

JOB REFERENCE: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

XXXXXX XXXXXXXX

XXXXXX XXXXXXXX

XXXXXX XXXXXXXX

Kent
CT6 xxx



FOR

XXXXXX XXXXXXXX

Prepared by:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

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INTRODUCTION

Firstly, may we thank you for your instructions of xxxxxxxxxxxx; we have now undertaken an independent 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 buildings services. We conclude with the section for your Legal Advisor and also attach some general information on the property market.

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

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REPORT FORMAT

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

GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

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

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



We utilise photographs and sketches to illustrate issues or features. In some photographs a pencil, pen, circle or arrow has been used to highlight a specific area. The sketches are not 100% technically accurate; we certainly would not expect you to carry out work based upon the sketches alone.

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.

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SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a semi-detached two-storey property, which has been updated considerably and amended with modern alterations by both the existing owner and we are advised previous owners such as the ground floor windows and considerable alterations by a previous owner/developer.

The property has a driveway for off road parking and a garage.

The front of the property sits approximately 750mm from the edge of the road and has a small garden to the rear.

The property is Grade II Listed, as found in BritishListedBuildings.co.uk. As this is a Grade II Listed building you will become liable for any amendments not in keeping with Grade II Listed consent requirement.



Old property



Old property

We believe that the property was built in the 18th century Victorian era. If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

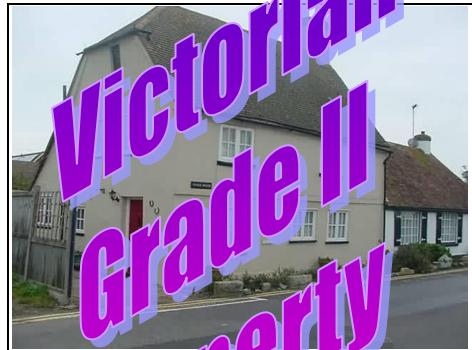
- 1718 British convicts transported overseas
- 1750 The start of the Industrial Revolution
- 1783 Britain recognised American Independence
- 1793 – 1800 The Grand Union Canal was built

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EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Left gable end



Rear View



Street view front of property



Rear Garden

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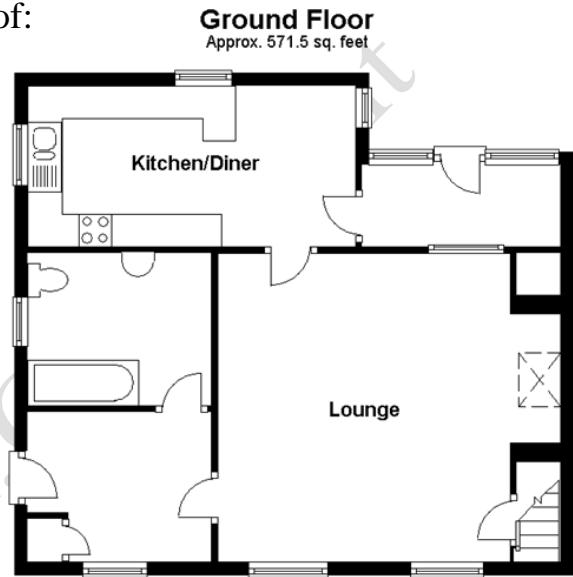
ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

(All directions given as you face the front of the property)

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

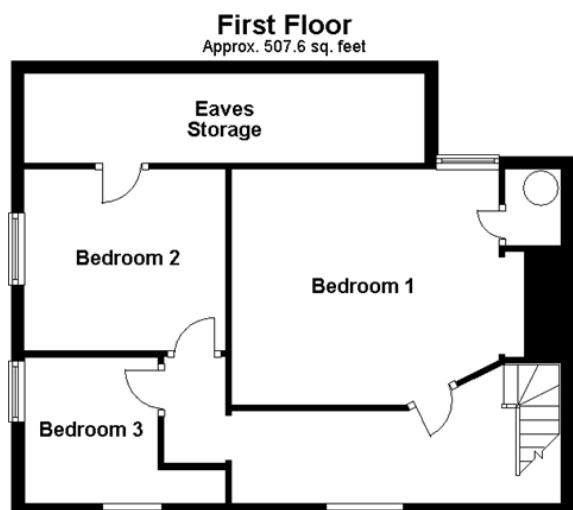
- 1) Entrance Hallway
- 2) Bathroom (left middle)
- 3) Lounge with staircase leading off (right side)
- 4) Kitchen (rear)
- 5) Conservatory area



First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Stairs (right side)
- 2) Master Bedroom (rear right side)
- 3) Office/Study/small Bedroom (front left)
- 4) Double Bedroom with under roof storage (rear left)



Outside Areas

There is a driveway for off road parking and a garage together with a small rear garden.

Finally, all these details need to be checked and confirmed by your Legal Advisor.

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INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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

Ground Floor



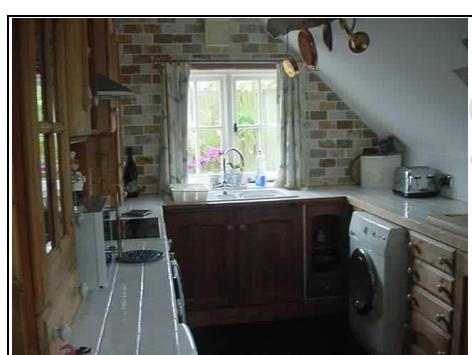
Lounge looking towards rear



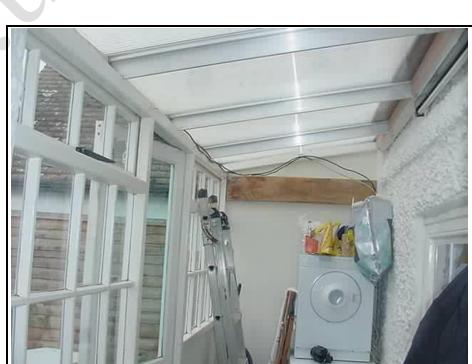
Lounge looking towards front



Stairs from lounge



Kitchen



Conservatory area



Entrance hallway



Bathroom

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First Floor



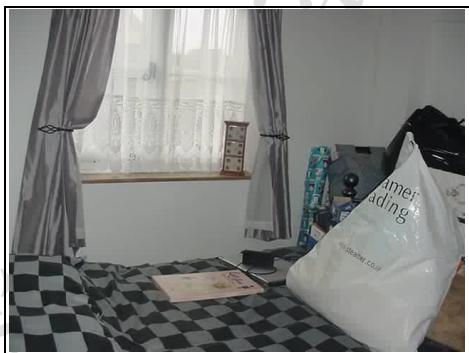
Master Bedroom



Master bedroom



Office/study/small Bedroom



Double Bedroom rear



Access to roof

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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Chimneys:	One brick chimney to right side (left side chimney has been removed)
Main Roof:	Small concrete tile covered coupled gablet roof
Main Roof Structure:	Coupled cut roof which has been strengthened in an A frame
Rear Roof:	Cap slide roof
Roof over covered area:	Polycarbonate
Gutters and Downpipes:	Cast iron and plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Cast iron
Wall Structure:	Structural frame likely to be timber frame with metal bracing and strengthening added (assumed)
Wall Finish:	Painted smooth cement render with wooden drip detail over the majority of the windows and no bell mouth to the base of the render
Fascias and Soffits:	Not visible
Windows and Doors:	Painted timber windows, single and double-glazed with older windows at first floor level. The owner advised new windows at ground floor level, old windows at first floor level.

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Internal

Ceilings:	Lath and plaster and plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Predominately studwork partitions to the first floor and solid partitions (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: Solid underfoot, assumed concrete (assumed)
	First Floor: Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)

Services

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage and electricity (all assumed).

Heating:	There is an electric hot water cylinder with a real coal fire with a back burner for the central heating located in the rear right side master bedroom.
Electrics:	The electrics are 1980s/1990s and are located in the entrance hallway.
Gas:	No gas
Drainage:	The two manholes are located to the left side only one of which we could lift to inspect as the other was covered over.

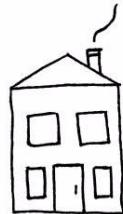
We have used the term 'assumed' as we have not opened up the structure.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor needs to check and confirm the above and advise us of anything they require further clarification on before legal commitment to purchase the property.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summaries are not ideal as they try to précis often quite complex subjects into a few paragraphs. This is particularly so in a summary about someone's future home when we are trying to second-guess what their priorities are, so it is important the Report is read in full.

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 350 photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if an issue has not been discussed that you are interested in or 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.

We have divided the Executive Summary into 'The Good', 'The Bad' and 'The Ugly', to help distinguish what in our mind are the main issues.

We have grave concerns over this property and feel there are a considerable amount of hidden problems and we consider it a high risk property to purchase.

Once you have read the report we would recommend that you revisit the property to review your thoughts on the building in light of the comments we have made in this survey.

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!

- 1.0 The property has many traditional features (although a consider amount are mock/replacements).
- 2.0 The property has potential.
- 3.0 Large roof space.

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

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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.

1.0 Roof – timber - woodworm

We found signs of frass, which are the chewed up remains of wood in the roof. We would have expected woodworm in a property of this age, unfortunately it appears that the woodworm may be active.

Frass defined

Frass is the chewed up sawdust that the woodworm has left behind.



Woodworm frass

We were shown copies of old woodworm certificates, which to some extent are irrelevant as it is what is happening today that is of concern. There is always discussion as to whether chemical woodworm treatments work over the long term and are a good thing to use.

ACTION REQUIRED: Whilst we do not consider that the woodworm is structurally significant that is present it does need to be monitored. We generally recommend the environment is changed to an environment that woodworm are unhappy to live in. We would be happy to return in the Spring of 2015 to give a further opinion.

Please see the Woodworm Section of this Report.

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2.0) Cement render rather than lime render

This is a big problem which we have explained further in the Ugly Section.

3.0) Cracking in the render

Again, we have explained this further in the Ugly Section.

4.0) Windows

Some of the windows have been updated and some of the windows are double glazed. From what we understand Listed Building Consent was not obtained or sought. You will need to be aware that you will become liable for replacing these with appropriate windows if the listed building/conservation officer was made aware of them and felt them inappropriate.



Modern replacement timber window

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal advisor to speak to the council/conservation officer to ascertain whether listed building consent should have been sought.

Please see the Windows Section of this Report.

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5.0) Asbestos

There is possible asbestos to the rear covered area (with polycarbonate roof).

Our insurance company require us to advise we are not asbestos specialists.



Base of rear lean to area with possible Asbestos

ACTION REQUIRED: The only way to be a hundred per cent certain with regards to Asbestos in a property is to have an asbestos survey carried out by a specialist asbestos company.

ANTICIPATED COST: Asbestos costs can vary considerably; we are forever surprised at the variety in quotes. Please obtain quotations.



Possible asbestos to base

Please see the Asbestos Section of this Report.

6.0) Left hand side - what is happening to it?

To the left hand side there is an empty plot which we are advised by the owner of this property that the owner of the left hand side property and area passed away fairly recently and it is not known what the plot is going to be used for.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your legal Advisor needs to check and confirm whether any development is taking place or proposed.

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7.0) Services

7.1) The real fire

Whilst a real fire can be a feature of a house it can be problematic where it also heats the radiators. From what we understand you have to have the fire alight to heat the radiators which can mean there is a time lag between the property being cold and warm as the fire is lit.



Inglenook fireplace

In the summer months we are advised that hot water is provided by the hot water cylinder located in the rear right side master bedroom.

ACTION REQUIRED: Consider this a characteristic of the building.

7.2) Radiators

Some of the radiators have micro-bore pipes which we are not keen to see as they tend to block.

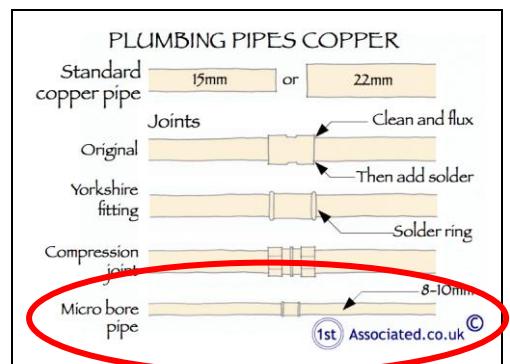
ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend that the micro-bore is replaced. We would also change any single panel radiators to double panel convection radiators.



Micro-bore pipes

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £150 - £250 per radiator depending upon the pipework repositioning; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.



Plumbing pipework

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The Ugly

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

High Risk

Unfortunately due to the Ugly issues detailed below we consider it a very high risk and we cannot recommend purchasing this property.

1.0 Cement render rather than lime render

The entirety of the external of the property has had a cement render rather than a lime render which unfortunately with a timber frame structure that this property has will accelerate deterioration.



Thickening of the render at high level



Lip on the render

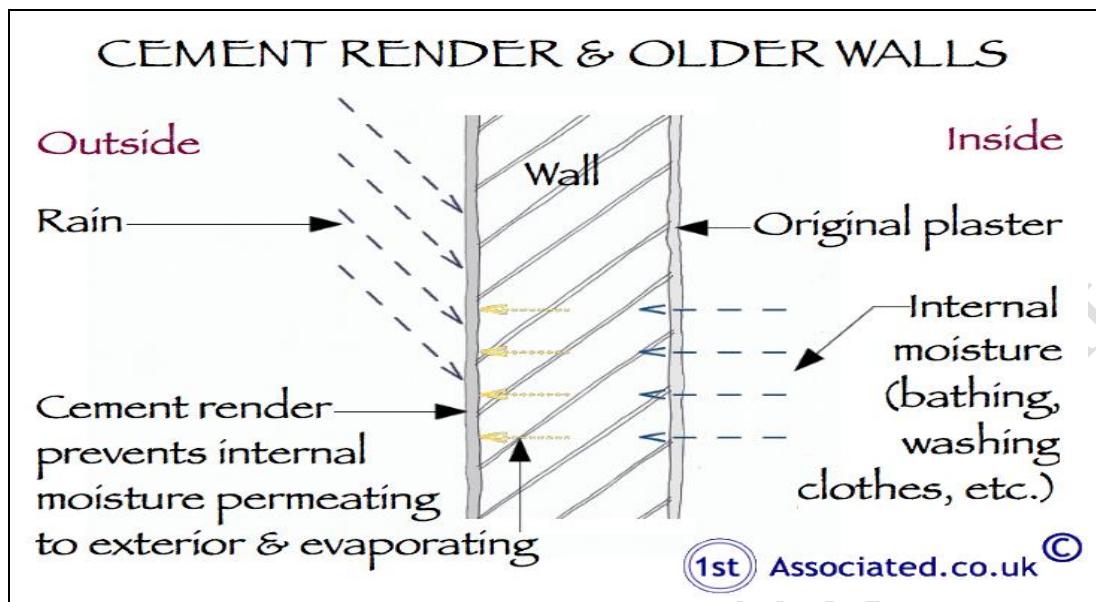
1.1) Cracking in the render

There is cracking in the render which can be caused by differential movement as you have a timber structure trying to move and it is being straight-jacketed with a cement render and modern gypsum plaster internally. In addition to this there may be other problems as indicated in the roof-spread item of this report.

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Cracks in render



Cracking to render



Cracking occurring to render



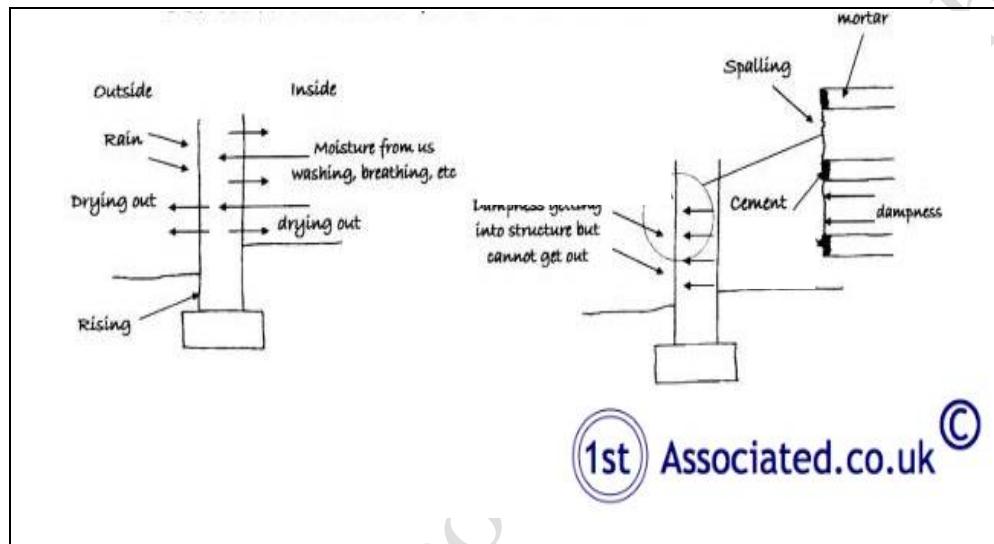
Render has cracking

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Lime Every Time – a bit more information.

Unfortunately the cement render is not appropriate for this type of construction. A cement render has been used rather than a lime render. We recommend you use lime render in any re-rendering regardless of what the builders say! Using lime render will limit further damage to the timber structure, which is very difficult to repair successfully and very costly.



ACTION REQUIRED: Ideally all of the cement render needs to be removed and replaced with a lime render to allow the property to breathe.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

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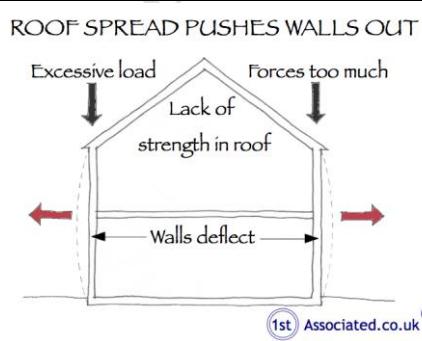
2.0 Roof Spread

The original roof is likely to have been a clay Kent peg tile which then has been replaced with a heavier concrete tile which can cause roof spread. We could see hairline cracking in the cement render which is vertical indicating that the walls are moving out or down albeit relative minor.



We would also add that with cement even the most minor movement can result in cracking.

The roof-spread may well have been occurring with the Kent peg tiles.



Roof spread

ACTION REQUIRED: There may be an option of the existing owner placing an insurance claim which you would then take over (approved by your legal advisors of course) with regard to the potential roof spread and then the insurance company could monitor for at least a year which is the recommended timescale. However this still would not get over the problem of having the cement render on the outside of the property.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

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3.0 Movement to the gable end

It can be seen that the gable end is out of vertical by approximately 15 degrees. We could also see within the roof that attempts have been made to tie the gable end in.



Gable end out of true

We could see some old iron bracing to the front of the property, which indicates there has been an attempt to tie-in the structure, which appears far older than the concrete small roof tiles that are likely to have been added in the 1970s.



Bracing running from front to rear

From what we could see there was once a chimney to the left side of the property. In this era of property the chimneys were also a structural element so removal of the chimney may have resulted in movement in the property. We assume the chimney has been removed because the doors have been moved from the front of the property, as we could see in an old picture, to the left side. We believe that this property may well have been two cottages in years gone by as often people used to live in much smaller homes.

Our concern is that the movement would put many purchasers off. A worst case scenario would be that the gable end falls off. As it is a gable end wall it does not take as much weight as the front and back walls.

ACTION REQUIRED: Monitor.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

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4.0) Spine beams not tied in

We could see a spine beam within the roof which is an essential beam that you need as the name implies which we could not see how this was tied in. There is also a beam which we could not see how it was tied in within the bedroom. These timbers may form part of the modernisation in years gone by.

Unfortunately we would have to open up the structure to confirm how these were tied in. It could be contributing to both any movement that is taking place in the roof and also the gable end.



Beam does not look to be tied
into the frame



Spine beam not tied into frame
within the roof

ACTION REQUIRED: Open up the structure to check and confirm. We would be happy to return and comment further.

5.0) Rising Damp

We have taken damp meter readings, which indicate that there is rising damp to the walls. We are not surprised with this given the modern material construction on an older property, which is stopping the property from breathing.



Damp meter reading indicating
rising damp

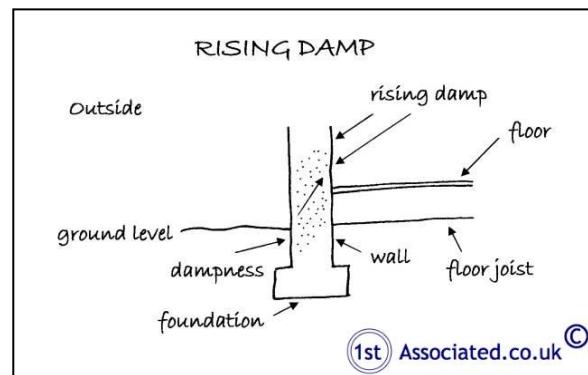
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Rising damp defined:

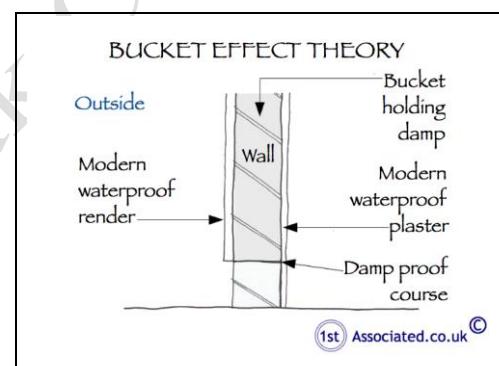
Rising damp depends upon various components including the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation of the material, amongst other things. Rising damp can come from the ground, drawn by capillary

action, to varying degrees of intensity and height into the materials above. Much evidence points towards there being true rising damp in only very rare cases.



Rising damp

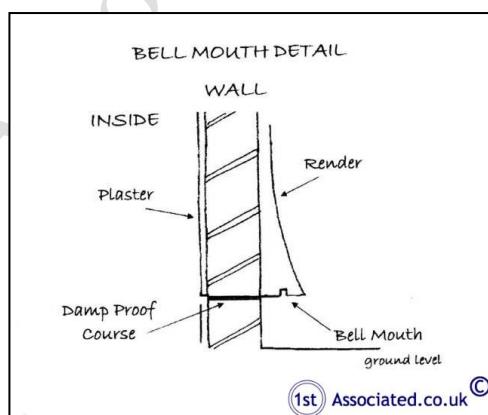
We were shown Damp Proof Certificates and would comment that inserting damp proof is usually completely wrong for this era of property as it creates a bucket effect.



The bucket effect

Bell mouth to base of property

We also noted to the base of the render there was no bell mouth detail.



Bell mouth detail



No bell mouth detail

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ACTION REQUIRED: Removal of cement render externally and cement/modern gypsum plaster internally and replace with lime based render and plaster which would then allow the property to breathe. Add bell mouth as this would help with the dampness.

We would recommend in the short term that the ground level around the edge of the property is reduced slightly and an effort is made to ensure that all gutters and downpipes are watertight and discharge rainwater away from the property.



Clear gutters regularly

ANTICIPATED COST: To lower the ground level a few hundred pounds/a DIY type job. To add a bell mouth in the region of £2,500 - £3,500. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Damp Section of this Report.

Summary

We have found more than the average number of things that we would classify as Bad and many which are Ugly. This is a high risk purchase and we would not recommend purchasing the property.

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Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Maintenance

It should be appreciated that defects, which would normally be highlighted in a modern property, effectively form part of an older property's overall character and style. Such character defects are normally considered acceptable and may not have been specifically referred to as defects within the context of this Report. The Report is looking at structural issues which we consider may be a problem.

This type of property will require ongoing maintenance and repair and a budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in good condition. This will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration. In this case we believe there has been some inappropriate maintenance for the age of the property.

Getting to know more about older properties - SPAB course

We would recommend that you go on a Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) weekend course on looking after and maintaining older properties. Even if you do not intend to carry out the work yourself it does give you a far better idea of what work should be carried out. The website for this is www.SPAB.org.

Services

Whilst we have carried out a visual inspection only of the services within the property and we would always recommend you have your own specific testing for each of the services. We also need to advise you of the following:

Electrics

The Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE) recommend a test and report whenever a property changes occupancy. This should be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

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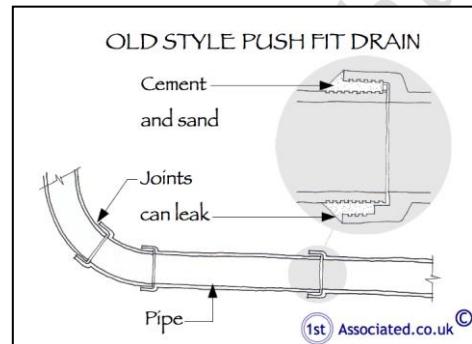


Heating

It was warm at the time we were in the property as the heating was on but we nevertheless recommend that old service records are obtained and/or tested.

Drainage

In older properties, such as this, drainage was often push fitted together rather than bonded together which means that they may leak over the years. Whilst we ran the tap for 15 minutes without any build up or blockages the only way to be 100% certain of the condition of the drains is to have a closed circuit TV camera report.



Push fit drain

Water Supply

There is danger in older properties of having a lead water supply; we would recommend that you speak to the water company to ask them if they have carried out such replacement, as you will be re-piping much of the water used in the building it gives an ideal opportunity to also check for any remaining lead pipes.

ACTION REQUIRED – SERVICES: We would reiterate that we recommend with regard to all services that you have an independent check by a specialist contractor.

DIY/Handyman Type Work

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as redecorating to turn the property into your home. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

Purchase Price

We have not been asked to comment upon the purchase price in this instance, we have however referred you to sources of general information on the

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housing market within the Information on the Property Market Section, which can be found in the Appendices at the end of the Report.

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Estimates of Building 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 and estimates can of course vary from area to area when giving a general indication of costs. For unskilled labour we currently use between £75 and £125 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 usually be best to have work supervised if it is complex, both of which we can do if so required.

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SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



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

In theory the cement render can be removed and the timbers checked and repaired as necessary together with an insurance claim with regard to the roof spread and movement in the property. We feel that this is a blank cheque scenario to some extent and only the sort of thing that would generally be taken on by a very enthusiastic listed buildings person or a builder/developer who saw other potential in the property such as dividing in two or developing on the land. As mentioned we consider it very high risk and we would not recommend purchasing the property.

We would refer you to our comments in the Executive Summary, ‘Good’, ‘Bad’ and ‘Ugly’ Section and ask that you re-read these.

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 in full and contact us on any issues that you require further clarification on.

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MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT

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

TENURE – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)

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

ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

It is important to remember that the estate agents are acting for the seller (usually known as the vendor) and not the purchaser and are therefore eager to sell the property (no sale – no fee!). We are employed as Independent Chartered Surveyors and offer an independent point of view.

SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR

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

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS

This report is being carried out under our terms of engagement for Building Surveys, as agreed to and signed by yourselves. If you have not seen or are not happy with the terms of engagement please phone immediately 0800 298 5424 or email the secretary from which this survey came from.

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 property purchase - just phone us.

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

From our investigations the property is Grade II Listed and/or falls within a Conservation Area (your Legal Advisor should confirm this and make their own enquiries) and as such it will require various permissions to be obtained before work is carried out, over and above that normally required and possibly the use of appropriate materials for the age, type and style of property.

As this is a Grade II Listed building you will become liable for any amendments not in keeping with Grade II Listed consent requirement such as the windows.

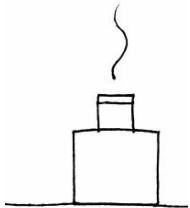


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EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS, FLUES AND DORMER WINDOWS



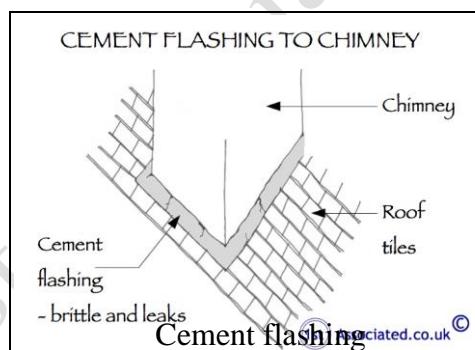
Chimney Stacks

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.

There is one chimney to this property, which is located to the right side and sits on the Party Wall (all directions given as you face the property).

Chimney – right side

This chimney is render finished with a cement flashing and no chimney pots. From what we could see from ground level it looked in slightly below average condition considering its age, type and style due to the cement flashing.



Chimney from front of the property



Chimney viewed from rear

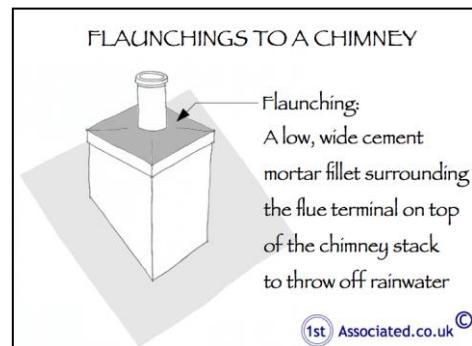
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Unfortunately we were unable to see the top of the chimney properly known as the flaunching, we therefore cannot comment upon them.

ACTION REQUIRED: Replace

cement flashing with a lead flashing.
Periodically inspect the chimney.



Flaunchings

Chimney Two – gable end

We believe a second chimney was present to the left hand side (all directions given as you face the front of the property) but has been removed some time ago possibly to give access into the side of the property via the door.

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.

Flaunchings Defined

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

Cement Fillets/Cement Flashings Defined

This is where cement has been used to cover up or fill the junctions between two areas, for example between a roof and a wall to help prevent dampness. Cement is a brittle material and prone to cracking which in turn allows dampness into the structure. We would always recommend the use of lead flashings.

Render Defined

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

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Dormer Windows

Dormer windows are often used where rooms are formed within the roof space and have the advantage of allowing light into the area and also giving the head space to allow them to be stood next to.

The dormer window roof is made from the same material as the main roof , the cheeks of the dormer are made in render and the windows are made in painted timber. Generally we could comment for their age, type and style they are in average condition. This is a new window – please see our comments in the Window Section regarding new windows and listed buildings.



Dormer window

Finally, Dormer windows have been viewed from ground level and literally from the dormer windows themselves.

Party Walls

The party wall relates to shared items, such as the chimneys and the firewalls. If you do any work on these you will need to work within the Party Wall Act. Here is a brief explanation of it. We recommend you seek professional advice on party wall work.

Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

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

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

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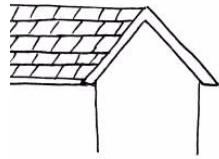


Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the chimney stacks and dormer windows from the parts we could see above roof level. The inspection was made from ground level within the boundaries of the property (unless otherwise stated) using a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera.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

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

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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.

Dependent upon the age of your property and the type of construction a protective underlayer may or may not be present, please read on:

We will consider the roofs in three areas:-

1. The main roof
2. The rear roof
3. Cap slide roof

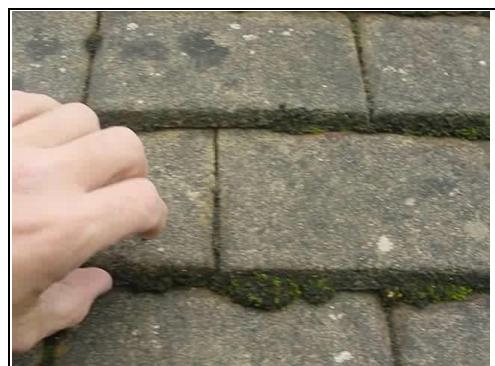
Main Pitched Roof

The roof is pitched and clad with small concrete tiles and, from ground level, this looks in average condition considering the roofs age type and style other than we would not have put a concrete tile roof like this onto this age of property. There is moss gathering on the roof as there often is with concrete tile roofs which you need to sooner or later remove.



Main roof

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments regarding the roof in the Executive Summary. Carry out periodic inspections and maintenance of the roof, as required.



Moss gathering on roof tiles

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Roof detailing

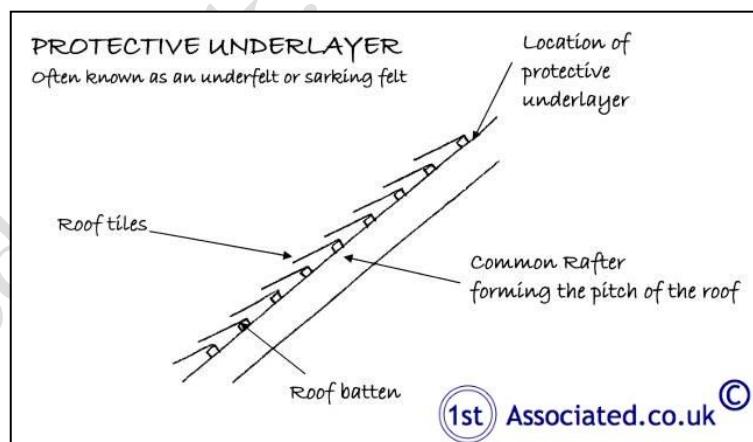
There is some poor quality roof detailing with cement mortar etc, which ultimately will crack one way or another and allow rainwater in. We would much prefer to see a lead flashing which moves with the structure rather than fighting against the structure. It could be argued that this is next doors detail but it is likely to affect this property first.



Poor quality roof detailing

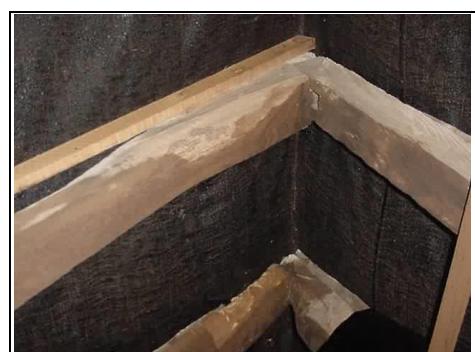
Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)

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.



Protective Underlayer

When we inspected the loft space we found a Hessian base Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s. We generally found it to be in average condition, with damage in some areas, which is what we typically find.



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

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Rear cap slide roof

The roof is a cap slide roof with concrete tiles as the main roof. The cap slide is an extension of an existing roof which was fairly common in years gone by. This was added to allow the kitchen extension. We would add that it may be this cap slide roof and the extension that are limiting the movement in the building. Unfortunately it would take a years worth of monitoring as recommended by the Building Research Establishment to be certain of this.



Rear cap slide roof

Rear low level roof

The property has a rear polycarbonate low level roof with poor detailing. This is very shallow pitched and we could not be certain that it is watertight. We can see that repairs/flashband has been used around it

Flashband Defined

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



Rear low level roof

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to decide whether this area is useful or whether you wish to renew it. If it is to be kept we would recommend replacement of the roof and an increasing of the height.



Poor detailing to rear low level roof

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £750 - £1,500; quotations required

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All the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera.

Finally, we were only able to see approximately ninety percent of the main roof 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.

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ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT

(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

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

Main Roof

Roof Access

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing and the rear left bedroom. Although there was a light in the roof it was relatively dim so we had to use our torches to the perimeters and to the rear of the roof which has limited our viewing slightly.

Roof Structure

This property has a coupled cut roof which has been strengthened in an A frame.

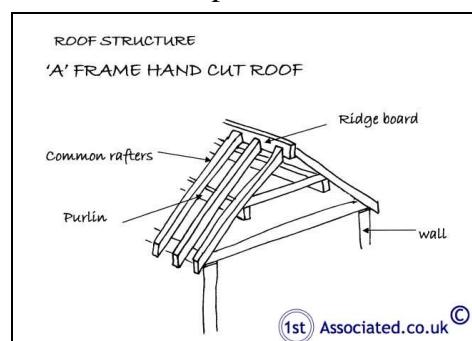
The areas of concern in this particular case are:

- 1) The woodworm
- 2) We do not believe the roof is tied sufficiently with collars although obviously it has stood for many years.

The combination of factors such as the cement floor and the cement render to the walls mean that the building as a whole cannot move and cope with additional movement found in a timber framed property.



Coupled roof



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Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

1. Serious active woodworm
2. Structurally significant defects to the timbers
3. Structurally significant dry rot
4. Structurally significant wet rot



General view of roof

Our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof, the insulation and stored items. What we could see was generally found to be in slightly below average condition considering its age. It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.

ACTION REQUIRED: The only way to be 100 per cent certain is to have the roof cleared and checked.

Replacement and Back to Backing of Timbers

We could see that there have been repairs to the timbers which is quite common in older properties to have replacement timbers. Many of these have been re-used in other constructions. Or, the adding of additional timbers in what is known as back to backing, where timbers are strengthened by timbers being added back to back.



Back to backing of timbers

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Re-used timber and
approximately half of it cut



Close up of backing of timbers

Woodworm

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

Fire Walls

The property has a brick firewall which is located to the right side (all directions given as you face the property). The firewalls are also Party Walls.

Fire Walls Defined

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



Firewall

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Water Tanks

The property has a plastic water tank which is un-insulated and without a cover.

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



Un-insulated water tank

Ventilation

No ventilation.

Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

Electrical Cables

We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of wiring found in the roof. In this case we could see a number of these, some of which were old.

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



Wiring in the roof

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

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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 cast iron and plastic gutters and downpipes.

Cast Iron gutters and downpipes

The property has older cast iron gutters and downpipes. The condition is fairly typical of what we see; they are in average condition for their age, type and style. Cast iron of this age will need maintenance. If regularly maintained it lasts longer than plastic, in our experience.



Guttering

Plastic Gutters and Downpipes

In some areas the gutters and downpipes have been replaced with plastic.

There may be some minor leaks but most people would be happy to live with these providing repairs are carried out within the next six to twelve months.



Awkward gutter and downpipe detail

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Moss

There is some moss building up on the concrete tiles as is often the case. You need to ensure this is cleaned in due course and any that gets in the gutters is cleaned.

ACTION REQUIRED: Clear moss. We would recommend you stand outside the property next time it rains heavily and see how well the drains cope with the rainwater particularly looking at the guttering and the joints.

We also 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

The property has two cast iron soil and vent pipes one used located to the left of the property which aligns with the bathroom and one unused located to the right of the property which does not align with anything in this property; we assume it may be used by next door. Cast iron of this age can crack and rust and needs regular maintenance.



Soil and vent pipe to left of property

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.

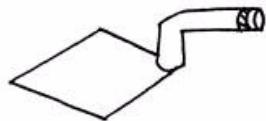


Unused soil and vent pipe to right of property

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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.

Whilst the property is traditional timber frame it will have infill panels, which could be traditional parjeting render, or herringbone brickwork or modern cement render.

The timber frame structure comes first then larger areas of wall construction, smaller areas are secondary.

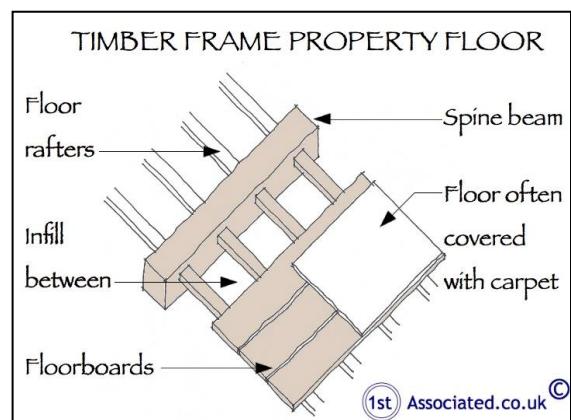
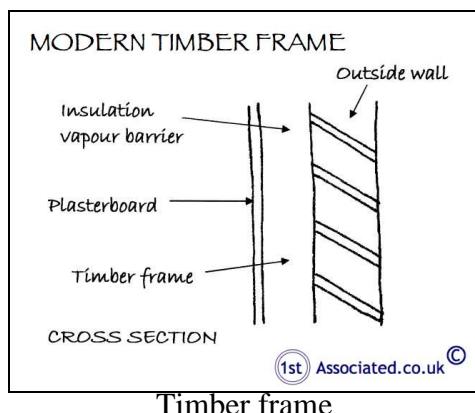


The walls are constructed using a traditional timber structure with painted smooth cement render.

Painted cement rendered walls covering timber frame

Timber Structure

It is possible given the age of this property that it was not built in locally sourced materials. Traditional timber frame buildings were the way we built for many centuries, although few survive from before 1500. We continued to build in timber to the 1800 century, mainly using Oak and Elm, but as timber supplies reduced other timbers were used and we moved to non-local materials, particularly as the sea, canal and rail systems developed.



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Main Timber Frame Walls

Traditional timber frame buildings work as whole units forming both the walls and roof and built in bays with infill timbers and panels with wattle and daub, replaced later with other materials.

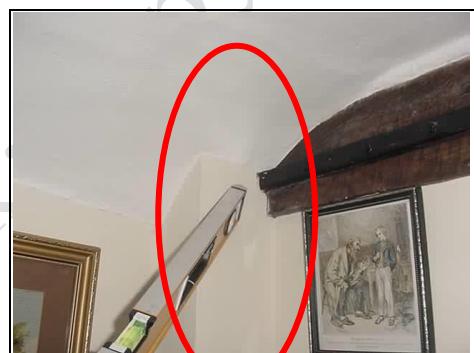
These buildings are typically listed and require care and regular maintenance.



Wattle and daub

Bracing straps

We could see bracing straps. We would refer you to our comments with regards to collars in the Roof Section. All of these are to stop movement to the front and rear walls. This type of bracing we would suggest is pre-war however it may have been added as part of the refurbishment programme.



Bracing straps

Timber lintels and bonding timbers

Before the 19th Century, the practice of building timbers into external walls was almost universal. These were known as bonding timbers. They are of course prone to rot as solid walls allow dampness through. Unfortunately, without opening up the structure, we are unable to confirm if this is the case. During our question and answer session the owner advised that they had checked the lintels when replacing the windows and they were all okay.

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False and fake timbers

This timber did not fall in with the pattern of the structure and during our question and answer session the owner confirmed that he had added it. Unfortunately he had not remembered to mention it earlier until we pointed it out.



Fake timbers

Render

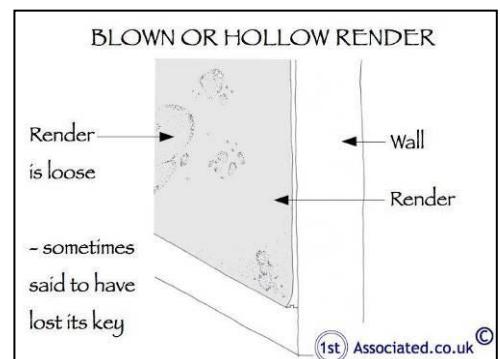
The external walls are finished in a smooth faced painted render.



Render at gable end

We have carried out a tap test (literally hitting the render with the back of a hammer). We found it to be in average condition. The problem is it is a cement render.

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



Blown or hollow render

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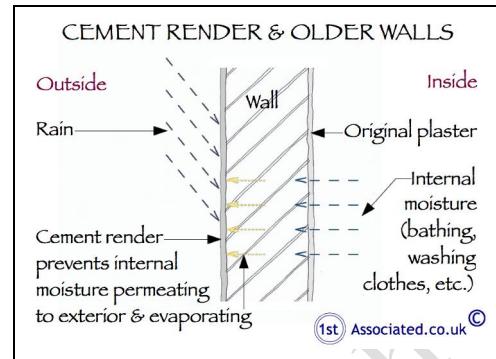
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Cracking in the render

There is cracking in the render.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Cement render



Cracks in render



Cracking to render



Cracking occurring to render



Render has cracking

Render Detailing

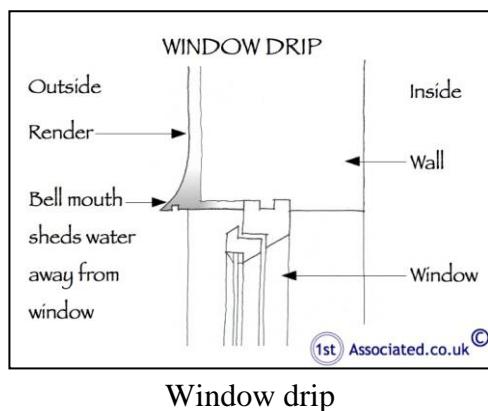
You can normally tell whether the render is good or not by the drip detail over the window and the bell mouth to the base of the property.

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Window drip detail

In this case we found a drip detail to the windows.



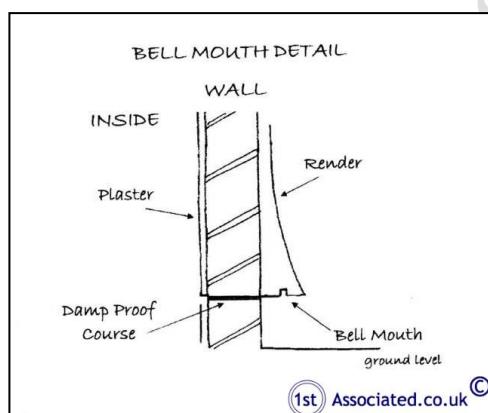
Window drip



Drip detail to window

Bell mouth to base of property

To the base of the render there was no bell mouth detail.



Bell mouth detail



No bell mouth detail

ACTION REQUIRED: Add bell mouth as this would help with the dampness. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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Angle bead

We noted rusting due to the wrong angle bead being used.



Rusting

Painted render/painted walls

Do not underestimate the amount of time/cost it will take to repaint the property particularly as there is high level work which is likely to need scaffolding which can be expensive.

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 traditional timber frame / render / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age timber lintels or metal lintel 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 traditional timber frame / render / plaster has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the traditional timber frame / 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 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.

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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.

Foundations

In a property such as this it is likely to have a mixture of foundations, due to the property being extended and/or altered over the years.

We would expect this to include shallow foundations or stone/brick foundations to the original property. To the rear extension where the kitchen is we would expect stone/brick foundations or a concrete foundation. Unfortunately there was no information with regard to the refurbishment and the extension of the property available from the existing owners.

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.

It is your responsibility to check out prior to commitment to purchase that insurance is available on the property on the basis of the things we have reported in the survey. Much as we would like to we are unable to keep up with the changing insurance market and give you advice with regard to this.

Cracks

Please remember to talk about any cracks identified within the property. Often insurers will refer to progressive and non-progressive cracking. Unfortunately this is something we are unable to comment upon from a one-off inspection; the Building Research Establishment recommend a year of monitoring of any cracking.

We would refer you to our comments with regard to building insurance throughout this report.

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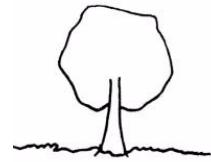
Finally, we have not excavated the foundations but we have drawn conclusions from our inspection and our general knowledge of this type, age and style of property.

We would always recommend that you remain with the existing insurance company of the 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.

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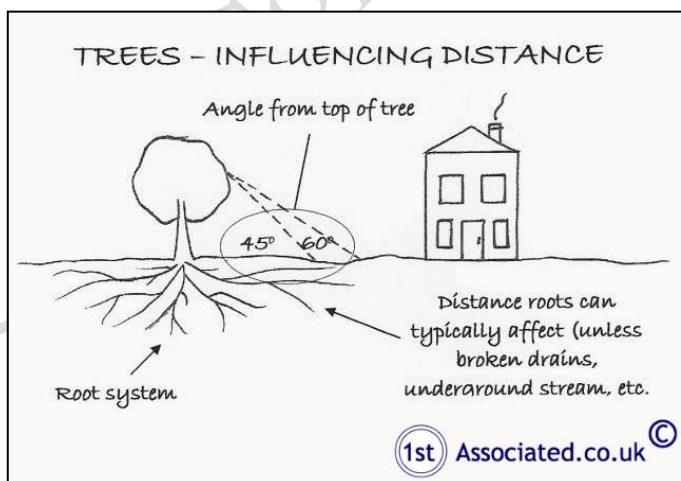
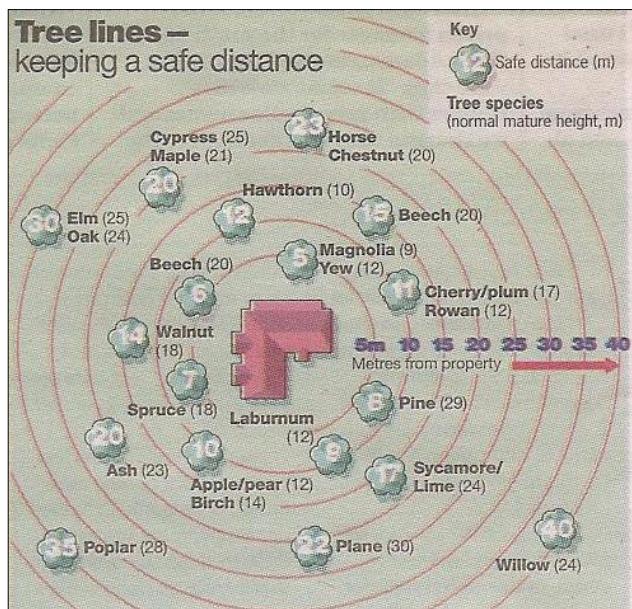




TREES

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

There are no trees within what we would term as influencing distance but you do need to speak to your insurance company as they may have a different interpretation for insurance reasons.



Influencing distance of trees to a property

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.

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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.

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

Old damp proof reports and woodworm reports that we were shown

We were shown damp proof course and woodworm reports which made interesting reading, not because of the damp proofing or woodworm treatments it was because of the description they gave of the property. The description explained that the property had a timber floor rather than a concrete one it has now and also it seemed to imply that there was no access into the roof, which is what we sometimes find on older properties.

Your attention is drawn to the section of the report specifically dealing with dampness.

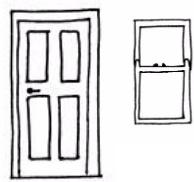
Finally, sometimes it is difficult for us to identify if there is a damp proof course in a property. We have made our best assumptions based upon our general knowledge of the age, type and style of this property.

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FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



This section covers fascias, soffits and bargeboards and windows and doors, and any detailing such as brick corbeling 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.

Bargeboards, Fascias and Soffits

As far as we could see there were not any fascias or soffit boards. There were bargeboards in the form of thickening of the render to the gable end which could be covering over timber beneath; it was impossible to confirm from ground level.

Windows and Doors

The property has a mixture of single glazed and double glazed timber windows with many of the windows on the ground floor replaced and some on the first floor not replaced.

From what we understand Listed Building Consent was not obtained or sought. You will need to be aware that you will become liable for replacing these with appropriate windows if the listed building/conservation officer was made aware of them and felt them inappropriate.



Modern replacement timber window



Rusting to hinges

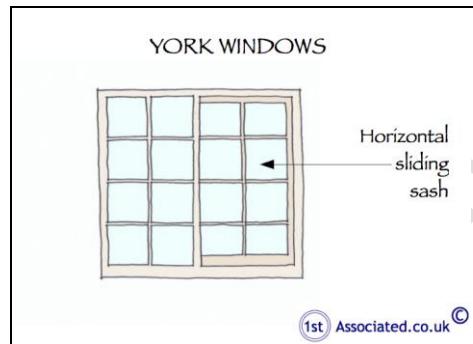
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On the first floor there is a horizontal sliding sash window sometimes known as a York window which are particularly old windows and a nice feature.



York window



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Knife Test

We have tested the windows by pushing a knife into a random selection. We generally tend to do the lower windows as access is easier.



Knife test

Double glazed windows

The plastic double glazed windows without trickle vents, which generally look to be of an average quality. We would draw your attention to the fact that sealed double glazed units can fail, particularly as a result of poor workmanship during installation. Failure of the seal leads to condensation between the two panes of glass and simply replacing the affected units may not provide a satisfactory long-term solution.

Transferable Guarantees

Although these windows are old enquiries should be made as to the existence of any transferable guarantees by your legal advisor. Generally it is considered that double glazed units have a life of about ten years.

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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.

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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.

The external decoration is in average condition. We would expect redecoration in the next two to three years. Do not underestimate the amount of time/cost it will take to repaint the property particularly as there is high level work which is likely to need scaffolding which can be expensive.

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.

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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.

Ceiling Construction

The ceilings have exposed timber beams, the primary main larger beams are known as the spine beams, with the inter-connecting ceiling / floor rafters.

Often these timbers are re-used timbers, used sideways as it was more practical but this leads to higher levels of deflection than usual in modern properties.



Spine beam that does not tie in



Peg fixing spine beam not tied in

Where we could see the ceilings from the roof space we could see that they were lath and plaster. There is plasterboard/gypsum plaster to the newer areas such as the kitchen.

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Advised by owner the mark in ceiling was due to wife's poor decorating skills rather than roof leak



Slightly rounded ceiling in rear bedroom indicates the possibility of cold bridging



Lath in ceiling overclad



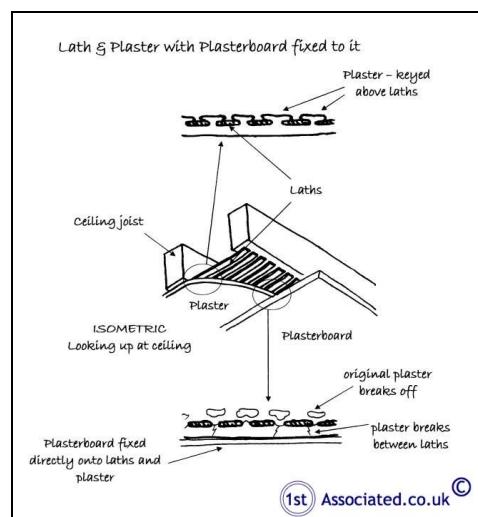
Lath and plaster ceiling

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.

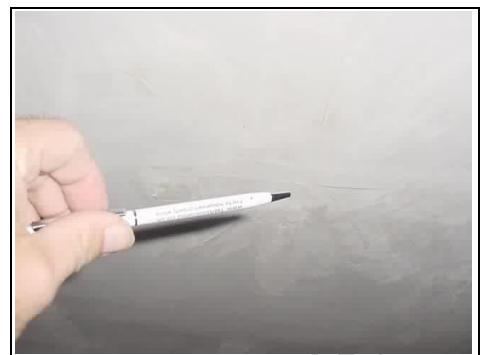


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Cracking

Cracking is due to a mixture of old and new plasters.



Hairline cracking

Internal Walls and Partitions

Typically this age of building was built in timber bays. These bays have structural elements within the property that form what we would term as primary and secondary timbers.

Perimeter Walls

The perimeter walls were all reasonably decorated. We would refer you to our comments with regard to dampness.

Sole plate

Often the most important part of these is the sole plate, which is at the base of a wall which can be affected by dampness, causing wet rot and dry rot and general deterioration as this ground floor sole plate effectively forms the base of the timber frame. In most cases it is very difficult/impossible to see so we have to make assumptions. In this case we simply cannot see it. Our concern is that as the property is covered with cement render, meaning it cannot breathe, and as there is dampness at ground floor level it could have deteriorated badly. Alternatively we have come across cases where it has been replaced completely in refurbishment. Unfortunately without opening up the structure we cannot confirm.

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.

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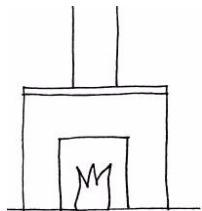


xxxxxxxxxxxxxx, xxxxxx, Kent. CT6 xxx

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.

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CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES

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

The chimney breasts are located to the right side and left side (all directions given as you face the front of the property). At the time of the survey the fire was in use and the property was very warm.

We could see dampness coming in via the chimney breast found within the roof.

We believe a chimney has been removed.
Please see our earlier comments.



Dampness to chimney breast in roof



Inglenook fireplace



Mark on fireplace where knives were sharpened according to current owner



Fireplace in master bedroom

Finally, we will comment on the condition of the chimney breast where we can see the chimney breast. If we can see a chimney breast has been removed we will inspect for signs of movement and advise. However, often the chimney breasts are hidden so we cannot comment. Also additional support can be concealed very well when chimney breasts are hidden particularly when plastered over.

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Your Legal Advisor needs to specifically check with the Local Authority for removed chimneys and associated chimney breasts and Building Regulations Approvals and advise by e-mail immediately if chimney breasts are found to have been removed. We would recommend opening up the structure to check the condition. If we are not advised we will assume the relevant Building Regulations Approval has been obtained.

It is strongly recommended that flues be cleaned and checked for obstructions prior to use to minimise the risk of hazardous fumes entering the building.

Please also see the Chimney Stacks, Flues Section of this report.

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FLOORS



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

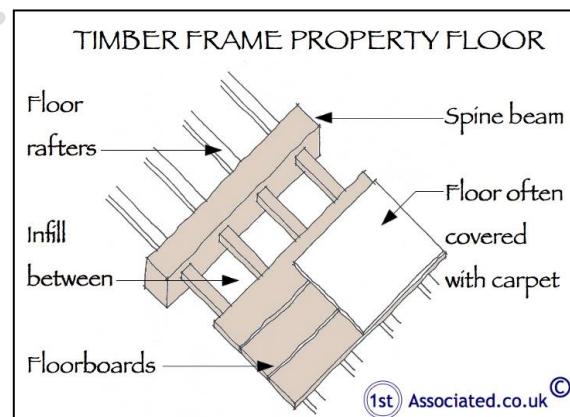
Ground Floor

We have assumed that originally the ground floor construction is tiles on earth or trampled earth. Over the years this has been replaced with concrete. Unfortunately concrete does mean that the base of the floor is being held in place. We often describe this as if it is asking you to walk while holding onto your ankles as the building struggles to move as it should which can cause problems.

Our investigation has been restricted due to us not opening up the floor or lifted the carpets/floor coverings.

First Floor

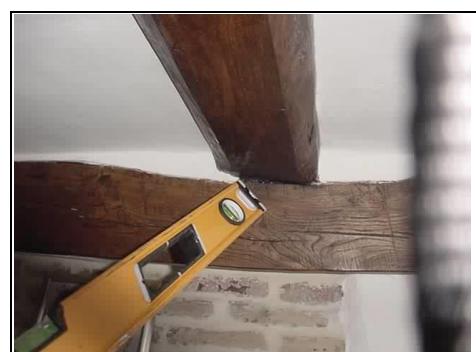
The first floor construction is exposed timber beams, with the main spine beam and inter-connecting floor joists making the structural frame. This then is covered by floor boards. Originally these floor boards were wider than we typically have today.



There can be more deflection to this type of floor than in a modern floor due to the use of timber on the side in the floor construction as it was more practical way to build.

As with most older properties the floors are uneven and you may need to pack underneath the furniture. This is caused by general settlement and movement within the property over the years.

Traditional timber frame floor



Spine beam that does not tie in

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Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with fitted carpets, floor coverings, 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.

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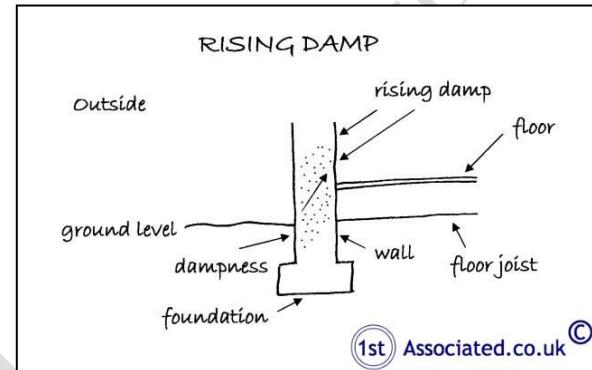


DAMPNESS

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. Much evidence points towards there being true rising damp in only very rare cases.



Rising damp

A visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we have found significant rising damp.



Testing for rising damp

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

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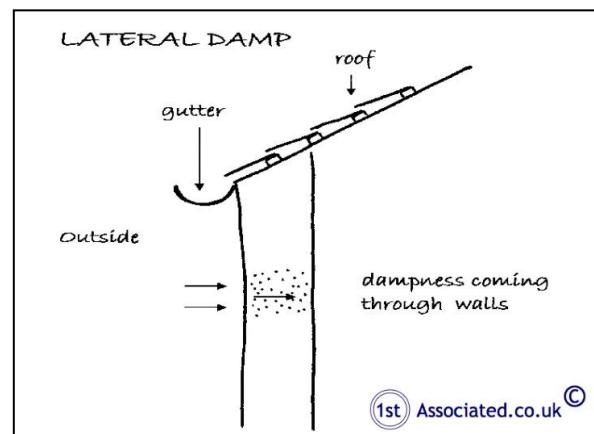
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Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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 used a resistance meter on the external walls. We have found dampness in line with what we typically see for this age, type and style of property.



Lateral dampness

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



Damp plaster to chimney breast

Condensation

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

At the time of the inspection there were no signs of condensation however this type of property is prone, where it has a roof partly built into the room (the curved section).

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, cooling and ventilation of properties and opening windows to air the property regularly.

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Extract fans in kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas

A way of helping to reduce condensation is to have good large extract fans with humidity controlled thermostats within the kitchens and bathrooms and also in any areas where you intend to dry clothes which are moisture generating areas.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend large humidity controlled extract fans be added to kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas.

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.

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INTERNAL JOINERY



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

Doors

The property has Victorian style timber doors.



Victorian style timber door

Staircase

We noted that the underside of the staircase was exposed. It is more normal today to have a half hour fire barrier to stop fire spreading from the ground floor to the first floor in a worse case scenario. You may wish to take a view on whether you add this.



Unlined staircase

Kitchen

We found the kitchen in average condition. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

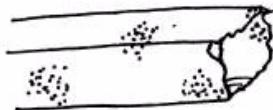
Finally, it should be noted that not all joinery has been inspected. We have viewed a random sample and visually inspected these to give a general overview of the condition. Please also see the External Joinery/Detailing section.

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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 have not visually seen any significant dry rot during the course of our inspection. We would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had a limited view of the roof however of course the majority of the structure is hidden by the cement render and the plaster.

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 have not visually seen any signs of significant wet rot during the course of our inspection however of course the majority of the structure is hidden by the cement render and the plaster.

Again, we would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had a limited view of the roof.

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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 roof is the main area that we look for woodworm as well as the actual traditional timber structural frame. Within the roof we found visual signs of significant woodworm activity or indeed signs of significant past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage.

In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection is usually restricted by insulation covering some of the timbers and general stored items in the roof, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings.



Frass indicating woodworm

Old damp proof reports and woodworm reports that we were shown

We were shown damp proof course and woodworm reports which made interesting reading, not because of the damp proofing or woodworm treatments it was because of the description they gave of the property. The description explained that the property had a timber floor rather than a concrete one it has now and also it seemed to imply that there was no access into the roof, which is what we sometimes find on older properties.

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

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

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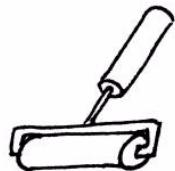
do not state if the woodworm they have found is ‘active’. You should ask them specifically if the woodworm is active or not.

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.

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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.

Internal decorations are in average condition. You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste.

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.

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THERMAL EFFICIENCY

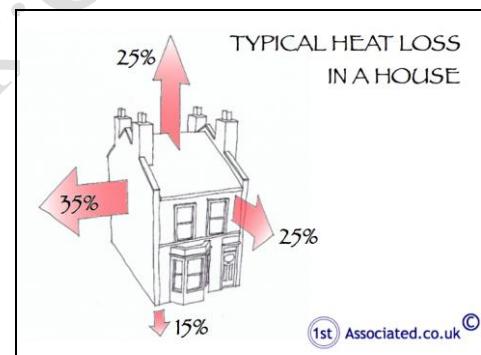


This property was built a long time before modern methods of insulation were considered. We have only given real thought and consideration to the insulation of properties since the fuel crisis of the 1970's. Since then insulation standards have increased considerably and today we are looking at typically 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, particularly with older properties, that they 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, particularly of this age, as it can lead to timber deterioration and other problems.

Roofs

Although current regulations recommend a lot of insulation in the roofs (currently 300mm) this is not necessarily the best thing for a timber frame building as it can promote condensation and an ideal environment for woodworm. You should ensure that the roofs remain well ventilated; the more insulation the better they need to be ventilated.



Typical heat loss

Walls

The walls to this property are solid in the sense that they do not have a cavity as a modern property would have. Also they are unlikely to have any substantial insulation, however, unfortunately it is generally very difficult to improve the insulation without affecting the external or the internal appearance of the property.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Adviser to check and confirm if there is insulation within the walls and whether it was installed originally or not.

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Windows

The windows are a mixture of single and double glazed and therefore will have poor / reasonable thermal properties.

Services

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

Summary

Assuming the above is correct, this property is average for its age, type and style compared with what we typically see.

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

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

or alternatively www.cat.org.uk (Centre for Alternative Technology)

*or Sustainable Energy Without the Hot Air by David J C MacKay
HTTP://www.withouthotair.com/Videos.html to download for free or buy a paper copy as we did.*

It is worth watching the video How Many Light Bulbs? by David J C MacKay – can be viewed on YouTube

SPAB (Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings are currently researching how best to insulate older properties and it is worth checking their website for the latest information at www.SPAB.org

HIPs

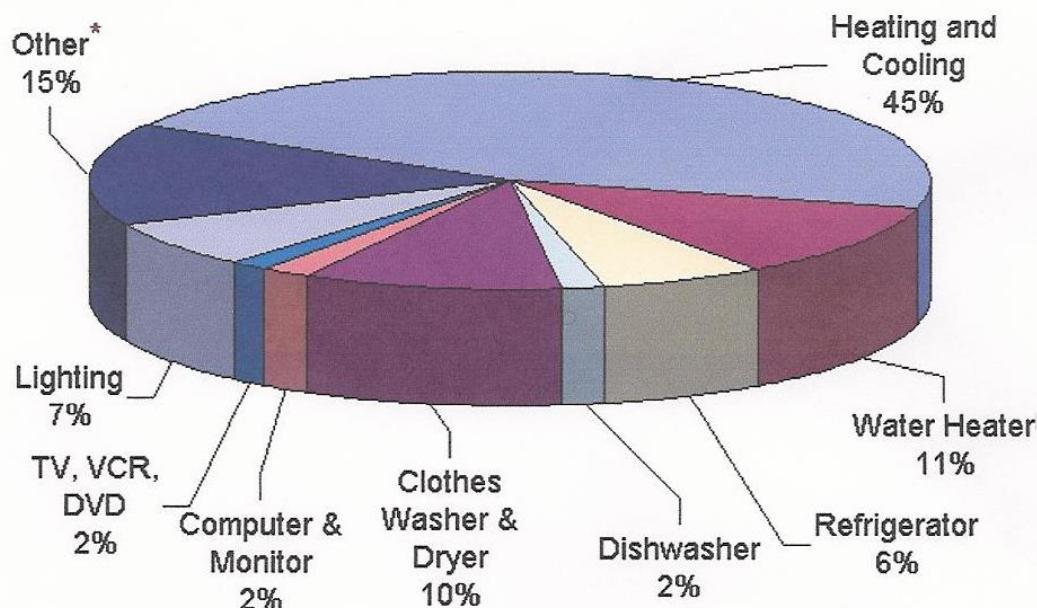
We understand that HIPs were suspended from 20th May 2010. Energy Performance Certificates are required before a sale completes.

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Finally, we would comment that energy we feel will become a major consideration in years to come, particularly with the greater focus in modern buildings on energy efficiency.

What does my energy bill pay for?



* "Other" represents an array of household products, including stoves, ovens, microwaves, and small appliances. Individually, these products account for no more than about 2% of a household's energy bills.

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OTHER MATTERS

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

Security

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

Fire / Smoke Alarms

With older properties it is particularly important to have a good fire / smoke alarm system, as often they are built from many burnable elements.

Some smoke detectors were noted, some without batteries. The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply. Obviously in a property of this age this is difficult, as it would mean having surface mounted wires or cutting wiring into the plaster.



Smoke alarm without battery

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend, for your own safety, that smoke detectors be installed. We would always recommend a hard wired fire alarm system and are also aware that some now work from a wireless signal which may be worth investigating. Whilst fire is relatively rare it is in a worse case scenario obviously devastating.

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.

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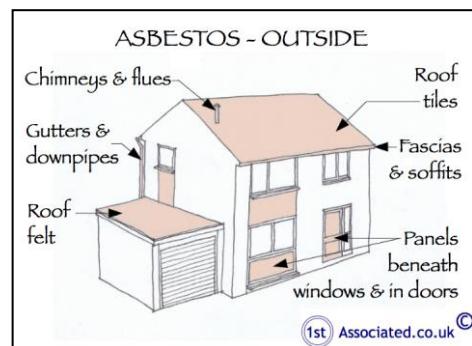


We would refer you to our comments with regard to building insurance throughout this report.

Asbestos

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. In this case we have noted asbestos.

In years gone by asbestos was commonly used as wood and can be found in all sorts of places. Asbestos was used post war until it was banned only in the UK in the last ten years or so. It is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time where products were imported from countries where it is not banned.



Asbestos externally

We are Building Surveyors and not Asbestos Surveyors and as such the only way to be a hundred per cent certain with regards to Asbestos in a property is to have an Asbestos report carried out.

ACTION REQUIRED: If you wish to confirm you are 100 percent free of asbestos you need to have an asbestos survey carried out.

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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.

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ELECTRICITY



It is strange to think that electricity only started to be used in domestic properties at the turn of the 19th 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

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the entrance hallway. The fuse board looked dated 1970s/1980s and better are now available. In an older property a defective fuse board can be particularly dangerous.



Fuse Board

Earth Test

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



Earth Test

ACTION REQUIRED: As the property is changing occupancy an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test and report is required, carried

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out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

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 1st January 2005. Any comments made within this report or verbally do not change this requirement.

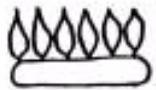
For basic general information on this matter please see the appendices at the end of this report.

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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 Gas Safe registered plumber.

We are advised that the property does not have mains gas.

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PLUMBING AND HEATING

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

Water Supply

We were advised by the owner that the controlling stopcock is located in the bathroom next to the bath.

The stopcock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness.



Stopcock

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

Cold Water Cistern

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

Hot Water Cylinder

There is a factory insulated hot water cylinder located within the bedroom cupboard. This cylinder will therefore have a good thermal efficiency, although not as good as the more modern hot water cylinders.



Hot water cylinder

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Plumbing

We are using this term to refer to supply pipes, wash hand basins, sinks, etc. Where visible it comprises of copper piping. No significant leakage was noted on the surface, although most of the pipework is concealed in floors, walls and ducts.

Heating

There is an electric hot water cylinder with a real coal fire with a back burner for the central heating located in the rear right side master bedroom.

Our limited inspection of the hot water and 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.

Ten Minute Heating Test

The heating was on during the course of the survey and the property was warm. However often these houses do get cold and they are draughty.

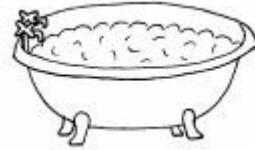
Finally, it should be noted that the supply pipe from the Water Company stopcock to the internal stop tap is the responsibility of the property owner.

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.

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BATHROOM

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

Bathroom

The property has a four piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin, shower and WC, which looks in average condition, subject to some day-to-day wear and tear, as one would expect.



Bathroom

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.

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MAIN DRAINS



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

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

The cold taps have been run for approximately quarter of an hour in the kitchen. No build up or back up was noted.

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 identified two inspection chambers / manholes.

Manholes Defined

Access areas, which usually fit a man (or woman) into them and are put in where the drains change direction.

Inspection Chamber / Manhole One (left side)

We duly lifted the cover and found it to be free flowing at the time of our inspection.

From what we could see it is brick built.



Manhole

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Inspection Chamber / Manhole Two (left side)

We were unable to lift the manhole as it was covered over.

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

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

Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

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

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

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal. In this instance the rainwater pipes discharge on to the ground close to the property. The rainwater pipes need to be moved away from the property to stop dampness.

ACTION REQUIRED: A way to do this is to literally take the downpipes half a meter or so away from the building and also utilise water butts to get the water away from the building.

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.

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OUTSIDE AREAS

The main focus of this report has been on the main building. We have taken a cursory inspection of the outbuilding and would be happy to return and carry out a survey of so required.

PARKING/GARAGES



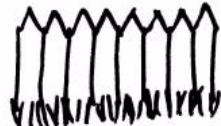
The property has a driveway for off road parking and a garage. The garage is currently used for bike restoration and bike storage.



Overgrown plant on garage roof



Inside the garage



EXTERNAL AREAS

Front Garden

The property has a narrow area to the front sitting very close to the road.



Front of the property sits close to the road

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Rear Garden

The property has a small rear garden with a patio area, lawn and shrubs.



Rear garden

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

Often with older properties the boundaries are subject to negotiation and local practice. You do need to make sure that your solicitor is aware of the complications that can occur with older property boundaries.

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

Neighbours

Left Hand Neighbours

To the left hand side there is an empty plot which we are advised that the lady who owned it has died and the owner advises it is not known what the plot is going to be used for.

Right Hand Neighbours

We spoke to the right hand neighbour briefly. They have advised they have no problems.

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POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:
 - i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
 - ii) Rising damp treatments.
 - iii) Double glazing or replacement windows.
 - iv) Roof and similar renewals.
 - v) Central heating installation.
 - vi) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
 - vii) Removal of any walls in part or whole.
 - viii) Removal of any chimneys in part or whole.
 - ix) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
 - x) Removal of walls and chimneys and supporting documentation
- 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.

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- 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 the knowledge that any are about to be served.
- n) 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 link on the www.1stAssociated.co.uk Home Page.

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

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

Your Legal Advisor should carry out Local Authority searches to ascertain whether the property is a Listed Building and whether it is situated in a Conservation Area. They should also find out any information available with regard to Planning Applications and Building Control. We have not made any formal or informal Local Authority enquiries.

Finally, your Legal Advisor should carry out any additional enquiries they feel necessary and if they find anything unusual or onerous then we ask that they contact us immediately for our further comments.

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xxxxxxxxxxxxxx, xxxxxx, Kent. CT6 xxx

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
Independent Chartered Surveyors

This Report is dated: xxxxxxxxxxxx

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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 published by Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Books.

House Builders Bible
By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

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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 xxxxxx 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.

APPROVALS/GUARANTEES

Where work has been carried out to the property in the past, the surveyor cannot guarantee that this work has been carried out in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations, British/European Standards and Codes of Practice, Agreement Certificates and statutory regulations.

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.

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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 dull and showery at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

In recent times our weather seems to be moving towards the extremities from its usual relatively mid range. Extremes of weather can affect the property.

NOT LOCAL

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

OCCUPIED PROPERTY

The property was occupied at the time of our survey, which meant that there were various difficulties when carrying out the survey such as stored items within cupboards, the loft space and obviously day-to-day household goods throughout the property. We have, however, done our best to work around these.

INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been limited as:

- 1) We did not open up the ground floor or the first floor as we could not see a way to do it without causing damage.
- 2) We didn't have the benefit of meeting you at the property to talk about your specific requirements although are aware you are in France and therefore would find this difficult.

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BUILDING INSURANCE

We do not advise with regard to building insurance. You need to make your own enquiries. Some areas may have a premium, some buildings may have a premium and some insurers may be unwilling to insure at all in certain areas. You need to make your own enquires prior to committing to purchase the property. Please be aware the fact a building is currently insured does not mean it can be re insured.

We would comment that non-insurability of a building we feel will affect value. It is therefore essential to make your own enquiries with regard to insurance before committing to purchase the property and incurring fees.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to contact an insurance company today to make enquiries with regard to insurance on this property.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Our computer system sends two copies of our Terms and Conditions to the email address given to us when booking the survey; one has the terms attached and the other has links to the Terms and Conditions on our website (for a limited time). If you have not received these please phone your contact immediately.

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APPENDICES

1. Listing Information
2. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
3. Information on the Property Market

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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 homes and gardens in England and Wales must follow new rules in the building regulations. All significant electrical work carried out in the home 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 household 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 - NICEIC Electrical Contractor or equivalent trades body.
2. A certificate from the local authority saying that the installation has approval under the building regulations.

Homeowners will still be able to do some minor electrical jobs themselves. To help you, we've put together this brief list of dos and don'ts.

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.

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INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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

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

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www.hometrack.co.uk

This gives information with regard to house sale and purchase prices.

www.motleyfool.co.uk

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

www.rightmove.co.uk

This is probably the largest Internet search engine for estate agency sales and also has useful information with regard to prices of property (but it is not the same as having a chartered surveyor value it).

www.zoopla.co.uk

This is a good website for seeing the prices of properties for sale in a certain postcode area.

www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk

This is a good website for establishing if the property is Listed and general information on British Listed buildings.

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