future business venture, when we are trying to second-guess their priorities, so it is important the Report is read in full. Having said all of that, we would draw your attention to the following areas:

1) **Roofs**

The Main Roof

The main roof is a flat bitumen roof that is leaking and has deflected. There was also ponding on the roof at the time of our inspection. We believe the best way to resolve the roof issues are to use an insulation cut to falls (to aim any rainwater at the outlets) and then to re-felt with a high performance elastomeric-type felt. The flashings will also need checking, as will the parapet walls in general.

General view of the roof

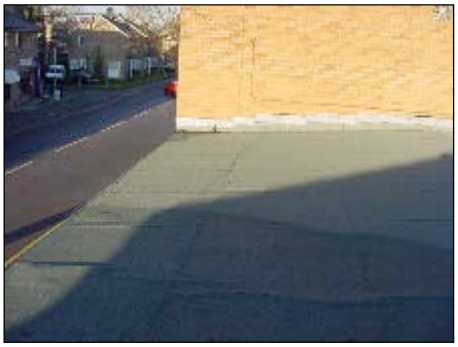
This photo shows nicely the amount of water sitting on the roof, none of which is actually getting to the rainwater outlets.

You can see part of the damage that has been caused internally.

The roof to the stairway has also seen better days

The Lower Single Storey Roof

The lower roof has a traditional double-pitched roof, although with a fairly minor fall on it. This roof has a mineral felt covering, which has been put on fairly badly and has now blistered and it can be seen where repairs have been carried out, particularly around the junction where it meets the main building. In the long term this will need re-roofing, however we feel on a short-term basis that patch repairs can be carried out and new flashing work. However, it must be understood that the longer the roof is left the more repairs will need to be carried out, for example to the decking beneath it. We are advised that this roof was re-roofed approximately eight years ago, however the quality of the re-roofing is fairly poor, which is why the problems have occurred.



General view of the roof. Note the blisters, for example in the left hand corner of this photo.

A close up of one of the blisters, the pencil is sitting on top of it, you can also see other blisters surrounding it.

Far Right Hand Roof

This is a bitumen roof with a chipping finish. We recommend here that the flashings are repaired and that a layer of chippings are added to the roof to give it protection against the extremes of sunlight and frost.

You can tell that the water is not running off of this roof because of the moss sitting on it.

The pencil is sitting on the mortar, which has come away at the top of the flashing.

ACTION REQUIRED: The main roof needs re-roofing with falls adding to it, the lower roof can be patch repaired initially with future re-roofing and the lower right hand roof can also be patch repaired in the short-term.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £25,000 - £30,000 (twenty five thousand pounds to thirty thousand pounds). We recommend that you get estimates on this from a suitably qualified roofing company that specialises in flat roofs before you proceed with the purchase of the property.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

2) **Services**

Whilst the heating in the property was working well at the time of our inspection we believe it is probably original and therefore is coming to the end of its useful life and therefore a new one should be budgeted for. However in the first instance we would recommend a full service and report, if they are not available from the present owners.

We also believe that the electrics should have an IEE test by an NICEIC approved electrician, as where the roof leaks it traces the lines of the electrical wiring, which is not ideal! Also the standards in public buildings have generally gone up.

ACTION REQUIRED: Obtain service records and preferably have a discussion with the companies that have carried out the servicing. If you wish we would be more than happy to do this if you forward details on to us.

ANTICIPATED COST: Unfortunately we do not have suitable experience of dealing with warm air heating systems to estimate the costs. With regard to the electrics we would expect a test to cost in the region of up to £250 (two hundred and fifty pounds) and then there would be associated recommendations and repairs.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

3) **Fire Regulations**

From what we could see the building did not meet current Fire Regulations, although these are relatively minor items such as doors and door closers missing, fire extinguishers not being properly positioned etc. We have not tested the fire alarm system and have only carried out a visual inspection.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend initially looking at any fire certificates that are available and an off the record discussion with the Fire Brigade, who are usually very helpful in this type of circumstance.

ANTICIPATED COST: We recommend that you carry this out prior to purchasing the property. You could then advise us of what work is required and we would carry out an estimate of the costs.

Please see the Other Matters Section of this Report.

4) **External Joinery – Timber Windows and Metal Windows**

We found rot within the timber frame of the property. This is effectively a cladding because the strength of the property is set out within the steel frame and can be replaced, which does give you the opportunity to make the property more visually appealing/visually dramatic if you so wish, without major costs.

The pencil pushed straight through the timber frame.

Please note we have not carried out anything other than a visual inspection on the steel frame.

ACTION REQUIRED: In due course repair work will be necessary, but first the roof issues and the drainage via the rainwater gutters and downpipes needs to be resolved. These are fairly basic in some instances, such as re-fixing the hopperheads and downpipes.

Note the bare timber frame. We think that possibly water is running through this area when it rains.

ANTICIPATED COST: This very much depends upon the work you intend to have carried out. A cover up job could run into the hundreds and a full re-vamp could run into the tens of thousands.

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

5) **Disability Act**

From earlier in this year (1 October) the Disability Act has been enforced. This effectively requires anyone with a business such as this to make allowance for disabled people entering the property. From what we could see the wheelchair bound would be able to access via the rear door (although we have not checked that it is wide enough) and then could be ramped down into the main part of the building and use the toilet facilities there (again we have not checked that the doors are wide enough). We have included this piece of legislation as we feel that whilst it is in the early days at present it will become a major requirement in buildings such as this.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to give due consideration to not only access into the property but how the facilities in general can be used by the disabled. We can offer more guidance on this should you wish.

ANTICIPATED COST: This very much depends upon what you intend to do.

Please see the Other Matters Section of this Report.

6) **Environmental Health**

We noted what we would term as some environmental health issues such as the quarry tiles that are behind the bar. Environmental Health generally much prefer an altro-style floor (vinyl) for these areas. There are various other items that we have seen, but during our discussions you said that these items would be carried out by yourself in the due course of business. Please see the Other Matters Section of this Report.

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as re-decoration, clearing of the gutters (low level), etc. These problems are fairly typical for this age, style and type of property. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report. The above issues are explained in full within the main body of the report.

Purchase Price

We have not been asked to comment upon the purchase price in this instance. We have not seen formal trading accounts or been verbally advised of the trading figures.

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Estimates of Costs

Where we have offered an estimate of building costs please remember we are not experts in this area. We always recommend you obtain quotations for the large jobs before purchasing the property (preferably three quotes). The cost of building work has many variables such as the cost of labour. For unskilled labour we currently use between £50 and £75 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold. If you obtain builders estimates that vary widely, we would advise the work is probably difficult or open to various interpretations and we would recommend a specification is prepared. It would probably be best to supervise the work if it is complex, both of which we can do if so required.

SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

The Summary Upon Reflection is a second summary so to speak, which is carried out with our thoughts a few days after the initial survey. We would add the following:-

The main risks as we see them is the water damage from the roof and any hidden costs associated with this. We have no idea how long the roof has been leaking and how it has affected the steel structure.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend opening up a section of the roof and part of the wall to check the condition of the steel frame. This should be carried out prior to legally committing to purchase this business.

The other element of unknown risk is that with the services within the business, but you can reduce this risk by speaking to the contractors that have been servicing the equipment and the one that installed the new heater.

And finally we would bring your attention to various legislation-type issues, such as the Disability Act and the Environmental Health issues, which will need addressing in due course.

To list all the faults in this building would take us forever and a day, so we have tried to focus on the main issues only.

As a general comment for any work required we would always recommend that you obtain at least three quotations for any work from a qualified, time served tradesperson or a competent registered building contractor prior to legal completion. If you so wish we can prepare specifications and obtain quotations for the work, whatever you do don't allow the commercial agent to organise the quotes as he will utilise people he regularly uses who know they have to keep in with him/her to get further work and therefore are very keen to please the estate agent, as opposed to you the real client and at the end of the day it doesn't take long to organise.

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

MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT

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

TENURE

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

ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

It is important to remember that the estate agents are acting for the seller (usually known as the vendor) and not the purchaser and are therefore eager to sell the business (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 a Commercial Building Survey, as agreed to and signed by yourselves. If you have not seen and signed a copy of our terms of engagement please phone immediately.

ESTIMATES OF COST

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 business (preferably three quotes). The cost of building work has many variables such as the cost of labour, we are currently using between £75 per day for unskilled labour up to £150 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.

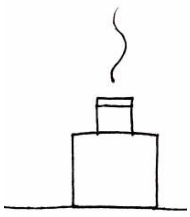
If you obtain builders estimates that vary widely, we would advise the work is probably difficult or open to various interpretations and we would recommend a specification is prepared. It would probably be best to supervise the work if it is complex, both of which we can do if so required.

OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION

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

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

EXTERNAL



PARAPET WALLS AND FLUES

Parapet Walls

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

Main Two-Storey Roof

There are parapet walls surrounding this roof; they are brick built with a small copingstone sitting upon them. This copingstone is too small and does not have the appropriate drip, which is why we believe the edges of it have sheared off in some instances.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally the entirety of the coping should be removed and replaced with copingstones with drips on either side and suitably bedded.

Parapet Walls Defined

These walls are usually above the roofline and often sit on the boundary of the business. Due to their position they are relatively exposed and suffer from deterioration due to the elements.

The edges have sheared off some of the copingstones.

Water Tank

On the main roof there is a timber clad box section, which we believe hides the water tank within it, this was not opened up.

This would benefit from re-staining

Roof Light

There is one roof light to the property. It is glazed with a Georgian wire polished plated glass as it should be, although it looks to be single glazed. From the tar that is around it we think it has probably leaked in the past and we tend to find that condensation occurs on these.

Note the tar around the edge of the roof light.

Far Right Hand Roof

The parapet wall to the far right hand roof is also brick built with a felt flashing, which is coming away in various areas.

In some areas the parapet is exposed on both sides to the weather, this is why we believe the cracking has been caused. Also the drips are not ideal and there will be similar problems to the parapets on the main building.

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.

ACTION REQUIRED: Re-bed the flashing or better still replace with a lead flashing.

The pencil indicates the hairline crack that runs down through the parapet wall.

Upstand Wall

Between the far right hand roof and the main roof is a step or upstand that has been built in brickwork. This area has a defective felt flashing and needs re-fixing.

ACTION REQUIRED: Re-fix flashing and preferably replace with lead.

Please also see our general comments on the roofs in general.

Not a very neatly cut flashing.

Flues

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

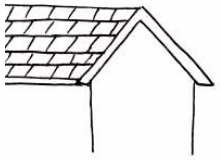
There are various flues around the roof, from an old flued duct flue to the rear of the main roof to various soil and vent flues from the toilet facilities.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** All the flashings around these need checking to ensure they are watertight.

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

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

ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



The roof coverings and underfelts 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 underfelts function is to prevent wind and minimise water damage. Dependent upon the age of your business this may or may not be present, please read on:

We will consider the roofs in three areas, the main high level roof, the lower roof and the lower right hand side roof.

Main Roof

This is a bitumen felt roof with a chipping covering to protect it from frost and sun heat. We believe that it is probably the original roof covering that has had little alteration or repair work carried out on it over the years. It is coming to the end of its useful life, normally considered to be about 30 years and there are signs internally of dampness getting through the roof. We feel there are two options on this:

1. To carry out ad hoc repairs as and when necessary, this may well extend the life of the roof for another five or ten years or possibly even longer, we are always surprised at how long buildings last. The risk side of this is that the decking beneath becomes rotten and that the steel frame starts to rust, which ultimately could lead to structural issues.

2. To bite the bullet and to completely re-roof. We would recommend using an insulation to falls as this has two advantages:

    i. it puts a fall on the roof, which currently there is not (or at least not to the actual rainwater outlets);

    ii. it adds extra insulation to the roof.

We have not opened up this roof, but if we did we would expect to find a timber decking with minimal insulation on a steel frame, possibly with some wet rot in the timber decking.

ACTION REQUIRED: On our second reading of this report we feel it is prudent if we open up the structure. We suggest it is opened in two areas. We could widen an existing opening to the roof where the water is getting through and we also need to do a second area at the base of a steel column to examine the condition of this to ensure it is not rusting or fractured in any way.

This is another general view of the roof. It shows quite nicely how the ponding is occurring. Yet to the far corner where the rainwater outlet is there is no water (this is approximately in the centre of the of the photo to the top end).

Again there is ponding on the right hand side and again the drainage outlet can be seen roughly in the centre of the photo. You can also see that the chippings have bulked up leaving some bald areas, for example at the front of the photo.

Roof to Steps

At the end of the main roof is the roof over the steps. This roof has a mixed finish, partly of mineral felt and partly of felt with a chipping covering. It is fairly warn and past its best.

This is looking down onto the return of the stairs. You can see that the black felt is exposed.

ACTION REQUIRED: This all needs chippings putting on it, or it may well be cheaper and easier to add an additional layer of felt.

Lower Roof

This roof sits over the bar area and part of the toilets. Again there are visible signs internally that the roof is leaking and also externally we can see that the fairly new mineral felt finish has had various repairs.

The workmanship of this mineral felt roof looks to be fairly poor and/or it was put on in the winter or during rain as it has blistered considerably; in fact rarely have we seen a roof with more blistering on it that is so new. These blisters ultimately pop and allow water into the structure. Again there are two options:

1. You can carry out reactive repair when leaks are seen, you may well end up chasing the leaks around, not knowing quite where they are coming from with this technique; or

2. You can carry out repairs to all the flashing and proper repairs to where mastic has been used on the roof and then wait for the blisters to pop, perhaps carrying out an annual check of the roof.

This photo shows a deflective flashing, the pencil is literally stuck into the felt showing how it has come away.

Right Hand Roof

This is a bitumen-covered roof with chippings on it. We think that at one time all the lower roof was like this and the pitch roof was added over the top of it; why they did not do this section we do not know. Repairs in this area are fairly minor compared with the other roof, but then again it is much smaller. We feel the roof would probably be watertight if the flashing was repaired and a few ad hoc repairs. Again you have the more long-term option and could put a pitched roof over this one, similar to the one on the rest of the single storey part of the property, although it would need some amendment around the parapet wall.

Note: Remember when changing roofing materials the Building Regulations now require approval to be obtained when a property is re-roofed in a different material. This will often require additional support being added to the roof structure and was brought in for the reasons mentioned in the above paragraph. Our suggestion to add a pitch to the far end may well also require planning permission.

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.

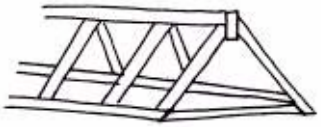
Also it could not be established if there is insulation within the roof or a vapour barrier, without the vapour barrier and combined with inadequate ventilation there will be an increase in the risk of wet or dry rot.

This is of particular importance where you have buildings such as this where there is a relatively high level of water vapour (coming from the people in the building).

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.

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 have not been able to get into any of the roofs properly.

Main Roof

As already mentioned we believe the main roof is probably timber decking with some insulation, possibly strammet board, which was used both as decking and insulation and looks, for want of a better description like compressed straw. This has next to no strength if it gets wet but it was commonly used in the 1960s before these problems were known about.

The roof space has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly. This together with the general construction of the roofs means that we believe we have probably seen in the region of 10% of the roof structure.

Lower Roofs

We were able to inspect the low level roofs through the suspended ceiling tiles, although our view was very limited. What we did see was what looked to be a wood decking, this looked to be damp in areas and we did note when walking on it that some areas were particularly spongy, indicating that water is getting through on to the decking itself.

This is the ceiling tile that we got in through to look at the ceiling.

You can just see some dampness to the top edge of the photo.

This perhaps shows more graphically how the water is getting through the roof into the decking.

Finally we would ask you to note that a general inspection of the roof timbers has not been possible as we could not access the roof for safety reasons (we do not think that the suspended ceiling tile system would take our weight). Our comments are based on our limited view. If you wish to ere on the very cautious side we suggest that all the ceiling tiles are removed and a full inspection is carried out.

ACTION REQUIRED: If you do decide to expose the structure we would also recommend that a selection of the ceiling tiles are removed to gain a better view of the lower roof structure.

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.

Replacement Plastic

The Gutters and Downpipes are plastic probably replacing the original cast iron. 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, however there do appear to be some basic problems where the Gutters and Downpipes have come away from their fittings. For example in our photo, which was taken on the left hand side of the building, this in turn has contributed to the wet rot in the timber down this area. This simply needs re-fixing and we suggest a grub screw is added or it is masticed/glued into place.

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

Missing Guttering

To the rear of the property, where the staircase is, the guttering in this section is missing.

Missing gutter.

To be exact it is not missing as it has fallen down between the buildings.

Clean the gullies.

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

WALLS

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

We will look at this property in two areas, the two-storey section and the single storey section.

Two-Storey Section

From what we could see, without opening up the structure, we believe the two-store section of this building to be built on a steel frame. This was quite a common form of construction by local authorities in the 1960s and was used for their public buildings, particularly schools.

As the main structure is on the frame the areas between it should not be load bearing. The risk with this structure is due to the fact that the roof has been leaking for a while, which could have affected the framework and caused it to rust.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would ideally recommend that the structure is opened up, partly to the roof and partly at the base of the structure.

The base of one of the 'I' columns.

This is the reason why you need to open up the structure, you can see minor amounts of rust starting to occur on the bottom of this steel frame.

Window Sections

Between the structural frame to the left hand side you have a large window section formed partly in metal and partly in glass. These windows are commonly known as Crittle windows, who were the main manufacturer of them, similar to the way that vacuum cleaners are known as Hoovers.

The problem with these is that if they are allowed to deteriorate, get wet or rust they warp and then the windows cannot be opened or shut. At present you have a lot of water discharging down the side of the building due to the gutters not functioning properly. This is why it is essential that the guttering repairs are carried out prior to any work whatsoever being carried out on the outside of the property.

An example of one of the metal cladding panels.

Profile Metal Cladding

To the rear of the property a staircase has been added at some time. Possibly this was external originally as we found out when we discussed it with some of the patrons of the Tudor Rose. The cladding, from what we can gather, was added in the mid 1990s. We checked a random selection of the bulk, as these are often a weak area, as they rust, and we found about 80% of them to have their caps on and to be in reasonable condition; we found the remaining 20% of them to be starting to rust. You simply need new end caps on (it is very unlikely that you will find these) or you can mastic them over and paint them.

Single Storey Structure

This part of the structure is built in brickwork in what is known as stretcher bond. We were going to say it was a cavity wall construction, however from the photo that we took from the ceiling of this section (below left) we believe that it may be on a steel frame, like the two-storey section of the property, and the brickwork is a cladding around it.

This shows an example of the brickwork and it also shows what is known as toothing and bonding, where we believe an extension has been added, or alterations carried out. Toothing and bonding is where brickwork is toothed into the existing structure and looks like teeth. Here, from the size of the lintel we can see we think there may have been a larger entrance that has simply been blocked up.

A step hairline crack.

Hairline Cracking

A diagonal hairline crack was found to the far right hand corner of the brickwork at the front of the building. We believe this may relate to water coming in via the flat roof. We stress this is very minor.

Lintels

If we are correct with the construction being on a steel frame the lintels will be an integral part of the cladding panels, particularly to the two-storey property. There may well be metal or concrete lintels in the brickwork section, without opening up we cannot be certain.

Finally, the external walls have been inspected visually from ground level and/or randomly via a ladder. Where the window and door lintels are concealed by brickwork / stonework / render / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age timber lintels, concrete lintels, rubbed brick lintels, stone lintels or metal lintels are common,

which can be susceptible to deterioration that is unseen, particularly if in contact with dampness.

Our comments have been based upon how the brickwork / stonework / render / plaster has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork / stonework / render / plaster would be if it were opened up for this age, style and type of construction. We are however aware that all is not always at 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.

With this type of construction there will tend to be pad foundations underneath the steel feet that are bolted in place with a strip foundation running between the steel or possibly even a slab foundation across the entirety of the building.

We have inspected the walls for any signs of moment and found nothing to the brickwork section, which is where we would be able to see a sign, with the exception of the hairline crack mentioned earlier, and to the cladded section (the two storey property) only major failure would enable you to see any movement in this area.

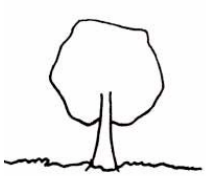
Building Insurance Policy

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

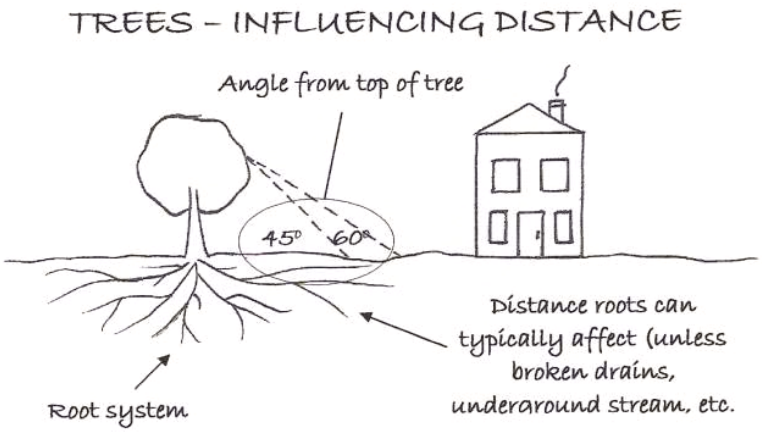


Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.

There is a tree to the left had side of the property; this is what we would term as within influencing distance. We assume that the residential flats have some sort of maintenance contract whereby the gardens etc are maintained. It is however worth keeping an eye on the tree and, if it is allowed to overgrow, having a word with the residents.

Influencing Distance Defined

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



Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

DAMP PROOF COURSE

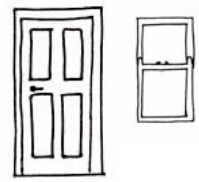
The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required various other basic standards. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout London and then the country as a whole,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

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case we could not actually see a damp proof course, although given the age of the building there should be one built in. We carried out a visual inspection internally as the walls are clad and we were unable to use our damp meters in many instances. Your attention is drawn to the section of the report specifically dealing with dampness.

The damp proof course was not visible.

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.

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

Both to the two-storey and the single storey part of the property there is a fascia detail only, this is hidden in part gutter. We feel this is likely to have some rot due to the fact that the gutters are leaking.

Windows and Doors

As already mentioned the windows in the main part of the property are formed predominantly in metal and need to be kept in good maintenance order to avoid them from warping and rusting.

To the new part of the property the windows are formed in timber.

A random selection of the windows and doors were opened.

Note the dampness at the base of this door that will cause rot, and the door is untreated.

This is the rear door, you can see dampness at the base of it and rusting to the hinges.

This is an internal view of the window where you can see that the dampness is coming through, causing wet rot to the timber.

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

EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

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

In this case we would classify the external decorations as being in poor condition.

ACTION REQUIRED: Once the remedial action recommended has been carried out we would then recommend external re-decoration or possibly re-cladding may be a better long term option.

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

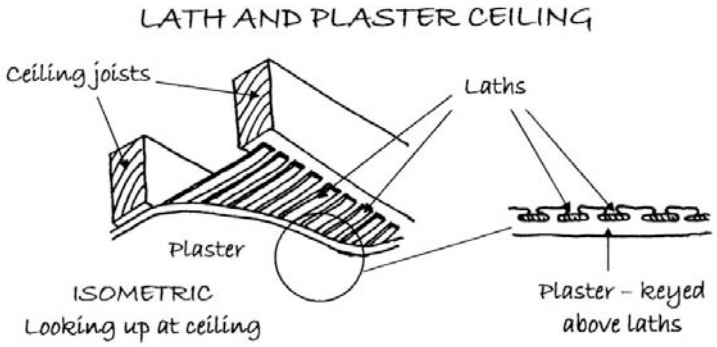
In this section we look at the finish applied to the structural elements such as the plasterwork applied to the ceiling joists, walls or partitions, together with the construction of the internal walls and partitions. The concept of internal finishes is relatively modern. Partitioning developed originally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

Ceilings

Given the age of the property and our general knowledge of this construction and from what we have seen during the course of this survey we believe that the ceilings will be a mixture of plasterboard and suspended ceilings.

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.



We have only been able to access the ceiling in the corridor area near the bar. Here there is a suspended ceiling system, this is usually attached via a wire suspension system to either the decking, the steel frame or timber joists. As a general comment there is damage to some of the ceilings, for example to the first floor bar area there is water damage, where the water has literally come through the roof, and there are tiles damaged and missing to the suspended ceiling system on the ground floor.

An example of the water coming through into the first floor room.

General view of the suspended ceiling. Note the light fitting on the right hand side, we are advised that water literally drips from this when it rains. An interesting, but not ideal feature within a public bar.

A view into the ceiling above the suspended ceiling system. The darker timbers that can be seen is where dampness is getting through from the roof above.

This is a further photo in the roof section which indicates to us that there is a beam and collar structure to the single storey part of the property,

Internal Walls and Partitions

We have tap tested the walls and these appear to be a mixture of solid walls and studwork walls. We feel it is unlikely that any of the internal walls are load bearing, although it is difficult to be 100% certain without opening up the structure.

We believe that the weight of the building is taken upon the structural steel frame and possibly to the single storey section partly through the walls as well.

There is general marking and impact damage to the walls, scuffing etc, but nothing that we feel is particularly unusual for this type of property and that would fall under the general re-decoration and making good or refurbishment heading.

There are minor movement cracks to some of the internal walls, this we feel could relate to either dampness in the structure causing movement, or as a worse case scenario rust in the steel frame.

Further dampness can be seen to be coming through around this window.

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.

FLUES

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 Parapet Walls and Flues 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.

No exposure was carried out due to the restrictions of fitted carpets, floor coverings etc. The comments are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction.

Ground Floor

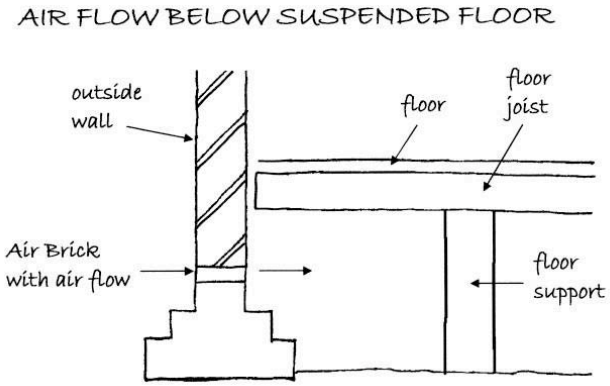
The floor construction is difficult to determine. We believe there are a mixture of floor constructions, we believe that part is what is known as a suspended floor, and this could either be timber or concrete. Externally there is a concrete plinth, which indicates that it may be concrete but internally we felt the floors had more 'give' than we would expect in concrete and that is why we would opt for it being in timber. Part of the floor is solid and firm underfoot so we assume it is concrete. We would be more than happy to return and lift the carpets if you so wish.

The suspended flooring to the two-storey part of the property could well be proprietary concrete or something similar, as it encloses the ductwork that is used on the warm air heating system. The floor was not opened up.

Please see our comments within the Executive Summary section about the Environmental Health requirements.

Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

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



First Floor

The structure in this area will be the steel frame. Between it we believe there is likely to be timber joists, possibly concrete could have been used with a decking put on this. Without opening up the floor we cannot be certain; again, we would be more than happy to carry this out if you so wish for an agreed fee. The floor was not accessed.

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

DAMPNESS

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

Rising Damp

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

Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to internal wall surfaces. Unfortunately it was not possible to take damp meter readings throughout the property due to the cladding internally and the metal structure, which would affect our electronic damp meter. We have however carried out a random visual inspection; in the areas we were able to see there were no obvious signs of rising damp.

Effective testing was prevented in areas concealed by heavy furniture, fixtures such as kitchen fittings with back boards, and wall tiles etc.

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 material, inadequate Gutters and Downpipes or corroded downpipes.

There were signs of dampness to some of the internal walls. We believe this is probably coming through the roof to the higher levels and through the cladding, particularly to the timber sections in the other areas.

You really need to work from the top of the structure down to make it watertight, preparing the roof as we have mentioned earlier, then the gutters, then looking at the cladding. This should then resolve the lateral or penetrating dampness.

The paper literally coming off the wall. Internally we believe this to be via the roof, rather than via the walls

Condensation

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

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

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 a mixture of panel doors throughout. We noted some of them to be marked and scuffed etc, as you would expect in a building of this type. We noted that some appeared to be missing door closers and we feel there may be a need for an additional fire door to the base of the staircase, if you intend to use the upper floor.

A good idea is to ask the Fire Brigade to take a walk around the property with you and carry out their recommendations.

General marking and scuffing to the door. Also this door closer was not working.

Staircase

There is a metal staircase to the rear of the property, which is in the section where the cladding is. We can only assume that this is of a suitable fire rating as it looks to have been specifically added as a fire escape, we assume that originally there may have been an internal staircase.

Skirtings

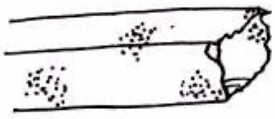
These again are marked, as you would expect in this type of property, but nothing out of the ordinary.

Kitchen

On the first floor there is an area which, we are advised, is set aside as a kitchen. We were unable to get into this properly due to the amount of stored items in there. We cannot advise whether it has been wired accordingly, or indeed has the appropriate ventilation extract.

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 over-view 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.

We did not note any evidence of dry rot during the course of our inspection, although the circumstances to promote dry rot do exist within the roof structure, i.e. a warm humid atmosphere within the bar areas and a leaking roof adding water to the timber structure. Therefore there is the outside chance that there is dry rot here, although we feel it is unlikely.

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 can see examples of wet rot to the cladding, which we have mentioned already and we feel that some of the roof, due to the amount of 'give' when we walked upon it also may have wet rot. This is not unusual and will simply need some of the decking replacing as and when you renew the roof.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** As mentioned elsewhere within this report we suggest you open up the roof to see the extent of damage that has been caused to the decking etc from the rainwater and equally open up the cladding to check the damage that has been caused.

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.

The woodwork was inspected for woodworm and there were no obvious visual signs of it or indeed signs that past woodworm activity had caused any structurally significant damage, however, if you wish to be 100 per cent certain the only way would be to have a check when the property is emptied of furniture and various stored items. Although I think it is unlikely there is active woodworm you can never be 100 per cent certain.

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

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

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

INTERNAL DECORATIONS

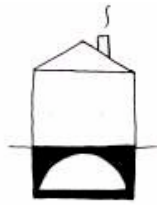
With paints it should be remembered that up to 1992 lead could be used within paint and prior to this most textured paints (commonly known as Artex) contained an element of asbestos up to 1984, so care should be taken if the paintwork looks old and dated.

We are advised by the landlady that the internal decoration was carried out less than a year ago. We would say it is of a reasonable standard compared with what we typically see, however you may wish to redecorate to your own personal standards and taste.

It is very difficult to advise on how frequently redecoration should take place. This very much depends upon the use and abuse the decoration gets, for example, within toilets this tends to be greater than for example within the main bar area, for example you have burn marks on the cisterns within the toilets and generally a fairly worn décor in this case in the toilet areas; we personally would make these a priority area for re-decoration as research has shown that often customers, particularly female customers judge the quality of a licensed business on the standards of the toilets.

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

CELLARS AND VAULTS



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

There is a beer cellar to the right hand side of the bar and a spirits and bottle store underneath the stairs to the rear left hand far side of the bar.

The cold cellar has a concrete floor and painted plaster or hardboard walls, this is marked to some extent, but nothing more that we would expect in a normal working cellar. The cellar also houses a sink and worktop area that the staff use for making coffees etc, and also an electric heater.

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

THERMAL EFFICIENCY

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

It is very difficult to comment upon thermal efficiencies in a building of this age and type. For example, many requirements of present Building Regulations, which cover thermal efficiency would not be appropriate to this type of structure as they are designed for modern buildings, which are constructed to different standards.

We would, however, comment as follows:-

Roofs

This is likely to be nothing more than plywood and roofing felt with a minimal amount of insulation, if you are lucky.

Walls

To the two-story part of the property you have a cladding, which again is little more than plywood boarding and insulation and single glazed window.

To the single part of the property you have a traditional construction in the form of cavity brickwork. Without details on when exactly it was built we cannot even hazard a guess as to whether there is any insulation within the cavities.

Windows

We believe these are all single glazed.

Services

The boiler you have providing the warm air heating we believe is original, although during the course of our visit it did appear to be working very well and pumping out a considerable amount of heat. However, you have to consider that these typically do not have a life of more than 20 or 30 years and even if it has been serviced regularly you may not be able to find spare parts for it any longer.

We are advised that the electric heater to the water is 'as new', although there was no literature available at the time of our inspection to verify this.

Summary

This property is very poor thermally and without being too flippant we feel you are probably contributing quite well to global warming and the general heating of St Neots.

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

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

or alternatively www.cat.org.UK

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

OTHER MATTERS

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

Security

There is a door entry system, which we saw in use throughout the day, although it has a speaker on it we did not see this being used. You may wish to upgrade to a video base system.

We believe a property of this type should have a good security system incorporating close circuit TV cameras with recording facilities, both internally and externally. We noted that there is a security alarm box on the outside of the property, but we have not made any enquiries with regard to the security system.

Fire Regulations

As commented in the Executive Summary of this report, although we are advised that it meets current Fire Regulations, there are various items that we noted that we do not feel would meet these Regulations. We therefore recommend that you have an 'off the record' conversation with the local Fire Brigade to establish whether they are happy with the present arrangement and if they have made any recommendations that have or have not been carried out.

We do not think this smoke/heat detector is working.

Insurance

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

SERVICES

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

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

New Building Regulations dictate that as from January 2005 certain electrical installation work is required to be carried out and certified by an approved contractor and is notifiable to the relevant local authority. Your Legal Advisor should request any relevant documentation.

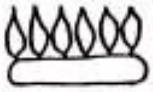
ELECTRICITY

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

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the first floor office and in the cellar area. The fuse board in the first floor office looked relatively new and we discussed this with the present landlady and she was not aware if and when there had been any major electrical work carried out. Based upon the wiring that we saw and the socket points etc these all looked relatively new, but to some extent this is a superficial examination and we would therefore recommend the following action.

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

GAS



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

We are advised that the main heater is gas fired. We have not seen any services relating to this, although the landlady advised that it is fairly regularly serviced in her experience.

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 landlady did not know where the internal or external stopcock is located. It is important that its presence is established in case of bursts or leaks. The stopcock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness.

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.

Water Pressure

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

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

Cold Water Cistern

We believe this is located on the main roof in the timber-clad boxing. There is always a danger from freezing where water tanks are located externally, however we assume this has stood the test of time. Please see our comments in the Roof section

Plumbing

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

Heating

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

Ventilation and Cooling

There is an extract fan to the first floor bar; the outer cowling is missing, which is likely to allow water in. When we tried to get the fan to work via the control panel behind the bar it did not appear to be working.

External view of fan.

There is also a general air circulation system to areas with the suspended ceiling. The vents to this are desperately in need of a clean.

Clean the vents.

There is a cooling system for the cellar situated on the back wall. This is often owned by the company that supplies the beer and maintained by them.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that you confirm ownership and who maintains the unit and check that it is in good working order as it is essential to have the cellar at the right temperature.

Soil and Vent Pipes

We believe there are internal soil and vent pipes to the toilets on the first floor, although we could not see it as it looks to go into the gents' toilets, which we did not have access to.

The soil and vent pipe to the ground floor toilets looks to go across within the suspended ceiling system and discharge out to the rear of the property.

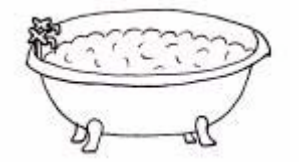
The pipe here we believe is the soil and vent pipe. Note also the ally way behind it that needs a general clear.

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

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.

SANITARY FITTINGS



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

We would describe the ground floor sanitary fittings as well used and abused and the first floor sanitary fittings as in need of some work. To be fair we were only able to access the female toilet on the first floor and we did manage to get the w.c. to flush and the taps to run and a general clear up, together with some ad hoc repairs such as replacing the handle on the w.c. for example, may well be sufficient

First floor ladies W.C.

Gents W.C.

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

MAIN DRAINS

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

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

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 located four or five manholes to the right hand side of the property. Unfortunately we were only able to lift three.

During our question and answer session with the landlady we were advised that recently they called out a drain cleaning company, but this was the first time to the best of her knowledge and this was more a problem with something that someone had put down the toilets than a problem with the toilets themselves.

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

Inspection Chamber/Manhole One (located to the corner)

We duly lifted the cover and found it to be free flowing at the time of our inspection. It has got a fairly lightweight manhole cover upon it and is located behind the gate.

There is also a second manhole cover here, but we could not lift it.

Inspection Chamber/Manhole Two (located near the fire exit)

This again was free flowing when we lifted the fairly lightweight cover.

Inspection Chamber/Manhole One (located closest to the front of the property)

Again this was lifted and found to be free flowing at the time of our inspection.

There were also some further manholes that we could not get open. One of which looked to have been rusted in place.

A view of the manhole, you can see the brickwork, which means it is traditionally built.

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

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

Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal.

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.

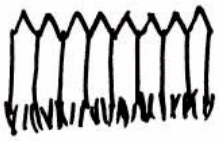
Please also see our comments within the Gutters and Downpipes section.

OUTSIDE AREAS

PARKING

From the area that has been described to us as being the boundary of this property we do not believe there is any parking available.

EXTERNAL AREAS



Boundaries

We have discussed with both the landlord and one of the managers the extent of the boundaries. We are advised that the boundary line follows approximately the line of the building to the front and includes the benches, it incorporates the alleyways to the right hand side and to the rear of the property of the single storey property and to the two-storey property it incorporates the patio area and the bin store.

Generally the boundary areas to the right and rear of the single storey structure are overgrown and we think the rear wall may be in need of some attention. It was difficult to tell with the amount of general rubbish etc that has accumulated in this area.

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.

Right of Way to the Left Hand Side of the Property

There is a road running up the left hand side of the property. This is worn. We are advised that there is a right of way and you should check to see if there is a responsibility to pay towards the maintenance or even maintain the road.

Road in need of maintenance. (Note the wall to the far right hand side has a step crack in it. This has been caused we believe by the close proximity of the tree.

Steps to the Front of the Property

We would suggest that a day or so is spent on the steps to the front entrance of the property re-aligning and levelling these and also replacing the missing step.

Missing and damaged steps.

Alleyways

The alleyways need clearing that give access to the side and rear of the property.

Needs tidying. Note also the messy detailing to the mineral felt, that indicates to us that it was never a particularly good job.

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 – this is particularly important as there are no clear boundaries as far as we can see.

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.

Our concern would be with regard to the right of way road access to the left hand side as you may well need scaffolding in this area to carry out work to the cladding and the roof, and from what we could see it would block access to the flats. You may be able to carry out the work off lifting hoists by arrangement.

c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees etc 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) Roof and similar renewals.
v) Central heating installation.
vi) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
vii) The structural frame
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 for example the roadway area and the ally ways around the property.

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 Notice or of the knowledge that any are about to be served.

n) We strongly recommend that Envirosearch or a similar product is used by your Legal Advisor to establish whether this area falls into a flood plain, old landfill site etc., and brought to its logical conclusion. If your Legal Advisor is not aware of the system please ensure that they contact us and we will advise them about it.

o) Any Environmental Health matters and a copy of the last Environmental Health Inspection report.

p) Any fire related matters and a copy of the last Fire Inspection report.

LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREA

From our investigations the property has not been identified as being Listed or in a Conservation Area.

Your Legal Advisor should confirm the above and carry out any searches he/she feels are necessary.

PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

Planning and Building Control

We were informed by ??????????? District Council Planning Department that their easily available records date back to 1980 (i.e. the ones that they have put on computer). The last application they could see on record was for planning in ????. We therefore recommend a formal approach by your Legal Advisors to be the best course of action, which should normally be carried out as part of the purchase.

This information was provided by a member of the Planning Department, who refused to give their name and was most unhelpful, on ?????? at ??????

Your Legal Advisor should confirm this information and carry out any checks he/she feels necessary.

Finally, an extract from the book "Sold"!

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

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

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

For and on Behalf of

GEM Associates Ltd
Chartered Surveyors

This Report is dated

REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses
Published by Estates Gazette Limited

Life expectancies of building components
Published by Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and Building Research Establishment

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

House Builders Bible
By mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

APPENDICES

LIMITATIONS

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

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

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

ENGLISH LAW

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

SOLE USE

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

ONLY HUMAN!

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

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

WEATHER

It was an overcast and fairly unpleasant winter's day with some rain during the course of our inspection - not ideal surveying conditions.

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

OCCUPIED PROPERTY

During the course of our survey the property was in use, we did our best to work around the present landlady and the various customers that were there during the day.

As it was a Friday it was a fairly busy day and to add to this the Christmas lights were being switched on as well, so it was particularly busy. There were various difficulties when carrying out the survey such as stored items within cupboards and store areas throughout the property. We have, however, done our best to work around these.

INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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